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THE CONCEPT OF DHARMAKĀYA  
IN THE TA-CH'ENG TA-I CHANG

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IN THE TA-CH'ENG TA-I CHANG

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The misunderstandings between Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan about the term dharmakāya in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang center around four things: ontology versus epistemology; practicality versus speculation; the use of the Abhidharma; and the attitude of the two men toward the texts they were citing. Previous research on the topic has focused on the difference between the Indian and Chinese mentalities and ignored the different roles played by Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan in their respective communities. The sections of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang which deal with dharmakāya (1-8,13,18) have been translated.

I would like to thank Dr. Yün-hua Jan for suggesting that I work on Hui-yüan and calling my attention to the possibilities of writing something on the dialogue in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang. His interest in the topic, ready help with the translation and high example of scholarship have been a great source of support throughout my work on this thesis. Dr. Koichi Shinohara patiently went through the Japanese notes of the Eon Kenyū with me and was ever ready to provide linguistic assistance, for which I am very grateful. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Graeme MacQueen for taking time out of a busy schedule to direct this thesis. Dr. Rudolf Wagner of the Free University of Berlin proved himself a kalyāna-mitra when he responded to my having accosted him at a concert with questions about Hui-yüan by loaning me a copy of his dissertation and setting up a meeting to discuss the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang. My fellow graduate students in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster have been most supportive, both in listening to my various woes while writing and in serving as sounding boards for ideas. In particular I would like to thank Curtis Heckaman for helping with some of the Sanskrit terms and Bee Tan for sharing her knowledge of Pure Land Buddhism. Karen Wen-ling Yan wrote the Chinese characters in the text, for which I am most grateful. Finally, I would like to thank Sergei Iusin for providing the moral support without which this thesis would never have been completed.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang (大乘大義章, T. 1856) is an exchange of letters between the Serindian translator Kumārajīva and the eminent Chinese Buddhist monk Hui-yūan of Lu-shan (廬山慧遠) concerning certain Mahāyāna topics about which Hui-yūan desired clarification. It is one of the rare recorded examples in the history of early Chinese Buddhism of a distinguished Chinese monk questioning a learned foreign authority about the tenets of the faith, and as such, sheds light both on the problems that the Chinese were having with Buddhism and the understanding that they had achieved of it. Because the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang was written at a critical juncture in the history of Chinese Buddhism - Hui-yūan's questions were precipitated by Kumārajīva's introduction of Mahāyāna scholasticism to China and were the direct result of his translation of the Ta-chih-tu lun (大智度論 T. 1509) - it is also one of the earliest documents which bears witness to the Chinese attempts to come to grips with the conflicting schools within Indian Buddhism. Viewed from Kumārajīva's side of the correspondence, the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang provides a summary of the Ta-chih-tu lun's position on a variety of Mahāyāna topics and is also a good example of the scholastic mode of argumentation. Because of these characteristics, the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang affords a nearly unique opportunity to exa-

mine a dialogue between a Chinese and a foreign Buddhist.

In the attention it has received from Western scholars, the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang has been considered a problem text in the Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan often seem to be at cross purposes in the correspondence. This thesis will continue in that vein by focusing on the question of whether or not Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan were actually communicating with each other or whether, because their approaches to the Buddhist scriptures were so different and because their respective positions within the Buddhist community were so divergent, their starting points made it difficult for the one to understand what the other was saying. In order to show their individual approaches in high relief, this thesis will center on their attempts to clarify the meaning of the term dharmakāya (法身). Dharmakāya has been chosen not only because it is one of the major issues in the correspondence, but also because the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang is one of the first Chinese discussions of the topic and so allows us a glimpse of the process by which a major concept of the Mahāyāna was introduced into the Chinese religious vocabulary.

To set the stage for examining this question, the first chapter gives brief biographies of Hui-yūan and Kumārajīva, and the textual history of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang. Then the positions of the various modern scholars who have written on the work are summarized and commented on with an eye to determining which of the problems in the text were there to start with and which are a by-product of modern academic study.



The second chapter gives a sampling of definitions of dharmakāya and then sets out the points at which Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan diverged in their approaches to the concept. In the discussion which follows this, the object is not to extract a meaning of dharmakāya from the text, but to use the concept as a way of illuminating Hui-yūan's and Kumārajīva's manner of thinking about the subject. Because both men recognized it as authoritative, quotations from the Ta-chih-tu lun are given as examples of the orthodox view of the subject.

Three appendices are provided, the first giving Kumārajīva's uses of dharmakāya in the correspondence, the second showing a sampling of the types of Buddha bodies in the Ta-chih-tu lun, and the third listing a variety of Bodhisattva bodies from the Ta-chih-tu lun. In this way the reader can quickly see how many things the term dharmakāya was being used for and how vaguely defined the term was at the time of the correspondence.

The heart of the thesis is the translation of those sections of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang (1-8, 13, 18) which deal wholly or in part with the concept of dharmakāya. In the main, Hui-yūan and Kumārajīva are capable of speaking for themselves.

I

There is, in Buddhism, an honored tradition of question asking. It is considered proper and commendable to question the Buddha and his disciples about the Dharma and, because of this, many of the sūtras and śāstras are in the dialectic form. According to the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā<sup>1</sup>, to be unwilling to ask questions is to show a lack of faith and respect for what the Buddha teaches. Consequently, both those who expound the scriptures and those who receive the explanation with faith and ask questions about it are worthy of praise.

The Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang can be viewed as a work in this tradition. Reserved in the Chinese Buddhist Canon as an exchange of 18 sets of questions and answers, it is a correspondence between the Chinese Buddhist monk Hui-yüan and the Serindian translator Kumārajīva, written approximately<sup>2</sup> between the years 405 and 409 C.E.

Hui-yüan was born in Northern Shansi in 334 C.E., the son

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Conze, tr., The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines (Berkeley, California: Four Seasons Foundation, 1975), p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of the date of the correspondence see R.G. Wagner, "The Original Structure of the Correspondence Between Shih Hui-yüan and Kumārajīva", HJAS, Vol. 31, 1971, pp. 31-34.

of a gentry family.<sup>3</sup> Like most others of his class, he spent his youth in the study of the Confucian Classics along with the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. In spite of excelling in the study of these last two works, in Hui-yüan's first attempt to leave the world he planned to join the orthodox Confucian hermit Fan Hsüan (范宣), who was living in retirement in Kiangsi. However, political disturbances prevented him from reaching his goal and so the 20 year old Hui-yüan, who had been travelling in order to study with various masters, turned and began to journey back to his native Shansi. But before reaching home he passed through western Hopei and there heard Shih Tao-an (釋道安) lecture in his monastery on Mt. Heng. According to his biography, as soon as Hui-yüan had seen Tao-an "he was filled with reverence and thought, 'he is truly my master'."<sup>4</sup> Thereafter, when he heard Tao-an explain the Prajñā-pāramitā, "he became suddenly awakened (to the Truth) and said, with a sigh: 'Confucianism, Taoism and (the other of) the Nine Schools (of philosophy) are all no more than chaff'."<sup>5</sup> With

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<sup>3</sup> There are biographies of Hui-yüan in the Kao-seng chuan (T.2059, vol.50, pp. 357c-361b) and in the Ch'u san-tsang chi chi (T.2145, vol.55, pp. 109b-110c). The former has been translated by E. Zürcher in The Buddhist Conquest of China (Leiden: Brill, 1972 reprint), pp. 240-253. The following survey is based on that translation, Zürcher's own comments on Hui-yüan (Conquest, pp. 204-239) and the chapter on Hui-yüan in R.H. Robinson's Early Madhyāmika in India and China (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976 reprint), pp. 96-114.

<sup>4</sup> Zürcher, Conquest, p. 240.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

this thought, he and his younger brother Hui-ch'ih (慧持)<sup>6</sup> became Buddhist monks and disciples of Tao-an. Hui-yüan was as diligent and excellent a student of Buddhism as he had been of the Classics, causing Tao-an to praise him, saying, "Should Hui-yüan not be the one who will cause the Way to spread over the Eastern country?"<sup>7</sup> From the time Hui-yüan was 24 (357 C.E.) and used a particularly apt analogy from Chuang-tzu to explain a debated point in Buddhism, Tao-an especially allowed him to make use of secular literature, and even in his old age, Hui-yüan retained the respect of the lay gentry for his expertise<sup>8</sup> in the Rites and other aspects of the Classical Tradition.

Hui-yüan remained with Tao-an on his various journeys and in his various residences until 378 C.E. when Hsian-yang was besieged and Tao-an dismissed his disciples so that they could go to places of greater safety. At this time Hui-yüan started south, intending to go to Lo-fou Shan near Canton, but on the way through Kiangsi decided instead to settle at Lu Shan, where he remained for the next thirty odd years. The monastery which he founded there was renowned for both learning and purity of morals, with Hui-yüan himself demonstrating the ideal of

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<sup>6</sup> P. Demiéville ("La Pénétration du Bouddhisme dans la Tradition Philosophique Chinoise", Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale, Vol. III, 1, 1956, p. 23) refers to "ses frères", but that is the only reference I have seen to more than one brother of Hui-yüan.

<sup>7</sup> Zürcher, Conquest, p. 240.

<sup>8</sup> Zürcher, Conquest, pp. 217-219; 230-231, 245, 252.

aloofness from the world by never setting foot off the mountain, nor going beyond a set boundary when seeing off guests. It should be noted that not only monks lived in this vihāra, but also lay devotees, "gentlemen who (desired to) observe the Rules and to appease their minds, guests who (wanted to) reject the worldly dust and to live in pure faith."<sup>9</sup>

It was with a group of such lay devotees that, in 402, Hui-yūan made a vow before a statue of Amitābha to strive for rebirth in the Western Paradise. This streak of devotionism is also evident in Hui-yūan's interest in icons as aids to meditation, and in his visualizations of the Buddha and poems of Buddha recollection.

Hui-yūan's achievements reached far beyond the study of the perfection of wisdom and the promotion of the laity as active members of the Buddhist community. The types of Buddhist texts with which he was familiar included works of vinaya and dhyāna and the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma. He was so upset about his lack of knowledge concerning the first two that he sent his disciples to the west in order to obtain more complete texts, and even with what of the vinaya he knew, made Lu Shan famous for the strictness with which the rules were there kept. He studied <sup>part of</sup> the Abhidharma under the influence of Saṅghadeva, who resided on Lu Shan from 391 to 397 C.E., and who, during that time, translated part of the Abhidharmahr-

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<sup>9</sup> Zürcher, Conquest, p. 244.

daya, one of the many translations of various types of Buddhist texts promoted by Hui-yüan.

While his learning and encouragement of scholarship ranged over all of the then known aspects of Buddhism, Hui-yüan did not limit his activities to the realm of erudition, but also acted as the representative of Buddhism to the cultured laity and as the defender of the faith and protector of the autonomy of the saṅgha in a time of political turbulence. The most important instance of this last activity came in 402 C.E.<sup>10</sup> when the dictator Huan Hsüan proposed that the monks be subject to secular authority, that they "bow before the ruler". Even though Huan Hsüan had shown an earlier tendency toward anti-clerical policies<sup>11</sup>, before acting on the matter of changing the relationship between the ruler and the monks he sought Hui-yüan's opinion and the highly respected monk was able to convince him not to go ahead with his plan. Hui-yüan's arguments on the subject were published as the treatise "The Śramana Does not Bow Before the Prince" (沙門不敬王者論).

Hui-yüan died in 416 at the age of 83, his death show-

<sup>10</sup>

Zürcher, Conquest, pp. 231-239.

<sup>11</sup>

This in the form of attempting to "select" the saṅgha by defrocking all monks who were unable to read and explain the sūtras and who did not live in retirement and adhere to the monastic rules. It is evidence of the esteem in which Hui-yüan was held that even in the planning stages of the decree, Lu Shan was exempt from the process.

ing the same devotion to the purity of Buddhist doctrine as his life, for he would not drink a medicinal mixture of honey and water until he knew whether or not the vinaya permitted it. He died while his disciples were still consulting the text.

In 404 Hui-yüan received news that Kumārajīva had come to Ch'angan. Before that Kumārajīva, who was born in Serindia in 350 C.E.<sup>12</sup> to an emigrant Indian aristocrat and a Kuchean princess, had been held captive at the court of the Later Liang in northwestern China for 17 years, during which time he learned Chinese. His early education covered almost all aspects of contemporary Buddhist doctrine. He left lay life when he was seven years old along with his mother, who became a nun. He spent the next two years in Kuchā studying the Āgamas and the Abhidharma and then at the age of nine went with his mother to North India and studied the Dīrghāgama, the Madhyamāgama and the Ksudraka under the dharma-master Bandhuatta. At the age of twelve he spent a year in Kasghar where he studied the Sarvāstivādin Adhidharma and also began to receive the Indian equivalent of Hui-yüan's classical ed-

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This is the date given by Zürcher, Conquest, p. 226, with an explanatory note (#239) on p. 239. Robinson (Early Mādhyamika, p. 71) prefers the dates 344-413 C.E. and gives his reasons in a long note (pp. 244-245) which summarizes most of the research done on Kumārajīva's dates. There is a biography of Kumārajīva in the Kao-seng chuan (T.2059, vol.50, pp. 330a-331a) which has been translated by J. Nobel in Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 1937. Unfortunately, I have been unable to consult this work. The following sketch of Kumārajīva's life is based on the chapter devoted to him by Robinson (Early Mādhyamika, pp. 71-95).

ucation, studying the Vedas, the Five Sciences, grammar, rhetoric and astrology. At some point shortly after this he was introduced to the ideas of the Mahāyāna and converted. He then began to study the Middle Treatise, the Hundred Treatise and the Twelve Topics. When he was twenty he received the full ordination and thereafter studied the Sarvāstivādi-vinaya with the North Indian master Vimalākṣa. Until his capture by the Chinese force in 383 (when he would have been about 40 years old) Kumārajīva had settled into a brilliant career as a resident of the king's New Monastery in Kuchā, where he studied and expounded the Mahāyāna.

Kumārajīva's background made him eminently qualified to introduce to China the Mahāyāna scholastic literature of the Mādhyamika school, and it is this transmission that Zürcher considers his greatest contribution to Chinese Buddhism.<sup>13</sup> It is obvious that his translations of these materials, particularly of the Ta chih tu lun<sup>14</sup> set off an entirely new line of speculation among the Buddhists of China, and it was with this new trend that Hui-yüan was coming to grips with in his seventh

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<sup>13</sup>

Conquest, p. 225.

<sup>14</sup>

The Ta chih tu lun (hereafter TCTL, T.1509) claims to be a Chinese translation of the Mahāprajñāpāramitāsātra. Because there is no extant Sanskrit version of this text, there is some debate as to whether it is a translation, a compilation, or an original Chinese composition. In the introduction to Vol. 3 of his translation (pp. viii-xliv) Lamotte summarizes what is currently known about the author and the sources and comes to the conclusion that it is indeed a Chinese translation of an Indian work, which was probably written in the 4th century of the Common Era. Kumārajīva translated the work at Ch'angan between 404 and 406 (see Lamotte, Vol. 3, pp.xliv-1).



decade.

Hui-yüan sent his first letter to Kumārajīva in 405<sup>15</sup> or 406. It is an epistle of good will and welcome in which there are not yet any doctrinal questions. Kumārajīva answered in the same vein, which elicited another friendly letter from Hui-yüan, this one expressing alarm at the rumor that Kumārajīva might be leaving Ch'angan and saying that he was going to "take the liberty to submit some summary questions on several tens of subjects".<sup>16</sup> It is most likely these questions which form what is now known as the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang. The first of the letters which form this text is dated c. 406<sup>17</sup>, which is approximately the same time that the translation of the TCTL was finished.

From reading the friendly salutations of the first two letters, it is obvious that the exchanges in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang have been sheared of any such material. We do not know when the text was edited nor by whom. The Fa-lun mu-lu (465-472) grouped the material topically and referred to one section which is now lost<sup>18</sup>, indicating that the rearrangement of the work out of the original letters took place very early.

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<sup>15</sup> Zürcher, Conquest, p. 226. R. Wagner, "Original Structure", p. 32 places the date firmly in early 405. The letter is preserved in the Kao-seng chuan, T.50, p. 359b.

<sup>16</sup> Zürcher, Conquest, p. 226.

<sup>17</sup> Wagner, "Original Structure", p. 33; Zürcher, Conquest, p. 226.

<sup>18</sup> Zürcher, Conquest, p. 226; Wagner, "Original Structure", pp. 35-36.

Wagner cites Fa-ching's 594 Chung-ching mu-lu as the first compilation of the correspondence outside of the Fa<sup>2</sup>-lun.<sup>19</sup> In his Li-tai san-pao chi of 597 Fei Ch'ang-fang refers to a version in three chüan with the title Wen ta-ch'eng chung shen-i shih-pa k'o (問大乘中深義十八科), which seems to have survived with some change of title to the present. The title shows that the present division into 18 sections was adopted very early. It was under this title that the work appeared in the Fa-yüan chu lin compiled by Tao-shih between 656 and 668. The 664 Ta-t'ang nei-t'ien lu of Tao-hsüan refers to it as the Wen shih-shih ta-ch'eng shen-i. Wagner considers that the "transmission of the separate editions of the text is accordingly well attested in China to the middle of the seventh century".<sup>20</sup>

The text is cited under slightly differing names in the Japanese catalogues of the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>21</sup> The editors of the Eon kenkyū base their text on the earliest known manuscript, which is dated 1293 and titled Ch'i<sup>2</sup>-mo-lo-shih fa-shih ta-i (鳩摩羅什法師大義). The Taishō edition is based on a 1762 manuscript now in the library of

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<sup>19</sup> Under the title Ta-wen lun (答問論), Wagner, "Original Structure", p. 39. The following summary of the textual transmission follows Wagner's section on the topic, pp. 34-42.

<sup>20</sup> "Original Structure", p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> Wagner, "Original Structure", pp. 40-41.

the University of Kyoto. This manuscript was also the basis for Ch'iu Po's 1930 Yüan-shih ta-ch'eng yao-i wen ta (遠什大乘要義問答).

The most recent edition and the one followed here is Studies on Hui-yüan: Texts and Translations (Eon Kenkyū), which provides a critical edition of all the surviving works of Hui-yüan and is the product of a joint research project by the Religion Research Room of the East Asian Section of the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies, Kyoto University.

In the companion volume to this work, Studies on Hui-yüan: Researches, there is an article in Japanese by MAKITA Tairyō on "The Textual Transmission of Hui-yüan's Works." The English summary contains the following statement about the form of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang:

there is no way of knowing with certainty whether  
 . . . the Ta-sheng ta-i chang . . . did in fact  
 exist from the very outset in its present form.  
 (1962:21)

Mr. Makita then goes on to give the results of "the textual transmission and study of the Correspondence in Japan before 1293 and the transmission and study of later manuscripts still surviving in Japan"<sup>22</sup>. It is his belief that the text disappeared in China quite early, but that it was transmitted to Japan during the Nara Period (710-784) with other works<sup>23</sup> which summarized portions of the Buddhist Canon. He makes

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<sup>22</sup>

Researches, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup>

Ibid.

the observation that:

it is an interesting fact that in China only his collected writings survive (albeit only in part), while in Japan only his correspondence with Kumārajīva survives. (1962:22)

To date there has been no full translation of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang published in a western language. Zürcher gives a summary of the questions in The Buddhist Conquest of China and R. Robinson translated sections 12-15 in Early Mādhyamika in India and China. In his 1969 dissertation R. Wagner gives a German translation of section 1 in its entirety and Hui-yūan's questions in the remaining sections. There is, of course, a full Japanese translation in Eon Kenkyū.

What attention the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang has received from modern scholars has focused on it as a problem text, with Hui-yūan generally being held responsible for not understanding Kumārajīva.

Liebenthal discusses Hui-yūan in three works - the book Chao Lun<sup>24</sup>, and the two articles "Shih Hui-yūan's Buddhism as Set Forth in His Writings"<sup>25</sup> and "The Immortality of the Soul in Chinese Thought" - and represents the extreme end of the prevalent attitude of western scholars toward the Hui-yūan/Kumārajīva correspondence:

(Hui-yūan) at once got in touch with (Kumārajīva) to ask for the explanation of subjects of

<sup>24</sup>

Hong Kong University Press, Second Revised Edition, 1968.

<sup>25</sup>

JAOS, 70, 1950 pp. 243-259.

<sup>26</sup>

Monumenta Nipponica 8, 1052, section on Hui-yūan pp. 332, 354-365.

controversy. The main topics dealt with are the dharmakāya and connected problems. Kumārajīva explains inconsistencies of theory by quoting different exegeses, though the needs of the Lu-shan community might have been better served by the exposition of a simplified theory of Buddhism. The distance between the mentality of the Indian scholar and the community on Lu-shan, uneducated in dogmatics, was too great for the correspondence, as published by Hui-yūan /27/, to have much success. (Liebenthal 1968:5)

This notion that the Chinese could not quite understand Indian Buddhism is often found in discussions of the introduction of Buddhism to China<sup>28</sup>, with the usual charge being that the Chinese are too pragmatic, this-worldly and culture-bound to understand the intricacies of the Indian religion.<sup>29</sup> While a more balanced view is presented by Paul Demiéville in his article "La Pénétration du Bouddhisme dans la Tradition Philosophique Chinoise"<sup>30</sup>, we find even Hu Shih saying "Indigenous China was always factual and rarely bold in imagination".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> I don't know where the idea that the correspondence was published by Hui-yūan comes from.

<sup>28</sup> As a rejoinder to this kind of thinking Ed. Conze wrote: "Often in the past when I heard Sinologues complaining that the Chinese did not understand Buddhism, I have wondered how well they themselves had actually grasped the terminology of the more archaic writings". Further Buddhist Studies (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1975), p. 185.

<sup>29</sup> H. Nakamura is the best known proponent of this view: "It is a well known fact that the racial nature of the Chinese is commonplace and utilitarian" and so on. The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples (Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 1960) p. 227.

<sup>30</sup> Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale III, 1, 1956, pp. 19-38.

<sup>31</sup> "The Indianization of China" in Independence, Convergence and Borrowing (London: Russell & Russell, reissued 1970) p. 229.

In the article "Shih Hui-yüan's Buddhism as Set Forth in His Writings", although Liebenthal is still not free from such notions, he does show more awareness of the specifically religious aspect of the problem than do many of the other commentators. For example, he realizes that revelation is what Buddhism is based on and that it was this concern with revelation which forged the commitment of the Chinese Buddhist community.<sup>32</sup> Focusing on Hui-yüan's concern with Amitābha he writes:

Shih Hui-yüan is famous as the first to create a Community or an Order of the type such as later spread all over China, in which a number of devout people took the vow to follow in the Buddhist path to the very end, to be reborn in the Western Paradise. (1950:244)

What this means for doctrinal discussion is well summed up in the following:

the theoretical aspect of a religion is less important than its sociological one; one is a Buddhist not because one believes in Buddhist cosmology, but because one follows the path of the Buddha. (1950:244)

But Liebenthal does not consider in this what it means to intellectually follow the Buddhist path, and it is the process of resolving the intellectual position of faith that we witness in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang. However, rather than seeing in Hui-yüan's questions the strivings of one intent on resolving the logical inconsistencies of an unfamiliar system of thought, Liebenthal views his confrontation with Kumārajīva as a nearly

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<sup>32</sup>

JAOS, 70 (1950), p. 243.

blind meeting of Indian and Chinese thought<sup>33</sup> in which Hui-yüan was somehow incapable of grasping the subtleties of the Indian mind. In his conclusion, Liebenthal shows an astounding mixture of insight, in realizing that much of the discussion was religious rather than philosophical, and blindness, as his final statement shows:

What is astonishing is only that a man who spent the greater part of his life under Tao-an (he left him A.D. 378 when he was 45 years old), studying the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, assimilated so little of the Indian Buddhist theory. (1950:259)

Part of Liebenthal's problem with Hui-yüan may be that the scholar does not recognize the monk's skill in means, for in one of the works of Hui-yüan which he examined he makes much of the point that Hui-yüan "never quotes a sūtra by name"<sup>34</sup> and notes elsewhere that Hui-yüan rarely quotes from the sūtras.<sup>35</sup> At the same time Liebenthal emphasizes Hui-yüan's Taoist outlook and allusions to the Classics. While all of this is quite true when Hui-yüan is writing for the laity (and Liebenthal sees him almost entirely in this position), in the correspondence with Kumārajīva, Hui-yüan, taking the measure of his audience, generally leaves his Chinese learning to one side and shows himself perfectly able to exchange scriptural quotations with the Serindian.

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<sup>33</sup> JAOS 70 (1950), p. 258.

<sup>34</sup> Monumenta Nipponica 8 (1952), p. 332. The work in question is "A Śrāmana does not bow before a Prince."

<sup>35</sup> JAOS 70 (1950), p. 248, n. 26.

In the final part of the article "On the Immortality of the Soul", Liebenthal presents translations of sections of "A Śrāmana does not bow before a Prince"<sup>36</sup> Hui-yüan's letter to Huan Nan-chün, and his "Treatise on the Three Types of Kar-mic Response".

Zürcher also views the miscommunication in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang as a case of the concrete and empirical Chinese mind being alien to the "subtle dialectical philosophy" of Indian scholasticism<sup>37</sup> although he benevolently decides not to blame Hui-yüan:

for his lack of understanding; on the contrary, his letters to Kumārajīva testify of a knowledge of doctrinal problems and, above all, a critical spirit and an acute power of observation which are quite remarkable. (1972:226)

Zürcher realizes that Hui-yüan and the general Chinese interest in the dharmabody was triggered by Kumārajīva's activities at Ch'angan, stating that "speculations about the dharmakāya are not found in early Chinese Buddhism before the late fourth century . . . the subject essentially belongs to scholastic literature."<sup>38</sup> But Zürcher acknowledges that at the same time that this literature, and in particular the TCTL, was exciting interest in the dharmakāya and related subjects, it

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This work is translated in its entirety by Leon Hurvitz under the title "'Render unto Caesar' in Early Chinese Buddhism", Liebenthal Festschrift Sino-Indian Studies, Vol. V, Parts 3 & 4, ed. Kshitis Roy, Visvabhanti, 1957.

37

Conquest, p. 226.

38

Conquest, p. 225.



was also very confusing. For example, while Zürcher says that in this work (the TCTL) "the Chinese found for the first time a detailed discussion of the nature of the dharmakāya and the whole Buddhology connected with it",<sup>39</sup> on the same page he also says that the TCTL was innocent of the full trikāya scheme. Then in a later footnote he adds:

The buddhology of the Ta chih-tu lun recognizes only 化身 (nirmānakāya) and 法身, the latter referring to the Buddha's "Dharma-body" (dharmakāya), as well as to his glorified body perceived by the Bodhisattvas (elsewhere denoted as sambhogakāya, "body of enjoyment") - a fact which still increases the confusion of Hui-yüan's ideas on this subject. (1972: II 401 n. 243)

Indeed it does increase Hui-yüan's confusion, but I would argue that the confusion does not originate with him, but rather is in the TCTL itself, which, in spite of our expectations of it, is not a final, nor even an entirely clear, source on the matter of Buddhology. Instead, it is a work in the process of developing a Buddhology.

As Zürcher notes, the problem is compounded by the curiously limited vocabulary of the TCTL, in which the glorified body of the Bodhisattva is also called dharmakāya.<sup>40</sup>

In the end, Zürcher's conclusion is more balanced than that of Liebenthal's and is here quoted in full:

It is interesting to note how the two partners continually misunderstand each other. Kumārajīva does not see the real point of Hui-yüan's problems and answers him by a profusion of quotations and, more indico, by a bewildering enumeration of conflicting theories and scholastic opinions.

But Hui-yüan, not satisfied by abstractions, goes on asking: the dharmakāya must, after all, be made of some "stuff", however subtle it may be; you can hear it and see it, it must have sensory faculties and so on. Still the same urge typical of Hui-yüan and the creed propagated by him, to have something concrete to hold on to, and this is perhaps the most fundamental difference between this branch of Southern Chinese Buddhism and the intellectualized pseudo-Buddhist speculations which had flourished at the capital and in the South-East. (1972:229)

This at least is fair to both participants in the discussion.

In the volume on Hui-yüan published by the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies of Kyoto University, there are several articles that shed light on the problem of the misunderstanding between Hui-yüan and Kumārajīva.<sup>41</sup> TSUKAMOTO Zenryu suggests in "Hui-yüan in Early Chinese Buddhism" that part of the problem was that it was not until Kumārajīva's work in Ch'angan that Hui-yüan discovered that the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna were rival systems of thought and that this discovery forced him to rethink and interpret the Buddhist doctrine which he had received from Tao-an.

In his "A Preface to the Study of the Correspondence of Hui-yüan and Kumārajīva" ŌCHŌ Enichi states that many of the problems stem from Hui-yüan's attempt to reconcile the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras and the Abhidharma, and further says that:

as far as Hui-yüan was concerned, his questions were a matter of the most vital necessity, since

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<sup>41</sup> My knowledge of these articles comes from their English summaries.

his position in the doctrinal circles of his own locality was one of leadership. (1962:9)

Ōchō then addresses the three matters of the nature of the dharmakāya of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the distinction between the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna, and the reconciliation of the doctrinal differences between the Perfection of Wisdom and the Lotus Sūtras.

This last issue is also addressed by Leon Hurvitz in his article "The Triune Vehicle in the Correspondence of Hui-yūan and Kumārajīva"<sup>41a</sup>, which further develops the argument that for Hui-yūan all of the Buddhist translations were equally and literally true, while for the modern scholar and for Kumārajīva, the same documents present a progression of ideas and the theories of various schools.

In his Early Mādhyamika In India and China Richard H. Robinson devotes a chapter to Hui-yūan and one to Kumārajīva, and also translates sections 12-15 of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang, part V ("The Spirit Does Not Perish") of Hui-yūan's "The Śrāmana Does Not Make Obeisance to the King" and Hui-yūan's "Preface to the Abridged Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise."<sup>42</sup>

Of all the works discussed so far, it is only Robinson's that gives an analysis of Kumārajīva's Buddhism:

He shows himself to be an orthodox Śūnyavādin and Mādhyamika, rejects the authority of the Abhidharma, and interprets the Agamas in a Mahāyāna way, holds that the Buddha's statements are purely pragmatic and do not imply any real entities, and denies that real entities

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<sup>42</sup>

The abridged treatise itself is lost.

<sup>41a</sup>

Also in *Eon Kenkyū*.

arise, because (a) neither inherence nor non-inherence of the effect in the cause is admissible, and (b) simultaneous and successive occurrence of cause and effect are alike untenable. He maintains that reality transcends the four modes of the tetralemma, and he holds Nāgārjuna's concept of negation. (1976:90)

This Robinson finds to be disappointingly orthodox, and, indeed, when studying the two men, Kumārajīva appears quite colorless beside the personal intensity and idiosyncrasies of Hui-yūan.

Robinson agrees that Kumārajīva's basic text for answering Hui-yūan's questions is the TCTL, going so far as to say that "Kumārajīva's doctrine is the doctrine of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise".<sup>43</sup> His conclusion as to Kumārajīva's convictions is as follows:

There is no evidence that Kumārajīva attempted to found a lineage of any sort. His interests were catholic, and his sympathies were broadly Mahāyāna. Within limits, his teaching was in accordance with the interests of his disciples. In his language there is very little self-assertion, and it does not appear that he set himself up as the founder of any sect. As apparently he recognized no conflict between any two aspects of Mahāyāna, there would not have been much point in founding a Mādhyakika faction. For him, Mādhyamika was simply Mahāyana in sāstra form. (1976:95)

Given this, it is easy to see why Kumārajīva did not understand what Hui-yūan was asking. Having fully accepted the Mahāyāna, Kumārajīva could not see the very real contradictions within it, and so in the correspondence he often accuses Hui-yūan of

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43

Early Mādhyamika, p. 94.

making difficulties on the basis of prapañca, when, in fact, Hui-yüan is showing considerable insight into what the texts actually say.

Robinson offers three solutions to the confusion he perceives Hui-yüan to be evincing in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang: some of the questions actually originated with Hui-yüan's disciples; Hui-yüan did not have the complete text of the TCTL; Hui-yüan was manufacturing problems simply to have Kumārajīva pronounce upon them.<sup>44</sup> It is discouraging to find Robinson echoing Liebenthal's view:

He (Hui-yüan) had learned some parts of his Abhidharma well, but he certainly had not acquired any idea of what the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras meant. It would be unwarranted to assume that other members of Tao-an's school were equally uncomprehending of Sūnyavāda, but it is significant that so eminent a scholar as Hui-yüan should have been so much in the dark.  
(1976:109) /45/

However, immediately following this, Robinson praises Hui-yüan's preface to the abridgment of the TCTL as "a piece worthy of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise in every way",<sup>46</sup> "a giant among prefaces". This is hard to reconcile with his previous idea that Hui-yüan had not read the treatise in its entirety and with the notion that the Master of Lu Shan did not understand the Prajñāpāramitā.

<sup>44</sup> Early Mādhyamika, p. 108.

<sup>45</sup> Foot-noted to Liebenthal. "Hui-yüan", p. 259b.

<sup>46</sup> Early Mādhyamika, pp. 109-110.

Robinson's final statement on Hui-yüan is:

Hui-yüan, his advanced age notwithstanding, had learned a great deal from Kumārajīva and the Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise. However, certain features of the synthesis which he had labored more than fifty years to build were not exactly congruent with Mādhyamika. His doctrine as of A.D. 404 was Mahāyāna in spirit, but Hinayāna in philosophy. Consequently, he did not assimilate the sāstra variety of Śūnyavāda perfectly. (1976:114)

In spite of registering his disappointment with Kumārajīva's orthodoxy and acknowledging that a faith which lacked any recognizable personal addition was not one that would fire future followers, Robinson does not recognize the necessary complement to Kumārajīva in Hui-yüan, who, not bound by adherence to a tradition system of thought was free to recast the Buddhism he received into a distinctive form which, in time, would become a recognized lineage. Later generations of Chinese Buddhists have every reason to be thankful that Hui-yüan "did not assimilate the sātra variety of Śūnyavāda perfectly" and so become a colorless copy of the Indian Masters.

R. G. Wagner proposes a more creative solution to the problem of misunderstanding in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang<sup>47</sup>, saying that the problem rests not in Hui-yüan's understanding or misunderstanding of Kumārajīva, but instead in the current form of the text. He suggests that originally there were only two long letters of questions from Hui-yüan with two corres-

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In both his Munich dissertation Die Fragen Hui-yüans an Kumārajīva (1969) and the article "Original Structure".

ponding long answers from Kumārajīva. As Wagner says:

The interpretative consequences of this structure are evident: instead of fragmented, obstinately repetitive questions from Hui-yūan, we would be reading two sets of coherent questions, the second of which takes into full account the argumentation of Kumārajīva's foregoing series of answers. We would have, in other words, an intelligible text. (1971:31)

While this is a very appealing suggestion for making sense of the text, it does not solve all of the problems in it. For even if we postulate just two sets of letters, there are still grounds for wondering if Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan were fully aware of the other's position.

Whalen W. Lai, in his article "The Predocetic 'Finite Buddhakāya' in the Lotus Sūtra: In Search of the Illusive Dharmakāya Therein"<sup>49</sup>, comes up with a quite sensible addition to the discussion on the misunderstanding in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i-chang. Reminding the reader that at the time of the correspondence, the full trikāya structure had yet to be introduced to China, and that in particular the concept of the sambhogakāya was unknown, he goes on to suggest that these things were at the base of the misunderstanding between Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan. He writes:

Instead of seeing their exchange as a case of cross purposes . . . we should see it as an unresolved tension between the philosophical Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra and the mythopoeic tradition of the Lotus Sūtra. (1981:463)

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Or perhaps three - oral communication 8 March 1982. "Original Structure", pp. 30-31.

49

Journal of the American Academy of Religion, XLIV, 3, Sept. 1981, pp. 447-469.

This would mean that in their discussions of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang modern scholars are assuming that Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan were aware of the full trikāya system, and that Chinese Buddhists of the early fifth century understood the tension between the Lotus Sūtra and the Perfection of Wisdom Literature. As Lai points out, this simply was not true.

Perhaps a more profitable way to approach the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang is to follow the lead suggested by Lai and to take the limitations of knowledge available to Hui-yūan and Kumārajīva seriously and begin the discussion from there. For instance, several of the scholars discussed above have suggested that if only Hui-yūan had had the complete text of the TCTL, or if he had studied it a bit harder, then most of the questions regarding dharmakāya in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang would have been superfluous. However, even a brief glance at Appendices II and III, where there is a sampling of the uses of dharmakāya in the TCTL shows that that text is far from clear about what the dharmakāya is. Hence the TCTL was more likely to cause Hui-yūan to ask questions than to resolve his doubts.

Although there is something to the Indian/Chinese split which is so often resorted to in explaining peculiarities in early Chinese Buddhism, in the case of the two correspondents here I think that the matter is more a division between a believer who was so thoroughly immersed in a system that he could not see its inconsistencies and one who had come to the faith as an adult and so intellectually was not



able to lay to rest certain questions without investigation. Thus Kumārajīva may well not have realized how glaring the contradictions between the Lotus Sūtra and the Perfection of Wisdom Literature were <sup>50</sup>, while Hui-yūan felt intellectually obligated to somehow reconcile the Holy Scriptures of his new faith.

In the following chapter I will examine the nature of the dialogue about dharmakāya with the following suppositions: that Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan are intellectual equals; that the TCTL is not entirely clear in its use of the term and therefore some confusion is justified; and that the two men are divided not so much by language and nationality, as by their positions within the religious community and degree of immersion in Mahāyāna scholasticism and corresponding ability to see contradictions within that system.

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James Joyce, when asked how he liked Bach's St. Matthew Passion, responded: "I simply cannot understand how any man can mix the synoptic gospels with the gospel according to Saint John." (Frank Budgen, James Joyce, London: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 186) Bach probably would not have understood the problem.

## CHAPTER II

By virtue of the similarity in background of the two correspondents, we are saved from a host of problems in beginning the discussion of the concept of dharmakāya in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang. Although Kumārajīva had a more extensive Buddhist education than did Hui-yūan, the similarity of the texts which they read is striking. Both specialized in the Perfection of Wisdom Literature, yet had a broad background in other Mahāyāna sūtras, and both were thoroughly conversant in the Abhidharma. Even more importantly, they both recognized the same set of texts as authoritative and were in (unstated) agreement as to which sūtras belonged to the Mahāyāna.<sup>1</sup> Thus a question like "What is a Mahāyāna Sūtra?" does not come up in reference to this discussion, although the relationship between the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna is obviously a problem for Hui-yūan.

While there seems to be an unstated agreement as to which texts were to be used in the discussion, what form those texts were in is an almost insolvable problem at this point and very probably was one of the sources of confusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Of this Robinson says, "The general picture of the canonical texts that mattered to Kumārajīva is much the same as the one afforded by the translation corpus - centered in the Prajñapāramitā, but accepting all known Mahāyāna texts." Early Mādhyamika, pp.88&90. For a list of Buddhist scriptures cited in the text see p. 89.

Kumārajīva's fame rests in large part on his having done the first reliable translations of many of the major sūtras.<sup>2</sup> Before his arrival, the texts read and studied, as Hui-yūan's teacher Tao-an pointed out, were often not only inaccurate, but also nearly incomprehensible. No doubt it was Hui-yūan's awareness of this<sup>3</sup> that prompted him to seek the authoritative pronouncements of Kumārajīva on matters in doubt. Twice in the correspondence (letters 4 and 18) he quotes passages which neither Kumārajīva nor the Japanese commentators can locate, even though in one case Hui-yūan gives the name of the sūtra from which he is quoting. It is possible that some of the things he has having difficulty with were the result of poor or faulty translation and incomplete texts. In view of this situation, we are fortunate in knowing that the TCTL was used in the same form by both men.

The dharmabody, being a matter for religious insight, is, on many levels, not an understandable concept, not a proper object for understanding.<sup>4</sup> It is:

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<sup>2</sup> For a list of sūtras translated by Kumārajīva which had already been translated see Robinson, Early Mādhyamika, pp. 74-75.

<sup>3</sup> See Zürcher's translation of Hui-yūan's biography (Conquest, pp. 246-248) for a description of Hui-yūan's attempts both to acquire more texts and more accurate translations.

<sup>4</sup> "the Dharmakāya is not a product of philosophical reflection . . . it has religious signification as the object of religious consciousness." D.T. Suzuki, Outlines of Mahāyana Buddhism (New York: Schocken Books, 1963 reprint), p. 222.

without coming and without going,  
without arising or extinction, the same as nirvāna.  
(Question 1)

and so beyond all frivolous discussion. Because of this any statement about Hui-yūan's or Kumārajīva's final understanding of dharmakāya would be presumptuous.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest definition of dharmakāya or dharmabody was quite simple - it was the body of the scriptures as opposed to the physical body of the Buddha and so was what remained of the Buddha after his nirvāna.<sup>6</sup> The Sarvāstivādin Adhidharma discusses three Buddha bodies: the material body (rūpakāya); the fictitious bodies conjured up by the magical powers of the Buddha (nirmāṅkāya); and the "five-limbed Dharma-body", i.e., the dharmas which constitute a Buddha as distinct from a Bodhisattva.<sup>7</sup>

N. Dutt adds to this by pointing out that the Kośa has two interpretations of the Dharmakāya, one being the qualities

<sup>5</sup> Also, practically, we do not have enough information to make any such pronouncements. As Wagner points out in his article ("Original Structure" pp. 28-48) we do not know what the original text looked like and so cannot safely say anything about a progression in Hui-yūan's view of dharmakāya. Moreover, there is no record of what Hui-yūan thought about the subject after the end of the correspondence.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis R. Lancaster, An Analysis of the Aṣṭasāhārikā-prajñāparamitāsūtra from the Chinese Translations (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1972), p. 92 with references to original sources. NAGAO Gadjin, "On the Theory of Buddha-body" (The Eastern Buddhist, Vol. VI, 1, May 1973, pp. 25-53) gives a history of the development of the views of dharmakāya.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. Conze, Buddhist Thought in India (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, The University of Michigan Press, 1967 reprint), pp. 94, 172. Even though Conze claims a triple body scheme here, it is not the classical trikāya division. Cf. Nagao, "Theory", p. 29.

adhering to a Buddha and the other being the purified personality (āsraya) possessed by him and other advanced beings. In this latter sense, beings other than the Buddhas, such as Arhats, can have a dharmabody.<sup>8</sup>

Of the Buddha's bodies in the Perfection of Wisdom

Conze writes:

The Prajñāpāramitā knows this as the distinction between dharmakāya and rūpakāya, which is, however, explicitly made relatively late. In the Aṣṭasāhasrikā it is found only in the later strata. (1975:113) /10/

and goes on to say "of the sambhogakāya there is no trace at all in the actual text".<sup>11</sup>

Murti expands on what is made of the dharmakāya in the Perfection of Wisdom Literature:

The Prajñāpāramitā texts repeatedly ask us to consider Buddha as Dharmakāya and not in the overt form which appears to us. Dharmakāya is the essence, the reality of the universe. It is completely free from every trace of duality . . . It would be, however, not exactly correct to take the Dharmakāya to be the abstract metaphysical principle - Śūnyata or Suchness, (tathata). The Dharmakāya is still a Person, and innumerable merits and powers etc. are ascribed to him. (1980:285)

<sup>8</sup> Nalinaksha Dutt, Mahāyāna Buddhism (Delhi:Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), pp. 151-152.

<sup>9</sup> "The distinction between the Buddha in so far as he is a channel for the spiritual force of the Dharma, and in so far as he is an historical individual . . ." Conze, Further Studies, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> For more on this topic see the chapter on Dharmakāya in Lancaster, Analysis, pp. 92-95.

<sup>11</sup> Conze, Further Studies, p. 114.

For Suzuki the Dharmakāya is:

the ultimate reality that underlies all particular phenomena; it is that which makes the existence of individuals possible; it is the raison d'être of the universe; it is the norm of being, which regulates the course of events and thoughts.

(1973:46)

All of these meanings of dharmakāya, including the Hīnayāna and Abhidharmic, were known to and accepted by Hui-yūan and Kumārajīva. That Conze should wonder whether or not the dharmakāya doctrine is a doctrinal innovation<sup>12</sup> shows the state of flux that the concept was in during the period between the writing of the Perfection of Wisdom Literature and the trikāya theory of the Yogācāra-vijñāna school.<sup>13</sup> What we see in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang is an attempt to bring order to this doctrinal chaos.<sup>14</sup> However, given the material

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Further Studies, p. 113. He decides that it is not: "It seems to me that such a teaching belongs to the very essence of Buddhism, and that it must have been taken for granted from the very beginning, although it was explicitly formulated only in the course of time, as and when misunderstandings became more and more widespread."

13

"It was in the philosophy of the Yogācāra school (or the Vijñāna-vāda school) represented by Asāṅga and Vasubandhu that the two-body theory developed until it was consummated into a three-body theory." Nagao, "Theory", p. 30.

14

Although he never mentions the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang in his article, Nagao shows how neatly many of the problems there can be solved by the idea of the sambhogya-kāya. This reward-body Nagao finds to have been necessitated by the Bodhisattva's vow to remain in the world to save beings (pp. 28-29), to be the form in which the Buddha preaches to the Bodhisattvas as it is concrete and visible (p. 33), to be the body with the 32 marks (p. 34) and to be the result of cause, i.e. the Bodhisattva's vow and discipline (p. 35). All of these are points of particular interest to Hui-yūan. Considering the claim of the later Pure Land Buddhists of Hui-yūan as their first patriarch it is interesting to read "we see that the Reward-body is closely connected with the Pure Land Teachings". (p. 32)

Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan had to work with, the matter could not be resolved without a bold stroke of Buddhological innovation, which does not come in the text. It is this, more than any misunderstandings, which makes the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang an ultimately unsatisfying work.

The examination of how Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan were treating the concept of dharmakāya and whether or not they were speaking to each other about it in the same terms will focus on four major issues; epistemology versus ontology; practicality versus speculation; the use of the Abhidharma; and the attitude of the two men toward the texts they are citing. But before we begin to look at the abstract positions in the work, there are two concrete linguistic problems which add greatly to the possibilities for misunderstanding.

The first is, of course, the word dharmakāya itself. That the term is used of both Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is a basic source of confusion. While Kumārajīva does finally, in the third letter, say that there are two kinds of dharmabody, one of the Buddha and one of the Bodhisattva, and then again in the fourth letter says that there is a dharmabody which is like dharmatā and one which belongs to the dharmabody Bodhisattva, at no point in the correspondence does he stress that the dharmabody Bodhisattva is an entirely different order of being from the dharmabody of the Buddha which is like nirvāna and the dharmatā. The dharmatā-like body seems to be the one foremost in Hui-yūan's mind, for from the beginning he seems to be assuming that the dharmabody is pre-existent and the ground

of being - neither created nor destroyed - and is that on which the Dharma and the Buddhist way is based.<sup>15</sup>

The matter is further complicated by Kumārajīva's seeming inability to see the problem Hui-yūan is having. On the one hand he agrees that the dharmabody is like nirvāna, but on the other, there is in this text and in the TCTL a desire to say both that the dharmabody is pre-existent (because of its relationship with the dharmatā<sup>16</sup>) and that it is produced by practice:

As for the Dharmanaturebody Buddha, without affairs he is not complete, without vows he is not sufficient. Why? For limitless asaṃkhyeya kalpas he has accumulated all good roots and virtuous accomplishments and completed all-knowledge and wisdom without hindrances. (TCTL 313b) /17/

Kumārajīva, instead of seeing that this is confusing Hui-yūan manages to add to the ambiguity by speaking about the excellently practicing body produced by the dharmanature (妙行

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This is Suzuki's view of the dharmabody. (Outline, pp. 45-49; 220-241.

16

This relationship is indicated by references in the TCTL to the dharmatākāya (法性身) (TCTL 122a, 263c, 264b, 271a). As used in the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang and the TCTL there seems to be no difference in meaning between 法性身 and 法身. Both texts insist that the Buddha has two kinds of bodies, one absolute and the other conditioned or illusory. At each pole there is a cluster of terms describing what is meant. On one end there is the dharmabody, the body produced by dharmanature, the real body and on the other end is the birth body, the transformation body and the form body. See Appendices I & II.

17

All passages from the TCTL in French come from La-motte's masterful translation of the Sāstra (see bibliography for complete citation). The English passages were translated by the author.



法性生身)<sup>18</sup> This leaves much of Hui-yūan's questioning focusing on the problem that while nirvāna may be achieved by effort and practice, it is not produced by them and exists independently of them. The dharmabody, however, while sharing the same nature as nirvāna, is also the result of sucavita, excellent practice. This only makes sense if one is talking about two different dharmabodies which are two entirely different things. Much of the confusion, then, is linguistic. "Dharmabody" is being used for too many different things (see Appendix I). Kumārajīva can hardly be faulted for this, for in his answers he is only reflecting the contemporary state of thought on the subject.

The other major linguistic problem unfortunately reinforces the confusion about the status of the various dharmabodies, for it is found in the term which is used to describe the manifestations of both the dharmabody Buddhas and the dharmabody Bodhisattvas, 變化, transformation. One is tempted to resolve the matter by translating it instead as "emanation", which is clearly what Kumārajīva means by it. However, that is not the root meaning of the word in Chinese, and although it is serving as a translation of "nirmāna", which

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18

I have found one reference each in the TCTL to the Bodhisattva and the 清淨法身 Bodhisattva: "Moreover, as when Buddhas of the ten directions preach the Dharma, they praise all excellently practicing (妙行) Bodhisattvas" (614c-615a); "The third type (of Bodhisattva) is the pure dharmabody Bodhisattva (清淨法身) who obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas and dwells in the six supernatural powers" (317b). These terms appear to be used more as adjectives than as descriptions of a process.

Edgerton defines as "a magical creation", and expands, "a magical creation is what has no material basis"<sup>19</sup>, the term in the text comes out meaning "transformation", which in Chinese, as in English, implies an existing something which is transformed. While Kumārajīva tries to get across the idea that there is no material basis for the various emanations of the dharmabody Buddha, his point is obscured by the fact that the dharmabody Bodhisattvas actually do transform from the material basis of residual karmic elements and the process is described by the same term, 變化. So, from the outset it would seem that by taking 變化 as an equivalent for nirmāna, Kumārajīva is trying to tell Hui-yūan one thing and ending up saying quite another and seriously confusing the distinction between the dharmabody of the Buddha and the dharmabody of the Bodhisattva.

In the confusion over the term 變化, the difference in interests between Kumārajīva and Hui-yūan is already apparent. Hui-yūan, from his first question in which he wants to know the relationship between the Buddha's dharmabody and the four elements and five sense organs, is concerned with what the dharmabody is and what it is made of. This concern is precisely the opposite of Kumārajīva's and the TCTL's, for while Hui-yūan wants to know what it is about the dharmabody itself that can be seen, particularly given its equation with the unperceivability of nirvāna, Kumārajīva, taking his stand

on the Sāstra, is considering instead why beings can and cannot see the dharmabody ("les êtres dont la pensée est impure ne le voient pas", TCTL 126b, Lamotte I, 546).

The difference between their starting points, between Hui-yüan's ontology and Kumārajīva's epistemology can most clearly be seen in the 13th exchange, for there Hui-yüan specifically asks about the ontological status of dharmanature:

I would also like to ask, the dharmanature endures eternally - is it non-existent or existent?

In spite of Kumārajīva's disapproval of ontological topics, which usually call forth a charge of prapañca, what Hui-yüan is getting at is extremely important, for without knowing what does and does not exist it is nearly impossible to make any statements about how things are causally connected, or, as Hui-yüan says:

Considering the limit of existence and non-existence, it is possible to obtain the conditions and causes. (Question 13)

However, Kumārajīva does not seem to agree with this, for the wording of his answer gives some indication that he feels he is being forced into a corner. He has presented the orthodox position and does not see what more could be required of him.

In part this might be because Kumārajīva did not entirely realize what the question was, for Hui-yüan's interest in the three concepts of Thusness, Dharmanature and the Reality Limit may well have come from his teacher Tao-an. Tao-an was known to have addressed these issues in his bi-yearly

lectures on the Fang-kuang Ching, and in a preface to the same work the three are fit together to form the Perfection of Wisdom.<sup>20</sup> There are, however, textual problems, for while the Fang-kuang Ching does indeed discuss Thusness, Dharma-nature and the Reality-Limit, in Tao-an's extant work on the subject<sup>21</sup> the triad instead is Thusness, the Dharmabody and the Reality-Limit (translated by Hurvitz and Link as "Pinnacle of Reality"). Hurvitz and Link give two notes on the confusion:

The "Dharma-Body renders fa shen 法身, which in the context appears somehow to have become confused or identified, with fa hsing 法性, the standard equivalent of dharmatā. Given that substitution, the trio is to be found in the Fang Kuang, as may be seen below. Furthermore, Hui-yūan, Tao-an's one-time pupil, was quite exercised over the same question, as can be seen in his correspondence with Kumārajīva . . . Hui-yūan too has fa hsing, not fa shen. (1974:444n.89)

After rethinking the matter:

On second thought, fa shen is almost certainly not a copyist's error for fa hsing, since Tao-an is clearly thinking in terms of a "body". The fact remains, however, that the original reads dharmashitita, where "body" is not involved. There is a confusion here, one that we cannot account for. (1974:449n. 152)

Zürcher accepts the reading fa shen and considers this pre-

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Zürcher, Conquest, p. 193; Leon Hurvitz & Arther Link, "Three Prajñāpāramitā Prefaces of Tao-an" (Mélanges de Sinologie offerts à M. Paul Demiéville II, Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1974), pp. 424-425; 429.

21

Translated by Hurvitz and Link, "Three Prefaces", pp. 423-442.

face one of the earliest examples of Chinese speculation on the dharmakāya.<sup>22</sup> Hui-yūan shows a tendency throughout the letters to identify dharmakāya and dharmatā, a matter which he attempts to get Kumārajīva to address, so the confusion here may well go beyond textual problems.

But even without resolving the matter of exact terminology, it is clear that Hui-yūan had a background in these ideas which Kumārajīva did not share. Perhaps one of the reasons Kumārajīva never spoke to this matter of the confusion between the dharmanature and the dharmabody is because he did not realize that it was there. It is very unlikely that he had studied any of the native Chinese speculation on Buddhism (although he was known to have admired Tao-an<sup>23</sup>) and by taking the TCTL as his source for the relationship between these terms he may well have missed the entire issue that Hui-yūan was trying to raise.

In the TCTL there is a different triad of concepts which fit together to describe reality - Tathatā, Dharmadhātu, and Bhūtakoti - all of which are said to be synonymous with dharmatā (TCTL 297c). It, in turn, is the characteristic of reality of all of them (TCTL 297c). However, the true nature

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Congest, p. 193.

23

"Kumārajīva also had heard from afar of An's mode of life, and he said of him, 'He is the Sage of the East'! Though always at a distance from him he nevertheless revered him." Arther Link, "Biography of Shih Tao-an", (T'oung Pao, Vol. XLVI, 1-2, 1958), p. 40.

of dharma, in spite of having attributes given to it, in the end cannot be discussed. (TCTL 170b)

Kumārajīva would second that sentiment, and his own very tidy relating of the three terms seems to be a variation on a similiar scheme found in the TCTL:

Ayant obtenu cette Tathatā des dharma, on pénètre dans le Dharmadhātu, on détruit toutes les opinions (vipāśyanā) et on concoit plus d'autres croyances, car "Telle est son essence (prakṛtir asyaisā)" . . . Enfin bien pénéter (suprativich-) le Dharmadhātu, c'est Bhūkoṭi.  
(TCTL 298a, Lamotte V, 2190)

It is clear in this that the interests of Kumārajīva and the TCTL are not the same as those of Tao-an and Hui-yūan, and it may almost be said that in spite of the similarity of vocabulary, they are not addressing the same questions.

One important point of difference between the Master of Lu Shan and the Purohita of Ch'angan was that while Hui-yūan had a religious community to run comprised of both clerics and laity, it was Kumārajīva's function at the capitol to serve as the final arbitrator on all points of Buddhist doctrine. Hui-yūan had not only the practical concerns of the monastery to deal with, but also the responsibility of both making the Buddhist way available to interested seekers and of defending it against uninformed, but well-armed worldliness.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Kumārajīva's responsibilities were to translate and to be knowledgeable in the Buddhist texts. His freedom from all

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For Hui-yūan's dealings with the authorities of the time see Zürcher, Conquest, pp. 211-217; 231-239. Without ever leaving his mountain he was an apt defender of the faith.

practical concerns<sup>25</sup> gave him the liberty for rarified speculation. In addition, his position allowed him no intellectual equal, a situation which he himself lamented.<sup>26</sup> Because Kumārajīva was too admired to be fallible, any questioning of him could never have the tone of a real debate. He was never in Hui-yūan's position of having to defend the faith. It is these things, rather than any postulated differences in the Chinese and Indian characters, which lead to the division between Hui-yūan's practical concerns and Kumārajīva's speculations.

The most blatant example of this difference in concerns occurs in the third letter when Hui-yūan refers to the didactic purpose of the 32 marks. The main thrust of the question is: If these marks are on the dharmabody and only the tenth stage Bodhisattvas can see them,<sup>27</sup> then what purpose do the

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A state which he seems to have enjoyed from the age of seven, when he entered monastic life. For most of his adult life he was kept wonder at the court of kings - first in the royally established New Monastery in Kuchā, then at the court of the Later Liang and finally at Ch'angan.

26

"Kumārajīva loved the Mahāyāna and wished to propagate it. He used to say: 'If I should write and compose an Abhidharma of the Mahāyāna it would be better than that of Kātyāyanīputra. Now, in the country of Ch'in, the well-learned are scarce, here I am a bird with clipped wings. No use discussing anything.' So he became dolefully resigned to his lot." Liebenthal, Chao Lun, p. 3. (Translated from Kumārajīva's biography.)

27

The TCTL agrees that it is the tenth stage Bodhisattvas who benefit from the Buddha's dharmabody: "De même cette Loi prêchée par le Buddha (au vrai corps) ou au corps d'élément fondamental (dharmadhātutakāya), exception faite pour les Bodhisattva de la dixième terre, ne peut être supportée par les adeptes des trois Véhicules; seules les Bodhisattva de la dixième terre, dont les moyens salvifiques (upaya) et la force du savoir (jñāna-bala) sont inconcevables (acintya), peuvent entendre et accepter cette Loi." (TCTL 278b, Lamotte IV, 1940-1941)

marks serve? The point Hui-yūan is making about the teacher-<sup>28</sup>lessness of the tenth stage is not so much a statement about the condition of these Bodhisattvas, but a very practical question about how the dharmabody and its marvelous attributes can aid the progress of other beings.

Kumārajīva misses this point altogether. While Hui-yūan is trying to find out the purpose of the special nature of the Buddha's body in helping the multitude of beings on their road to salvation, Kumārajīva dives right by this question and plunges into a discussion of the actual status of the tenth stage Bodhisattva in relation to still being taught by the Buddhas. This, while it is a moot point, is not very applicable to the salvation of the great multitude of beings. Kumārajīva is backed by the TCTL in his statements, for that work describes the necessity of the various practices of the tenth stage and says that "although he is a great Bodhisattva, in regard to the Buddhas, he is still small" (340c).

Another division between the two men in terms of their enjoyment of speculation comes in Hui-yūan's desire for universality in the process of rebirth as opposed to Kumārajīva's detailed typology of the kinds of bonds and karma involved in the rebirths of the various types of dharmabody Bodhisattvas.

When, in the second question, Hui-yūan wants to know what is meant by the body produced by wonderful practice, what seems to be most bothering him is how rebirth occurs and



whether or not it is the same for everyone. If it <sup>is</sup> not the same then problems ensue. Karma, and hence what ordinary people do to become better, to become more like the Buddha, becomes meaningless. The dharmabody Bodhisattva, because he is susceptible to a special kind of rebirth, is cut off from the human realm.

Neither of these problems seem to bother Kumārajīva. His answers generally present the (often contradictory) theories of the various schools with quotations from the sūtras and śāstras which can support almost any viewpoint. While this does provide information for the modern scholar which might otherwise be hard to come by, it is not the most straightforward way of answering questions of religious urgency. Another problem with Kumārajīva's marshalling of scriptural reference is that the examples found there are often those of one set of great beings preaching to another set of great beings, all quite beyond human comprehension. Kumārajīva adds to this his own predilection for never discussing a Buddhist being lower than the rank of a dharmabody Bodhisattva with five supernatural powers. After several pages of such abstruse speculation, when Kumārajīva finally says that the "dharmabody Bodhisattva profits and benefits the multitude of beings" (answer 3), one would like a concrete example of how.

Closely related to this problem of universality is the matter of the connection between the dharmabody and the ordinary people, or the link between the transcendental and

the mundane realms. As Nagao says in his discussion of the drawbacks of the two body system:

Later on . . . this abstract dharmakāya must have gained universal reality - the reality that claimed equal realness with the corporal body. At this stage, however, there was nothing that could reconcile the two realities of dharmakāya and rūpakāya. (1973:38)

That Hui-yūan recognized this problem and was troubled by it is apparent from his first question - if the dharmabody can be seen and heard then it must be of the world, i.e., made of the four elements and five sense organs. But if this is so, then how can it be the same as nirvāna? In his attempts throughout the correspondence to solve this problem Kumārajīva highlights what is not necessarily a misunderstanding between the two men, but what is a major difference between them. Hui-yūan wants to connect everything in a great chain of being beginning with the four elements and then the five sense organs and up to the supernatural powers and so on (question 7). Kumārajīva, in his answer, starts from exactly the opposite end of the scale and after defining what characterizes the dharmabody - the mark of solitary extinguishing, or that essence which it shares with nirvāna - he then goes on to sketch out a system in which it is this dharma mark which gives everything reality, from the minute and fine elements of the dharmabody Bodhisattva down to the coarse four elements and five sense organs of the ordinary people (answer 7).

In doing this Kumārajīva is presenting the view of

the TCTL which says:

Des l'origine les Dharma sont non-nés (anutpanna), non-détruits (aniruddha), pareils au Nirvana (nirvānasama) et tous leurs caractères sont du même genre: c'est la Vrai caractère des Dharma. (190b, Lamotte II, 1059-60)

Later on the TCTL postulates an underlying sameness of all things which allows for their equation:

the characteristic of reality of all dharmas consequently is the Buddha. Why? Obtaining this characteristic of reality of all dharmas is called obtaining Buddhahood. (747a)

The same passage goes on to equate the Buddha, nirvāna, dharmatā and the reality limit, all of them being without coming and without going, not arising and not extinguishing.

In the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang Hui-yüan shows no sign of accepting this Mādhyamika position. Why, it is hard to say. Since he seems to prefer to have things made of the four elements and five sense organs rather than of emptiness, perhaps it is because he remained immersed in his Abhidharmic studies. Certainly there are other examples in the correspondence of the Abhidharma proving a stumbling block to Hui-yüan's understanding of the dharmabody. This can be seen in the fifth exchange when Hui-yüan specifically asks whether the 32 marks are part of the dharmakāya or of the transformation body.

The issue centers around the production of the marks, for as we know from the TCTL they are produced by specific acts, and these acts are, as Hui-yüan notes, mental:

Question.- Les actes producteurs des trente-deux marques sont-ils des actes corporels (kāyakarman), vocaux (vākkarman) ou mentaux (manaskarman)?

Reponse.- Ce sont des acts mentaux et non pas corporels ou vocaux. Pourquoi? Parce que l'acte mental est seul profitable. (87a, Lamotte I, 249)

As for the answer to the rest of Hui-yüan's question:

Question.- En quel endroit les actes producteurs des trente-deux marques sont-ils accomplis?  
 Reponse.- Dans le monde du désir (kāmadhātu) et non pas dans le monde material (rūpadhātu) ni dans le monde immaterial (arūpyadhātu). Parmi les cinq destinées (gati) du monde du désir, ils sont accomplis dans la destinée humaine (manusyagati). Parmi les quatre continents (caturdvīpaka), ils sont accomplis étant dans le Jambudvīpa. Le Bodhisattva les accomplit étant un male (puman) et non pas un femme. Il les accomplit à l'époque ou apparaissent des Buddha; non pas à une époque vide de Buddha. Il les accomplit en vue de l'état de Buddha et non pas dans un autre but. (87a, Lamotte, I, 249)

This is all quite specific and probably a source of confusion, for while the TCTL gives the Abhidharma position, it does so in order to refute it with the Mādhyamika view. However, the Abhidharma was a system which Hui-yüan had learned well, and a system in which the dharmabody plays no great role. If the concept of the dharmabody is injected into that which was just described by the TCTL it throws the whole system into chaos. In his response, Kumārajīva relies heavily on the section of the TCTL just following that given above, which gives the Mahāyāna response to the Abhidharma. Because of the Mahāyāna emphasis on the dharmabody, the human body of the Buddha is given a very minor role, and accomplishments of that body, like the 32 marks, are played down. What Hui-yüan seems to be trying to do is to take what he knows about the body with the marks from the Abhidharma and transfer that to the dharmabody of the Mahāyāna. In doing this he quite correctly sees

that the marks are the result of karmic practice, but then does not follow the idea to the end by concluding that for that very reason the marks are not going to be important to the Mahayanist.

As a response Kumārajīva presents the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna views of the dharmakāya, which leads into their two respective views of the 32 marks. Kumārajīva is quite clear about the fact that it is the Bodhisattva's body of incarnation which has the 32 marks, and because of that, while they are a good thing, not all that much importance is attached to them. This is further emphasized by the story of Nanda<sup>29</sup>, which is also told in the TCTL as proof that "Ces marques sont donc faciles à obtenir" (92a, Lamotte I, 288) and consequently should not be taken very seriously, even though, as Kumārajīva points out, without their completion one cannot be called a Buddha. So, although the marks are an Abhidharmist idea and are conditioned dharmas, they do serve a purpose in inspiring people to go on the Buddhist path and even provide a concrete manner of practice. Therefore, one both wants to fulfill the marks of the body in order to aid beings and aids beings in the process of obtaining the body so marked.

In the eighth letter Hui-yūan again tries to apply Abhidharmic notions (the 34 minds, 9 without hindrances, 9 liberations, etc.) to the dharmabody and again there is the

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<sup>29</sup>

Nanda acquired 30 of the marks (TCTL 92a).

resulting mismatch. In his answer, Kumārajīva finds a way of working these things into the Mahāyāna scheme, but there is a feeling that the two are being forced together. It is clear from these letters that the problem is not simply Hui-yūan's Abhidharmic background, but that he and Kumārajīva do not have the same attitude toward the Buddhist scriptures.

There is no reason to doubt that both recognized first the sūtras and then the śāstras as holy and authoritative,<sup>30</sup> but by virtue of how each came to Buddhism they viewed the sacred writings differently. During Hui-yūan's life the Chinese were only beginning to be aware that many of the Buddhist writings had a polemical and exclusivist nature, and so he was still trying to view all of the sūtras as being of equal authority. However, in the eighth letter there are signs that Hui-yūan is breaking out of this attitude, for in his statements about the story of the three animals he gives the impression that, being uncertain about where the tale fits into the tradition (Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna), he is then free to question it. As for his statement about the lack of classification of original meaning, it reminds one of Tao-an's interests:

His orderly style attained depth and richness, and he marvelously realized the profound purport (of the sacred texts). Once the sequence

There is an interesting thought at the end of Kumārajīva's eighth answer, that if only they had more sūtras, then all questions could be properly looked into and answered. The overwhelming number of texts is not seen as a cause of confusion, but rather as a means out of it.

of items was in proper order, the (seemingly contradictory) principles of the texts could be comprehended 會通. That we are able to understand clearly the concepts of the sūtras: this, in fact, began from Tao-an. (Link 1958:18)

Interest in this sort of matter also suggests that the p'ian chiao developed later would have solved many of the problems in these letters.

Kumārajīva, being at home in the way that the scriptures were viewed by the various Indian schools, practices an unspoken, and perhaps unconscious, ordering of the texts. 31 As we have seen, he is fairly explicit about this when dealing with the Abhidharma, but in his third reply there is a more subtle example of the harmonization of the scriptures when he wants to explain away a sūtra saying that tenth stage Bodhisattvas ought to be known as Buddhas. If he had only set forth his own presuppositions, it would have made his treatment of the scriptures much easier for Hui-yūan to understand.

In the casualness with which Kumārajīva treats Buddha-vacanam can be recognized both the ease and the curious blindness of one who grew up in a religion and was too familiar

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In light of Kumārajīva's attitude, there is an interesting statement in James Barr's book Fundamentalism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978) on p. 65: "Fundamentalists, though many of them may not admit it, accept in practice a certain grading of the biblical materials, so that, to repeat our example, St. John's gospel has a much more central function than Ecclesiastes. They do not willingly concede that a similar grading can be carried out by others." In other words, while Kumārajīva was trying to persuade Hui-yūan to adopt his standard Mādhyamika ordering of the sūtras, any independent classification of the sūtras by Hui-yūan or any other Chinese master would have been frowned on by the Indian dharmamasters.

with it to notice what, to an outsider's eye, would be logical inconsistencies. After summarizing in the second letter the major śāstric ideas about the klesās of the dharmabody Bodhisattvas, he simply mentions that all of this is based on the Buddha's words and then goes into his own speculations. But his position on Buddhavacam in the first letter is even harder for Hui-yūan to tolerate, for there he quotes the Lotus Sūtra's prediction of the Arhats to Buddhahood and then a sūtra which contradicts this and finishes by saying:

These two sūtras both came out of the Buddha's mouth; how can they not be believed?

This is a bit too much for Hui-yūan, for the Lotus Sūtra is the fish in the milk for him throughout the correspondence. Since he came to Buddhism after he had reached the age of reason, he was not blind to its logical inconsistencies and required of Kumārajīva a more serious attempt to solve the textual contradictions in the faith. After struggling with the unsolvable problems presented by the Lotus, finally this outburst is wrung from Hui-yūan:

Although it is said that we (must) have faith, yet understanding must result from rational principles 理. If these principles are not yet understood, how can one have faith?

(Question 10, Zürcher, Conquest, p. 228)

This is the cry of a religious dilemma. Hui-yūan was not asking questions as a matter of academic interest nor out of a desire to clarify philosophical issues, but because he needed to know. What he finally got out of this correspondence we cannot say. It is true that there were misunder-



standings between him and Kumārajīva, which were due in part to his inability to see the difference between the Abhidharma and the Mādhyamika, and Kumārajīva's failure to realize the need for explicitly harmonizing the scriptures, but which were even more the result of their respective positions within the religion and because the concept they were discussing was in a state of semantic flux. But it is equally true that beyond any misunderstanding, there stand revealed two men who deserve the respect of later readers - Kumārajīva for his erudition and Hui-yüan for his determination to know and understand.

## CONCLUSION

While in the end the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang leaves the reader with the unsatisfying feeling that many of the issues in it have gone unresolved, it is possible to look beyond the work itself and see the fruition of its ideas outside the realm of the text.

In the first chapter several commentators were mentioned who wrote about Hui-yüan's seeming inability to comprehend or conform to orthodox Mahāyāna śāstric Buddhism. While in the examination of his questions we have found him occasionally baffled and certainly not a candidate for easy conformism, if we look beyond the correspondence and into Hui-yüan's religious practices, then we find that bold stroke of Buddhological innovation which was lacking in the text. Hui-yüan's devotional approach to the Buddha, his practices of visualization and icon worship coupled with the cult of Amitābha, provide the link between the earthly and transcendental realms which he was seeking to have verbally explained in his questions. In Hui-yüan's part of the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang one can see him asking for the yet undeveloped concept of the reward-body. In his religious life, he can be seen to be developing it. One can only admire the profundity of the Buddhism of a man who could so see what was needed in his own religious life and the religious life of his community and

put it into practice before it was intellectually developed.

As yet there has been no full length monograph in a Western language devoted to Hui-yüan, so there has been little Western study of the relationship of his thought and practice. One hopes to see more energy directed toward this remarkable man.

Much less emerges of Kumārajīva in the correspondence, as he faithfully reflects the position of the Ta-chih-tu lun.<sup>1</sup> However, this makes the Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang very valuable as an introduction to the sāstra. Studying the workings of the klesas and subtle elements of the dharmabody Bodhisattva in Kumārajīva's answers would provide both a summary of and an entry point to the topic in the Ta-chih-tu lun.

The meaning of the concept of dharmakāya remains unresolved. It had no fixed definition at the time of the letters and perhaps for that very reason served as a good touchstone for revealing the attitudes of Hui-yüan and Kumārajīva. Ultimately it is a religious mystery and perhaps the most appropriate attitude toward it is that voiced by Melanchthon on his deathbed toward an analagous concept in the West:

You will come to the light, you will see God,  
you will know his Son, you will discern the  
wonderful secrets which in this life you could  
not understand, namely, why we were created thus  
and not otherwise, and wherein consists the unity  
of the two natures in Christ. /1/

Thus Hui-yüan in the Western Paradise understands dharmakāya.  
The rest of us practice prapañca.

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Bernhard Lohse, A Short History of Christian Doctrine,  
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 90.

Appendix I: Definitions of dharmabody given by Kumārajīva

- General: the good accomplishments without outflows, the 37 limbs of enlightenment, 10 powers of a Buddha, 4 grounds of fearlessness, and 18 dharmas particular to a Buddha (Hīnayāna definition, answers 2, 5, 18).
- the principles expressed in the Tripitaka (Hīnayāna definition, answers 2, 5, 18).
- all dharmas are non-arising and non-extinguishing, the way of words is cut off, the place of mind and practice is terminated, it is without outflows and unconditioned, limitless and boundless like nirvāna, it is all meritorious accomplishments without outflows and all sūtra dharmas (Mahāyāna definition, answer 2).
- dharmatā (answer 4).
- embodiment of the mark of solitary extinguishing (answer 7).
- Buddha: same as transformation (answer 1).
- the body produced by the excellently practicing dharmanature (answer 1).
- Buddha born from dharmanature (answer 1).
- Bodhisattva: the body of the Bodhisattva who has obtained the patience of non-production, also called the body produced from dharmanature (answers 2, 5).
- the body of the Bodhisattva with 5 supernatural powers (answer 2).
- the body of the Bodhisattva with 6 supernatural powers (answers 2, 4).
- the body of the Bodhisattva of the 10th stage who has obtained the sūrangama samādhi.

Appendix II: A sampling of Buddha bodies in the Ta-chih-tu lun

Mundane		Absolute
body in conformity with the world 隨世間身	303b	body born from the dharma- nature 法性生身
birth body of the Buddha 生身佛	310b	"
the Buddha which manifests and transforms in ac- cordance with the misery of beings 隨象生優劣現化佛	313b	the Buddha whose body is born from the dharma- nature 法性生身佛
body born from a mother and father 父母生身	121c	dharmanature body 法性身
transformation body 化身	278a	real body 真身 dharmanature body Buddha 法性身佛 dharmabody Buddha 法身佛
birth body Buddha 生身佛	122a	dharmanature body Buddha 法性身佛
birth body 生身	59b, 77c, 137a, 173c, 274a, 683a	dharmabody 法身
Buddha body 佛身	236a	dharmabody
form body 色身	477c, 658a-b, 747a	dharmabody
fleshly body 肉身	502a	dharmabody

Appendix III: A sampling of Bodhisattva bodies in the Ta-chih-tu-lun

Mundane	1 Transitional
fleshly body 肉身	251a body born from dharmanature 法性生身
transformation 變化 261c, 264b	dharmanature body 法性身
birth body 生身 262a	dharmabody 法身
fleshly body of birth and death 263a, 580a 生死肉身	dharmabody
body of limitless transformation 602a 無量變化身	dharmabody
transformation body 273b 變化身	body resembling that of the Buddha 身體似佛
body of birth and death 682a 生死身	body produced from the dharmanature 法性生身
Bodhisattva's fleshly body of birth & death 349c 菩薩生死肉身	dharmanature's supernatural powers' dharmabody 法性神通法身
karmic fleshly body 106b 結業肉身	dharmabody's independence 法身自在
karmic birth body 146a 結業生身	dharmabody 法身
fleshly body 肉身 317b	dharmabody
body 身 570a	dharmabody

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<sup>1</sup>  
Until the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha, he does not have an absolute body. After his enlightenment he obtains a real body 眞身 or true Buddha body

## A Note on the Translation

The following translation was made from the Japanese critical edition of the complete works of Hui-yüan, Studies on Hui-yüan: Texts and Translations (Eon Kenkyū). In the main, I have followed the readings proposed in that work - variant readings were suggested by their notes.

My aim in translating was to reproduce as closely as possible the style and difficulties of the Chinese text. Because of this, smoothness and literary style have been sacrificed to literalness and a general adherence to the syntax of the original. This lack of elegance was necessitated by two things: the first is my own timidity and lack of skill as a beginning translator; and the second, more to the point, is the nature of the question being asked by this thesis. If we are trying to find out whether or not two correspondents understood each other, one of the first things we need to know is whether or not the correspondence itself is understandable. This last issue can be obscured by a smooth translation which renders what we think was meant or what should have been said, instead of what actually was said, which, on occasion, makes very little sense.

A related issue is the use of Sanskrit terminology. Translating Chinese terms back into the Sanskrit from which it is assumed they were taken can lead to both fallacious equivalencies and to a false view of what the Chinese did and did not understand about the texts they were reading. Since the aim of this translation is not to smooth over the difficulties

of the original text, three categories for dealing with Sanskrit terms have been established:

1. Transliteration. When Kumārajīva or Hui-yūan transliterate a term the Sanskrit original is used in the translation.

2. Equivalent terms. These are set Chinese words which are used to represent a Sanskrit term, regardless of the meaning of the original Chinese term. Examples of this are 劫 for kalpa, 業 for karma, and, most importantly, 法 for dharma. The Sanskrit word is used in the translation, although this does not do justice to the possibilities for confusion in the Chinese. As Max Mueller wrote in his introduction to the Vajracchedika Sūtra:

If we were always to translate dharma by law, it seems to me that the whole drift of our treatise would become unintelligible. /1/

which is precisely the problem faced by the Chinese. When an equivalent term is mixed with a Chinese term in one word I have preserved the mixture in English - hence dharmabody, dharmanature and so on. These hybrids, awkward as they are in English, give the reader some notion of the flavor of the Chinese. If purist of English object to such formations, consider how the classically trained Chinese scholars must have felt about the wording of the Buddhist texts.

3. Translation. When a technical term is transla-

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Suzuki, Outlines, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> This assumes that there is a distinction between 字 and 詞.



ted into Chinese. I have followed the literal meaning of the Chinese words, rather than the sense of the Sanskrit original, in rendering it into English. At the first occurrence of the term, the Sanskrit is given in a footnote. An exception to this is 學問, which I have rendered "Disciple".

## Question 1: The Real Dharmabody

Hui-yüan asks: The Buddha, in the dharmabody, preaches the sūtras for the Bodhisattvas, and so the dharmabody Bodhisattvas are able to see it. If this is so, then (the dharmabody) has the four elements and the five sense organs. If this is the case, then what difference is there between it and the form body<sup>1</sup> that it is called the dharmabody? A sūtra says:

The dharmabody is without coming and without going, without arising or extinction, the same as nirvāna.

Please explain how it can be seen and also preach the sūtras.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Rūpakāya.

## Answer 1: The Real Dharmabody

Kumārajīva replies: The Buddha's dharmabody is the same as transformation<sup>1</sup>. Transformation is without the four elements and the five sense organs. Why is this? The dharma of the production of form is not separate from the four elements. Now, if there is a thing having smell, it must have four dharmas - form, smell, taste and touch. If there is a thing having taste it must have three dharmas - form, taste and touch. If there is a thing having form, it must have two dharmas - it has form and it has touch. If there is a thing having touch, it must have one dharma and that is accordingly the dharma of touch. As for the rest, it may either have them or not. Thus the earth must have form, smell, taste and touch. Water has form, taste and touch. If water has smell, then it is the smell of earth. How do we know this? If a genuine gold vessel<sup>1</sup> is used to catch rain from heaven, then it will be without smell. Fire must have touch; if it has smell, then this is the smell of wood. How do we know this? If fire comes out from a white stone, then it is without smell. Wind only has touch and is without form. If there is a thing with no form, then it is something different from the affair at hand. Thus the image in a mirror and the moon in water are seen as though they had form, but are without touch, etc. and consequently have no form. Transformation is also like this. The dharmabody is also thus.

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<sup>1</sup>  
nirmāna.

Again, in the sūtras speaking about the dharmabody, some say that it is the body which is transformed by the Buddha and others say that the excellently practicing<sup>2</sup> dharma nature<sup>3</sup> produces the body. The body that is produced by the excellently practicing dharma nature is the true dharmabody, like the Bodhisattva of non-production who sheds his fleshly body and thus obtains a body of pure practice.

Moreover, as the Lotus Sūtra says, the Arhats receive a prediction<sup>4</sup> to Buddhahood. A sūtra also says that this is the final body of the Arhats. These two sūtras both came out of the Buddha's mouth; how can they not be believed? It is merely because the Arhats no longer receive karmic form; the saying only refers to their future. Like the dharmabody Bodhisattvas, because they are born from pure practice, it is said that they will become Buddhas. Thus in all matters having to do with the Buddha, although all are true, yet there are differences - some are real and some illusory<sup>5</sup>. The true dharmabody completely fills the universe and dharma-realm in the ten directions; its light fully illuminates limitless lands; the sound of the Dharma being preached constantly and completely covers numberless countries in the ten directions. The multitude of Bodhisattvas who have fully completed the tenth stage are able to hear the

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<sup>2</sup> sucavita.

<sup>4</sup> vyākaraṇa.

<sup>3</sup> Omitting 身.

<sup>5</sup> 偽.

Dharma. From the skillful transformation of this Buddha's body, there are always limitless and boundless transformation Buddhas filling the ten directions and manifesting (their) forms in accordance with the different degrees of the multitude of beings. In illumination and image there are different subtle and coarse forms. Even the ninth stage Bodhisattvas are still not able to see the Thus Come One's<sup>6</sup> real body. How much less are those from the vaiivartika down to the multitude of beings able to do so! Why is this? The dharmabody of the Buddha transcends the triple world, not relying on the practice of body, speech or mind. Limitless and without outflows, it is that which is completed by the original practice of all pure accomplishments and virtuous roots, and like nirvāna is able to long endure. The real dharmabody is like the sun itself, the body which is transformed from it is the same as the sun's rays. As it says in the Sūramgama-samādhi-nirdeśa Sūtra, Deng Ming Wang Buddha, who lived seven hundred asaṅkhyeya kalpas was identical with this Śākyamuni. This and that were the same body and there was no difference. If there is one Buddha, then it must exist coming from that. The Buddha which is transformed by the Buddha born from the dharmanature is also like this. If one says that the dharmabody is without coming and without going,<sup>6</sup> this means that the dharmabody's Characteristic of Reality

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<sup>6</sup>  
Zürcher (Conquest, p.404, n.17) gives the following note on this term; "實相", bhūtalakṣana(?), satyalakṣana(?), thus rendered by Et. Lamotte (Traité, passim), but I have been

is identical with nirvāṇa, unconditioned and uncreated .

Moreover, it is said that although the dharmabody is long enduring, it has dharmas of production and in the end returns to non-being; its characteristic is emptiness and quiescence. If this is the case, then however, the dharmabody's Characteristic of Reality is without coming and without going. Thus, although it is said that the dharmabody preaches the sūtras, its characteristic is non-arising and non-extinction; consequently there is no error.

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unable to find proofs of this restitution; it occurs frequently in Kumārajīva's terminology for dharmatā or dharmadhātu (besides 法性), especially in the combination 諸法實相 . "In this work 實相 will be translated literally "Characteristic of Reality".

Letter 1: Hui-yüan concludes

Hui-yüan's understanding and explanation is as follows: the essentials of the recent response had three main points. The first is that the dharmabody's Characteristic of Reality is without coming and without going, identical with nirvāna. The second is that the dharmabody is the same as transformation, without the four elements and five sense organs, a type of thing like the moon in water or an image in a mirror. The third is that the body produced from the dharmanature is the real dharmabody; it is able to long endure in the world and is like the sun. These three are different, but are called under one name - thus it is generally called "dharmabody". And because the ones who preach (about) it had not yet made a careful analysis, they merely kept the term and confused the reality. Therefore I sent the previous enquiry. You, Sire, have set out an orderly gradation with judgment.

Question 2: Again asking about the dharmabody

Hui-yüan asks: As for the dharmabody's Characteristic of Reality being without going and without coming; in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras the Bodhisattva Dharmadgata's answer to Sadaprarudita has already expressed this view <sup>1</sup>. Moreover, as for the dharmabody being the same as transformation and a thing like an image in a mirror, the Vaipulya Sūtras, drawing out this illustration, say: "the sun and moon do not move and their lights and shadows appear in the rivers and lakes." About these two things I have no problems. What I want to ask now is the meaning of the body produced by dharmanature which is accomplished by wonderful practice. In the Vimalakirti "Shun Chüan" Chapter it says that the Thus Come One's body is established from the dharma of transformation. (Your) response which came was similiar to these words. The classification of dharmas which this essay explained, were they those caused by this body produced from the dharmanature or not? If there were previous causes, they must come from them in order to cause effect. I want to ask <sup>2</sup>, are dharmas which cause effect the same as the Characteristic of Reality or not? If that which is caused is the same as the Characteristic of Reality and is not mixed with <sup>3</sup> remaining impurities, then it should not receive birth. I ask you to look into the root of receiving birth, in order to seek out its custom.

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<sup>1</sup> 觀 for 視。

<sup>2</sup> 問 for 聞。

<sup>3</sup> 雜 for 離。



From the ordinary people to the Disciples who have obtained the fruit of non-returning<sup>4</sup> and the final body, all are born from the vexations<sup>5</sup>; the bonds and karma are that which is transformed. From the Bodhisattva who, obtaining the patience of dharmas, receives a pure body, up to the one limited to one more birth<sup>6</sup>, and the Mahāsattva<sup>7</sup> who sits under the king of trees and obtains perfect enlightenment<sup>8</sup>, all are born from the vexations and remaining emanations<sup>9</sup>. The original habits and remaining impurities are that which is transformed. From this time on, the principle of birth is completely cut off. Concerning this birth, one ought to treat it as ignorance. If the main idea is clear, then is it not the same as this? If it is the same as this, then there are problems I want to ask about. When the Bodhisattva who obtains patience throws off the bonds and karma and receives a body born from the dharmanature - by means of what principle does he nevertheless obtain rebirth? If it is caused from attachment and the habits of remaining emanations, (then in) the Bodhisattva who has obtained patience, the vexations are already removed, manifested action is cut off, and he is in addition not attached to dharmas - how is there the original habit

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<sup>4</sup> anāgāmin. <sup>5</sup> kleśas, 煩惱. I have translated the term as closely as possible to the literal meaning of the Chinese, although this may occasionally sound odd in context. 煩惱 is an equivalent term for a word, which is, as Edgerton says, "vague and undefined" (p.198a).

<sup>6</sup> ekajāti-pratibadda 補處.

<sup>7</sup> 士 for 土.

<sup>8</sup> sambodhi.

<sup>9</sup> vāsanā 習氣.

of remaining attachment? Supposing that he has this remainder, explain how it obtains arising. And explain receiving a body; is it real birth as birth or non-birth as birth? If it is non-birth as birth ~~as birth~~, then is called real birth - in that case the birth principle ought to be inexhaustable. If it takes birth as birth, then all kinds of things which receive birth should be classified as one with the Way.<sup>10</sup> Even if<sup>11</sup> the dharmabody Bodhisattva is caused to take the Characteristic of Reality as his own standpoint, excellent dharma as good cause to the limit of receiving birth, he must depend on remaining impurities in order to accomplish transformation. One still ought to take up and discuss what the reasons are in it.

Now, that which is not yet understood is namely, if the basis (of receiving rebirth) is already cut off, that form which dwells is not the original vessel, and the remainder of the former habits is without anything from which to obtain arising. How do we know this is so? The vexations and emanations must be produced from the bonds and karma of the final body. Let me explain with an example. If one were with<sup>12</sup> Śāriputra (in) constant dhāraṇī and samādhi and sound and sensuous beauty were all displayed in front (of one), (but) the ear and eye remained unused, then (one would) receive

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<sup>10</sup> This passage is obscure. Note 49 to the text§ gives two possible ways of reading it.

<sup>11</sup> 假 for 就 .

<sup>12</sup> 同 for 問 .

dispassion (by letting it) pass through. As for its use, if this for a moment passes the nose and eyes of the ordinary person, then harm is done to the great work, the virtuous is lost and thoughts are dispersed.<sup>13</sup> Why is this so? Because the basis is not yet cut off, there are (still) objects of the ears and eyes. If one reaches the point of forgetfulness of objects, there is no longer use - how much more the cutting off of the five organs of sense!<sup>14</sup> These vexations and remaining emanations must come from the effort of the bonds and karma of the five sense organs. Even if the nature of compassion and mercy transforms in regard to receiving the habits of the emanations, gives rise to the root of independent supernatural power and does not depend on the sense organs, since the four elements are already cut off, how can that which comes together have this form? Outside of yin and yang,<sup>15</sup> how can there be movement and the accomplishment of transformation? If this is not possible, then the Way is impoverished, fortune is exhausted, and the principle is unknowable. In the example of water and the mirror, there is cause and so there is an image. From where is the true dharmanature produced?<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> From the reference to Śāriputra on, the rendering is entirely problematical.

<sup>14</sup> 卽 for 既.

<sup>15</sup> Zürcher cites this as Hui-yüan's only use of a Chinese technical term (Conquest, p.12).

<sup>16</sup> The last paragraph is very obscure; the reading here is at best tentative.

Answer 2: About the Dharmabody

Kumārajīva answers: After <sup>1</sup> five hundred years, according to the various Sāstra teachers, each one clinging to that with which he felt comfortable, the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna were classified and distinguished. The Hinayanists take all the good accomplishments without outflow which have been obtained, those so-called 37 limbs of enlightenment and the 10 powers of a Buddha, the four grounds of fearlessness, the 18 dharmas particular to a Buddha, etc. as the dharmabody. Moreover, the principles expressed in the Tripataka are also called the dharmabody. Therefore, in all the countries of India, it is said that although they are without the Buddha's living body, the dharmabody still exists. The Mahayanists say that all dharmas are non-arising and non-extinguished, the way of words is cut off, the place of mind and practice terminated, without outflows and unconditioned, limitless and boundless, like nirvāna - these things are called the dharmabody. And all meritorious <sup>of</sup> accomplishments without outflows and all sūtra dharmas are also called the dharmabody. Why? For this reason, by this the conditions and causes <sup>2</sup> obtain the Characteristic of Reality. Also, in the Mahāyāna Dharma, there is no fixed division between what is the produced body and what is the dharmabody. Why? Because dharmanature in the end is pure. Nonetheless, according to the common distinction,

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<sup>1</sup> Delete one 後 .      <sup>2</sup> hetupratyaya.

when the Bodhisattva obtains the patience of non-produced dharmanature<sup>3</sup> he sheds the physical body and at that time receives the body of the next stage, which is called the dharmabody. Why? It embodies the power of the patience of non-production, (being) without any vexations, and at the same time it does not take hold of the realization of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha Vehicles, and also has not yet become a Buddha. In this interval, the body which is received is called the body produced from dharmanature.

Thus the various śāstra masters, in regard to this dharmabody, have set forth different theories.

Some say that those without any vexations have already obtained nirvāṇa and should not again be born. As the Vikurvāṇa-paripṛcchā Sūtra says, the Buddha told the Bodhisattva Vikurvāṇa-<sup>pari</sup>prcchā, "In the time of the Buddha Dipaṅkara I attained to the four independences and accordingly in that time I had already obtained the Buddha Path and afterwards will enter nirvāṇa - this is my final body." Vikurvāṇa-<sup>pari</sup>prcchā said, "If at that time you obtained nirvāṇa, from then until now, what have you been doing?" The Buddha said, "My self-profit already being finished, I returned for the sake of saving the multitude of beings, purifying my Buddha-land and preparing all spiritual powers and majestic virtues." By means of these conditions and causes it is possible to know that although the body's portion is used up, for a long time

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<sup>3</sup>  
anāpattika-dharma-kṣānti.

the transformation body can be used to save the multitude of beings.

Some say that the matter is not thus. Why? If at that time the true path of nirvāna had been obtained, the body's portion would have been entirely used up, and moreover, there would be no mind and thought. It is said, "How would it be possible to manifest transformation in the five destinies, to save the multitude of beings and to purify the Buddha-land?" It is comparable to there actually being a magician, who then would be able to do magic tricks. If there were no magician, then there would be no magic tricks. Therefore, when the Bodhisattva obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas, even though he is without vexations, he must have the remnants of habit. As when the Arhats complete the Way, even though all outflows are exhausted, they still have remaining emanations. But all Arhats, with reference to being in the entire multitude of beings, are without the thought of great compassion; all have the remnants of habit and still do not receive rebirth. But the Bodhisattva enters deeply into the whole multitude of beings, great compassion penetrates to the marrow of his bones, reaching to the power of his original vow and at the same time testing the reality limit<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly he responds by saving beings; receiving a body in their midst and maintaining life and death by his own decision, and not in accordance with the vexations. When

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<sup>4</sup> bhūtakoti. One would like a negative in this phrase.

he comes to sit in the seat of enlightenment, then the remaining emanations will be exhausted. If that were not the case, then there would not be any difference between the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas.

Others say that there are two types of Bodhisattvas who have obtained the patience of non-produced dharmas. The first type obtains the five supernatural powers and the second obtains the six supernatural powers. As for the one who has obtained the five supernatural powers, (although) the vexations are still active, they do not appear before him. Like a man who has seized an enemy thief and binds him in prison where he is not able to do evil, like this are all Bodhisattvas, who, because the power of the patience of non-production restrains all vexations so that they are never able to rise again, (are able) with only a purified mind to cultivate the meritorious achievement of the six pāramitās. Thus the ordinary people's efforts in the triple world produce vexations, while in the upper two worlds the vexations are not manifested in front (of beings), so that although there are vexations, they are not able to act. The Bodhisattva who dwells in the five supernatural powers manifests every kind of transformation, saves the multitude of beings, and because of the remaining bonds, continues to receive rebirth. If there were no residual bonds, then there would be no returning to birth. It is similar to the rice one is obligated (to pay) and therefore putting by the seeds. Gradually the six pāramitās are completed, the multitude of beings converted, the Buddha-land

purified and then the Bodhisattva sits in the seat of enlightenment, sheds the bonds of the vexations and afterwards becomes a Buddha. As for the Bodhisattva who has completed the six supernatural powers, that which he had to do has already been done, his self profit has already been completed, and like the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, he does not become otherwise. When this body is finished, he no longer receives birth. But because of the power of his original vow and of his great compassion, his body is transformed, its continuity is not cut off, he saves beings and afterwards becomes a Buddha. When salvation has been completed, afterwards he is extinguished, First is the real extinguishing and then, in order to imitate the multitude of beings, he transforms his body and causes (it) again to appear totally extinguished.

According to other Tripataka Śāstra Masters, even though the Bodhisattva obtains the six supernatural powers, he does not exhaust all outflows. Practicing the four infinite states of mind<sup>5</sup>, he was born in the realm of form, and then coming to the final body, he fathered Rahula, bathed in the Nairañjanā, was caused to drift by the great water, but could do nothing about it, the five ascetics forsook me and left. When he sat in the seat of enlightenment, by means of the 16 mindfulnesses he obtained the state of a non-returning Arhat, by means of the 18 mindfulnesses he cut out the bond of the realm of formlessness, by means of the 34 mindfulnesses he destroyed all

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<sup>5</sup>  
catvāri apramāṇāni.



vexations and obtained all knowledge. After he became a Buddha, he endured all the human dharmas of hunger, thirst, cold, heat, old-age, sickness, death, etc., so even though his mind had obtained (liberation), his body still had obstructions. Only in terms of all knowledge, wisdom and great compassion was he superior.

Thus the various Śāstra writers all rely on the Buddha's words in describing the characteristics of a Bodhisattva; in this each gives raise to different points and those who obtain to the heart of the matter are few.

(My) view is that when the Bodhisattva obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas, he sheds the body of birth and death and then falls into the limitless and boundless dharma. Like the Arhat who has already entered into nirvāṇa<sup>6</sup> with no remains, he falls into the limitless and boundless dharma, but this can no longer be explained saying that he is like a god or like a man, or that it is as if he exists, or as if he were extinguished. What is the reason that he is known as a man? Because of conditions and causes that are dissolved of themselves and come to rest. There is no case of a fixed actual extinguishing. But it is called having transformation into a different body. When he has obtained this dharma door, even if at that time he desires extinguishment and liberation, Buddhas in the ten directions say to him, "Son of good family, you have not yet obtained this limitless

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<sup>6</sup> nirapadhi-śeṣa-nirvāṇa.

<sup>7</sup> 邊 for 數.

and boundless (vision?) and see (only for) a short time these Buddha bodies. Also, you have not yet obtained all the meritorious achievements of a Buddha - limitless meditations, knowledge, wisdom, etc. You have only obtained one dharma door. Do not, on account of one dharma door, consider yourself to be completed. You ought to ponder your original vow and have compassion and sympathy for the multitude of beings. Now, for this reason, do not know this sign of solitary extinguishing, (because the multitude of beings?) will fall into the three evil paths and suffer all misery and trouble. That which you have obtained, even though ultimately it is genuine and real dharma, this is not the time to realize it." At that time, when the Bodhisattva has received the Buddhas' instructions, he himself ponders his original vow and returns with great compassion into life and death. This Bodhisattva is named as one not residing in nirvāṇa, not residing in the world, one without a fixed characteristic, who with all sorts of skillful means saves the multitude of beings.

What if there were the question asked, if the Bodhisattva were like this, that without returning to actual birth he appeared to undergo toil and trouble, but without all irritation and calamity, would the accomplishment of merit be little? The answer is that the affair is not thus. If while they are ordinary people, they wait for the results of practice with the mind of attachment, then even if they cultivate difficult

practices, they are entirely without real practices. Now, (the Bodhisattva) obtains the Characteristic of Reality of all dharmas, he <sup>9</sup> completes the enjoyment of nirvāna and enters into birth and death to convert and save the multitude of beings - doing this is extr<sup>o</sup>rdinarily rare.

What if it were again asked, if this person had no frivolous thoughts and also was without the thought of self, how could he regard the accomplishments of merit as <sup>9</sup> valuable? The response is that the Bodhisattva's mind is without this matter, but others who make distinctions say that he has great meritorious accomplishments <sup>10</sup>. It is like the lion, who has great power, but does not (himself) consider it as great - <sup>11</sup> only the other animals consider it as great. Moreover, it is like a spiritual drug, which for the sake of benefitting the multitude of beings, issues into the world and is without discrimination - only the other people know (the Bodhisattva) to have great power. As for (such) people (who have no frivolous thoughts), it is said that (when) the body has the ultimate Characteristic of solitary extinguishing, it is like an illusion, like a dream, like the image in a mirror - the characteristic of production or the characteristic of non-production cannot be taken as a difficulty. Why? This person has fallen into the limit beyond number and should not be sought <sup>12</sup> on the basis of meaningless discourse. But (if) because of

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<sup>9</sup> adding 為 .

<sup>11</sup> 獸 for 狩 .

<sup>10</sup> adding 功德 .

<sup>12</sup> prapañca .

this a person foolishly says that when the Bodhisattva has reached the seat of enlightenment, he exhausts all the bonds and instigators and cuts off that idea (?), he is merely saying that the Bodhisattva only has the bonds and instigators of the remaining emanations.

Thus in the Mahāyāna Sūtras it says that there are two different kinds of karma. One is the bonds and instigators of the passions which binds (beings) to the triple-world. The second is the Characteristic of Reality of dharmas which all Bodhisattvas obtain, which extinguishes the bonds and instigators of the triple world. Being very deep in Buddha's Dharma, he only has the subtle karma of attachment, pride, ignorance, etc., which are received in the dharmabody. As for attachment, if it is deeply displayed (toward) the Buddha's Body and even to all Dharma of the Buddha, then it reaches the Bodhisattva virtue of not sparing one's life. As for ignorance, it is not able to penetrate through into deep dharmas. As for pride, when this deep dharma is obtained, if the mind is not residing in the meditation of the patience of non-production, perhaps he will give forth a boastful thought - I, among the ordinary people, have obtained this unique dharma of solitary extinguishing. These words are a case of residual emanations; these are the dharmabody Bodhisattva's bonds and instigators - because people do not recognize them, they are called "emanations". These residual emanations are not able to cause people to be born in the triple-world, they are only able to cause all Bodhisattvas to endure in the

dharmabody, to convert and save the multitude of beings, to complete the dharmas of a Buddha. It is like these bonds and instigators of the ordinary people; there are some which screen the way of gods and men, the so-called evil views - scorn, anger, avariciousness, envy, etc. - because they vex and injure the multitude of beings. There are some which do not (act as) screens - the so-called views that the self is real<sup>13</sup>, rigid asceticism<sup>14</sup>, attachment, pride, ignorance, etc., because these do not vex and injure the multitude of beings. The bonds and instigators, if they are produced in the triple-world, moreover, are like this. For this reason, the Bodhisattva is both said to have obtained liberation and also is said to have not yet escaped. In regard to the bonds and instigators of the ordinary people, he may be taken as having escaped, while in regard to the bonds and instigators of the Buddha's meritorious achievement, he has not yet escaped. Some say that because he has obtained the six supernatural powers, he has exhausted the bonds and instigators of the triple-world. Others say that because he has (only) obtained the five supernatural powers, he has not yet broken the bonds and instigators of a Bodhisattva.

It is also said that, in addition, he is without the attachment of dharmas, which means not being in the attachment of the dharmas of the ordinary people or of the two vehicles. Why? Because the Bodhisattva issues forth through

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<sup>13</sup> sat-kāya-dr̥ṣṭi.

<sup>14</sup> śīla-vrata-parāmarśa.

the two ranks. Like the srotā-apanna who knows that all dharmas are impermanent, painful and vexing, he accordingly does not produce attachment - if his mind is not residing in the Way, then there will be that to which he is attached. Again, it is like the Arhats, who in regard to everything (else), have nothing to which they are attached, but in regard to being in the Buddha's Dharma, then have attachment. Like Śāriputra and Mahākāśyapa, when they heard the Buddha's very deep knowledge and wisdom and boundless supernatural power, said to one another, "If I had originally known that the Buddha's meritorious achievement was like this, then (even) residing in Hell, it would have been better to have covered the earth with one flank (of my body), and (so remained) until the passing of the kalpa, then to have had my mind not respond and turn away from the Buddha's Way."<sup>15</sup> And again all the Disciples wept copiously and they heard the shaking of the tri-śasra-mahū-śasra-loka-dhātu, and it was said, "How could they lose this great benefit?" Therefore are there two vehicles to complete the Way; although the attached karma of the triple world is cut off, in regard to being in the Dharma of the Buddha's meritorious achievement, the attached mind is not yet cut off. All Bodhisattvas moreover are thus, because of the power of the patience of non-production. They are generally said to be free from attachment to anything, but they think of the Buddha's grace and honor and are deeply attached

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A very tentative rendering.

to the Buddha's Dharma. But they do not merely give rise to meaningless discourse. If, in regard to being in all dharmas, attachment had already been cut off, then they would not return and would not be able to complete the higher path, and this person would not yet have fulfilled what ought to be fulfilled, or yet obtained what ought to be obtained.

(You) say (in your question) that if the basis has already been cut off, the form which dwells is not the original vessāḷ and the remainder of former habits are without that from which to obtain arising. Outside the triple-world, the appearance of form is refined and the remainder of attachment and habit moreover are minute. Therefore, suppose that (the Bodhisattva) returned with a different form - the intrinsic characteristic has issued out and consequently there is no error. Again, there is this nirvāṇa, but it is as though screened. Thus the Mahāyāna Sūtras say, "The entire dharma from the origin until the present has always had the mark of solitary extinguishing." (Even if) the entire multitude of living beings had already done that which there was to do, because they are obstructed by all the bonds and instigators of ignorance, etc., they would be unable to know that they themselves have this characteristic of solitary extinguishing. Thus is the Bodhisattva's solitary extinguishing screened and hindered, and this is so until he realizes himself and becomes a Buddha. If it were the case that the Bodhisattva was without the screen of the bonds and instigators, then he would already be a Buddha.

There are two <sup>16</sup> kinds of screens. The first is all the vexations of the triple-world, which screen the path of nirvāna. The second <sup>17</sup> are the Bodhisattva's bonds and instigators which screen the Buddha path, and are the most difficult to cut off because they are minute and concealed. Like an enemy thief the results are concealed; (they are like) an interior thief who is difficult to recognize and difficult to know. When the Bodhisattva obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas he sees the world's Characteristic of Reality, even though he has destroyed <sup>18</sup> the bonds and instigators of the ordinary people, he has not yet eliminated the bonds and instigators of the Buddha path. In regard to being in the Buddha path there are still errors (?) <sup>18</sup>. If he were without errors, then when he obtained the patience of non-produced dharmas, he consequently ought to be a Buddha. If he desires to teach and convert the multitude of beings, purify his Buddha-land, then he can complete it at one time. Why? Because what he had obtained previously had been hindered from the knowledge of reality. Therefore he could not obtain that, because of having minute screens. However, the power of the patience of non-production is only able to destroy heterodox and frivolous discussions, etc. It manifests the real mark of all dharmas, and afterwards, when Buddhahood is obtained, then the entire dharma is broken through to, without regard to near and far or

<sup>16</sup> 二 for 三.  
<sup>18</sup> 錯謬.

<sup>17</sup> Omit 乘.



deep and shallow. I have heard that there is a Bodhisattva Abhidharma, which undertakes to extensively distinguish the characteristics of the bonds and instigators, like the Disciples' Abhidharma extensively distinguishes the fundamental ten bonds.

(You) also say that the four elements already being cut off, how would anything come together and have this form? It was already said that the production of mire is not cut off, (so) the response of the dharmabody is without doubtful points. But that which the Abhidharma and that which the Mahāyāna Dharma understands is each different. Kātyāyana's Abhidharma says:

Magical illusions, sounds in dreams (echoes?), the image in a mirror and the moon in water, these are dharmas which can be perceived and moreover, which can be recognized and known. That which is bound to the triple-world is that which is united in the phenomenal world.

In the Mahāyāna Dharma, the magical illusion and the moon in water only deceive the mind and eye, and are without having a fixed dharma. Moreover, the Hinayāna Sūtras say, "In what world is the illusory man united in one person?" The answer, "There is no such place." Now, using the explanation of the Mahāyāna Dharma discussions, the dharmabody is without the four elements and the five sense organs. Even matters of magical transformation which the fleshly eye sees are, in addition, without that which comes together - how much more the minuteness and subtleness of the dharmabody? Therefore, it is only without the coarse four elements and five senses

of the triple-world. The condition and cause of its being seen is in order to save the multitude of beings - when the cause is exhausted, then it is extinguished. It is like the sun shining in water; if the (water is) muddy, then it cannot be seen. Thus, all Bodhisattvas always reside in the dharmature; if the multitude of beings are profited and the root of virtue and happiness purified, then accordingly, that which is seen corresponds to the body of salvation.

To reiterate, if you desire to seek the reality of the matter, only the dharmas which the Sage views when he has begun to obtain the Way extinguish all meaningless discussion and finally are the characteristic of solitary extinguishing. In this characteristic of nirvāna, the characteristic of birth and death still cannot be distinguished - how much less the four elements and five sense organs. Therefore one ought not to take the characteristics of the four elements and five sense organs as real, meaning that without these, then the dharmabody cannot exist. Like a conditioned dharma, all are completely false and not real. A conditioned dharma means the five skandas. The coarsest of the five skandas is the so-called material skanda. If this is the case, nothing surpasses the falseness of the four elements. Why? Thought only makes distinctions<sup>19</sup> and so reaching to the minute dust, moreover nothing exists - this is extensively discussed in the Śāstra. But in regard to the ordinary people, a number

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<sup>19</sup> 别 for 裂.

of dharmas are combined and obtain the name "material skanda," but the material skanda has no fixed (substance). How much less the four elements and five sense organs? Therefore one cannot take the falseness with which the ordinary people view the material skanda as proof of (its) reality and thereby question the limitless meritorious achievements which are completed by the body. If one desires to obtain faith, one ought to believe in the dharmabody. Thus in the Sūtras it says that the existence of that which has form comes from the four elements because of the attachments and bonds, conditions and causes of the triple world. It says that the four elements and five sense organs of the Bodhisattva's dharmabody are the same as transformation and should not be distinguished as a (separate thing). Moreover, the multitude of beings of the realms of desire and form are fettered to the four elements and five sense organs and are not independent. And coming to the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, although their minds have obtained separation from the ties and forms of the triple world, they still have not yet escaped from the feelings of cold, hot, hunger, thirst, and such like evils. The dharmabody Bodhisattva accordingly is not thus. He is without having birth and death, maintains life and death by his own decision and manifests according to change without there being hindrances and obstructions.

Question 3: Again asking about the kind of form of the real dharmabody

Hui-yüan asks: The multitude of sūtras in speaking about the Buddha's form all say that the marks of the body are fully complete, its bright light penetrates and illuminates, it is handsome and perfect without compare, its wearing of clothes is a virtuous model - this is in accordance with the śrāmana dharma form. As for the true dharmabody, can it be classified like this? If it is classified like this, then there are points in doubt. Why is it that the Buddha's transformation form dwells in a man, and of the highest among men, none surpasses the wheel turning king<sup>1</sup>? Therefore the World Honored One displays the form of going forth from home, and an excellently handsome body in order to lead the ordinary people. These kinds of forms (that of the Buddha and the ca-kravartīrāja) are the same, and one ought to take the fine and coarse merely as a degree of difference. Moreover, only the tenth stage (Bodhisattva) can see the Thus Come One's true dharma form, with the collection of coarse elements screened and cut off. The tenth stage (Bodhisattva) is without a teacher and so has need of nothing. Even if he depends on the future for completion, he does not depend on it in order to make karmic progress. For what purpose did this form come into existence? If it is by means of spontaneous merit and retribution, he does not expect for there to be a response after-

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<sup>1</sup>  
cakravartīrāja.

wards. Accordingly, the Bodhisattva should not indicate the existence of stages in order to establish the root of their virtue.

Answer 3: The kind of form of the real dharmabody

Kumārajīva answers: The Buddha's dharmabody and the Bodhisattva's dharmabody have the same name, but are really different. Even though the Bodhisattva's dharmabody has minute bonds as I said before, the Buddha's dharmabody is not thus. But by means of the conditions and causes of the karmic practice of his original vow, he spontaneously displays the doing of the matters related to a Buddha. As the Tathāgatācintya-guhya nirdeśa Sūtra says, the Buddha's body is without correspondence to direction; in one assembly of the multitude of beings some see the Buddha's body as gold colored, some see it silver colored, or like ch'e-ch'ū<sup>1</sup>, or cornelian-like, and so on, the forms of the sūtras<sup>2</sup>. Others among the multitude of beings see the Buddha's body not different from that of a man, others see the body 16 feet tall, others see it 30 feet, others see a form 10,000,000 feet high, others see the body like Mt. Meru, etc. while others see a limitless and boundless body. As with sound, moreover, the multitude of beings hear in accordance with their mental state. Some hear the sound of the kalavinka bird or the white snow-goose, like the sound of the lion's roar, like the sound of the king of the wild oxen, like the sound of striking a great drum, like the sound of great thunder, like the sound of Brahma, etc., each not the same. As for what is

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<sup>1</sup> Probably some jade-like stone. Morahashi V10, p.980.

<sup>2</sup> There is textual confusion here.

in the sound of the voice, some hear it explaining giving<sup>3</sup>, some hear it explaining the keeping of precepts, or meditation, or knowledge and wisdom, or liberation, or the Mahāyāna, etc. Each one takes the meaning of the Dharma as having been explained for his own sake. This is the dharmabody's spiritual power, there being nothing it is unable to do. If this were not so, how could it, at one time, widely send forth all kinds of sounds and all kinds of dharma doors? One ought to know<sup>4</sup> that all of these are divisions of the dharmabody. <sup>p</sup>Bai Ching Wang Kuan's Buddha body consequently is a division of the dharmabody. It does not obtain appearance having (any (final) type of form. Why? Śākyamuni's Buddha body was able at one time to do all the work of a Buddha in 10,000,000 countries (using) every kind of name and style, every kind of body to teach and save the multitude of beings.

As for (you) saying that the tenth stage is without a teacher, for the sake of the ordinary people, the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas and ninth stage (Bodhisattvas) they turn themselves back, (but) in regard to all the Buddhas they can not be said to be without a teacher. When the Bodhisattva comes to the seat of enlightenment, he even then still has teachers - how much more the tenth stage Bodhisattva! As the Daśabhūmikasūtra says, when the Bodhisattva sits in the seat of enlightenment desiring to become a Buddha, at that time Buddhas in the ten directions, rays of light issuing out from

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<sup>3</sup> dāna.

<sup>4</sup> 智 for 可.

their mouths and entering the top of his (?) head, this Bodhisattva consequently will deeply enter into limitless samādhis, all the Buddha samādhis, dhāraṇīs, liberations, etc. He will penetrate through to go into numbers of not yet come kalpas, limitless kalpas he will take as one kalpa, one kalpa he will take as limitless kalpas, one minute particle of dust as boundless form, boundless form as one minute particle of dust. He will distinguish without limit the ten directions, the triple world, the countries and lands, the names and styles and even the multitude of beings, names and words, practice and result, conditions and causes, beginnings and endings, and every kind of liberation path and door in sequence. By means of one moment <sup>5</sup> he is in correspondence with wisdom, penetrates through all dharmas and obtains liberation without hindrances - this is called becoming a Buddha. Liberation without hindrances is the root and foundation of Buddha Dharma. Thus a Sūtra saying, "the tenth stage Bodhisattva ought to be known as a Buddha", this is the Buddha's praise of the tenth stage of meritorious achievement. Like this are the ones who recite the Lotus Sūtra <sup>6</sup> praised, also being styled as Buddhas. It also says, "On (my) two shoulders I carry these people." Moreover, as in the Ajātasatrukaurtyavinodana Sūtra, Mañjuśrī says to Maitreya, "You should pick up the begging bowl." Maitreya is not able to pick it up. Mañjuśrī then extended his arm and in the lower direction fetched the bowl. "Although

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<sup>5</sup> 念 for 心.

<sup>6</sup> Omit one 讚.



you now have this power, when I become a Buddha, if those like you were boundless and without number, they would not be able to know the matter of my raising and lowering my foot." And these great Bodhisattvas both were of the tenth stage, they gave forth Buddha dharma beyond comprehension, and all (everyone else) were not able to reach (up to them). Moreover, Mañjuśrī, Maitreya and other Bodhisattvas, in regard to being in the Buddha's Dharma, have, in various places, asked many questions. Whether Mañjuśrī is acting for the sake of the multitude of beings, or whether for his own profit as Mañjuśrī, he is caused to obtain extremely deep Buddha Dharmas. If this is the case, how can it be said that the tenth stage Bodhisattva is without a teacher?

Moreover, all the great Bodhisattvas do not discriminate (saying) this is fine and this is coarse. They are able to view all dharmas as fine, or able to view all dharmas as coarse. As it says in the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra, Subhūti said, "World Honored One, the perfection of wisdom is extremely deep." The Buddha said, "The Bodhisattva's view of the perfection of wisdom, if his view is shallow, then it is also neglectful." Therefore, it can not be explained as that which the eye sees as coarse, the mind sees as fine. The great Bodhisattvas have already heard and abandoned the eye and all other organs of sense perception, and only by means of the dharma realm hear dharma from the Buddha. Thus in the Sūtra of Inconceivable Liberation it says, "Mañjuśrī and the tenth stage Bodhisattvas sit together in the Buddha's Assembly and hear

the Dharma and moreover are able to have their bodies walking in the southern kingdom. Moreover, the great Bodhisattvas constantly reside in concentration and are able to see the Buddha and to hear the Dharma. Sounds are not able to reach them. As the Viśaṣacintābrahmaparipṛcchā<sup>7</sup> says, P'u Hua Bodhisattva asked Śāriputra,<sup>8</sup> "Are you able in the concentration of complete extinguishment to hear the Dharma or not?" He replied, "I cannot, but the Bodhisattvas can." Thus the dharma-body Bodhisattva is able to practice, limitlessly and without conception. If he had the karmically produced body of the five sense organs, it would be different in regard to the subtle and coarse. Thus the essentials are exactly even, and the body and mind do not have the characteristics of difference.

Again, there are people who say that because the dharma-body Bodhisattva profits and benefits the multitude of beings, he will see the Buddha and hear the Dharma with his eyes and other sense organs, and that by giving gifts and moreover, by that which he has heard, he is established, supplied and nourished. Why? Because he desires to open up and lead the Bodhisattvas who have newly raised the thought (of enlightenment).

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<sup>7</sup> Hōbōgrin reconstructs this title on the basis of the Tibetan and attributes the Chinese translation to Kumārajīva.

<sup>8</sup> nirodhasamāpati.

Question 4: Asking about the limit of life of the real dharmabody

Hui-yüan asks: The length of life of the ordinary people is entirely the accomplishment of the practice of karma and the accomplishment has a basis. Therefore, the different essentials<sup>1</sup>, in accordance with the fine and coarse, must avail themselves of the characteristics of cause and effect. In your response you have said how the dharmabody Bodhisattva is not that which is created from the karma of body, word or thought. If he is without mental karma, then he receives result without cause - how can this be so? If this is not the case, from where do the subtle essentials<sup>2</sup> come that they (can be) obtained? I also want to ask, from the beginning of the Bodhisattva's patience of dharmas onwards (until) the dharmabody reaches to the tenth stage, the refined and coarse, excellent and vile, cannot be adequately expressed.<sup>3</sup> As applied to the root of life, that which is received (produces) either a long or a short (life), and so ought, in accordance with the refined and coarse, to take a spans of life. From the tenth stage on, there is no further essential discussion. What I want to ask now is about residing in the tenth stage. The Daśabhūmikasūtra says that the tenth

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1 體。

2 妙體 What to do with 體 is a problem I haven't solved.

3 There are textual problems in this sentence.

stage Bodhisattva at the most has one thousand births remaining, and at the least has one more birth remaining<sup>4</sup> - are these then dharmabody births or not<sup>5</sup>? If this is the case, (the Bodhisattva) must take the accumulation of merit and recompense in order to gradually produce up until the limit and by means of this reach a birth. Or are the remaining impurities passed on and dispersed and the birth principle transmitted to exhaustion, and by this means a birth is reached? If the remaining impurities are passed on and dispersed, then the śrota-āpanna is the same as the seventh birth because the power of the holy road does not reach to the eighth. Now, as for the tenth stage not exceeding 1,000 births - by what power is this done? If it is at the time of universal learning, the power of the Way is that which regulates it, and consequently the birth principle would be limited and could not reach a thousand. Therefore, it would decline and consequently could not be known as the same as the seventh birth<sup>7</sup>. If it is because merit and retribution have dispersed or piled up to the limit of the principle (of birth), and it is the case that there is only one birth (left), this one birth then is the final body, (and so) the body is exhausted in regard to the final limit; consequently there would be no possibility of achieving perfect enlightenment.

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<sup>4</sup> The editors could not find this in the Daśabhūmika.

<sup>5</sup> 不 for 非.

<sup>6</sup> sapta-kṛd-bhava-parama.

<sup>7</sup> Adding 生.

If there is no possibility of achievement, how can the Bodhi-sattva have self-vows and not choose perfect enlightenment? Do the words of his own vow apply to the transformation form or to the real dharmabody? If to the transformation form, then this is the speech of expediacy<sup>en</sup> and illusion. If this is the dharmabody, the lives have a fixed limit, and consequently the self-vow cannot be fulfilled without exhausting the words.

Answer 4: The Limit of Life of the Real Dharmabody

Kumārajīva responds: Now I will again summarize the discussion. There are two types of dharmabody. The first type is the dharmanature<sup>1</sup>, which is long enduring like space, without being conditioned or non-conditioned and such-like frivolous discussion. The second type is when the Bodhisattva has obtained the six supernatural powers, but also has not yet become a Buddha, the form which he has in that interval is called the secondary<sup>2</sup> dharmabody. The dharmanature, whether there is a Buddha or there is not a Buddha, is long enduring and does not decay; like space, it is without creation and without exhaustion. On account of this Dharma are the divisions of the Eightfold Noble Path, the six pāramitās, etc. called as "Dharma". Thus the śrot-āpanna obtains this dharma division, which is known as "the beginning of obtaining the dharmabody", and as applied to the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, it is known as "afterwards obtaining the dharmabody". Why? The Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas, having obtained the dharmabody, are not again born in the triple world<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, this is the meaning of the Buddha having distinguished between the three vehicles; it does not mean that the dharma has a departing place. Only<sup>4</sup> the Lotus Sūtra has this meaning. If it is preached everywhere, the Lotus Sūtra cannot be called a secret which ought to be hidden, and also it is not able

<sup>1</sup> dharmatā.

<sup>3</sup> 三 for 二.

<sup>2</sup> 後 for 復. This is obscure.

<sup>4</sup> 唯 for 准.

to cause people to greatly cultivate the habit of the path of nirvāṇa and to exhaust all outflows and bonds. Therefore, the Indian word is "kāya" and the Ch'in word is sometimes called "body" (身), sometimes called "multitude" (衆), sometimes called "section" (部), and sometimes called "essential mark (體相) of dharma", and sometimes with the mind the mental number of dharmas are called "body" (身). Thus in the sūtras it says that (there are) six knowledge bodies, six touch bodies, six received bodies, six desire bodies, six marks of the body, six thought bodies, etc. In the beginning of the eightfold noble path, etc., because the multitude of acts are harmonized and joined and not marked as separate, they are called "body". When the Bodhisattva obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas, although this <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~ the form of transformational space, and moreover, because it is similar to the physical body, it is called "body". Moreover, in this the genuine dharmabody is the essential mark of the true Dharma. If one refers to being without the karma of body, word and thought, this is said in relation to this real dharmabody. There are some who say that when the Bodhisattva obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas, this is the mark of the karma of liberation <sup>5</sup>, because it ~~destroys~~ <sup>604</sup> the karma of the triple world. Only by means of the great compassionate mind does this Bodhisattva business arise. Because it ~~destroys~~ <sup>604</sup> karma, it is called without karma, which only means that it is with-

out the ordinary people's discrimination of karma. Thus the Buddha said, "From the time I obtained Buddhahood until the present, I did not again produce karma, because I destroyed<sup>ed</sup> the mark of karma, this is called no-karma." Moreover, all Bodhisattvas have that from which karma arises, (but) because it is all in accordance with the patience of non-production, it is called no-karma. Therefore, the Bodhisattva in the karma of giving does not discriminate or grasp marks - this is called no-karma.

As for the sūtras speaking of one thousand births, because I have not yet heard that, I cannot deliver an answer. Thus are Viśvabhadrā, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, etc., these tenth stage Bodhisattvas who have completed the 10 powers of a Buddha, the four grounds of fearlessness, and the 18 characteristics of a Buddha, but because of their original vows to widely liberate the multitude of beings, they do not become Buddhas. As it says in the Mañjuśrī Prediction Sūtra, "Thus in asaṅkya kalpas, at that time I will obtain Buddhahood." Moreover, Śākyamuni, etc. all take Mañjuśrī as issuing the thought of condition and cause. At that time their power is already completed. Thus they extend their quest beginning to end, and consequently are not limited to a thousand births. If it is the case that the sūtras say that they have a thousand births, then this originally is not separated from the vow to long endure in the world. Or perhaps because those who have inferior capabilities are not yet complete in all Buddha Dharmas, and consequently have many births. If the



meritorious achievement is complete, then there is one birth. Moreover, if meritorious achievement is completely stored up, then there is only one birth, and (the Bodhisattva) cannot complete perfect enlightenment. There are two sorts of Bodhisattvas. One whose meritorious achievement is complete and who naturally becomes a Buddha. As when all Bodhisattvas begin to raise the thought (of enlightenment), they all make common vows<sup>6</sup> saying, "I ought to liberate the entire multitude of beings" and afterwards<sup>a</sup> as the mind and wisdom gradually become clearer, they think "I only have this span of life and not (even) a Buddha is able to save the entire multitude of living beings. Therefore, all Buddhas obtain all-knowledge, and (when) they have already saved what can be saved, they take hold of extinguishing and pass over. I also should be thus." In the second case, there are some Bodhisattvas who still reside in the physical body and think only in distinctions, "The principle is really thus, I have no choice, I must myself make an independent vow to dwell long in the world, to broadly act as a support for the multitude of beings, and not to obtain and complete Buddhahood." Like this are people who know that in the entire world everything returns and nothing is permanent. It is not possible to long endure and to have karmic practices to cultivate the habits of long life. Formerly<sup>7</sup> there was no place of having a mark or not having a

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<sup>6</sup> There is some textual confusion here and the translation is very loose.

<sup>7</sup> 住 for 往.

mark, even to 8,000 kalpas. Thus Maitrya, etc. purify their Buddha lands and have long life without limit.

Question 5: Asking about the cultivation of the thirty-two marks

Hui-yüan asks: In reference to what are the 32 marks cultivated? Are they cultivated on the karmic form or on the dharmabody? If they are cultivated on the karmic form, then the ability of the 32 marks is not that of an inferior position. If they are cultivated on the dharmabody, and the dharmabody has no karma form body or speech, then explain how they are cultivated. If there are two thoughts (on the matter) and one of them is this, that there is no production of karma from body or speech, but the 32 marks are able to be cultivated, then I want to ask, is the Buddha who is causing this the real dharmabody Buddha or the transformation body? If the cause is the real dharmabody Buddha, then it is not something which the ninth stage (Bodhisattvas) see. If the cause is transformational, then the achievement is of profound reaching, how, from this, can it be exhausted? If there is no difference between the real form and transformation, the achievement of responsive effort must be the same, thus how can it be styled the real dharmabody Buddha's excellent form in regard to the ninth stage?

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<sup>1</sup>  
I can make little or no sense out of the last two sentences.

Answer 5: The cultivation of the 32 marks

Kumārajīva answers: How can the dharmabody be spoken of with a false name? It is not possible to seek it by means of taking hold of marks. Why? In the Tripataka of the Disciples it only says that the ten powers of the Buddha and other such dharmas without outflow are the dharmabody. After the Buddha is extinguished and passes over, the sūtra dharmas are the dharmabody. Even more, this is the name of the dharmabody without remainders. In the Mahāyāna it says that the Bodhisattva's patience of non-produced dharmas cuts off all the vexations in order to save the multitude of beings and so receives a body. All the Śāstra Masters call this the dharmabody. Why? In this there are no bonds and instigators and even no outflows or wrong karma, but it is without the result of purifying the six pāramitās. This body exists for a long time, independent and without hindrances, and finally becomes a Buddha. The wheel turning king is the first among men and the only one to have the 32 marks. Therefore, the Bodhisattva's body of incarnation in the world has the 32 marks. In regard to birth and death there are different kinds of conditions and causes, in regard to the Bodhisattva's dharmabody (the 32 marks) causes it to increase its benefit, understanding and purity. Why? As for the 32 marks, an ordinary person can also have them, so they are not such a difficult matter. Thus the Buddha's younger brother Nanda, in a previous body, painted the stūpa of a Pratyekabuddha with yellow ochre and made this vow, "I vow that I must obtain the mark of the gold form, the best

body." Because of these happy and virtuous causes and conditions, after the end of his span of life, he became the son of king Tsao Li She<sup>1</sup> of the kingdom of Vārāṇasī and again saw the stūpa of Kāśyapa. His heart was extremely happy and accordingly, he placed an umbrella on it. Because of these causes and conditions, among the gods and men, he received limitless riches and happinesses, and finally was born as the son of Śuddhodana, king of Kapikivastu, completed the 32 marks, went out from home and studied the Way, obtained Arhatship, and was, among all correct bhikṣus, the first. Aniruddha supplied and nourished the Pratyekabuddha Upariṣṭa, and for seven ages he was born in the Tuṣita Heaven and for seven ages he was born among men and became a wheel turning king. He completed the seven treasures and obtained the 32 marks. Moreover, thus the Buddha said, "You, Bhikṣu, your sight has received the greatest happiness. You ought to know, that I already have received such happiness. Why? From beginningless worlds until now, the place where I have been born has not been pass<sup>d</sup> by.<sup>2</sup> And now, although I have returned to the evil world, still, I have obtained unity, the two forms and the 53 marks<sup>3</sup>. By means of this therefore, I know that on the body of birth and death all the marks and signs can be cultivated." Only (by) that which the marks and signs obtain-

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<sup>1</sup> 造利奢 . Alternate reading 告利奢.

<sup>2</sup> 經 for 逕 . The meaning is not clear.

<sup>3</sup> Or 三五.

the completion of the beautiful establishment (of the body), purification, bright illumination and the stern virtues - can (one) be called a Buddha.

The 32 marks which one hears of, the Buddha's Disciple Kātyāyana, himself only thought and spoke of them. They are not something of which the Buddha spoke. Moreover, these 32 thoughts are not something which can be completed in an instant. In one instant of time they rush off and do not remain - the matter cannot be completed and discriminated. In all conditioned dharmas, the response must harmonize to be able to have accomplishment. For example, if a man views the evil deeds of 32 people and if it is a case of desiring injury, then not only is (the mind) thus for one instant, (but still, only) at the same time life is cut off, is this called a murderous mind. Even if before and after there were many murderous thoughts, only this is called so. Concerning the 32 marks. There are people who say that if the Bodhisattva sees the Buddha's body and if he sees that the Buddha has 32 marks, by means of this he cultivates rich virtue and works of the transfer of merit<sup>4</sup>, vowing, "I will obtain thus this reward." Or, when the Buddha becomes a man it is said that if he cultivates the dharma of the 32 marks and people's eyes see the Buddha's 32 marks, then they will raise this vow saying, "I ought, in regard to the world which has not yet come,

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<sup>4</sup>  
pariṇāmanā.

obtain thus these marks, and afterwards, in order to purify meritorious accomplishments, cause them to be completed." So the first inferior seed afterwards is thus irrigated. For example, giving a pillow made of grass and other like things obtains the mark of firmness; giving light, lamps, illumination and so on obtains the mark of great illumination; regarding the multitude of beings with mercy, compassion and the like obtains the eye of purple clarity; always bowing the head and face to show respect to the teachers, elders and holy saints and giving umbrellas<sup>5</sup> and such-like is the cause and condition of obtaining the mark of the protuberance. There are other people who do not hear a Buddha and moreover, do not see a Buddha, but only hear others explain that there are 32 marks, or themselves read in the sūtras (about them) and then raise the vow saying, "I will obtain the 32 marks and gradually complete them." As was said above, there are other people, who whether they see a Buddha or do not see a Buddha, their minds are not concerned about it<sup>6</sup>, but when they hear the meaning of the Mahāyāna in regard to the multitude of beings, they raise the merciful and compassionate thought, and desire, by means of the fundamental reality of all dharmas, to profit and benefit the multitude of beings, vowing, "I ought to obtain a superior mind and body, to draw out the multitude of beings, to cause them to believe my words." As in the Tāthā-

5

There is a character here which I cannot decipher.

6

There is some textual confusion in this passage and the meaning is not clear.

gata-jñāna-murdrā-samādhi Sūtra, the Buddha says for Maitreya, "There are seven conditions and causes which give raise to the thought of anuttara-samyuksambodhi. The first is that a Buddha causes the thought to arise. The second is when someone sees the true Dharma decaying and raises the thought to protect and maintain the Dharma. The third is because one sees how pitiable are the multitude of beings and raises the thought. Fourth, a Bodhisattva causes him to raise the thought. Fifth, he sees another person raise the thought and so does so too. Sixth, because of a great display of giving he raises the thought. Seventh, he hears that the Buddha has the 32 marks and the 80 secondary signs and so raises the thought." The Buddha told Maitreya, "In the first three cases of raising the thought, Buddhahood must be obtained, the person will not again recede into revolving in birth and death. In the last four cases of raising the thought, one is not able to determine (for certain); many have receded into birth and death." Therefore you ought to know, in the types of the 32 marks, matters are not the same.

Moreover, as for the dharmabody Bodhisattva, the Sūtras also do not clearly explain that there is a dharmabody country, land and place.<sup>7</sup> But by means of the principle, one can infer that there ought to be a dharmabody. If all the Bodhisattvas extinguish all vexations and go out from the triple world, then they will be without a birth body, and if they

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<sup>7</sup> 國土處所也 . The syntax is odd.



also do not enter nirvāna, in this interval, if they are without a dharmabody, how can their business be said to be? Therefore all the Śāstra teachers say in regard to this interval that the body produced from the dharmanature without outflows is called the dharmabody. Again, this is not merely one body and then it is done with. According to the amount of power in the original effort, there is this body, or there are two bodies, or three bodies, 10 bodies, 100, 1,000, 10,000, or limitless asmkhyas of bodies, which reach without limit to the ten directions, the worlds all manifesting this body, which, because it acts to complete the remainder of the Buddha Dharma, unites in one to save the multitude of beings. In the Abhidharma-jñāna-prasthāna-śāstra the dharma without outflows has no retribution. Why? In the Disciples' Dharma, it only says that the affairs of the triple world extend to the small nirvāna door. In the Mahāyāna, it extends through the dharma of the ordinary people and reaches to the small nirvāna door and then explains the matter of purifying the Mahāyāna. According to the "Inconceivable Liberation Chapter" of the Hua Yen Sūtra and others, thus the ordinary people, although they give raise to good karma, because the vexations are not yet cut off, appropriate and grasp wealth and virtue. Because they are far from the characteristic of nature and its expression, they cannot cause the good karma to increase and be beneficial. All the Arhats, although they are without vex-

ations, injure the good dharma because they realize nirvāna, their minds do not give raise to the thought (of enlightenment), and they are not able to add to the good roots of the long Buddha path. The Bodhisattva extinguishes all vexations, and because he does not harm the good dharma, returns and does not realize nirvāna, his mind continues to go forth<sup>9</sup>, and his meritorious accomplishments accumulate for a long time. At this time he gives rise to all virtue and exceeds the happiness and virtue which he has performed originally from the world without beginning until now. As the Brahma-viśeṣacinti-paripṛccha Sūtra says, "I, in giving five lotuses to the Buddha, surpassed all the heads, eyes, marrow, brains, etc. which I had originally given. Why? The roots and the display of giving both are empty, mixed in all results, upside down and without reality. This giving however, in a small way, purifies reality." For example, a man in a dream obtains limitless precious things, (but) this is not like (not as good as) his having obtained a few things when he is awake. By this means the screens and hindrances of the Bodhisattva in the triple world are all extinguished and he has only the minute screens of the Buddha path still to exhaust. For example, by means of one lamp the darkness is shattered, it is not able to break the second lamp in parts.

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<sup>9</sup> 復 for 後.  
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This is following the text literally. Obviously there is a problem here. For variations of the lamp metaphor see TCTL 190b, 618c and 651a.

If it were able to break it, the second lamp would still not add to the benefit. Moreover, the darkness which the second lamp would destroy would be the same as that of the initial lamp. But if there were no initial lamp, then it would destroy the darkness. The Bodhisattva's obtaining of the patience of unproduced dharmas moreover is thus. When he sheds the body of birth and death and receives the dharmabody, he destroys the screens and hindrances of the triple world's ordinary people, but is not able to destroy the screens and hindrances of a Bodhisattva. If he does destroy them, then this is the tenth stage and consequently he ought to become a Buddha. This person, at that time, produces karma, without having the bonds and ties of the triple world and having only the Bodhisattva's ties and bonds and minute hindrances by which karma is produced - both know the really real and purification without limit. Why? It is not grasped by birth and death, because it is not the same as the vexations; the mind and will are broad and great and afterwards it receives its body from the dharma body, like an illusion or the image in a mirror. Karma moreover is like this; the mind which produces karma follows the body and thereby obtains rewards and recompence in accordance with karma. This is not possible with the coarse body of the triple world, although <sup>11</sup> the Bodhisattva's minute and subtle form goes out through the triple world.

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<sup>11</sup> 雖 for 莫佳。

You ask the causes whereby the Buddha acts in the real dharmabody and acts in the transformation body - this matter I have already answered. As I said above, there are some who see (the Buddha?) and some who hear (the Dharma?), and some who themselves act for the sake of the multitude of beings and therefore establish their bodies as beautiful. There are some people who do not see the Buddha or hear the Dharma, and are still able to raise the thought of anuttara-samyuksambodhi - how much more those who see the Buddha and hear the Dharma! This person, by means of the mind, eye, causes, the triple world and Buddha marks, goes beyond the marks of the Buddha body (and thinks), "I ought to be thus," and he thinks to manifest in times not yet come the marks of the Buddha body (thinking) "My body moreover ought to be thus." There are some people, who in accordance with goodness and happiness, from birth reflect and think, "The meritorious achievements which I have done, transfers of merit on the Buddha path, afterwards when I have become a Buddha, my span of life, land, meritorious accomplishments, marks and signs ought to be thus." This the Yüan Shih Chia Wen Fo <sup>P</sup>Ben Ch'u Fa Hsin Sūtra explains. In a country where there was no Buddha and which was without the Buddha's Dharma, there was a great king named Kuang Ming. At that time there was a minor king who presented a fine white elephant to King Kuang Ming. When the king saw (the elephant) he liked him very much and ordered the elephant trainer to train and subdue him. The elephant trainer, following his method, regulated him well

and told the king to ride him, and so they roamed and played in the forest. This elephant, while in the forest, heard a female elephant and smelled her scent - lewd desire rose in his heart and he dashed quickly forward. The king said to the elephant trainer, "Control him and make him stop." The elephant trainer then used a hook to control him, but he could not make him stop. Then the king looked at the things around and everything was spinning in circles. They plunged far into a thorny grove, which torn their clothes and injured their bodies. Then they looked up, and, grabbing the branch of a tree, climbed up and saved themselves. Later the elephant remembered the food and drink (he got) among men and returned to the palace. The king asked the great ministers, "If a person caused these things to happen to the king, how should he be punished?" The great ministers said, "His punishment ought to be to the greatest extent of the law." Then the elephant trainer said, "Do not cruelly <sup>12</sup> kill me. I am extremely expert at training." The king said, "Since the elephant was as bad as he was, how can you say that you are good at training?" The elephant trainer then approached in front of the king (with) a hot <sup>13</sup> iron pellet and said to the elephant, "Take this red-hot iron pellet and swallow it. If you do not swallow it, then I will go back to using the original method to train you." The elephant (calculated) his own life span and (decided that) it would be better (to suffer)

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<sup>12</sup> 枉 for 誑.

<sup>13</sup> 火 for 火.

for a moment and die, for he could not long endure the pain (of the training). And then he took the red-hot pellet and swallowed it; it burnt his body and penetrated through it and he gave a great cry and died. When the king had seen this, he knew (the effectiveness) of the elephant trainer's training and subduing and consequently asked the elephant trainer, "If you can train and subdue like this, by means of what conditions and causes has there recently been this evil business?" The elephant trainer said, "Having lewd desire in the mind is a serious sickness, because (its) power is used in an outburst - there is nothing which can guide or direct it." When the king heard this, he was alarmed and frightened (and said), "Where does the great sickness of lewd desire come from?" The elephant trainer said, "I do not know from where, or when, comes its increasing and diminishing." The king said, "If it is a sickness, then there is no one who is able to cure it." The elephant trainer said, "I wash and train the herd, and the others have not gotten this way; they return themselves from going down and bathing. There are people, who for the sake of destroying the thief of lewd desire, contend with the five passions and undergo mortifying practices. There are other people who enjoy the five passions, and (their) desire then becomes weary with and separate from (them) and, with this cause and condition, they obtain liberation from this sickness. There are those who, for all sorts of conditions and causes, go out from the house, and although

they desire to cut <sup>14</sup> off this evil, all have not plucked out the root of the tree of lustful poison." When the king had heard this, he was grieved and frightened, and spoke to the elephant trainer saying, "If this is the sickness, it is difficult to be able to control it. Among the gods and men, is there one who is able to destroy this sickness?" The elephant trainer said, "I have heard it said that there is a great man come forth to earth, his body is gold colored, he has the 32 marks and the 80 secondary signs, he is always shining and illumines afar, he pities and sympathizes with the multitude of beings, and he is called "Buddha". This man understands and knows the way of extinguishing the production of lust and desire, and because he pities the multitude of beings, he explains it for their sakes." The king, having heard this, then descended from his couch, his right knee set forth on the ground and his palms together, and said, "By means of this dharma I will govern the state and display giving, and the other meritorious achievements, and by means of this cause happiness and virtue. When I become a Buddha, I will control in the entire multitude of beings all types of sickness which produce lust and desire." From the time he raised this thought on, he began to meet the Buddha styled as Śākyamuni, who, in regard to length of life, (lived) one hundred years among the multitude of beings, doing the work

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<sup>14</sup> 勉 for 免.

of a Buddha. Now Śākyamuni Buddha served both together with another Buddha. At that time, King Kuang Ming was a potter, his name Kuang Chao. That Śākyamuni Buddha, having saved the multitude of beings together with the 500 Arhats, saved Kuang Chao, and from a great garden<sup>15</sup> went out to his house. Kuang Chao then with hot mud and oil, lighted lamps, a stone, and honey paste<sup>16</sup> nourished and reared the Buddha. The potter, hearing the Dharma from the Buddha<sup>17</sup> moreover raised this thought, "I ought, in the future era, to become a Buddha, and moreover ought to be like this." This person, in regard to being in an age without the Buddha's Dharma, was still able to raise this thought. How much more those who see the Buddha and hear the Dharma and plant (the seeds of) the 32 marks? If at the beginning of raising the thought he clearly and distinctly does not err, moreover, what value is there in becoming a Buddha? Only the Buddha is the first among men, and he only obtains without error. Therefore you ought to know that like King Kuang Ming, who met with and obtained the causes and conditions, and then himself raised the thought (of enlightenment), and by means of these causes and conditions, again was able to obtain a human body, to meet Śākyamuni Buddha, to hear the Dharma from the Buddha, and so after-

15

園 for 園.

16

In the TCTL both this Kuang Chao and King Kuang Ming are previous incarnations of Śākyamuni in a story illustrative of dāna. Both the identity of Śākyamuni and the list of gifts seem to be a bit scrambled here.

17

佛聞法 for 聞佛法.



wards to raise a vow. "Formerly in darkness I raised a vow, only to act to destroy the sickness of lust and desire. Afterwards I got to meet the Buddha and clearly and distinctly to distinguish his name and (now) I raise this vow - gradually my mind will turn to the minute and subtle, I myself will be able to give away my body into revolving in life and death. Afterwards, in regard to all dharmas, I will not take hold of marks, I will peacefully dwell in final emptiness, I will complete the six pāramitās, (for all these things) I raise this pure vow. (My) original vow was sent forth from a mind confused with myself and my desire, that which I now vow is pure and without dirt." Moreover, this would not be possible without a cause. He promptly vowed and so was able to obtain a pure vow - this affair is difficult. For example, although the water lily is pure, it depends on the condition of mud to be born - it cannot be born on the top of a gold mountain. So it says in the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra.

Moreover, because the Buddha's Dharma is apart from differentiation, there is no fixed real body. Because it is apart from differentiation, it is without a fixed coarse body. But because people are upside down, have wrong conditions and causes, they are not able to see the Buddha; as their upside-downness is cast off<sup>19</sup> and gradually (their) screens (diminish), the pure eye revolves open and then they are able to see him. The Buddha's body is minute and subtle, without coarseness or

dirt. For the sake of the multitude of beings, it manifests differently. Moreover, the multitude of beings, in former worlds, in all sorts of ways, have viewed the causes and conditions of the Buddha, their thick screens are each different. In the case of screens, it is like now seeing the form and image of a Mayna Bird, etc., in the case of thick (karma), they obtain seeing the marks and signs of the birth body giving and doing all the matters pertaining to a Buddha. Moreover, there are two types of seeing a living Buddha. Some see the inferior and others see the Buddha's superior subtleness of body. Seeing the superior subtle body also has two types. Some see the Buddha like Mt. Sumeru, etc., and others see the Buddha's limitless and boundless body. Thus when the wheel of the Dharma is turned, it supports the power of the Bodhisattva who desires to measure the Buddha's body - this is seeing the superior body. Like this is it superior to all other bodies and is able to save the multitude of beings, to destroy and remove all dirt and toil. Although there are differences in the refinement and subtleness, both act as the real. In regard to the subtle, it also has the subtle in it. And coming to the real dharmabody, the tenth stage Bodhisattva also is not able to completely see it, only the Buddha eyes of all Buddhas can completely see it. Moreover, the Buddha which all Buddhas see, is also born from the harmonious union of the multitude of conditions, its unrealness is not real. Ultimately its nature is empty, the same as dharmanature. If this body is real, then the other must be unreal. Because

this is not real, the other is not only unreal. Because the unreal is not separate, the coarse and subtle are the same. It ought, by means of the coarse body, to be able to act for the multitude of beings, to produce and make minute and subtle causes and conditions, to cause (them) to issue out of the triple world and to peacefully dwell in the Buddha Way, and moreover not to be named as coarse.

Question 6: Asking about the prediction to Buddhahood

Hui-yüan asks: The prediction of the Bodhisattva, does he receive the prediction from the real dharmabody or the prediction from the transformation(body)? If he receives the prediction from the transformation (body), then it was so that Śākyamuni received the prediction from Dipaṅkara and Maitreya received the prediction from Śākyamuni. This type is extremely broad and all (in it) is not true speech. If he received the prediction from the real dharmabody, afterwards when he becomes a Buddha, then from the company of coarseness he is eternally cut off, and this only concerns the tenth stage Bodhisattvas with their lands. Then what accomplishment and virtue is there in this? If the accomplishment and virtue is to be real, then he ought to be without a teacher and self-perceiving<sup>1</sup> - what man could he turn to? If this is without reality, then this view is false in one count. A Sūtra says:

There are some Bodhisattvas who, when they have become Buddhas, their lands entirely produce only those limited to one more birth /2/.

This then is the understanding of the tenth stage together with its land!<sup>3</sup> If there is result in the land of the tenth stage, then this is the same as the beginning point of all Bodhisattvas. One ought not say "there are some". "There are some" moreover is not real, and consequently is a thing

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<sup>1</sup> 覺 for 貴.

<sup>2</sup> ekajātipraibaddha.

<sup>3</sup> The syntax is odd and the reading problematic.

like transformation. Thus, the real dharmabody Buddha properly dwells alone in the realm of profound emptiness.

Answer 6: The prediction to Buddhahood

Kumārajīva answers: Theories of what the Bodhisattva prediction is are varied and different. There are some who say that in order to profit the multitude of beings he is given the prediction. Or that, with the corporeal Bodhisattva, in regard to limitless kalpas and the long practice of the Bodhisattva path, this acts as that prediction, only expressing his reward and settling his mind. By others it is said that in the coarseness of transformation, there is the idea of prediction - the idea in regard to the dharmabody consequently is without this matter. There are others who say that receiving the prediction is real substance<sup>1</sup>, and only the dharmabody ought to give a prediction, the transformation body should not.

Moreover<sup>2</sup>, what merit do these (predictions) have? The Thus Come One's knowledge and virtue is limitless and boundless, it profits and benefits the tenth stage, and his accomplishments are most excelling. By means of that root of power, therefore the prediction broadly pervades. As in the Perfection of Wisdom it says, "To nourish and rear limitless avaivartika<sup>3</sup>, not thus does a person hastily become a Buddha." To say without a teacher and self-perceiving, that is only not to see a heterodox path as a teacher. This meaning has been clarified above. If, as in the case of genuine

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<sup>1</sup> vastu.

<sup>2</sup> 復此 for 此復.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps a mistake for asamkhyeya kalpas?

<sup>4</sup>speech, all Buddhas are stern and majestic, the coarse matter still cannot be known - how much less the profound and mysterious meaning of the prediction? There are the multitude of beings who have not yet raised the thought (of enlightenment) and yet the Buddha gives them the prediction. There are people who appear before (him) and raise the thought (of enlightenment) and yet he does not give them the prediction. There are people, who at the time that they raise the thought, then they are given the prediction. There are people who in the body of life and death obtain the dharma of non-production and so are predicted (to Buddhahood). There are those who have thrown off the body of birth and death and received the dharmabody and obtain the prediction - like this are Mañjuśrī and others of that company. There are Bodhisattvas who limitlessly from all Buddhas receive the prediction; thus Śākyamuni from Dipaṅkara Buddha in the multitude with Hua Shang Ming Buddha and even reaching to Kāśyapa Buddha, all from <sup>5</sup>(him?) received the prediction. There are some who, in the great multitude of dharmabody Bodhisattvas, have received the prediction. These Bodhisattvas, although they were in the great multitude, that the Buddha had already given them a prediction, cannot be taken as an explanation. Why? Because they themselves knew everywhere that the body would re-

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<sup>4</sup>語 for 諸.

<sup>5</sup>從皆 for 皆從 . The sentence is not clear.

<sup>6</sup>說 for 悅 . Again, this is not clear.

ceive a prediction, they would not take one body receiving the prediction as happiness, because they also could not see the joyful affair. It was like this when the Dragon King A Na P'o Ta To received the prediction. Ajātaśatru said, "You have obtained a great benefit. In the midst of the multitude, you have been predicted to become a Buddha." The Dragon King said, "Who was predicted? If it was the body, the body is like a clay stone. If it was the mind, the mind is like an illusion. Apart from these two dharmas, there is nothing to receive the prediction. You ought to know, what benefit is there in the production of happiness? If I have received the prediction, then the entire multitude of beings also ought to receive a prediction. Because this mark is the same." Thus it is limitless and inconceivable, and one ought not take this matter (as a means) to search out difficulties. Moreover, all Buddhas (for) the body of the Bodhisattva, with limitless sound preach the Dharma and with limitless supernatural powers and skillful means, for the sake of profiting all Bodhisattvas and equally to profit the multitude of beings, give the prediction (to Buddhahood).

You have raised the difficulty saying that the multitude of beings does not correspond to the explanation which says, "there are some". The Buddha's Dharma is limitless and cannot, at one time, be exhausted; according to the time is the suitability of things - they will gradually become open and be expressed. The land of the tenth stage is the same as the final time of all Bodhisattvas, because the principle is



thus! The characteristic of all Bodhisattvas is all types of broad Buddha skill in means. Therefore formerly, in the production of vessels, one says "there are some."

As for dwelling alone in the realm of profound emptiness, if dwelling alone in profound emptiness is taken as the origin in order to convert the multitude of beings, then what blame is there in this? All the Buddhas are produced from the limitless and boundless knowledge and wisdom of skillful means, their bodies are minute and subtle, and cannot be impoverished or exhausted. Because the meritorious achievements of the multitude of beings are not yet complete, they cannot completely see the Buddha's body. Only a Buddha can see a Buddha, and is only able to do so to the utmost. Meritorious accomplishments, knowledge, wisdom, and so on are also all like this. As the four great rivers issue out from Anavatapta Mountain, all return to the great sea. Men see only the four rivers and do not see their source. Only the ones having supernatural power are able to see it. Although people do not see (it), they infer that it has a cause and must know that there is an origin. Moreover, the pure water in that pool has scant happiness for the multitude of beings, for they are unable to obtain and use it. (When water) from that pool issues out and flows to the boundaries in all directions, then it can be obtained and used. This Buddha dharmabody is also like this. When he is dwelling alone in this profound emptiness men cannot receive the benefit. If from this body, bodies are transformed without limit, then the entire multitude of beings can receive the benefit.

Question 7: Asking about the dharmabody's movement and response

Hui-yūan asks: Of the opennings of this form, none are better than the various sense organs, (and for) resulting in use, nothing is subtler than the supernatural powers. Thus it is said that a Bodhisattva without supernatural powers is like a bird without wings; he cannot soar high and roam far, and he is without the means to broadly convert the multitude of beings and to purify his Buddha land. Enlarging on this, it is said that to search for the source and to seek the origin and essentials is by way of the four elements. When the four elements have taken form, their opening is by means of the five sense organs. When the five sense organs are in use, they expand by means of the supernatural powers. When the supernatural powers are extensive, then accordingly, there is movement and response. The dharmabody Bodhisattva is without the four elements and the five sense organs. Being without the four elements and the five sense organs, then the subtleness of his supernatural powers have nothing of which to avail themselves. If the dharmabody alone moves, does not hurry and yet moves quickly, then coming to the assembly it must move in agreement with the coarse (elements), (and therefore) must have previously borrowed a vessel. The greatness of this borrowed vessel is not great in relation to the supernatural powers. Therefore the sūtras declare that the Thus Come One has all supernatural powers and wisdom, and that the supernatural powers and wisdom consequently are the sea of all-knowledge. These then are 10,000 currents assembled toget-

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her , issuing out of the dharmabody's felicitous cloud, moving the accomplishment of transformation, and the accomplishment is caused from this. Is it not thus? Is it not thus? If the supernatural powers avail themselves of the multitude of vessels in order to bring about use, on account of this, the use will be exhausted, (but) without the vessels there would be nothing of which they could avail themselves. This cause blows 10,000 different things all with one breath, and viewing (them) from the origin, where is their difference? Consequently, that which the tenth stage sees is cut off from the ones at the ninth stage - (this) really is the eye discriminating higher and lower, and only viewing governs the degree of difference.

Answer 7: The dharmabody's movement and response

Kumārajīva responds: The meaning of the dharmabody has already been clarified. As for the meaning of the characteristic of dharma, it is without either existing or not existing and other such frivolous discussion. Because it is the characteristic of solitary extinguishing, it obtains this dharma and its body is called "dharmabody". Like this the characteristic of dharma cannot be frivolously discussed, and the body so obtained also cannot be frivolously discussed as to whether it exists or does not exist. I said previously that it was without the four elements and the five sense organs, and this refers to the dharmabody of the triple world, ordinary people and coarseness. As the characteristic of dharma is solitary extinguishing and pure, the body also is minute and fine; because it is minute and fine, it is said to be non-existent, like a body of the heavenly realm<sup>1</sup>, which, if people are not caused to see it, cannot be seen. All the gods of the form realm, in regard to the heavenly realm, also are like this. So also are the people of the heavenly realm, who, when they obtain the concentration of the form realm and have great supernatural power, then the remaining men cannot see them, because of their minuteness and fineness. It is also like meditation and concentration giving raise to countless forms, which, although they always accompany people, yet can not be seen. Even though there is this minuteness, the minute-

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<sup>1</sup>  
kāmadhātu heaven.

ness, because of this, is not manifest. The four elements and the five sense organs of the Bodhisattva also are minute like this; the common people, Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas thereby are not able to see them, only all Bodhisattvas of the same rank and above can reach to the possibility of examining them and only are able to see them.

Moreover, as in the dharma of transformation, it is said that the transformation form of the heavenly realm relies on and resides in the four elements of the heavenly realm, the transformation form of the form realm relies on and resides in the four elements of the form realm. The Bodhisattva's dharmabody is like this, it similarly is transformed. Thus it separately has the supernatural powers of the minute and fine four elements and five sense organs and it is not possible by means of the obstructed mind of the triple world of even the Disciple's mind to be able to see it. If they obtain the Bodhisattva eye, which is pure and without obstacle, then they are able to see it.

Thus the "Chapter on Inconceivable Liberation" of the Hua Yen Sūtra says:

Great dharmabody Bodhisattvas of the ten directions sat in a previous assembly in front of the Buddha and heard the Dharma. At that time 1250 great Arhats sat to the left and to the right of the Buddha and were not able to see them, because in a former world they had not planted the conditions and causes to see the great dharmabody Bodhisattva assembly sitting.

Like a man in a dream who sees the sight of a garden up in heaven, when he wakes up, supposing that he is anywhere nearby.

and does not see it. Also like this is a man entering the water and fire samādhī; if one hasn't heard of it, then even though a person is together in one place, all is without being seen.<sup>2</sup>

Other people say that the supernatural powers of the dharmabody Bodhisattva do not rely on and borrow the cause of the four elements and five sense organs to have a display of use. Only the supernatural powers in the world must be caused by the four elements and five sense organs. As fire on earth comes out of wood, and in heaven lightening fire issues out from rain, and then, coming to transformational fire, moreover, it is not caused by wood to exist. You ought to know that one cannot take the fixity of the four elements and the five sense organs as the origin of the supernatural powers. Like all types of transformation bodies of the Buddha, which in the countries of the ten directions display (themselves) and do all the matters pertaining to a Buddha, (these) issue out from the Buddha's mind. The Bodhisattva's dharmabody moreover is like this; it employs its power and accordingly is able to save the multitude of beings, and so for their sakes manifests a body. A body such as this cannot be distinguished by frivolous discussion. Like the image in a mirror, only by the exterior is it known whether the visage is fair or ugly and that's all - still more is it unnecessary to frivolously discuss the reality of existing and not existing.

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This last part is obscure.

As for your statement that the supernatural powers avail themselves of the multitude of vessels in order to be moved to response and use, and, on account of this, use will be exhausted, but that without the vessels, there would be nothing of which they could avail themselves, of the vessels whereby the sage leads sentient beings, there are none which are not used by the supernatural powers - all of this is explained in the beginning of the supernatural powers<sup>3</sup>. (In the) matters of the supernatural powers, some have accomplishment and practice which is completed, and some have rewards and retribution which is obtained. If it is a case of obtaining by reward and retribution, then it does not rely on the accomplishment of karma, (but) responses to things according to the meaning - there is no obtaining of rewards, it relies on the power of meditation and then there is that which is used. If the coarseness and fineness which the ninth and tenth stages see is not the same, this then is different. Although the body which the tenth stage Bodhisattva sees is subtle, it also is not fixed. Why? Only that which all Buddhas see, well, this is the fixed dharmabody. If that which the tenth stage sees is real, then that which the ninth stage sees ought to be false. But the matter is not thus. Therefore, that which is seen has the pure and the coarse, the shallow and the profound as different. And coming to the srota-āpanna, he only see the Characteristic of Reality of the body, the tenth

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<sup>3</sup> 通 only.

stage great Bodhisattvas also identically see it. Thus when a mosquito reaches the bottom of the great sea and when Rāhu-asura also reaches the bottom, although what they have obtained is the same, there is a difference in deepness and shallowness. The deepness and shallowness being different, consequently is because the marks of the Buddha's dharmabody are perceived as clear or<sup>4</sup> coarse. People of the Disciples and even (those) beginning the habits and practices of the Bodhisattvas, obtain the Characteristic of Reality depending on the 16 foot body. There are others who, having the complete and firm power of the Bodhisattva's meritorious accomplishments and sincere and genuine faith, thereby see the body which exceeds 16 feet. The Characteristic of Reality is obtained in accordance with attachment to form. As the Mi Chi Sūtra says:

The avaivartika Bodhisattva, who has obtained the patience of non-production, the Buddha body which he sees is limitless and boundless, that which is correct and perfect in the world, the first without compare. Moreover, he does not take hold of marks, does not produce the attachment of desire, and, relying on this body, has already obtained the most profound samādhis, dhāraṇīs, etc. Thus this becomes more superior.

As in the Disciple's Dharma, what there is is not the same. The śrota-āpanna desires to obtain the sakṛdāgāmin path, he forsakes the root by which the great path is obtained. Even so he is not upside down, because with the sakṛdāgāmin path there is minute and subtle great profit. Because he is like

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<sup>4</sup> Problematic reading.



a person, who, for the sake of great profit, throws off small profit. The Bodhisattva from one rank to another rank moreover is like this. Although (when) he obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas the reality of the affair is fixed, however, obtaining one rank he throws off the (previous) rank, because by means of the original rank he is dull-witted and does not understand clearly what is not minute and subtle.<sup>5</sup> These two both advance the Buddha path and are not named as different or the same, because they do not issue forth from the Characteristic of Reality. The Characteristic of Reality then is the Buddha without separating the different (matters) large and small. The Bodhisattva's discriminating the Buddha body, that which he sees is different.

Question 8: Does the dharmabody Buddha exhaust original habits?

Hui-yüan asks: The Ta Chih Tu Lun says that the Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas exhausting the outflows is comparable to the smoke and charcoal remaining after burning grass and trees, therefore their power is inferior. The Buddha is like the fire which burns at the end of the kalpa, in which all is exhausted, without solid remainings or vapors. The Śāstra also says that when the Bodhisattva reaches the patience of dharmas and obtains a pure body, he exhausts the vexations, and when he becomes a Buddha, then he exhausts the remaining emanations. This being the case, it is only after again surpressing (the remaining emanations) that the matter is finished. The kalpa does not burn twice, how can (they) be removed? If it is as the Lotus Sūtra says, then the Arhats, in the end, are the same as the Bodhisattvas. Between them, can it be taken as a degree of difference that the vexations do not reside (with) the remaining emanations? Moreover, the three animals crossing the river, what was aimed at by the three marksmen, (are these) the same as the present case of the great removing? These matters are all heard of in the sūtras, (but) there is no great classification of the position of the original meaning of the words. Therefore they can be taken with doubts. Moreover, I want to ask, the real dharmabody Buddha, when it exhausts the original habits and the residual emanations, by means of which mental state is this done? By the 34 mental states? By the nine without hindrances and the nine liberations? By the one without hindrance and the one liberation?

If by the 34 mental states, the vexations have previously been exhausted and now only the residual emanations remain to be exhausted. This does not correspond to what is said in the Disciples' Sūtras. In what is named as the nine without hindrances and the nine liberations, there are nine kinds of vexations; because this pair of roads cuts (them) off, they merely do not have this use.<sup>1</sup> The vexations and remaining emanations are not that which is united (in the) outflows and bonds of the triple world, (but) the remaining impurities are light and minute, and are not even one kind - how much less are there the nine! If it is a matter of the one without hindrance and the one liberation, then it is counted in the triple world's nine positions and all ought to have remaining emanations and not be counted<sup>2</sup> as acting (only) in the upper positions. If, from the position of non-use up, the previous common paths of the world have been cut off, now there are still doubts in regard to the upper positions. How is it that the dharmas without outflows and the world's common road both cut off the nine kinds of bonds, because (while) the accomplishment is the same, the controlling is different, (and yet) there is this meaning? To expell the original habits and the residual emanations is still not to have reached the fire without outflows. How much more the world's common road? (When) this achievement is profound,

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<sup>1</sup> The translation of the sentence is problematic.

<sup>2</sup> 作 for 偏.

then the control is deep, (when) fate is impoverished, then the burning is minute, this principle is certainly correct. Calling to mind the Dharmabody Sūtra, there ought to be a complete explanation - in the remaining emanations do some have a degree of difference? This is what I desire to hear.

Answer 8: Concerning the dharmabody Buddha exhausting the original habits

Kumārajīva responds: The Disciples think that the Buddha, the Arhats and the Pratyekabuddhas have altogether obtained the supernatural power of the knowledge that the outflows are exhausted<sup>1</sup>. If they have cut off all the vexations, moreover, there is no difference (between them). Therefore, the exhaustion of the world's fire kalpa is taken as an example. Also, because when the Bodhisattva comes to sit in the seat of enlightenment, then he cuts off the vexations and therefore there is only the distinction of the difference between habits with remainder and without remainder. As the Mahāyāna Sūtras say, the Bodhisattva who has obtained the patience of non-produced dharmas cuts off all vexations and completes the six supernatural powers. However, what all the Śāstra teachers have understood (by this) is not the same. Some say that if the Bodhisattva cuts off the vexations and obtains the supernatural power of the knowledge of the exhaustion of outflows, then he is the same as the Arhat without outflows. That the Arhat whose outflows are exhausted never returns to birth, the matter is not thus. Why? Because the Arhat<sup>2</sup> has not yet cut off the habits and emanations and still he realizes nirvāṇa; he is without the great compassionate mind and so is not able to return to life. Be-

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<sup>1</sup> Adding 漏盡通.

<sup>2</sup> 阿羅漢 for 菩薩.

cause the Bodhisattva is without these two (ways of acting), he understands birth and birth is not cut off. Other people say that when the Bodhisattva obtains the patience of non-produced dharmas, the triple world's screens and vexations and even habits and residual emanations are all exhausted, and the dharmabody Bodhisattva is separated from having bonds and instigators which are not yet extinguished. Even so, they do not hinder the habits and practices of the Buddha path. They are like a thief who is bound in prison - although he is not yet dead, he is unable to do anything. These bonds and instigators of the Bodhisattva moreover, in every stage are cut off, until he reaches the seat of enlightenment when he really desires to become a Buddha, and then they are cut off, extinguished and exhausted. The meaning is like that which is explained by the lamp illustration above. Thus the meaning is that consequently (they) are without that which interferes or hinders. It is because these are not extinguished that the Bodhisattva (is able to) fully complete the tenth stage. As for it being said that the dharmabody Bodhisattva cuts off the vexations, this saying is also true, because he cuts off the vexations of the ordinary people of the triple world. That the dharmabody Bodhisattva does not cut off the vexations, this saying is also true, because there are still the fine and minute vexations of the Bodhisattva. It is like there being darkness and, when the lamp is lit, there being brightness, (then) there is that which can be seen. If there is darkness, when the second lamp is lit, then its brightness

increases the benefit. You ought to know, if because at first there is only minute darkness, (or) if at first there is no darkness, then when the second lamp is lit, it should not make any difference.

Moreover, the 34 mental states, 9 paths without hindrances and 9 paths of liberation all are not things of which the Buddha spoke. Why? Because in the Āgamas, the Vinaya, and the Mahāyāna, these are not spoken of. Only the Abhidharma makes this division. If the Buddha had spoken of these one ought (to be able) to search out the beginning and end, and (then) to raise difficulties in order to penetrate through them and not (simply) to receive (the commentators') discussions.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the 34 mental states, nine without hindrances and nine paths of liberation (were given) in order for people to penetrate through to the meaning, and therefore are spoken of in the Ta Chih Tu Lun in order to distinguish the Buddha from the two vehicles. In all the Mahāyāna Sūtras it says that the Buddha, by means of one moment of wisdom, cuts off all the vexations and habits, thereby knowing what ought to be known and seeing what ought to be seen, there being nothing which is not penetrated through to. This one moment of wisdom comes from the cultivation of habits in limitless kalpas up until the present and is supreme in understanding and benefit. It is not necessary for it to rely on the power of the remaining mental states. If the Disciples,

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<sup>3</sup> Problematic reading.

Pratyekabuddhas and all Bodhisattvas have knowledge and wisdom which is not able to be like this, then they use the nine paths without hindrances and the nine liberations because of this dull-wittedness. It is like a person with a dull knife and a weak hand - it takes alot of hacking before he cuts through. But if a person has a large sword and great strength, then he cuts through at one stroke. Like this is the final wisdom of the Buddha as he sits in the seat of enlightenment, it is the highest profit without there being anything able to surpass it. At one time he cuts off all the vexations and exhausts them forever without remainder. Because people do not recognize<sup>4</sup> this, they are only called "residual emanations." Moreover, all<sup>5</sup> conditioned dharmas, because they all are entrangling and degraded, the multitude of causes join together and then there is creation. The final diamond<sup>6</sup> wisdom consequently is not thus. Because it has great power, it only uses marks to correspond to all production of thought, mental conditions and dharma states, it does not need the power of remaining mental states. Therefore (these mental states) are spoken of in regard to the principle as a convience. They are like the ordinary people's bonds and instigators, habits and subtle emanations, which have no ability in the matter of great compassion and moreover cause a smallness in the karmic

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<sup>4</sup>識 for 議.

<sup>5</sup>諸 for 議.

<sup>6</sup>vajra.



marks of body and speech (and for) there to be different marks which give raise to other impure mental states.<sup>7</sup> The Bodhisattva's bonds and instigators are also like this. Their power declines, and although they are not able to give raise to evil karma, they still detain the Bodhisattva, but do not cause disease when it comes to the Buddha path. Therefore it is said that when the dharma body Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha, he cuts off the vexations and habits. Formerly, I heard that there was a Bodhisattva Abhidharma which, in every stage, distinguished all the Bodhisattva bonds and instigators and even his meritorious accomplishments, even as the "Great Ranking of the Tenth Stage" chapter of the Greater Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra speaks about renouncing so much dharma and obtaining so much dharma. From before until today, (I) would not have said that this age did not need a work of the Bodhisattva Abhidharma, and then, (when you) came to ask for a minute examination, I earnestly looked into the different forms of the remaining emanations. At present we do not yet have this Sūtra and it is not possible to use it for discrimination.<sup>8</sup> Therefore I cannot really make (a detailed) reply.

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<sup>7</sup> Problematic reading. <sup>8</sup> 作曲.

Question 13: Asking about Thusness, Dharmanature and the Reality Limit

Hui-yüan asks: The sūtras explain dharmanature and then say that (it does not matter) whether there is a Buddha or there is not a Buddha, because the nature dwells in thusness. They explain thusness and then clarify receiving a prediction to become a Thus Come One. They speak about the reality limit<sup>1</sup> and then say that the reality limit does not receive testing. These three statements are each different - could I hear the meaning? I would also like to ask, the dharmanature endures eternally - is it non-existent or existent? If it is non-existent like space, then it is associated with being cut off and it ought not be said that nature abides. If it exists and endures eternally, then it falls into the "eternal" view. If it is non-existent and moreover endures forever, then it falls into the nihilist view. If it is not existent and not non-existent, then it must be different from existence and non-existence. To distinguish between them and connect them, then one gets insight that is exceedingly deep and exceedingly mysterious. Considering the limit of existence and non-existence, it is possible to obtain the conditions and causes.

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<sup>1</sup>  
bhūtakoti.

Answer 13: Thusness, Dharmanature and the Reality Limit

Kumārajīva answers: These three ideas have already been explained in the section above on the patience of non-production. The Ta Chih Tu Lun extensively speaks about these matters. The so-called path of cutting off all speech, extinguishing all thought and practice, is called the Characteristic of Reality of all dharmas. This case of the Characteristic of Reality of all dharmas takes (the names) thusness, dharmanature, and the reality limit. In these there is no existing or non-existing, and in addition they cannot be obtained. How much less existence or non-existence? Because of the division of recollection and thought, each merely had the contended points of existence and non-existence. If it is in accordance with the characteristic of the Buddha's Dharma of solitary extinguishing, then it is without frivolous discussion. If existence and non-existence are frivolously discussed<sup>1</sup> then this is separate from the Buddha's Dharma. In the Ta Chih Tu Lun, every kind of condition and cause destories existence and destories non-existence. One should not grasp dharmas which have been destoried and then take them as difficulties. If I answer again, moreover, it will not be different from the first meaning. If I answered by means of another meaning, then it would not be the Buddha's meaning and then would be the same as heterodoxo.

Now I will again summarily explain. All character-

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<sup>1</sup> 論 for 證.

istics of dharma are named in accordance with the time. If, in accordance with reality, one obtained the characteristic of all dharmanature, then all thought and discussion would not be able to destroy it, and it would be called as thusness. Like this is the characteristic of dharma, it is not that which is made by the power of thought. The intelligence of all Bodhisattvas investigates all dharmas as marks. Why? Because thusness is the mark of solitary extinguishing, which is impossible to take hold of and impossible to let go of. Consequently one knows the mark of the thusness of all dharmas, because (their) nature is self-so. Like the firm nature of earth, the wet nature of water, the hot nature of fire, the moving nature of wind; fire's flame ascends to do what it does, water flows down to do what it does, the wind comes and goes to do what it does, thus all dharma-nature, the nature of self-so-ness, is called dharmanature. It enters thusness and dharmanature. Still less (is there reason) to search for a superior matter, at that time the mind is settled, it has exhausted its extreme limit, this is called the reality limit. Therefore the origin of these things is one, but they are called three. As the road of dharma is one, but because it is divided into upper, middle and lower, it is termed as the three vehicles. The beginning is thusness, the middle is dharmanature, and the end is the reality limit. The reality limit is the top, dharmanature is the middle, and thusness is the bottom, because this is in accordance with the power of viewing and so there are distinctions.

Moreover, the similiar sounds of the Indian words are taken as a name. Therefore it is said that the one who knows the thusness of all dharmas is called the Thus Come One, as the one who, because he correctly and completely knows <sup>2</sup> all dharmas is called the Buddha. Moreover, in the Sūtras of the Small Vehicle, thusness and dharmanature are explained. As in the Samyuktāgama, a bhikṣu asked the Buddha, "World Honored One, these dharmas of 22 conditions and causes, were they produced by the Buddha, or were they produced by the remainder of the people?" The Buddha said, "Bhikṣu, these 22 conditions and causes, are not produced by me and moreover, are not produced by others." If there is a Buddha or if there is not a Buddha, all dharmas - thusness, dharmanature and dharma-abode <sup>3</sup> - long endure in the world. As it is said, because this dharma exists, that dharma exists. Because this dharma arises, that dharma arises. Ignorance is the condition and cause of percep- <sup>4</sup> tion, and then, coming to birth is the condition and cause of old age and death, the condition and cause of all misery and trouble. Therefore, if ignorance is extinguished, practice is extinguished, and then because reaching old age and death is extinguished, all misery and trouble is extinguished. The Buddha, for the sake of humans, merely explains and manifests (these things), as the sun manifests and illumines the ten

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<sup>2</sup>  
samyaksambuddha.

<sup>3</sup>  
住 for 位 . bhūtatahatā, dharmasthititā.

<sup>4</sup>  
viññāna.

thousand things - long and short, fair and foul, are not that which the sun produces. The Sūtras of the Disciples say that the world always has the dharma of birth and death, that there was no time in which it did not exist. This is what is called, whether there is a Buddha or there is not a Buddha, the mark long endures. The meaning of the reality limit is only explained in the dharma of the Great Vehicle. By means of dharmanature limitless as the great sea's water, all saints thereby obtain their knowledge and power, Because the knowledge and power of a follower of the two vehicles is weak, he is not able to deeply enter into dharmanature and then take hold of its proof. The proof they know is like the principle of the limit, in which reality is the minuteness and fineness of dharmas, they are deeply satiated with the conditioned, and determined to take this as reality, without (there being) anything superior to it. But all Bodhisattvas have great wisdom and power, and deeply enter into the dharmanature, not in accordance with reaching it as proof. Although they<sup>5</sup> deeply penetrate, moreover, they are even more without matters of difference. It is like one who drinks (from) the great sea, there may be a difference in amount (drunk), but even so it is without there being a difference in the (basic) matter. Moreover, all Bodhisattvas, in their vehicle of the patience of compliance, have not yet obtained the patience of non-produced dharmas, they view the Characteristic of Reality of all dharmas and at that

time call them "thusness". If they have already obtained the patience of non-produced dharmas, because they deeply view thusness, at that time they change the name to "dharmanature". If they sit in the seat of enlightenment and prove the dharmanature, the dharmanature changes its name to "reality limit". If they have not yet proved the reality limit, because they still have entered dharmanature, they are named as Bodhisattvas, (although) they do not yet have the holy fruit. Because when they come to the seat of enlightenment, all Buddhas, by means of all knowledge and limitless dharmanature, at that time then issue out of the Bodhisattva path, in order to prove the Buddha path.

Question 18: Asking about the meaning of life which is made to endure for a long time

Hui-yüan asks: A sūtra says, "Knowing the four supernatural powers, extensively cultivating habits and practices, it is possible to obtain life which is made to endure for a long time, one kalpa and more." Moreover, Subuti requested the World Honored One <sup>1</sup> to make his life endure for as many kalpas as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. Since there is this dharma, there ought to be people who practice it. I would like to ask, do all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas finally have life which is made to endure for a long time or not? If the answer is that they do, then is this the dharmabody or the transformation body? If it is the dharmabody, then the dharmabody <sup>2</sup> consequently has a life span without exhaustion, not limited by the ordinary length of life, but not necessarily one which is made to endure for a long time. If it is the transformation body, then the transformation body consequently corresponds to the time of extinguishing; if the time is long, then it should not be short, if the time is short, then it should not be long. What would be the point of a life which is made to endure for a long time? I also want to ask, length of life has a naturally determined limit. Is the length of life a thing which is in the realm of transformation and yet is made to endure, the days corresponding to that which does not tarry? Time cannot be delayed, please explain how some-

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<sup>1</sup> 尊 for 為.

<sup>2</sup> 壽 for 算.



thing can be caused to endure. If the three marks can be stopped in the middle, then the mark of production suddenly would be the same as nirvāna. I do not know whether or not in a foreign language there really is life which is made to endure for a long time or not. If one takes the increase of numbers as life which is made to endure for a long time, then the explanation loses its purpose. Also, if one obtains the Extinguishing and Exhausting Samādhi, when this meditation is entered into, then one passes through the kalpa without transformation and the great fire is not able to burn one, and the great sea is not able to drown one. This then is the power of samādhi, to independently cause life to endure for a long time. Now, this is what I have doubts about, I do not know where the root of the lifespan is located<sup>3</sup>. Is it located in the mind or is it located in the form, or is it located in both form and mind? If it is located<sup>3</sup> in the mind, and consequently the mark of the mind is extinguished, the extinguishing leaves no where for it to reside. If it is located in the form, and consequently the form dwells in accordance with transformation, time cannot be delayed. How is this to be understood?<sup>4</sup> The Li Shih I Shan Sūtra says:

(If) it is not constantly transformed, (then) it is not governed by the ten powers. If the governing is not by the ten powers, then the completion of the supernatural powers can be known.

This question was already prepared in relation to a previous

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<sup>3</sup> 寄 for 壽.

<sup>4</sup> 明 for 時.

chapter. If one principle is enlarged and explained, two moreover will be gotten rid of together.

Answer 18: The meaning of life which is made to endure for a long time

Kumārajīva responds: As for your statement that there is life which is made to endure for a long time, one kalpa and more, there has been no such thing said. The ones preaching are in error<sup>1</sup>. As (in) the Long Āgama and the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, Ānanda says to the Buddha, according to actual proof, "From the World Honored One I have heard that if one cultivates well the habits of ṛddhipāda, this person, if he desires a span of life of one kalpa, or if less than one kalpa - can this be accomplished?"<sup>2</sup> As for the Mahāyāna Sūtras saying that if one desires a span of life as many kalpas as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, this is a hypothetical statement, for in the end you do not attribute it to anyone. A case of using this dharma is like the Arhat Piṇḍola-bhāradvāja, who, because he cultivated well ṛddhipāda, his span of life has reached up until the present without being exhausted. Because he displayed ṛddhipāda and therefore obtained a sandalwood almsbowl, the Buddha because of this, took him in line. I have only heard of this one person who practiced the use of this dharma, I have never heard of any others. Moreover, all the Arhats view the body like a disease, like an abscess, like an evil rebellious thief, like an Arhat who

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<sup>1</sup> 妄 for 生.

<sup>2</sup> Neither of the two suggested final characters, 所 or 耶 quite seem to work here. One would prefer for this to be a statement and not a question.

retreats from the Dharma - many have harmed themselves. How much less would they purposely desire to cause a long span of life? Because the mind is embodied without the thought of self, and therefore profoundly plucks out all the roots of craving, and because of the profit of the utter peace, calm, and cessation of nirvāna, he does not take pleasure in causing there to be long abiding. Even though they abide in the conditions and causes of a former world, (when) the body is exhausted, then they cease (to be). Moreover, the dharmabody and the transformation body have not had their different characteristics and states firmly differentiated by the sūtras. Among the Disciples it is said that the body<sup>3</sup> of transformation is without thought, idea, knowledge, cold, heat and other such awarenesses; its nature is without a sign and it is just what the eyes can see. For the sake of a particular matter, it is manifest and (when this) matter is verified, then (the body) is extinguished. Like this is the body, it is without a foundation, and so there is no meaning to causing it to live for a long time. There are two types of dharmabody. The first is the 37 limbs of enlightenment, and so on, all (of these) holy dharmas. The second is the Tripataka Sūtras, etc. These both are not (real) bodies, and are not (actual) life, and so cannot have the meaning of life which is caused to endure for a long time. As for the statement that this body ought to be that which is obtained from karmic practice in a

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<sup>3</sup> Adding 身.

former world; if, for the sake of a great condition and cause, one desires to cause it to endure for a long time, then one can obtain in accordance with the desire. In the Mahāyāna, the characteristic <sup>4</sup> of the dharmabody, its condition and cause, have already been completely explained. Now I will make <sup>5</sup> a brief explanation. There are two types of Bodhisattva dharmabodies. The first kind, when the tenth stage Bodhisattva obtains the sūraṅgama samādhi, causes the bonds and instigators of the Bodhisattva to become minute and slight. This person's supernatural power is independent and is similar to the Buddha's and this is called the dharmabody. In the ten directions (the Bodhisattva) manifests a body of transformation which saves people, and this is called the transformation body. Accordingly, the case of seeing the transformation body, investigating and searching out its roots and origins, is taken as the dharmabody. Therefore, the ordinary people and small (vehicle people) call it the transformation body; a person like this, whose supernatural powers are without hindrance, why must he cultivate well ṛddhipāda? The second case, (when the Bodhisattva) has already obtained the patience of non-production, he sheds the body of karmic result and obtains the body of the Bodhisattva's pure karmic practice, and moreover, this body is within his own division of thought <sup>6</sup>, and is able to be independent. If he is outside this division,

<sup>4</sup>相 for 想.

<sup>5</sup>作 for 者.

<sup>6</sup>於自分意. for 自於分憶.

then he is not able to be independent and without hindrances. This Bodhisattva, if he desires to cultivate all the habits of rddipāda, can also have a span of life as many kalpas long as there are grains of sand in the Ganges. If a person has this power, he does not rely on the four elements for use, but if he is without power, then he must rely (on them). In the beginning, entering into the dharmabody, the Bodhisattva moreover is like this. The strength of the supernatural powers have not yet been completed, (but) if rddhipāda is cultivated, then (the Bodhisattva) obtains the doing of that which is in accordance with his desires.

Also in the section on rddipāda, it says that if a person desires a long life of one kalpa, then he obtains rddipāda. It does not say that life is made to endure for a long time. As it says in the Abhidharma, there was an Arhat who, by means of giving, obtained great happiness and virtue, and who, by the power of his original vow, turned around and sought to increase his life span and then obtained in accordance with his desires. Why? This person, in regard to all meditations and concentrations obtained the power of independence, the wisdom resulting from a vow<sup>7</sup>, the "without debate"<sup>8</sup> samādhi, and utmost concentration, etc., all of these were comprehended and penetrated, (and when) the conditions and causes of the lifespan of the previous world were about to be exhausted, (then), in order to profit and

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<sup>7</sup> pranidhi-jñāna.

<sup>8</sup> aranā samādhi.

benefit the multitude of beings, he (took) the conditions and causes of his remaining happiness and turned it around to seek a long span of life and then he obtained what he desired. Like the dānapati who desired to give a bhikṣu many kinds of foodstuffs, but this bhikṣu had the condition and cause of wandering and so did not need these things. Excellently he instructs the dānapati saying, "You view giving with a good mind. Can you cause this food to be as articles of clothing?" And he obtained what he desired. Moreover, cultivating well rddhipāda is also like this. Even if one did not, in a former world, (on the basis of) happiness and virtue, seek a long span of life, because one has obtained the dharma without outflows, one has equally cultivated the extremely profound and good foundations which have outflows, because cultivating the power of the extremely profound and good foundations which have outflows, then obtains the reward and retribution of an increase in the span of life. Being without outflows though is being without reward and retribution. Being able to cause that which has outflows to be purified and diminish moreover is to seize a great result. Also, because of the conditions and causes of the power of the Extinguishing and Exhausting Samādhi, one passes beyond the life principle, then the body consequently can suffer injury, without the body being used, and when one arises from concentration, then it will cease to exist. If one enters into the remainder of the meditation,

then it will be without these matters. Like a bhikṣu who desired to enter the Extinguishing and Exhausting Samādhi and gave raise to the thought of these conditions and causes - he vowed that<sup>10</sup> when the bolt and mallet were struck, at that time<sup>11</sup> he would rise from meditation. There was a thief who came and destroyed the monastery, and during 12 years it was without the sound of bolt and mallet. This bhikṣu was still in concentration. Afterwards the dānapati returned and restored and established the monastery, struck the bolt and mallet, and at that time this bhikṣu then came to awareness and immediately died.

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<sup>10</sup> Reading 願力打撻推。

<sup>11</sup> Adding 時。



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