

The Conception of "nien-fo" in the Ching-
t'u-shih-i-lun (Treatise on the Ten Doubts
Concerning the Pure Land)



By

Bee Leng Tan, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

THE CONCEPTION OF "NIEN-FO" IN THE CHING-T'U-SHIH-
I-LUN (TREATISE ON THE TEN DOUBTS CONCERNING THE PURE
LAND).

MASTER OF ARTS (1979)

Religious Studies

McMaster University

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Conception of "nien-fo"
 in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun
 (Treatise on the Ten Doubts
 Concerning the Pure Land)

AUTHOR: Bee Leng Tan, B.A.

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Graeme MacQueen

NUMBER OF PAGES: iv, 122.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the conception of "nien-fo" (literally, "thinking of the Buddha") in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun, an eighth century Chinese text on the Buddha Amitābha and his Western Pure Land.

Nien-fo has always been an important part of religious practice for many different schools of Buddhism in China, especially for the T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land schools. In T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, the nien-fo samādhi is considered as a means to accomplish concentration and insight; it is but one among the various methods of meditation. Considered as such, the nien-fo practice implies that salvation is achieved through the practitioner's own diligent cultivation of mind. On the other hand, the Pure Land nien-fo samādhi is essentially devout invocation of the name of Amitābha Buddha. Nien-fo as invocation emphasizes salvation as an act of the Great Compassion of Amitābha. The concern of this thesis is to clarify the link between these fundamental meanings of nien-fo in the context of one particular text in which both forms of the practice appear.

The first chapter gives an overview of the T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land practices of nien-fo based upon a careful analysis of relevant passages taken from standard works of the two schools.

The second chapter undertakes a thorough examination of the nien-fo concept in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun.

The thesis concludes with a look at the relationship

between the meditational and devotional paths to salvation in Chinese Buddhism. The two paths are essentially related, expressing two aspects of the bodhisattva path.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE " <u>NIEN-FO</u> " IN THE T'IEN-T'AI AND PURE LAND SCHOOLS.....	5
CHAPTER TWO " <u>NIEN-FO</u> " IN THE <u>CHING-T'U-SHIH-I-LUN</u>	30
CONCLUSION.....	70
TRANSLATION <u>CHING-T'U-SHIH-I-LUN</u> (TREATISE ON THE TEN DOUBTS CONCERNING THE PURE LAND).....	76
FOOTNOTES.....	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	120

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Dr. Graeme MacQueen and Dr. Koichi Shinohara for their invaluable assistance and personal concern for the successful completion of this thesis and Dr. Jan Yun-hua for his helpful suggestions.

INTRODUCTION.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the interpretation of the nien-fo (念佛) concept in one particular text belonging to the Chinese Buddhist tradition, namely the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun (淨土十疑論) or Treatise on the Ten Doubts Concerning the Pure Land,¹ which is attributed to the T'ien-t'ai master Chih-i (智顗 538-597). The term nien-fo usually requires the translations, "Buddha-recollection", "Buddha-meditation" or "Buddha-recitation". It is, thus, a form of religious practice which takes place in a relationship with the Buddha. What is the meaning of this relationship? In Chinese Buddhism this relationship has been variously conceived, but we may note two dominant trends. First, there are those who, emphasizing the wisdom attribute of the Buddha, tend to interpret the relationship in terms of mind (hsin 心). The Buddha is said to have attained wisdom while deep in meditation. Since it is so, the Buddhist path could be conceived as a path of meditation. In his wisdom, the Buddha teaches that man's basic problem is the mind that continuously clings to that

which is known as "ego" (我). Therefore, true liberation is cutting through that basic fixation and it is by the power of wisdom that the mind is able to free itself from attachment. For such followers of the wisdom tradition, relating to the Buddha means knowing one's own mind, which one has in oneself all the time. It means one's mind is the path and in meditation one works on the mind to awaken it to see for itself the truth which the Buddha teaches in his wisdom. Hence, there is naturally a need for great emphasis on the practice of meditation. One such sect which takes meditation and wisdom to be the two pillars of Buddhist practice is the T'ien-t'ai school with its very comprehensive system of mind cultivation known as chih-kuan (止觀) or cessation and contemplation. On the other hand, there are those who, emphasizing the compassion attribute of the Buddha, tend to interpret the relationship in terms of faith (hsin 信). In his compassion, the Buddha has vowed to save all suffering beings. The emphasis in this case is always on the faithfulness, the trustworthiness, the reliability of the Buddha who will not abandon any suffering being. For such followers of the devotional tradition, relating to the Buddha means resolving to have complete faith in the power of the bodhisattva's vows and to allow himself to be saved by the Buddha. The Pure Land school is a classic representative of devotional Buddhism.

Since the nien-fo practice has its roots in both the meditation and devotional traditions of Buddhism, the term itself, nien-fo, has come to refer sometime to devout invocation of the

name of Amitābha Buddha, and at other times to mental contemplation of Amitābha. When nien-fo is practised as mental contemplation, as it is in the T'ien-t'ai school, it is understood as a means to accomplish concentration and insight. Considered as such, the nien-fo practice implies that salvation is the outcome of the practitioner's diligent cultivation of mind. On the other hand, nien-fo as invocation, which is the central form of practice in the Pure Land school, emphasizes that salvation takes place in a relationship with the Buddha Amitābha that is entirely dependent on Amitābha's saving action. Considering that nien-fo has this dual connotation it becomes worthwhile to ask the question whether, during its various phases of development in Chinese Buddhism, there has been drawn a dividing line between meditative nien-fo and invocative nien-fo or whether the tradition as a whole has tried to see them as one so that on closer examination, we cannot separate them. It is the purpose of the present paper to address this intriguing question to the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun, in which both forms of nien-fo practice appear.

It is the thesis of this paper that the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun, when it uses the term nien-fo, does not want to tell the reader that meditative nien-fo is essentially different from invocative nien-fo; it wants to tell the reader that although the two meanings are distinguishable, invocation or recitation cannot be abstracted from meditation. The idea that one could discuss invocative nien-fo without any reference to meditative nien-fo is foreign to this particular text. At the very most we could say that the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun is seeing them as two sides of

one relationship. On the basis of such detailed study of the nien-fo concept in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun, an attempt will be made to reflect upon yet another question central to Chinese Buddhism, namely whether these two conceptions of nien-fo indicate that there are, in Chinese Buddhism, two separate paths to salvation, or whether there is but a single path?

This paper will consist of the present introduction, the main body in two chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter will give a brief sketch of the T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land understanding of nien-fo based upon careful analysis of relevant passages taken from standard works of the two schools. The second chapter will contain a detailed analysis of the nien-fo concept in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. And, in the conclusion, an attempt will be made to discuss the nature of the relationship between religious faith on the one hand and Buddhist meditation and philosophy on the other. The thesis work will also include an English translation of the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun.²

CHAPTER ONE

"NIEN-FO" IN THE T'IENT-T'AI AND PURE LAND SCHOOLS

Nien-fo in the T'ien-t'ai school.

Here we will discuss two of four methods of cultivation which Chih-i, the Great Dharma Master who is responsible for the systematization of T'ien-t'ai doctrines and meditation, expounds in his Mo-ho-chih-kuan (摩訶止觀)³, namely ch'ang-hsing-san-mei (常行三昧) or Constantly Walking Samādhi and ch'ang-tso-san-mei (常坐三昧) or Constantly Sitting Samādhi. Both these methods entail some form of nien-fo practice.

The main T'ien-t'ai text from which we will borrow materials is Chih-i's Mo-ho-chih-kuan. In addition, we will make use of two other T'ien-t'ai texts, the T'ung-meng-chih-kuan (童蒙止觀)⁴ and the Wu-fang-pien-nien-fo-men (五方便念佛門)⁵. Although the two former writings are genuine works of Chih-i, the last is suspect. Tradition attributes the Wu-fang-pien-nien-fo-men to Chih-i but modern scholars are of the opinion that it is not his work. Nevertheless, since the T'ien-t'ai tradition reveres the text as Chih-i's we may regard it as one representative of later T'ien-t'ai thought. In addition to the three T'ien-t'ai texts we will look at two sūtras, namely the Pan-chou-san-mei-ching

(般舟三昧經 Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra)⁶ which was translated by Lokarakṣa in 178 A.D., and the Wen-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-ching (文殊師利所說經)⁷ which was translated by Man-t'o-lo-hsien (曼陀羅仙) in 503 A.D.

According to Chih-i, the method of doing the Constantly Walking Samādhi comes from the Pan-chou-san-mei-ching which describes the samādhi practice called pan-chou-san-mei, and that of doing the Constantly Sitting Samādhi comes from the two sūtras called the Wen-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-ching and the Wen-shu-shih-li-wen-ching. The two sūtras describe the samādhi practice called i-hsing-san-mei (一行三昧) or One Practice Samādhi.

The discussion will be divided into three sections:

- i) Pan-chou-san-mei.
- ii) I-hsing-san-mei.
- iii) Ch'ang-hsing-san-mei and ch'ang-tso-san-mei.

Pan-chou-san-mei.

Pan-chou-san-mei is a method of viewing Amitābha. The practice requires the practitioner to engage in nien-fo for a specified number of days, meditating intently on the name of Amitābha as well as on the body of the Buddha. If successfully practised, it would make the Buddha appear before the eyes of the practitioner. To quote from the Pan-chou-san-mei-ching,

"He who upholds this method of practice will instantly attain samādhi, and the Buddhas of the present will all be standing before him. If there be a bhikṣu or bhikṣuṇī, upāsakā or upāsikā who practises according to the method,

and upholds the complete and entire set of precepts and, staying in one sphere, practises (nien 念), then Amitābha Buddha of the Western Land will presently become manifest... That Buddhaland, which is myriads of Buddha-lands away from here, is called su-mo-ti (須摩提). With one mind, practise nien on it for either one day and one night or seven days and seven nights. After seven days have passed he will see it... 'What method should one uphold so that one may get to be born into the land?' The Buddha Amitābha informs, 'As for desiring to come and be born: If a person should think (nien) of my name uninterruptedly he will then get to come and be born.' The Buddha says, 'Because one thinks intently (專念) one gets to be reborn.' He should constantly think (常念) of the Buddha-body as having thirty-two signs and eighty kinds of marks, with numerous light rays shining forth brightly and brilliantly, as being incomparably upright and straight..."⁸

From the above quote we learn that rebirth is obtained by thinking uninterruptedly of the Buddha's name. Interestingly, it is the word, "nien" (念) and not "ch'eng" (稱) that the sūtra associates with the Buddha's name. As for the Buddha's name, one could think of his name either vocally or mentally or both. This sūtra emphasizes the mental aspect of the practice. This implies that Pure Land rebirth is obtained by meditation.

In fact, we may say that the working basis of the pan-chou-san-mei practice is the mind. The entire cultivation is based on mind. The pan-chou-san-mei practice is aimed not only at regulating the mind to visualize the Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land but it is also intended to lead the practitioner to a mental state in which there is freedom from dualistic thinking. The sūtra says,

"On hearing the sūtra he is greatly happy and should make this thought: From what place does the Buddha come? To what place do I reach? He should think(nien) to himself that there is no place from which the Buddha comes and there is no place to which he reaches. He should think(nien) to himself that the three realms, that of desire, that of form and that without form, are made by thought(意 所 能): Whatever I think, I see. The mind makes the Buddha. The mind itself sees. The mind is Buddha-mind. The Buddha-mind is my body(我 身). When the mind sees the Buddha the mind does not itself know mind, the mind does not itself see mind. The mind that has thoughts(有 想) is the deluded mind. Without thoughts(無 想), it is nirvāṇa..."⁹

The above quote reveals pan-chou-san-mei as a samādhi state in which the practitioner's mind is without discriminating thoughts. That is, being free from the subject-object dualism, the mind is the Buddha-mind. At this point in the discussion it may be appropriate to mention that Chih-i borrows much of the

material from the above quote to help explain his Constantly Walking Samādhi practice.¹⁰

In conclusion, we may say that pan-chou-san-mei is a form of niēn-fo practice. It has two levels of meaning. On the first level, it means fixing the mind on one sphere and thinking intently of the name as well as the body of Amitābha. On the second level, it means a mental state in which the mind is without discriminating thoughts and does not know itself as an object. That is, when the Buddha appears before the eyes of the practitioner, he has no thought of the appearance as something separate from himself. In that samādhi state, the mind is said to be no different from the Buddha-mind. The pan-chou-san-mei is, thus, a samādhi practice in which single-minded concentration and absence of dualistic thoughts are inseparable mental states.

I-hsing-san-mei.¹²

I-hsing-san-mei is sometimes called "i-hsiang-san-mei" (一相三昧); it is also called "chen-ju-san-mei" (真如三昧).¹¹

In the Wen-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-ching, Mañjuśrī asks the the Buddha to explain why the practice is called i-hsing-san-mei. The Buddha replies, saying,

"The Dharmadhātu is of one characteristic.
Connect one's thought to the Dharmadhātu.
This is called i-hsing-san-mei."¹³

In other words, i-hsing-san-mei is a samādhi state in which the practitioner realizes that the Dharmadhātu is essentially a unity.

What, then, are the practical steps which the practitioner can take to cultivate? The sūtra answers,

"If a good man (or good woman) desires to enter i-hsing-san-mei he should retire to a vacant and isolated ground, give up all confusing thoughts and be not grasping of characteristics and appearances. He should bind the mind to one Buddha (專心一佛) and concentrate on calling upon the name of the Buddha (專稱佛名字). If he is able, in thought after thought, succeeding one another, to be on one Buddha, then, in the midst of this nien (practice), he will be able to see the Buddhas of the past, future and present. And why? (When one) thinks (nien) of the merits and virtues of one Buddha, they are immeasurable and limitless. These are not different from the merits and virtues of all Buddhas. It is inconceivable (不思議)... Thus, the one who enters i-hsing-san-mei knows very, very thoroughly that the Dharmadhātus of the Buddhas, as numerous as the Ganges sands, do not differ in characteristic." ¹⁴

From the above we learn that the two essential steps are binding the mind to one Buddha and calling intently the Buddha's name. Interestingly, the Buddha's name is not specified. Another interesting point to note is that although the practitioner practises nien on just one Buddha, if he succeeds in his practice he gets to see not one Buddha but all the Buddhas of the past, present and future. The reason, according to the sūtra, is that there is absolutely no discrepancy between the Buddhas because the

stock of merits and virtues of one Buddha is in itself immeasurable and limitless. Therefore, when compared with the merits and virtues of all Buddhas no meaningful distinction can be made.

In conclusion we may say that i-hsing-san-mei is a samādhi state in which the practitioner realizes the essential oneness of all Buddhas. In that samādhi state the practitioner understands very clearly that all the Dharmadhātus of the Buddhas do not differ in characteristic. In its practical aspect, i-hsing-san-mei requires the practitioner to bind his mind to one Buddha and to call intently the name of the Buddha.

In comparing this with the samādhi practice called pan-chou-san-mei, we find some similarity and some difference. The two resemble one another in that both practices bring the practitioner to have an insight experience. When he enters either of the two samādhi states he gets to understand clearly the interconnectedness, the interdependence and essential oneness of the Dharmadhātu. The important difference between the two practices is: whereas pan-chou-san-mei is explicitly set forth as a form of nien-fo on Amitābha, it is not so with i-hsing-san-mei. In the latter practice the name of the Buddha is not specified. Furthermore, when the practitioner enters pan-chou-san-mei, he sees Amitābha. On the other hand, when successfully practised, i-hsing-san-mei is supposed to make not only the present but also the Buddhas of the past and future appear before the practitioner.

Ch'ang-hsing-san-mei and ch'ang-tso-san-mei.

What is ch'ang-hsing-san-mei? Chih-i explains,

"As for ch'ang-hsing-san-mei...this method comes from the Pan-chou-san-mei-ching...For ninety days the body (sheng 身) is to be engaged in constant practice (ch'ang-hsing 常行) without interruption; for ninety days the mouth (k'ou 口) is to be constantly chanting (ch'ang-ch'eng 常稱) the name of Amitābha Buddha without interruption; for ninety days the mind (hsin 心) is to be constantly thinking (ch'ang-nien 常念) of Amitābha Buddha without interruption... in step after step, sound after sound, thought after thought, the practitioner is to dwell only upon Amitābha Buddha..." 15.

According to Chih-i, ch'ang-hsing-san-mei is a form of nien-fo practice. The Buddha is Amitābha. The practice requires the practitioner to embark upon a prescribed method of body, speech and mind cultivation for ninety days continuous, without interruption. The body is to be engaged in constant practice, the mouth in calling upon the Buddha's name and the mind in thinking of Amitābha. The bodily and vocal aspects of the practice are simple and straightforward to perform but not so the mental aspect. How is the mind to be engaged in nien? Chih-i explains,

"As for 'mind' (意), we discuss chih-kuan (止觀). Think (nien) of Amitābha

Buddha of the Western Land, which is
 myriads of Buddha-lands away from here...
 on the precious ground...seated and
 teaching the sūtra. For three months
 one is to think constantly(常念) of
 the Buddha. How should one think(nien)?
 One is to think of the thirty-two signs...
 Also, one is to think: I mistakenly
 think(常) that it is from the mind
 that (I) attain the Buddha, that it is
 from the body that (I) attain the
 Buddha. The Buddha is not attained by
 using the mind, is not attained by
 using the body...And why?...As for
 'mind', the Buddha is non-mind; as for
 'body', the Buddha is non-body.
 Therefore, one does not use 'form' and
 'mind' to obtain sambodhi...Although he
 seeks the ego (自我) exhaustively, he
 is still incapable of attaining (it).
 Also, there is nothing to be seen for all
 dharmas are, originally, without that
 which existed(本無所有)...It is like a
 dream. One should, like this, think(nien)
 of the Buddha, over and over again without
 interruption. If one applies this kind of
nien one will promptly be born into
 Amitābha's land. This is called ju-hsiang-
nien(如相念)." ¹⁶

From the above passage we learn that Chih-i's method
 of training the mind to practise nien is related to his very
 comprehensive system of meditation called chih-kuan(止觀) or
 cessation and contemplation.

What is chih (止)? Chih or cessation means
 "regulating the mind (制心)." 17

It means

"putting a stop to its aimless wanderings
 (制之令不馳散)." 18

What is kuan (觀)? Kuan or contemplation means

"looking into all dharma's as having
 no characteristics (觀諸法無相),
 being the products of causes and
 conditions (因緣所生)." 19

In the context of ch'ang-hsing-san-mei, chih (止) takes the form of concentrating the mind on one sphere, namely Amitābha's Pure Land. The mind is regulated and brought under complete control to think of nothing else except to view the scene of the Buddha in his Western Pure Land preaching the Dharma to his assembly of bodhisattvas. And for a period of three months the practitioner is to think (nien) of the Buddha, his qualities and virtues such as the thirty-two marks until he can behold in meditation the Buddha and his assembly of bodhisattvas. Then, when the practitioner has attained this degree of success in his meditation during which the Buddha appears to him, he is instructed to apply the kuan technique to his nien-fo so that his seeing of the Buddha will be not just a superficial viewing but becomes an illuminative penetration into things as they are.

In other words, the practitioner is exhorted to go beyond the act of concentrating the mind on Amitābha to the act of awakening the mind to that subtle understanding which illuminates

all existing dharmas, one of which is the present appearance of the Buddha, as dream-like, the products of mind itself, and hence ultimately empty.

In conclusion we may say that Chih-i's ch'ang-hsing-san-mei is a form of nien-fo. Essentially, it has two levels of meaning. The two levels are intimately related to his system of meditation called chih-kuan. First, it means a state of single-minded concentration, free from distraction, in which the practitioner beholds Amitābha and his Pure Land. Second, it means insight into the true nature of dharmas. If successfully practised, it is supposed not only to make the Buddha appear but is also supposed to bring the practitioner to a state of mental illumination in which he "knows very, very thoroughly that all dharmas are eternally quiet like the void." 20

It is clear that the ch'ang-hsing-san-mei practice resembles the pan-chou-san-mei practice. Both are forms of nien-fo on Amitābha. When the practitioner enters either of the two samādhi states, the Buddha he is assured of seeing is Amitābha. Secondly, at the heart of each practice is an experience of insight into the true nature of dharmas. Both pan-chou-san-mei and ch'ang-hsing-san-mei practices take meditation and insight as being inseparable. They are two aspects of a single practice of nien-fo: as the practitioner beholds the Buddha before him his mind is intently thinking of the appearance as being produced by cause and condition, the product of his own mind and hence, ultimately empty like a dream.

What is ch'ang-tso-san-mei? Chih-i explains,

"As for 'ch'ang-tso', it is derived from the two pan-jo (sūtras), the Wen-shu-shuo and the Wen-shu-wen. It is called i-hsing-san-mei." 21

From the above we learn that the ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice is the T'ien-t'ai interpretation of the samādhi practice called i-hsing-san-mei. We know, from our earlier analysis, that i-hsing-san-mei means, on one level, binding the mind to one Buddha and, on another level, insight into the oneness of the Dharmadhātu. Chih-i explains his ch'ang-tso-san-mei under three aspects, bodily, vocal and mental. What is more important for the present comparison with i-hsing-san-mei are the vocal and mental aspects of the practice. Chih-i explains the mental aspect of the practice in terms quite similar to those used in the Wen-shu-shuo-ching to explain i-hsing-san-mei:

"As for 'mind' (意) it is chih-kuan (止觀). Sit upright and correctly (practise) nien (念). Remove evil feelings and abandon disorderly thoughts; do not confuse thinking (思) and reflecting (惟) and be not grasping of characteristics and appearances. Merely, connect one's thought exclusively on the Dharmadhātu (但專繫緣法界) and be of oneness of thought concerning the Dharmadhātu (一念法界). 'Binding and fastening' is chih (止); 'oneness of thought' is kuan (觀)... This Dharmadhātu is also called Bodhi (菩提), also called

prajñā(般若), also called neither-production-nor-extinction(不生不滅).

Like this, it is equal: all dharmas and the Dharmadhātu are neither two nor separable:..²²

Based on the above passage we may say that the ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice involves binding and fastening the mind onto the Dharmadhātu and realizing "oneness of thought" concerning the nature of the Dharmadhātu. The phrase "i-nien" probably means thinking intently of the Dharmadhātu as one. We may note, here, an interesting difference between what is said in the sūtra and Chih-'s instructions. In the sūtra, one is instructed to bind the mind to one Buddha. In Chih-i's ch'ang-tso-san-mei, one binds the mind to the Dharmadhātu. At this point it appears that the ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice does not involve any nien-fo at all. This impression is not quite correct. There is some flavor of nien-fo to the ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice. However, it is related to it only in its vocal aspect. Invocative nien-fo is used as an aid to dispel drowsiness and overcome the many obstacles to progress in one's mental cultivation. Chih-i says,

"Speaking and being silent: If while sitting, one is fatigued to the extreme, or is wearied by illness, or being covered by sleep, one keeps toppling over (or if) internal and external obstacles encroach upon and rob the mind of right thinking(正念), and one is not able to banish and drive (these) away then one should concentrate on calling the name of one Buddha(專稱).

一佛名字), and being ashamed and repentent, take life and voluntarily entrust (it) (to the Buddha)...What is the reason?...Suppose a man pulls, again and again, a heavy weight with his own strength but (the weight) moves not forward. If then he avails of the help of someone nearby it would become deceptively light to lift. It is the same with the practitioner. When his mind is weak he is not able to clear away the obstacles. But if he calls upon the name (of the Buddha), requesting for protection, then the evil conditions are not able to ruin (his practice)."²³

From the above we learn that for those who are mentally weak and incapable of rigorous meditation Chih-i recommends invocative nien-fo as an aid to meditation. The Buddha is seen here as coming to the aid of the practitioner in response to his request for help. From the outset it should be said that invocative nien-fo is not at all related to the mental aspect of the cultivation. The preceding quote shows that the mental aspect of the ch'ang-tso-san-mei is related to Chih-i's chih-kuan. The Buddha's aid is invoked only to help the practitioner progress with his meditation. On the one hand, the practitioner is advised to seek protection from the Buddha. On the other, he is expected to persist in his meditation. The vocal is only a supplementary practice.

In conclusion, we may say that the ch'ang-tso-san-mei is the T'ien-t'ai interpretation of the i-hsing-san-mei practice. It has three component parts to its practice: bodily, vocal and mental. The vocal takes the form of calling intently the name of one Buddha. The same word "ch'eng" (稱) is used in the sūtra as well as in the Mo-ho-chih-kuan. Also, in both practices, the Buddha's name is not specified. The ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice, like the i-hsing-san-mei, offers an experience of insight to the practitioner. Chih-i refers to this insight experience as "oneness of thought" (一心) and equates it with standard Buddhist terms for wisdom like "Bodhi" and "prajñā". Finally, it should be noted that invocative nien-fo occupies only a marginal position in Chih-i's ch'ang-tso-san-mei. The centre of the practice is still binding and fastening of the mind onto the Dharmadhātu and awakening to the oneness of the Dharmadhātu. It may be added that the act of binding and fastening is not a mere mechanical effort of the mind. Rather, genuine fastening and binding of the mind means experiencing the oneness of the Dharmadhātu in thought.

We may mention at this point another T'ien-t'ai text, the Wu-fang-nien-nien-fo-men which interprets the relationship between i-hsing-san-mei and nien-fo quite differently. In that particular text, the i-hsing-san-mei practice stands not as a samādhi practice in its own right but stands under a more general practice called nien-fo-san-mei: i-hsing-san-mei is one of five kinds of nien-fo. That is, whereas Chih-i's ch'ang-tso-san-mei, which is clearly a form of i-hsing-

san-mei, permits invocative nien-fo only as a marginal practice, in the Wu-fang-pien-nien-fo-men, invocative nien-fo shifts more towards the centre of the i-hsing-san-mei practice.

Conclusion.

We will now attempt to draw some conclusions important for our understanding of the T'ien-t'ai conception of nien-fo: First, the main nien-fo practice in the T'ien-t'ai school is that which is called ch'ang-hsing-san-mei or Constantly Walking Samādhi. It resembles closely the practice of contemplating Amitābha that is expounded in the Pan-chou-san-mei-ching. Second, the nien-fo practice in the ch'ang-hsing-san-mei is fundamentally bound up with the Chih-kuan discipline of meditation. To concentrate the mind exclusively on the Buddha Amitābha is chih (止). And when one is beholding the Buddha and yet has no thought of attainment and is not moved by the occasion because one has no thought of a subject and an object, that is kuan. One has no dualistic thoughts because one sees through the appearances and understands clearly the "suchness characteristic" (如相) underlying phenomena. The practical aspect of the ch'ang-hsing-san-mei practice is nien-fo. In turn, the nien-fo practice is based on the principle which insists upon the oneness characteristic of the Dharmadhātu. That is, the ch'ang-hsing-san-mei method of cultivation begins with nien-fo on Amitābha. In turn, the nien-fo practice is meant to culminate in an insight experience. That brings us to the third point. Thirdly, in his samādhi state of nien-fo, the T'ien-t'ai practitioner recollects not the Buddha's compassionate vows to save suffering beings who call upon his name in faith but rather,

he recollects that Amitābha is essentially a provisional body, neither to be identified with nor separated from the true body of the Buddha. Fourth, the T'ien-t'ai samādhi practice called ch'ang-tso-san-mei or Constantly Sitting Samādhi is based upon the samādhi practice called i-hsing-san-mei that is expounded in the Wen-shu-shih-li-so-suo-ching. The vocal aspect of the ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice is invocative nien-fo. It requires the practitioner to call intently the name of a Buddha, requesting the Buddha for aid to help remove the mental obstacles to right thinking (正念). The mental aspect of the practice is based on meditation. It is intended to awaken the mind to see into the oneness characteristic of the Dharmadhātu. It is clear that the centre of the ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice is the insight experience-- the immediate apprehension of the Dharmadhātu as one. Invocative nien-fo stands only as a supplementary practice invoked to aid the effort of those who are less capable of doing meditation.

Fifth, the T'ien-t'ai idea of nien-fo current during Chih-i's time is essentially of a meditative type. Although the practice involves the practitioner in an intense drama which combines physical and verbal acts with mental concentration, the chanting and circumambulating are merely looked upon as favourable conditions which cause the practice to succeed. The heart of the practice consists in seeing into the true nature of phenomena, namely that phenomena exist provisionally only (chia 假) in total dependence on conditions and are, in this sense, void of any self-nature (k'ung 空). And when the mind realizes that phenomena are at the same time void of self-nature and provisionally

existent it has then attain the mental state of the "Mean" (chung 中) or "oneness of thought" (i-nien 一 念). It is clear that the T'ien-t'ai nien-fo takes its basis to be the meditative system of chih-kuan on the one hand and, the method of mentally viewing Amitābha taught in the Pan-chou-san-mei-ching on the other.

Finally, it is worth noting Chih-i's assurance that the practitioner will be reborn into Amitābha's land if he were to think (nien) that all existing dharmas are like a dream and then apply such a mode of thinking to his nien-fo practice.²⁴ Such statements imply that the T'ien-t'ai teaching of nien-fo emphasizes not faith in Amitābha but efficacy of meditation in terms of chih (止) and kuan (觀) as the condition of rebirth into the Pure Land.

Nien-fo in the Pure Land school.

From the Pure Land tradition, we will draw upon the following works, the Wang-sheng-lun-chu (往生論註)²⁵, composed by the Dharma Master T'an-luan (曇鸞 476-542), the An-lo-chi (安樂集)²⁶, composed by the Dharma Master Tao-ch'o (導 562-645), and the Kuan-ching-shu (觀經正疏)²⁷, composed by the Dharma Master Shan-tao (善導 613-681).

There are three sūtras which are generally considered as specifically "Pure Land", that is, the Wu-liang-shou-ching (無量壽經 Larger-Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra)²⁸ which was translated into Chinese by Saṅghavarman in A.D. 252, the A-mi-t'o-ching (阿彌陀經 Smaller Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra)²⁹ which was translated by Kumārajīva in A.D. 402 and the Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching (觀無量壽經 Amitāvur-dhyāna-sūtra)³⁰ which was translated by Kalayaśas in A.D. 424. The main theme of the Wu-liang-shou-ching is that a special relationship between the Saḥā-world and the Western Pure Land has been established by the Buddha Amitābha during the course of his bodhisattva career: in former lives, the sūtra tells us, when Amitābha Buddha, as the Bhikṣu Dharmākara, was cultivating the Buddha Dharma, he saw how hard it is for sentient beings, in complete bondage as they are to the three poisons of desire, anger and ignorance, to practise the Buddha Dharma. Out of his infinite compassion, he wished to convey all living beings over the Three Realms (san-chieh 三 界) and lead them to a Pure Land to attain the blessings and wisdom enjoyed by all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. And so the Bodhisattva Dharmākara vowed that his

attainment of Buddhahood be contingent upon the establishment of a Pure Land into which all suffering beings who simply invoked his name in faith could be assured of rebirth and the attainment of anuttarasamyaksambodhi. Until this vow was fulfilled, Dharmakara himself would not realize Buddhahood. And so it is that sentient beings in the Saha-world and Amitābha Buddha have a special relationship. The subject-matter of the A-mi-t'o-ching is, again, a description of Amitābha's Pure Land called Sukhāvati but the description is less elaborate and ornate than that found in the larger sūtra. The central teaching of the third sūtra, the Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching, is a series of sixteen subjects for meditation which will direct the mind towards Sukhāvati, ensuring rebirth there. What is noteworthy in this particular sūtra is its teaching of the nine grades of rebirth into the Pure Land and of these, the "lowest form of the lowest grade"³¹ is significant for Pure Land Buddhism--The Buddha tells Ānanda and Queen Vaidehī that even those guilty of the most heinous sins will be reborn there if they can only repeat ten times before death the formula, "Namo Amitābha Buddha". Very likely, the Pure Land practice called shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu (十念成就) which is a type of nien-fo for the hour of death has its origins in just such statements found in the Pure Land sūtras.

Whatever the Pure Land tradition may have said about its lineage, beginning with Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu as its first and second Indian patriarchs and Hui-yüan (344-416 A.D.) as its first Chinese patriarch we know of no definite devotion to Amitābha Buddha, trusting to rebirth in Sukhāvati, among the

masses before the arrival of T'an-luan. According to Kenneth Ch'en, in his book Buddhism in China, there is no evidence to indicate that the White Lotus Society founded by Hui-yüan of Mt. Lushan involve itself in publicly spreading the Pure Land doctrines³²

Historians generally credit T'an-luan with having spread Pure Land practices and teachings in society as a whole and originating the practice of reciting Amitābha's name in the formula "O-mi-t'o-fo" as a means to salvation.³³ T'an-luan is probably also the first in the tradition of Pure Land to use the term "t'a-li" (他力) or "other-power" to indicate the efficacy of Amitābha's compassionate vows to save suffering beings as expounded in the Wu-liang-shou-ching. T'an-luan begins his Wang-sheng-lun-chu by quoting Nāgārjuna's classification of Buddhism into nan-hsing-tao (難行道) or difficult path and i-hsing-tao (易行道) or easy path and ends his commentary by using the terms "t'a-li" (他力) and "tzu-li" (自力) to distinguish between cultivation that is dependent on Amitābha's original vow-power (pen-yuan-li 本願力) and cultivation undertaken independently of the Buddha's act of compassion, respectively. For T'an-luan, "all these, birth in the Pure Land and the various practices performed by bodhisattvas, men and devas, are entirely dependent upon the power of Tathāgata Amitābha's original vow as cause."³⁴

By interpreting the nien-fo in the setting of the Wu-liang-shou-ching T'an-luan initiates a radical change of direction in the development of nien-fo which has, until then, been understood in the orthodox setting of the Pan-chou-san-mei-ching. For T'an-luan, the most significant part of the Wu-liang-

shou-ching is the forty-eight vows of Amitābha and of these, the most noteworthy is the nineteenth vow which says, in essence, that even beings "who have only ten times repeated the thought (of that Buddha country)" will attain rebirth in his Pure Land except those who have committed the five deadly sins.³⁵ Since the words of the Buddha are always true and hence completely trustworthy, this means that rebirth into the Pure Land, as T'an-luan sees it, will take place if only the devotee will practise ten continuous thoughts of the Buddha with a heart of the faith that what the Buddha has promised he will fulfill. T'an-luan's original contribution to nien-fo is precisely the introduction of two new elements, faith and vows, into the stream of nien-fo practice. Henceforth, invocative nien-fo need not be confined to being just a "concurrent cause" (yuan 緣), preparing the practitioner for the main practice which involves much meditation. In fact, invocative nien-fo in the form of ten thoughts of the Buddha in faith is sufficient to gain, for the practitioner, entrance into the Western Pure Land. It is no longer required of the devotee that he spend energy and time cultivating the meditative nien-fo in order to be reborn into the Pure Land. And wherein, one may ask, lies the power of invocative nien-fo to accomplish rebirth? The answer, T'an-luan replies, is that the nien-fo in ten thoughts has t'a-li (他力) or other power, which is Amitābha's pen-yuan-li (本願力) or original vow-power. On the other hand, the orthodox practice of nien-fo operates by tzu-li (自力) or self-power, which is derived from one's good actions and practice in meditation.

T'ian-luan's standpoint is clarified by Tao-ch'o who distinguishes, in his An-lo-chi, the Pure Land Path(wang-sheng-ching-t'u 往生淨土) from the Holy Path(sheng-tao 聖道),⁵⁶ rendering the latter as being ineffective for salvation because "the present is the period of the disappearance of the Dharma (mo-fa 末法); currently, it is the evil time of the five pollutions (wu-cho-o-shih 五濁惡世).⁵⁷ For Tao-ch'o, "there is only the one gate of the Pure Land through which one can pass and enter the road (to enlightenment)."⁵⁸

Whereas his predecessor in no way renders the nien-fo practice based on tzu-li (自利) as obsolete, Tao-ch'o makes it so. His reason for it is that in the period of decay when none will succeed even though beings who practise the Way number into the millions the Pure Land Path in the form of k'ou-ch'eng-nien-fo (口稱念佛) or invoking the Buddha can still lead to salvation. This is because the practice takes as its basis another's benefits (t'a-li 他利), namely Amitābha's stock of merits acquired during his career as a bodhisattva and which he has vowed to turn over for benefiting others(li-t'a 利他). Another of Tao-ch'o's unique contribution to Chinese Pure Land consists in introducing string beads as an aid in counting the devotee's invocations to Amitābha.³⁹ His innovation of prayer beads proved to be most popular, especially among the lay devotees who have naturally a need for the tangible and the simple in all areas of life, including worship. Thus it was during Tao-ch'o's time that the Pure Land movement began to develop momentum among the people.

Developing upon Tao-ch'ao's distinction of the two paths, Shan-tao asserts, in turn, that reciting the name of the Buddha Amitābha in faith is the "correct practice" (cheng-hsing⁴⁰ 正行) leading to rebirth, because the condition of rebirth lies in Amitābha's compassionate vows. As for the other forms of practice such as chanting the sūtras and meditating on Amitābha, Shan-tao relegates them to being just "miscellaneous practices" (tsa-hsing 雜行).⁴¹ This development marks another crucial stage in Pure Land history. For the first time, invocative nien-fo is explicitly stated to be the principal among the various religious practices that lead to rebirth in Amitābha's land.

To summarize, in the Pure Land understanding of the nien-fo practice as a means to salvation the emphasis is clearly put on the power and merits from a source other than one's own self, and Amitābha is that source. Amitābha's help is available in conformity to one of the forty-eight vows of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara, that is, that all who call upon his name in faith should be born in his land. According to the Pure Land patriarchs, no long discipline or scholarly preparation is necessary to gain entrance to the Western Pure Land. With T'an-luan, invocative nien-fo in ten thoughts is made sufficient for Pure Land rebirth. For Tao-ch'ao, invocative nien-fo is not merely considered to be a practice sufficient for rebirth; rather suffering beings living in the period of the "five pollutions" have access only to this form of nien-fo as a means of salvation. Then with Shan-tao, invocative nien-fo assumes primary importance among the various practices as

the main activity leading to rebirth.

For the Pure Land patriarchs, the idea of faith(hsin 信) not only implies but emphasizes the reliability of the object of believing. It is important to note that when Tao-ch'o and Shantao use the word hsin they do not want to tell their followers something about the believer but rather, they want to tell their followers something about Amitābha, namely Amitābha's compassionate vows intended to save suffering beings. Naturally, they do not imply that the faith of the believer is of no consequence; but this is the more important thing, that the Buddha can be trusted absolutely, that his faithfulness and reliability are beyond question. That seems to be what the Pure Land patriarchs want to say and what the people need to hear. The consequence is the emergence of a form of nien-fo practice claiming to be both simple to perform and effective for obtaining release from the Three Realms.

Having now surveyed certain materials important for our understanding of the T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land practice of nien-fo we will move on to analyse the nien-fo practice in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun, making references to the T'ien-t'ai and Pure Land practices wherever relevant.

CHAPTER TWO

"NIEN-FO" IN THE CHING-T'U-SHIH-I-LUN

The Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun is a short but very rich text. Although the text has traditionally been accepted in China as the authentic work of Chih-i it has now been established by modern scholars that it is a much later work, not by Chih-i, produced sometime in the first decade of the eighth century.⁴² In spite of what modern research has discovered about its authorship, its traditional ascription to Chih-i led to its acceptance among later Buddhists as an authoritative text on Amitābha. Consequently, many like Yung-ming (永明 10th century) and Chih-li (知禮 11th century)⁴³ make extensive use of it in their own works on the subject. The text has thus a unique quality of being Pure Land in terms of its content but T'ien-t'ai in terms of its social standing. This unique quality shows through in its peculiar understanding of nien-fo in which faith and meditation co-exist.

The chief object of composing this work seems to be to refute mistaken views in order to expose the truth of the doctrines of nien-fo on Amitābha. The work consists of ten rhetorical questions and answers. The ten questions may be

summarized as follows: since all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas take Great Compassion to be their course of action, they should desire to be born within the "Three Realms" (san-chieh 三 界). Why then does one seek birth in the Pure Land? The point being that one should be reborn into the Three Realms in order to save suffering beings and not escape into the Pure Land. Second, is the person who seeks Pure Land rebirth acting contradictorily to the principle which teaches that the substance of all dharmas is empty and originally "non-arisen" (wu-sheng 無 生)? The point being that there is, ultimately speaking, no Pure Land. Third, is the person who seeks one Buddha-land acting contradictorily to the principle which teaches that one should practise nien (念) on all Buddha-lands and should seek to be born in all of them because all Buddha-lands are the same? Fourth, why should one seek out Amitābha's land, among all the Buddha-lands as the Pure Land on which to practise nien? Fifth, how could the ordinary man in complete bondage get to be born into the Pure Land which transcends the Three Realms? Sixth, even if the ordinary man in complete bondage gets to be born into that land, still, such factors as "heterodox views" (hsieh-chien 邪 見) and the "three poisons" (san-tu 三 毒) will constantly arise. How, then, could one get to be born into that land and attain "non-retreat" (pu-t'ui 不 退)? Seventh, since the Bodhisattva Maitreya will attain Buddhahood in this world, why is it necessary to seek birth in the Western Pure Land? Eighth, how is one to reconcile the teaching of binding karma to the practice of shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu (十 念 成 就), a practice intended to save very bad people

from the Three Realms and bring them to the Pure Land? Ninth, how could common mortals, inferior and weak, get to reach the Pure Land which is tens of thousands of Buddha-lands away from here? Tenth, as for the person who desires for the certainty of being born into the Western Land, what activities should he perform? Also, does the ordinary man who has not cut off sexual passions get to be born?

Since the present aim in studying the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun is to understand its conception of nien-fo, we will focus only on those Doubts which throw most light on the concept. These are the Third, Fifth, Eighth and Ninth Doubts. Relevant materials present in the other Doubts will also be drawn into the discussion in the course of analysing these four primary ones.

The term "nien-fo" occurs in the text of the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun thirteen times while the term "nien-A-mi-t'o-fo" occurs nine times. Since the Buddha in question is almost always Amitābha, we may look upon these two as being synonymous terms. The term "nien-fo-san-mei" occurs four times. Whichever word is used, the meaning tends to vary according to context.

Below we shall endeavour to analyse each of the four Doubts in detail. First, however, we should describe briefly the answers given in each of these four Doubts. In the Third Doubt, the central question is whether the act of exclusively seeking Amitābha's land contradicts the principle which teaches that all Buddha-lands are the same. The answer given is that the practice of thinking of one Buddha is in accord with the principle that identifies one Buddha with all Buddhas, and all Buddhas with

one Buddha. In the Fifth Doubt, the central question is the accessibility of the Western Pure Land to common mortals in complete bondage to karma. The answer given is that one gets to the Pure Land by availing oneself of the vow-power of the Buddha Amitābha. In the Eighth Doubt, the central question is whether one could reconcile the teaching of binding karma with the practice of shih-nien. The answer given is that the good karma accrued from the practice of shih-nien is extremely strong and powerful and thus able to destroy bad karma. In the Ninth Doubt, the central question is whether the ordinary man could get to reach the Pure Land which is thousands of Buddha-lands away from here. The answer given is that the power of karma is inconceivable.

Conception of "nien-fo" in the Third Doubt.

We are, here, dealing with nien-fo in the context of meditation. The mind(hsin) is set forth as the working basis of nien-fo. Much of the terminology used throughout is suggestive of meditation. There is great emphasis on the attainment of samādhi and nien-fo is viewed as a method to accomplish samādhi.

The central question setting the tone of discussion is, why should Amitābha be the Buddha preferred for nien-fo when there is the alternative method of practising a more general kind of nien on all Buddhas(總念一切佛)? The answer given is twofold: First, it is because "sentient beings have dull faculties(衆生根鈍)"⁴⁴ and "a mind that is highly polluted and confused(心多濁亂)"⁴⁵ that one teaches "concentrated thinking of the Buddha Amitābha."⁴⁶ To concentrate one's thought wholly on Amitābha is

one effective way "to bind the mind to one sphere."⁴⁷ And when there is "one-pointedness of mind(心專至)"⁴⁸ samādhi is attained.

Second, "to concentrate one's thought on Amitābha Buddha is, in fact, a form of i-hsiang-san-mei(一相三昧)."⁴⁹ We have noted in the preceding chapter that the reasoning behind the practice called i-hsing-san-mei involves the principle of the unified characteristic of the Dharmadhātu. The same reasoning applies here. The text argues that thinking of Amitābha Buddha is the same as thinking of all Buddhas "because of the identical substance of the Buddha Dharma(从同一佛法性故)."⁵⁰ The text then quotes the Hua-yen-ching to reinforce its argument. Essentially, the verse from the Hua-yen-ching says that although there are ten thousand reflections of the moon in as many pools of water, the original substance of the moon does not divide into two.⁵¹ Likewise, the many bodies of the Buddha appear in response to the myriad minds of living beings. These many bodies are, however, identical in substance. Hence, "to think of the Buddha Amitābha is to think of all Buddhas."⁵² "The wise one, by means of the parable, gets to understand."⁵³

The relevance of this entire passage for the present study rests in the sentence which states that "thinking of the Buddha Amitābha is, in fact, i-hsiang-san-mei."⁵⁴ If we understand the identity the text is trying to make, we will have understood something important about its conception of nien-fo.

As we have noted in Chapter One, nien-fo is one of the methods of cultivation taught in the T'ien-t'ai school.

For example, there is the T'ien-t'ai ch'ang-hsing-san-mei (常行三昧) or Constantly Walking Samādhi which is essentially a nien-fo practice on Amitābha. Then there is the T'ien-t'ai ch'ang-tso-san-mei (常坐三昧) or Constantly Sitting Samādhi in which the method of reciting intently the name of a Buddha is recommended as an aid to dispel sleepiness and overcome mental disturbances. We will, now, compare and contrast the nien-fo practice presented in our text with these two T'ien-t'ai practices.

The talk of "binding" (hsi 繫) in order that the mind might not be "scattered and unrestrained" (san-man 散漫)⁵⁵ hints of the T'ien-t'ai practice of chih (止) or cessation. As we know, both of the above mentioned T'ien-t'ai practices involve the cultivation of chih (止). For example, in his ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice Chih-i explains that

"Binding and fastening (繫緣) is chih (止)." ⁵⁶

Then there is, in the Shih-i-lun, the statement about the efficacy of meditation and Pure Land rebirth which says,

"Nien-A-mi-t'o-fo is i-hsiang-san-mei (一相三昧). Because the mind is concentrated to the utmost, one gets birth to that land." ⁵⁷

The above quote implies that the text is using the term "nien" to mean concentrating the mind to the utmost. When the mind is thus concentrated on Amitābha, rebirth takes place.

In discussing his ch'ang-hsing-san-mei practice, Chih-i also makes a statement regarding Pure Land rebirth:

"If one applies this kind of nien
one will promptly be born into
Amitābha's land."⁵⁸

By "nien", Chih-i means first,

"thinking(nien 念) of the thirty-two signs.
(三十二相)"⁵⁹

and second,

"thinking(nien 念) to oneself that all
existing dharmas are like a dream."⁶⁰

The question that must now be asked is whether and in what way the term "nien" used in our text is related to Chih-i's nien. That they are similar in one sense and different in another is quite clear. Both nien practices mean single-minded concentration, free from distraction. Both practices entail concentrating the mind to the point when the practitioner could behold Amitābha before the eyes. In this sense, the two nien practices are alike. The important difference is whereas Chih-i explains explicitly that the nien practice requires also that the practitioner think to himself that the appearance of the Buddha is like a dream, our text makes no such requirements on the practitioner. At the very most, the practitioner is told that one moon reflection and all moon reflections are the same. Whether or not he is required to deeply ponder upon the metaphor while beholding Amitābha is not made clear.

Before summing up the discussion we will examine the nien practice on Amitābha in our text in the light of Chih-i's discussion of ch'ang-tso-san-mei. As we have mentioned previously "i-hsiang-san-mei" could be read as a synonym for "i-hsing-san-mei"

According to Chih-i, the practice of ch'ang-tso-san-mei is the T'ien-t'ai equivalent of the i-hsing-san-mei method of cultivation.

There are some very interesting differences between the nien practice in our text and Chih-i's ch'ang-tso-san-mei: first and foremost, our text insists that nien-fo-san-mei is identical with i-hsiang-san-mei; furthermore, our text does not differentiate either its nien-fo or i-hsiang-san-mei practice into bodily, vocal and mental aspects. Chih-i, on the other hand, differentiates his ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice into the above mentioned threefold aspects and confines the nien-fo practice to the vocal aspect. Second, our text uses just the one word "nien" throughout its discussion in the Third Doubt whereas Chih-i associates the nien-fo practice with the term "ch'eng" (成) and uses the word "nien" only in describing the mental aspect of ch'ang-tso-san-mei. As we have noted earlier the mental aspect (心) of the ch'ang-tso-san-mei practice involves both chih (持), that is, binding and fastening the mind to the Dharmadhātu and kuan (觀), that is, realizing "i-nien" (一心). At this point, it should be mentioned that Chih-i does differ slightly from the Wen-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-ching, the sūtra which describes the i-hsing-san-mei practice. In the sūtra, the practitioner is instructed to bind the mind not to the Dharmadhātu but to one Buddha. When he has succeeded in doing so he should, so says the sūtra, awaken his mind to the mental state in which there is no dualistic thought. This mental state of absence of dualistic thoughts is strongly similar to Chih-i's i-nien (一心).

The question that must now be asked is, what significance do these differences between the nien-fo practice presented in our text and Chih-i's practice of ch'ang-tso-san-mei have for our understanding of the identity which our text is making between nien-fo-san-mei and i-hsiang-san-mei? We discover, in the light of these differences, that our text is emphasizing only one of two aspects of the i-hsiang-san-mei practice, namely the practice of binding the mind to one Buddha. In this sense, nien-fo-san-mei could be made identical with i-hsiang-san-mei. But since the text does not explicitly state that the practitioner is required to think(nien) that the appearance of Amitābha is like a dream we must conclude that the text may not view the process of awakening the mind to see into the true nature of dharma as being a necessary aspect of its nien-fo practice. What is important for its nien-fo practice is concentration of mind; a mind that is intently thinking of Amitābha. Our earlier analysis of its nien-fo practice in relation to Chih-i's practice of ch'ang-hsing-san-mei confirms what has been said above.

Having made comparison with the T'ien-t'ai nien-fo we may now examine the same passage in the light of the Pure Land practice of nien-fo. Is there room for Pure Land invocative nien-fo in a discussion that leans heavily on the side of meditation?

Its statement about the mind of ordinary beings being polluted and confused and thus unable to attain samādhi on its own initiative hints of the teaching of mo-fa (末法) or the Latter Day Dharma. As we well know, it is the Pure Land school which

makes the doctrine of mō-fa a central one in its teaching. The Pure Land school regards the present age as being that of mō-fa and the "five pollutions" (wu-cho 五濁); during this period, man's mind is extremely weak and he is completely helpless to save himself.

Then again, there is marked ambiguity as to who, in fact, does the actual work of binding the mind to one sphere? All that the text does is equate nien (念) with hsi (繫). It does not indicate wherein comes the power of nien-fo to bind the mind. Such openness allows the reader to form his own conclusions as to whether it is the ordinary mind working on itself or the saving power of Amitābha working on the mind. The statement that the ordinary mind is polluted and confused would lead us to believe that the source of power is more likely to be Amitābha.

Although the nien-fo that emerges from this particular passage is strongly meditative, the discussion nowhere contradicts or denies rebirth by invocation. It merely highlights rebirth through an intensely concentrated mind. Furthermore, there is no reason why one could not reach one-pointedness of mind by practising invocative nien-fo in faith. It is possible that along with a heart of faith constant and persistent cultivation of invocative nien-fo can result in extremely high degrees of samādhi. At this juncture we may recall that the Pure Land school teaches nine grades of rebirth and those being born in the lotuses of superior grades are precisely those who have left the home life and who "single-mindedly, without distraction, think of the Buddha of Unlimited Life."⁶¹ It is interesting that the same two

characters 專念 are used.

On the basis of the above analysis we offer several concluding remarks concerning the relationship between nien-fo and i-hsiang-san-mei: first, the text uses the term "i-hsiang-san-mei" to mean a kind of samādhi state cultivated to the point of single-minded concentration, free from distraction of "this" and "that". But the orthodox expression of i-hsiang-san-mei has two levels of meaning. On one level, it means "entire concentration of the mind on one Buddha."⁶² On another level, it means "realizing that the nature of all Buddhas is the same."⁶³ The text has chosen to emphasize one level, the level on concentration, as being the primary meaning of i-hsiang-san-mei and has relegated its other level, the level on wisdom, to a secondary position. In so doing, the text introduces a change of direction in the interpretation of i-hsiang-san-mei. In the viewpoint of the text, i-hsiang-san-mei means entire concentration of the mind on the Buddha Amitābha, where the power to concentrate the mind comes not through one's efforts at meditation but through one's faith in Amitābha. This latter point will become clear as we proceed further to analyse the other three Doubts.

Second, nien-fo is a practice that brings the mind into the samādhi state called i-hsiang-san-mei. The text is, however, reticent regarding the nature of the power of nien-fo to bring about the samādhi state. Does the power reside in the practitioner's own mind or in Amitābha? We are given no explicit answer. Because the text does not provide an answer we must conclude that it has succeeded only partially in identifying

i-hsiang-san-mei with its own nien-fo practice. To the extent that nien(念) serves to bind the mind nien-fo resembles the aspect of i-hsiang-san-mei that is concerned with concentrating the mind on one Buddha. But i-hsiang-san-mei contains also the kuan(觀) or i-nien(一念) factor. Since the text does not explicitly state that its nien-fo could bring about insight we must conclude that it is not claiming for its nien-fo that factor of kuan or i-nien which characterizes the orthodox interpretation of i-hsiang-san-mei.

Conception of "nien-fo" in the Fifth Doubt.

There is no doubt that here the cultivation of nien-fo is set fully in the context of

"faith in Amitābha's greatly compassionate
vow-power to draw in and take hold of the
beings who practise nien-fo." 64

The cultivation of nien-fo in faith is called the "way of easy practice"(i-hsing-tao 易行道). It is a practice which is different from such standard practices as the keeping of the precepts of a bodhisattva, cultivation of the various factors of enlightenment like the "ten faiths"(shih-hsin 十信), the "ten pāramitās"(shih-p'o-lo-mi 十波羅蜜) and cultivation of the bodhisattva vows. These other practices are summed up together and called the "way of difficult practice"(nan-hsing-tao 難行道).

Even more specifically, what differentiates the practice of nien-fo-san-mei in faith from the difficult practices is the fact that the former could "take advantage of the power of the Buddha's vows"(乘佛願力).⁶⁵ This implies that the

deciding factor determining one's rebirth is the reliability and trustworthiness of the Buddha to save all beings who perform nien-fo in accordance with his vows.

Since faith is the basis of the nien-fo practice we must conclude that the nien-fo-san-mei discussed in this particular passage is suggestive of invocative rather than meditative nien-fo. Of course, the passage nowhere implies that meditative nien-fo is of no consequence; but this is the more important thing, that the Pure Land rebirth rests primarily not in any quality or degree of samādhi attained through methodical meditative training on the part of the practitioner, but in Amitābha's vow-power.

The next important thing to note is that although the performance of meritorious deeds, especially that of giving is encouraged as an accompaniment of the nien-fo practice, the merit issuing from each and every good deed is "to be turned over towards vowing to be born into the Pure Land of Mi-t'o"⁶⁶ and not towards such things as the attainment of the various bodhisattva abodes (chu 住) which are primarily concerned with the mind and its varying degrees of awakening. Similarly, the merit derived from any meditative activity that the devotee might be engaged in is, we may assume, to be turned over for Pure Land rebirth and not towards a higher form of rebirth within the Three Realms (san-chieh 三 界), the latter being the way of difficult practice.

The import of this entire passage for the present study rests on its various statements regarding the relationship

between nien-fo-san-mei and faith. As a point of interest, the term "nien-fo-san-mei" appears most often in this passage, appearing three times. In two of its three appearances it is connected with a phrase on "faith".

The text explains its view of nien-fo-san-mei in the light of several concepts central to Pure Land teaching. These are "t'a-li" (他力) or "other-power" and "tzu-li" (自力) or "self-power",⁶⁷ "i-hsing-tao" (易行道) and "nan-hsing-tao" (難行道).⁶⁸ Thus, it is important to be clear about what these terms mean. Also, the text, in calling its practice of nien-fo-san-mei the "way of easy practice" raises a major question which has direct bearing on the present thesis. Is the text implying that the bodhisattva path should be divided into two distinct and separate paths? Furthermore, since nien-fo is a form of religious practice common to all sects and traditions of Chinese Buddhism what, then, is the difference between the kind of meditative nien-fo that could be said to be of the t'a-li kind and could be included in the way of easy practice and that which is of the tzu-li kind and would be classified as "difficult practice"? Below, we will clarify the terms, "t'a-li" (他力) and "tzu-li" (自力) and then proceed to resolve these questions.

What does the text mean by "t'a-li" (他力) and "tzu-li" (自力)? According to the text, t'a-li and tzu-li are two kinds of yuan (緣) or external conditions.⁶⁹ It seems that if we know what the term yuan means in this context we will understand t'a-li and tzu-li. First, the context in question is "cultivating the path" (hsiu-tao 修道). Second, the word "yuan"

is frequently used in relation with another word "yin"(因) or "primary cause", in which case yuan means "secondary cause". That is, yin is the inner and direct cause by which the result occurs while yuan means the external and indirect cause.

The "path" in question is the bodhisattva path. This is set forth at the very beginning of the text in the First Doubt which states not only that seeking Pure Land rebirth does not contradict the bodhisattva path but further states that it is a necessary initial stage of the path itself. The result of cultivating the bodhisattva path is the attainment of Bodhi which is frequently called the "Holy fruit"(sheng-kuo 聖果)⁷⁰ or "fruit of Buddhahood" (佛果).⁷¹ What then, we may ask, is the direct cause(yin 因) of Bodhi? The direct cause of Bodhi is the Bodhi-thought.⁷² The bodhisattva path is essentially a process of cultivating the Bodhi-thought in order that it may mature into Bodhi itself.

It seems reasonable here to think of the process of cultivation of the Bodhi-thought as being analogous to plant cultivation.⁷³ We may say that the act of "manifesting the thought of Bodhi" (發菩提心) is like that of sowing a seed;⁷⁴ the yuan (緣) or enviromental conditions relating to the bodhisattva path would parallel the "external conditions aiding plant growth, for example, certain degrees of moisture, light intensity, warmth and soil composition, Tzu-li or self-power refer, then, to those favourable conditions aiding the cultivation of the Bodhi-thought that have been produced through the practitioner's own effort at keeping the precepts,

cultivating the "ten faiths", the "ten pāramitās" and the bodhisattva vows. On the other hand, t'a-li or other-power refers to those favourable conditions aiding the cultivation of the Bodhi thought that have been produced through another's efforts, namely Dharmakāra's.

There are, thus, two options open to the practitioner. He can either choose to cultivate and make his own external conditions empowering the cultivation of the Bodhi-thought or he can avail himself of the ideal conditions that have been made by another and intended for helping others develop their Bodhi-thoughts.

Having understood the terms, "t'a-li" and "tzu-li", another pair of terms, "i-hsing-tao" and "nan-hsing-tao" are in the process of becoming clear. If the practitioner chooses to create those favourable conditions via his own efforts then his bodhisattva path appropriately termed "nan-hsing-tao" or the way of difficult practice. We may say that he is like a farmer who is farming from scratch. Such a one has first to clear away existing vegetation and rocks, build irrigation wells, fertilize the soil and put up fences to keep away animals. On the other hand, if the practitioner chooses to avail himself of those favourable conditions already created by the Bodhisattva Dharmakāra then he is on the "way of easy practice"(i-hsing-tao). We may say that he is like another farmer who inherits a piece of very good farmland in which everything necessary for the growing of crops has been done so that the only thing left for him to do is to plant his seeds into that good fertile land.

To summarize what has been said thus far, the intention of the text in designating its practice of nien-fo-san-mei as the "way of easy practice" is to differentiate between the set of external conditions empowering the development of the Bodhi-thought that is produced by self-effort and that which is produced by other-effort. It is not the intention of the text to divide the original bodhisattva path into two distinct and separate paths. Its intention is to show that the bodhisattva path is open to all living beings, whatever be the nature of their capacities and temperament. It is accessible to those of superior mental faculties and thus able to undertake a rigorous meditative discipline as well as to those who are mentally weak and incapable of meditative training but who could still practise in devotion and faith. Both i-hsing-tao and nan-hsing-tao involve the production of the Bodhi-thought (發菩提心) which is the beginning of the bodhisattva path and both lead to the state of "non-retreat" (pu-t'ui 不退).⁷⁵ The difference is that in the way of difficult practice, the non-retreating stage is attained within the Three Realms whereas in the way of easy practice, the attainment takes place in Amitābha's land.

Before we proceed to resolve the second question we will note two other points not yet mentioned but nevertheless important for our discussion. First, this passage is similar to the Tenth Doubt in that they both concern themselves with the earnest devotee who has decided to let his faith in the Buddha become the basis of a new and productive life. In this, they are unlike the Eighth Doubt which is primarily concerned

with the practitioner at his hour of death. Hence, the nien-fo-san-mei discussed here should be looked upon as a devotional exercise for day to day. The devotee is expected to be constant and persistent in his practice. Second, the text reminds the reader that "in the evil times of the five pollutions"⁷⁶ cultivation according to tzu-li or self-power is extremely difficult to accomplish. In so reminding its reader the text emphasizes the importance of faith in cultivating the bodhisattva path during the age of decay. According to the text, the environmental conditions destructive to Bodhi are many and powerful in the present age of "mo-fa" and the "five pollutions" so that the practitioner's own efforts at creating favourable conditions are bound to fail. We may say that the practitioner is like a farmer who is trying to grow wheat under conditions of scrubland, drought, whirlwinds and fires. Such a farmer, on hearing of other farmers who are going to an ideal land to cultivate, would also decide to leave the land and go to that other land where the conditions for wheat cultivation have been made ideal. Similarly, the Pure Land devotee living in the present age of decay sees that the only way he could sow his Bodhi-thought and protect his newly sprouted Bodhi shoot is to have faith in the Buddha and avail himself of the Buddha's vow-power to get to the Pure Land where there is no retreat, just vigorous progress.

Now, we will answer the second question posed earlier.

Since the nien-fo-san-mei discussed in this particular passage is meant to be a life-long cultivation we could expect that, even in its invocative form, it would lead the practitioner to

experience various mental states. This being so, what then is the difference between its own kind of meditative nien-fo and that other meditative nien-fo that is considered as "difficult practice" ?

There are two steps to the answer. The first requires that we refer back to our preceding analysis of the Third Doubt. There we conclude that the nien-fo practice presented in our text corresponds to i-hsiang-san-mei only in terms of concentrating the mind but not in terms of awakening the mind to see the nature of all Buddhas as one and the same. Here, the pattern repeats itself. Any form of meditative nien-fo would be said to be of the tzu-li kind and classified under "difficult practice" if its primary objective is obtaining the various degrees of insight which correspond to the various abodes(chu 住) mentioned earlier.⁷⁷ On the other hand, meditative nien-fo practised primarily to concentrate the mind on the Buddha Amitābha would be completely in accord with the "way of easy practice."

In fact, the text encourages the sixteen contemplations described in the Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching as good actions that would accumulate merit for enabling all sentient beings to be born together in the Pure Land in the Tenth Doubt.⁷⁸ As far as this text is concerned, the primary objective in such contemplations is to visualize the Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land. It is not to see into the ultimate emptiness of the manifestation.⁷⁹

The second step leads us into a discussion of the relationship between faith and meditation on the one hand and

meditation and wisdom on the other. In the Third Doubt, the source of the power to concentrate the mind has yet to be identified. In the Fifth Doubt, the source is clearly identified. The sentence,

"If one has faith in the power of the greatly compassionate vows of Amitābha Buddha to receive and take hold of living beings who practise nien-fo, then one immediately is able to give rise to the thought of Bodhi, cultivate nien-fo-san-mei, desire to leave the Three Realms..."⁸⁰

implies that the power to concentrate the mind during nien-fo-san-mei is the vow-power of Amitābha which becomes accessible to the devotee through his faith in the Buddha.

This, in turn, leads us to believe that the text is putting forward the idea that faith and meditation should remain undifferentiated in the conception of nien-fo-san-mei because they do harmonize one another. They should be looked upon as two aspects of the single practice of nien-fo-san-mei. The ordinary mind without faith is unable to become concentrated. With faith, however, the mind comes to possess the power to concentrate itself to the utmost. With a mind concentrated, rebirth takes place.

From our analyses of the Third and Fifth Doubts it is now becoming clear that faith and meditation are held together at the cost of dissociating wisdom from meditation. In the way of easy practice nien-fo-san-mei means a samādhi state in which

the mind is fully concentrating on the basis of faith. No insight accompanies the samādhi state. In the way of difficult practice, nien-fo-san-mei means one-pointedness of mind achieved after undergoing a long and difficult period of mental discipline and it is accompanied by an illuminative insight (kuan 觀) into the true nature of reality. This we have noted in the two T'ien-t'ai practices called ch'ang-hsing-san-mei and ch'ang-tso-san-mei.

According to the text, the rationale for putting aside wisdom in its teaching of nien-fo-san-mei is that the present age being that of the "five pollutions", wisdom is extremely difficult to attain. Concentration of mind is also difficult to attain. But the vow-power of Amitābha changes all that. Faith in the vow-power of the Buddha is now the basis of concentrating and focusing the mind on one sphere. Thus concentrated, one is assured of Pure Land rebirth at the hour of death. Once reborn into the Pure Land, one is certain of attaining "the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng" (wu-sheng-jen 無生忍),⁸¹ that very insight which bestows upon the practitioner the stage of no-retreat which followers of the Dharma find almost impossible to attain in the Saha-world during the present decadent age.⁸²

In the Tenth Doubt there is an excellent example of how the text takes a wisdom loaded concept like "manifesting the thought of Bodhi" (發菩提心)⁸³ and in a systematic manner, pushes its wisdom theme out to the periphery, replacing the centre with the rebirth theme:

"Therefore, the Wang-sheng-lun says,
'That is spoken of as 'manifesting

LEAF 51 OMITTED IN PAGE NUMBERING.

the Bodhi mind', it is just the mind resolving to become a Buddha. As for the mind resolving to become a Buddha, it is the thought of saving sentient beings. As for the thought of saving sentient beings, it is the mind taking in sentient beings to be born in the Buddha land." 84

Our text takes the viewpoint of the Wang-sheng-lun expressed in the above quote. The phrase "manifesting the thought of Bodhi" means "manifesting the thought of taking sentient beings to be born in the Buddha land." Buddhahood is essentially Compassion, enlightened Compassion. The Buddha is essentially the Compassionate One. As far as the question of salvation is concerned the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun regards attainment of rebirth as being of prime importance while the attainment of wisdom is of secondary importance, at least while the practitioner is still in the Saha-world. Once in the Pure Land, the attainment of wisdom becomes the prime objective of cultivation.

Conception of "nien-fo" in the Eighth Doubt.

In this particular instance the nien-fo discussed is of a specific form called shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu (十念成就) or "accomplishment of the ten thoughts", a typically Pure Land nien-fo practice for the hour of death. It is essentially invocative in nature, consisting of ten continuous invocations of the formula, "Namo Amitābha Buddha."

The significance of this passage for the present paper lies in its view that even the simplest and briefest of all possible forms of nien-fo, the nien-fo in ten invocations, is compatible with the idea of mental purification, an idea central to meditation. In fact, the text is, here, propounding the notion that shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu is a brief but intense meditative state achieved near the moment of death.

The discussion will be divided into three sections for convenience of explanation:

a) The source of origin of the shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu practice in the Pure Land sūtras.

b) Shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu and its relationship to meditation.

c) Shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu and its relationship to the Buddha's name.

The source of origin of the shih-nien practice in the Pure Land sūtras.

Very likely the practice has its source in two texts, the Wu-liang-shou-ching and the Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching where the phrase "shih-nien" occurs. In the former, the phrase "shih-nien" appears in the nineteenth ~~year~~ of Amitābha, which has been mentioned in the preceding chapter (16). In the latter, the practice of shih-nien is mentioned in connection with one of the nine grades of rebirth, namely the lowest form of the lowest grade. To quote the sūtra,

"The Buddha tells Ānanda and Queen Vaidehī, 'Those beings who will be born in the lowest form of the lowest grade: if there be a person who commits evil deeds, the five deadly sins, the ten evils and the whole complete list of evil; such a one as this stupid person should, because of bad karma, fall into evil destinies and suffer endless pains during many kalpas. On the eve of death he encounters a good and learned teacher who soothes and comforts him in various ways, and for his sake, preaches the excellent Law and commands him to nien-fo. But that person, being harassed by pain, has not the leisure to think of the Buddha. A good friend, then, says to him, 'Even if you are not able to think of (nien) that Buddha, you should call in praise (ch'eng 稱) 'Buddha Amitayus.' Let him like this concentrate his mind (chih-hsin 至心) and with voice uninterrupted, call repeatedly in praise, 'Namo Amitābha Buddha' until he has completed ten nien. On account of praising the name of Buddha he will, during every nien expiate the offenses which involve him in births and deaths during eight million kalpas. He will, while dying see a golden lotus flower like the disk of the sun coming to stop in front of him; in a moment he will be reborn in the World of Ultimate Bliss..."⁸⁵

From the sūtra quoted above we learn first that the ten thoughts(shih-nien + 念) accomplishes two things, namely expiation of offenses, thereby releasing one from the Three Realms, and rebirth in Amitābha's land. Second, the ten thoughts can be in the form of ten invocations. Third, these ten invocations do have the power to help the person concentrate his mind, a theme important for the present paper. Fourth, nien-fo in ten invocations is especially directed towards people who have committed evil throughout their lifetime. Even such people can be saved if they have faith that the words spoken by the Buddha must be true and act accordingly.

At this point we should pause to note two major differences between the Fifth and Eighth Doubts. In the former, the nien-fo-san-mei practice is conceived as a day-to-day exercise in devotion, bearing witness to one's faith in Amitābha. In the latter the shih-nien practice is intended for the hour of death. Also, in the Fifth Doubt the saving power of Amitābha is defined in terms of Amitābha's "vow-power". In the Eighth Doubt, it is defined in terms of Amitābha's meritorious name. What, then, is the explanation for these differences? What significance do these differences have for the present investigation?

The differences can be explained as follows: the conception of nien-fo-san-mei in the Fifth Doubt and even that in the Tenth Doubt, is based on the Wu-liang-shou-ching, whose main concern is with practitioners who are constantly performing nien-fo as an expression of their faith and devotion. On the other hand, the conception of shih-nien in the Eighth Doubt is

based on the Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching.

This means that there exists in the text two kinds of nien-fo in faith, nien-fo-san-mei conceived as a means of salvation by faith which extends into practice and good works, and shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu conceived as a means of salvation by faith without practice or good works. It should be noted that even in nien-fo-san-mei certainty of rebirth is not affected one way or another by practice and good works.

These differences are highly significant for our present investigation. They show us that the text emphasizes faith rather than practice or good works as being the decisive factor in obtaining rebirth. Pure Land rebirth is obtained by faith alone. This is not to imply that mental concentration has no place in the role of bringing about rebirth. In the viewpoint of the text, one-pointedness of mind and faith are inseparable in obtaining for the devotee Pure Land rebirth: "When the mind is concentrated to the utmost, one gets to be born in that Land."⁸⁶ It is on account of one's faith, however, that one's mind becomes concentrated. Faith is essentially one's bold confidence in the vows and Great Compassion(ta-pei 大悲) of the Buddha. This unshakeable confidence brings about a mental state very much like one-pointedness of mind achieved through meditative training.

In conclusion, we may say that the text, in its conception of nien-fo practice, whether it be nien-fo-san-mei or shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu sees meditation and good works as extensions of faith.

Shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu and its relationship to meditation.

Here we will analyse carefully those parts of the passage in which shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu is made to appear like meditation. The most significant set of statements in the entire passage which translates the shih-nien practice into a discourse on meditation is the following:

"When one commits a transgression, because there are intermediate thoughts there are subsequent thoughts. When one is practising nien-fo, because there are no intermediate thoughts there is, then, no subsequent thought. Accordingly, upon dying the good mind is fierce and sharp. Because of this, one is instantly born. It is likened to a thousand men not being able to manage a thickly woven rope but a boy brandishing a sword will, in an instant divide it into two." 87

Nien-fo is said to be "without intermediate thoughts and without subsequent thoughts", meaning that because one does not have intermediate thoughts during nien-fo, no thoughts stemming from such intermediate thoughts will be produced. At the time of committing evil deeds, the mind is filled with countless thoughts of greed and desire which succeed one another like waves on the sea. On the other hand, thinking of the Buddha causes the mind to become "fixed and settled" (chueh-ting 決定). If in thought after thought one thinks only of the Buddha and if one succeeds in doing so up to ten times, then for that brief interval of time one is naturally unable to have defiled thoughts.

Without scattered thoughts the mind becomes unconfused, composed and settled.

The text is here making the point that the ten thought accomplishment(shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu) is meditation in the sense that it causes the mind to become fixed and settled. Clearly, the mind of nien-fo is fixed and settled on a Buddha and in the case of the shih-nien practice, the Buddha is Amitābha. But on which aspect of Amitābha is the mind concentrating during the shih-nien practice? The practitioner of shih-nien is preoccupied with only the thought of rebirth and of this, he is most certain because he has complete faith that what the Buddha has vowed to do he will fulfill. It is thus on the imminent rebirth into the Pure Land that the mind is fixed and settled. That is, the mind is fixed and settled on Amitābha coming and receiving the devotee into the Pure Land.

Herein lies a crucial difference between the mind of nien-fo founded upon faith and the mind of nien-fo founded upon a prescribed meditative discipline. In the latter case, the mind is fixed and settled on something else. This is clearly seen in our discussion of T'ien-t'ai nien-fo in the preceding chapter. In the T'ien-t'ai practice of nien-fo, the mind is fixed and settled on account of its seeing clearly into the "suchness characteristic"(ju-hsiang 如相) of reality.

In other words, the text has subtly and firmly dissociated from meditation its wisdom component and put in its place another central element of Buddhist religiosity, namely faith. This process of transformation becomes even more

obvious in those passages where well-known symbols for wisdom are ingeniously adapted to express its own unique message of nien-fo. We will now look at two such passages.

"When one is committing a transgression, it is from the unreal, false and erroneous mind. As for the mind of nien-fo, it is produced from following good teachers and hearing them teach the real and meritorious name of Amitābha Buddha. One is false and the other real. Can we get to compare them, one with the other? It is like a house which has been in darkness for ten thousand years and suddenly, sunlight reaches it and the darkness is instantly dispelled. Can any age-old darkness resist being dispelled?" 88

In the present context the "sunlight" is the meritorious name of the Buddha. Just as sunlight enters a house from outside and dispels its inner darkness so the Buddha's name enters the dark and polluted mind of the common man and causes it to become clear and focused. This interpretation of the light metaphor is, we may be sure, not quite the kind that those inside the wisdom tradition, for example, the Ch'an school, would give.⁸⁹ What the followers of the wisdom school would probably say is the following: all of the practitioner's effort at mental cultivation is aimed at awakening the mind to the state where it is reflected that the substance of all dharmas is originally empty of self-nature. The mind thus enlightened is like bright sunlight which illuminates all of the sky and earth yet is nowhere attached to any dharma.

What has happened here is that a metaphor commonly used in the wisdom tradition to describe the state of awakening is now transferred away from representing the mind of the practitioner to represent the name of the Buddha Amitābha. What, then, is the relationship between the Buddha's name and the mind of nien-fo ? During nien-fo practice, the mind of the practitioner is thinking intently of the name of Amitābha. In thought after thought the devout practitioner is thinking only of the Buddha Amitābha. That is, the mind of nien-fo is a mind that is continuously being filled with thoughts on the name of Amitābha. This implies that the Buddha's name and the mind of nien-fo cannot be separated. We may, at this juncture, raise the question as to whether the meritorious name of the Buddha does cause the mind to see clearly in the same sense as that understood by the wisdom tradition ? The answer would have to be in the negative because the efficacy of the Buddha's name for salvation lies in its power to transport the devotee to the Pure Land and therein lies the limits of its functioning power. It is after rebirth has taken place that the devotee attains the "recognition of the principle of wu-sheng" (wu-sheng-jen 無生忍), a technical term referring to that subtle understanding that illuminates all dharmas as "empty" (k'ung 空). We will now see how the text uses yet another wisdom metaphor.

We may refer again to the passage which was quoted earlier on (57) where the mind of nien-fo being fierce and sharp is likened to a sword. It may be assumed that the thickly woven rope represents the unwieldy, tangled mass of karma since "binding

"karma" is the central problem which the metaphor is intended to help resolve.

The above interpretation differs again from the orthodox understanding of the sword of wisdom (慧劍).⁹⁰ In the orthodox viewpoint, the image of the sword dramatizes the cutting away of the bondage to illusion. The text has taken the sword image and used it to express the release not from illusion but from karma. In the light of the Pure Land teaching of rebirth this attitude makes sense. What is important for rebirth is release from karmic bondage. The fact that the mind of the devotee is still lacking in understanding is not a problem for rebirth because one could pack off one's ignorance to the Pure Land and once there have it severed. How, one may ask, is it possible that living beings who are still in ignorance manage to be born into the Pure Land? First, Amitabha Buddha has established a great karmic affinity (pién-yu-yin-yuan 徧有因緣)⁹¹ with the living beings of the Saha-world; second, the power of the Buddha's action to save suffering beings is inconceivable (pu-k'o-ssu-i 不可思議).⁹² We will discuss the substance of the answer in greater detail when we come to analyse the Ninth Doubt.

There is, thus, a difference in emphasis in the idea of salvation of the wisdom-oriented and faith-oriented schools of Buddhism. The former emphasizes salvation as liberation from ignorance whereas the latter emphasizes salvation as release from karmic bondage. We should note, however, that these differences are more apparent than real because liberation from

ignorance implies release from karmic bondage and likewise, Pure Land rebirth implies eventual release from ignorance and the attainment of Buddhahood. They should be looked upon as two aspects of one goal.

Shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu and its relationship to the Buddha's name.

Although the text is here trying to render the notion of shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu intelligible in the light of meditation, still, the background which sets the tone of discussion is strongly tinted in Pure Land colours. For instance, it makes, in the subtlest of manners a distinction between the good karma of the mind practising nien-fo and the good karma of cultivating the ten good actions.⁹³ The two kinds of karma have a different quality of "good". The goodness of the nien-fo karma comes from its being a "true, real, uninterrupted good action" (真實無間善業).⁹⁴ And the reason that the nien-fo practice could result in such high quality good karma is because the practice has its source in the meritorious name of the Buddha Amitābha which is "true, real and meritorious" (阿彌陀佛真實功德名號).⁹⁵ Such reasoning is suggestive of the Pure Land idea that the efficacy of the shih-nien practice rests primarily on the Buddha's power which is present in his name. Because its nature is true and real the shih-nien practice naturally has the power, so argues the text, to instantly banish the false and unreal just as light naturally banishes darkness.

In conclusion we may say that the shih-nien practice relates to the Buddha's name in the following manner: all of

Amitābha's merits and virtues resulting from his perfected practice in the past are presently contained in his name. Because the shih-nien practice takes the Buddha's name to be its basis it has access to Amitābha's stock of merits. The shih-nien practice thus becomes a meritorious action, unlike ordinary good actions. It is able to subdue and destroy bad karma because it is essentially a function of the Buddha's name. Shih-nien and the Buddha's name are inseparable.

To sum up, shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu is invocative nien-fo for the hour of death. Although invocative in nature it has the power to release the practitioner from the Three Realms(san-chieh) and to obtain for him rebirth into the Pure Land. The source of its power to perform the above two functions is the Buddha Amitābha, who has vowed to lead those who repeat his name ten times continuously in faith to his Pure Land and there to attain Buddhahood. The power of the Buddha's vows reside in his name. The shih-nien practice takes the Buddha's name to be its basis. Hence, its power is the Buddha's vow-power.

The mind of shih-nien is fixed and settled on the thought of Amitābha coming and receiving him into the Pure Land. That is, his mind is preoccupied with the thought of rebirth. Of his rebirth, he is most certain because he has complete trust in the vows and compassion of the Buddha. Shih-nien is meditation in the sense that it causes the mind to become fixed and settled. In the shih-nien practice, meditation, in the sense of one-pointedness of mind, and faith, in the sense of trusting to the Buddha's compassion, form a natural harmony in obtaining for the

practitioner rebirth.

Shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu is one of two kinds of nien-fo in faith. It is the more radical because it demonstrates that release from the Three Realms is entirely the work of the Buddha's true and meritorious name. It emphasizes that faith is the single decisive factor in obtaining rebirth.

As related before, in its view of meditation as an extension of faith, wisdom is largely dissociated from meditation and put aside. This is not to imply that the wisdom factor is completely absent in its conception of nien-fo in faith. Rather, it is the Buddha's wisdom which is important for the present work of rebirth. It is on account of the Buddha's wisdom that his name is meritorious. The text gives two levels of meaning to wisdom. On one level, wisdom refers to the Buddha's Enlightenment which is actively operating in his name. On the second level, it refers to the wisdom experience of sentient beings. For our text, it is the Buddha's wisdom, not the wisdom experience of living beings, which releases sufferings from karmic bondage to the Three Realms. During shih-nien meditation there is no experience of insight; there is only single-minded concentration. The prerequisite for rebirth is the practitioner's resolve to have faith in the Buddha's compassion and to allow himself to be saved by the Buddha's vow-power. The practitioner's insight experience follows his rebirth into the Pure Land when he awakens to the "recognition of the principle of wu-sheng."

Conception of "nien-fo" in the Ninth Doubt.

We will here analyse only the first half of this passage which speaks of the mind being reborn into the Pure Land. Since the second half speaks of the rebirth of women and those defective in sense organs, a theme not directly pertaining to our present concerns, we will exclude it.

The significance of the entire first portion of the passage rests in the interrelationship between the sentence which says,

"The mind of samādhi (在定之心) at the hour of death is the mind being born into the Pure Land."⁹⁶

and the sentence which says,

"The power of karma (業力) is inconceivable (不可思議)."⁹⁷

The first statement speaks of mind and the second speaks of power. What, then, is the interrelationship between the "mind of samādhi" and the "power of karma"? In the Eighth Doubt we read that

"...the uninterrupted good karma of the mind intensely thinking of the true and meritorious (name) of the Buddha... is able to cut off...the bad karma (accumulated) since the beginningless beginning..."⁹⁸

This would lead us to believe that the statement, "the power of karma is inconceivable" means that the power of the Buddha's name in causing sentient beings to be reborn into his Pure Land is something which does not lend itself to

conceptualization. The truth that "one thought and immediately one gets to be born(there)"⁹⁹ cannot be apprehended by logical reasoning.

What, then, is the interrelationship between the "mind of samādhi" and the "power of karma" ? There is strong similiarity between the mind discussed here and the "good mind being fierce and sharp"(善心-猛利)¹⁰⁰ discussed in the Eighth Doubt. This would lead us to believe that it is the power of Amitābha's name that causes the "mind of samādhi" to be in that very state of samādhi. The power which brings the mind into samādhi is not acquired as a result of undergoing a long and asuduous course in meditation. Rather, one comes to possess such power through having complete faith in the Buddha Amitābha and his Pure Land. On account of one's faith in the power of the Buddha's vows one recites the Buddha's name and thereby could avail oneself of the Buddha's vow-power. In an instant one's mind attains concentration and rebirth takes place.

In conclusion, we may say that the above analysis further confirms our viewpoint that the text regards faith and meditation as being different yet inseparable in nien-fo practice.

To sum up our analysis of the nien-fo practice in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun: first and foremost, the text takes faith to be the basis of its nien-fo practice. Faith is essentially human trust in the vows and compassion of the Buddha. Faith is the single decisive factor in bringing about Pure Land rebirth. When one practises nien-fo in faith one could take advantage of the Buddha's vow-power. Amitābha's vow-power is founded upon the good

karma which have resulted from his perfected practice of his vows in the past as the Bodhisattva Dharmakāra. Presently, the Buddha's merits and virtues are contained in his meritorious name. By invoking the Buddha's name in faith, a portion of that good karma is turned over to the devout practitioner. The good karma created by the Bodhisattva Dharmakāra is extremely powerful. It releases sentient beings who have not yet attained the "recognition of the principle of wu-sheng" from karmic bondage to the Three Realms; it brings about mental concentration and causes sentient beings to be reborn into the Western Pure Land.

Second, the text speaks of two kinds of nien-fo, each of which is firmly founded upon faith. There is the nien-fo intended as a daily devotional exercise performed to bear witness to one's faith and to accumulate merit which is then to be turned over towards Pure Land rebirth for all sentient beings. This form is commonly called nien-fo-san-mei. It includes invocations to and mental contemplation on the Buddha Amitābha. The devout devotee practises nien-fo-san-mei from morning till night. He recites the Buddha's name every day; both speaking and silent he recites the Buddha's name. It is not only in speech that the devotee recites clearly the Buddha's name but also in his mind he thinks clearly and distinctly of the Buddha Amitābha as it is prescribed in the sixteen contemplations (shih-liu-kuan + 十六觀) set forth in the Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching. It is, thus, possible that along with a heart of faith constant and persistent practice of nien-fo-san-mei can lead the practitioner to experience extremely high degrees of samādhi states. In the

sense of concentrating the mind intently on one Buddha, the conception of nien-fo-san-mei in the present text is understood as i-hsiang-san-mei which is one of four samādhi practices prescribed by Chih-i. But its conception of nien-fo-san-mei differs markedly from Chih-i's conception i-hsing-san-mei which includes a second level of meaning. For Chih-i, i-hsing-san-mei is a samādhi practice especially designed to awaken the mind to see into the "suchness characteristic" (ju-hsiang 如 相) of all Buddhas. This latter meaning of i-hsing-san-mei is absent from the conception of nien-fo-san-mei in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. The devotee who practises the nien-fo-san-mei in faith is not concerned with any insight experience while he is still in the Saha-world. For him, the attainment of wisdom, namely the "recognition of the principle of wu-sheng" is a matter of concern only at a later time after he has been reborn into the Pure Land.

Then there is the nien-fo practice intended for the hour of death, namely shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu. It is especially designed to save extremely bad people who have committed all conceivable forms of evil. Even such a one could be reborn if he, at the hour of death, resolves to have faith in the Buddha's compassion and to entrust himself to the inconceivable power of the Buddha's vows to transport him to the Pure Land. Like the nien-fo-san-mei described above, the shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu practice includes both invocation and meditation. Essentially invocative in nature it nevertheless has the power to concentrate the mind. Its power to do so comes from the Buddha. Because the

shih-nien practice takes the Buddha's name to be its basis it has access to the Buddha's vow-power. Shih-nien is meditation in the sense that the mind abiding in nien-fo is fixed and settled on the single thought of Amitābha coming and receiving him into the Pure Land, a thought born from the devotee's conviction that the Buddha is someone who can be completely relied upon.

Finally, as far as the present text is concerned, the person for whom its nien-fo practice is intended is always the ordinary man(fan-fu, 凡夫) whose sense faculties are extremely dull and blunt and whose mind is too weak to withstand, on its own, the onslaught of the afflictions(fan-nao 煩惱). This is especially true in the present age of "mo-fa" and the "five pollutions". Wisdom is extremely difficult to attain in the midst of so much distractions.

CONCLUSION.

Our exegesis of the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun has shown beyond a doubt that for this text faith and meditation are inseparable. They should be looked upon as two aspects of nien-fo practice. The practice of nien (念) serves to bind (hsi 繫) the mind to one sphere.¹⁰¹ It calls the mind of nien-fo "fierce" (meng 猛) and "sharp" (li 利)¹⁰² and "the mind of samādhi at the hour of death is the mind being born into the Pure Land."¹⁰³ Such statements as these imply that rebirth takes place not without mental concentration. In the viewpoint of the text, meditation, in the sense of one-pointedness of mind, and faith, in the sense of trusting to the Buddha's compassion, form a natural harmony in obtaining Pure Land rebirth for the practitioner.

According to the text, meditation or mental concentration means concentrating the mind intently on the Buddha Amitābha, where the power to concentrate and focus the mind on the Buddha comes through one's resolve to have faith in Amitābha's compassion and to avail oneself of Amitābha's vow-power to help attain samādhi and Pure Land rebirth. The ordinary mind without faith is unable to achieve concentration. This is especially true, so says

the text, in the present age of "mo-fa" and the "five pollutions" when the minds of sentient beings are extremely polluted and confused. With faith, however, the mind comes to possess the power to concentrate itself to the utmost. Meditation as well as good works as observing the virtue of giving are the natural consequences of one's faith.

The certainty of rebirth is not affected one way or another by man's lack of understanding of the true nature of reality. Pure Land rebirth is by faith alone. On account of one's faith in the Buddha, the mind attains single-minded concentration. Being thus fixed and settled, rebirth instantly takes place. During nien-fo meditation, be it nien-fo-san-mei or shih-nien-ch'eng-chiu, there is no experience of insight; there is only single-minded concentration. This is the view of the orthodox Pure Land school.

In putting forward the idea that faith and meditation should remain inseparable in its conception of nien-fo, something is gained and something is lost. What is gained is that faith becomes the basis for mental concentration. What is lost is that such mental concentration is no longer accompanied by any insight experience commonly associated with the practice of meditation in the T'ien-t'ai school. During the nien-fo practice, the mind still lacks correct understanding; it is a mind very much inferior to the Buddha's. But the inferior mind by availing itself of the Buddha's vow-power can still reach the Pure Land just as the inferior man by accompanying the Wheel-rolling Monarch can encircle the four quarters of the earth.

However, if we look at the triple factors of faith, meditation and wisdom from the viewpoint of the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun there is no contradiction at all. To help explain, we will borrow the house metaphor used in the text ¹⁰⁴ and elaborate upon it. We may say that the mind of the ordinary man is like a house shut in darkness and in which however hard one searches for the light switch one is still unable to find it in the darkness. Such a house could still be given light if it were to open itself to the sunlight already existing outside. In like manner, the darkness of the unreal, false and stupid mind of the ordinary man can be instantly dispelled if he opens, with a heart of faith, his mind to the inconceivable power of the Buddha's vows and let the Buddha's rays of wisdom present in his name come streaming into his mind. Then, after having arrived at the Pure Land, he could begin work on his own mind to bring out the light of Bodhi deeply hidden in it. We may liken it to one finding the light switch in the house during the day when sunlight is streaming in from every window in the house.

The text calls its nien-fo in faith the "way of easy practice" (i-hsing-tao) and distinguishes it from such practices as observing of precepts and cultivation of the ten pāramitās which are together called the "way of difficult practice" (nan-hsing-tao). In so doing, the text is not implying that there are two unrelated and separate paths of cultivation. Rather, it uses the terms, "i-hsing-tao" and "nan-hsing-tao" to indicate two different sets of external conditions (yuan 緣), aiding the development of the Bodhi-thought. Those who resolve to create

external conditions favourable for the cultivation of the Bodhi-thought through their own effort are on the way of difficult practice(nan-hsing-tao) while those who resolve to avail themselves of the favourable conditions that have been created through another's effort are on the way of easy practice.

The way of easy practice is essentially a path of faith and meditation. The Pure Land school emphasizes this path. The way of difficult practice is a path of meditation and insight. The T'ien-t'ai school emphasizes cultivation of both meditation and insight. The two paths are not identical. The path of meditation and insight for example, describes a method of mind cultivation which involves much critical thinking and evaluation of arguments and so on. The path of faith and meditation is very different. It involves believing that the Buddha's teaching is true and relying on the Buddha, trusting in his compassion. Although the two are not identical they may very well be complementary.

We can see the complementary relationship between the path of faith and meditation and that of meditation and insight when we look a little more carefully into the exact nature of the Bodhisattva path itself. Altruism is essential to Bodhisattvahood; the work and nature of a bodhisattva is "to benefit ~~himself~~ and to benefit others" (自利利他).¹⁰⁵ Hence, if a bodhisattva's progress is to be genuine and balanced, he must not only grow in his understanding of the true nature of reality in order to keep himself from becoming attached to the world but he must cultivate great compassion by being constantly

alert to the silent cry for help which arises from those beings who have forever been subject to transmigration since the beginningless beginning, showing mercy and helping them. That is, the bodhisattva's existence is essentially dialectic in nature. The bodhisattva is not only a being working towards Bodhi but he is also one who is genuinely concerned with suffering beings. This implies that a bodhisattva is dedicated to not only impart the Buddhist Dharma to living beings but also to free living beings from their immediate state of suffering in the Three Realms.

The above analysis of the Bodhisattva path implies that there are basically two types of responses that the ordinary man could make on hearing of the story of the Bodhisattva Dharmakāra. First, he could respond by taking the bodhisattva vows himself, making the resolve to perfect the ten pāramitās and establish a Buddha-land. His cultivation is basically unassisted; it is one of meditation and insight and his progress is measured in terms of stages or abodes (chu 十住) -- each abode marking a certain degree of insight attained.

On the other hand, one who feels himself incapable of undertaking the difficult path of self-reliance could, nevertheless, make a meaningful response to the bodhisattva ideal. Such a one could respond by becoming the beneficiary of the bodhisattva's stock of merits derived from his perfect practices. That is, he sees himself as one of those suffering beings whom the bodhisattvas have vowed to aid in their quest for Bodhi. He is presently incapable of leaving the Three Realms by means of his own personal achievements in meditation and insight. We may say

that he is like an infant (~~3~~ ¹⁰⁶) who presently lacks knowledge but who has an infinite potential for learning and knowing if he is put in a favourable environment where he is protected from destructive forces. His cultivation is basically assisted cultivation; it is one of faith and meditation where the latter is a natural consequence of the former. In fact we may add that it would be disastrous for those ordinary beings whose capacities and temperament do not permit them to undertake the difficult practice of meditation and insight to insist on doing so because they would be likely to misunderstand the main Buddhist doctrines. Being thus immersed in incorrect views they would fall even deeper into the transmigration process.

It is clear that the bodhisattvas who have vowed to establish their own Buddha-lands and those ordinary beings who are mentally not yet capable of practising meditation and insight are intimately related to one another because of the twofold beneficial nature of the Bodhisattva path. Each needs the other. Without such ordinary beings in need of being assisted, the bodhisattva's basic vow to save all beings would be empty; without the bodhisattva's expedient devices which are the consequences of his perfect practices in meditation and insight, those ordinary beings could not be lifted out of the ocean of suffering.

The Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun.

(text)

Expounded by the T'ien-t'ai
Great Teacher Chih-chê of
the Sui Dynasty.

The First Doubt.

Question: All Buddhas and bodhisattvas perform actions(業) out of Great Compassion(大悲). Thus, if one desires to save sentient beings then one should only desire birth within the "three worlds"¹⁰⁷ and among the "five pollutions"¹⁰⁸ and the "three paths"¹⁰⁹ in order that one might save suffering beings.

For what reason therefore does one seek rebirth in the Pure Land? This is making oneself comfortable and abandoning sentient beings; this is lacking the Heart of Great Compassion; this is exclusively for the sake of self-benefit(自利), and it obstructs the bodhisattva path.

Answer: There are two categories of bodhisattvas. The first category: those who have been cultivating for a long time the bodhisattva path and have attained the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng(無生忍). Truly, they are the ones who

should be responsible (for saving suffering beings in the three worlds).

The second category: those bodhisattvas who have not attained the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng and those common persons (凡夫) who have newly produced the thought of Bodhi. As for such bodhisattvas and common persons, they must always not leave the Buddha. When the power of endurance has been perfected then one becomes adequately equipped to be born into the three worlds and, in the midst of the evil world, to save suffering beings.

Therefore the Chih-tu-lun¹¹⁰ says, "...if such common persons in complete bondage have a heart of great compassion, and even if they vow to be born in the evil world to save suffering beings, such will not happen. And why? It is because the troubles and vexations (煩惱) are violently powerful in the evil world, and if one does not possess the strength of the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng then one's mind will revolve, following the objects of the senses. Being in bondage to sounds and forms, one falls into the three unhappy states. How will one be able to save other sentient beings?

"Supposing it be that one gets to be born among men, still the Holy Path (聖道)¹¹¹ is difficult to attain. Some, by means of their practice of such merits as generosity and morality, may become kings and great ministers with wealth, honour and ease.

"But even if one should meet a good teacher (善知識), one may not trust him, and so one becomes avaricious, wrathful and unrestrained and commits crimes of all sorts. Mounted upon such

bad karma, one falls instantly into the three unhappy paths.

After passing through innumerable kalpas one emerges from hell and receives a poor and mean body.

"And if one does not meet up with a good teacher, one returns to fall into hell.

"In suchlike manner one has transmigrated up to the present day. Therefore the Wei-mo-ching says, "Himself being sick, he is unable to cure; how then is he able to cure other sick people?"¹¹²

Again, the Ta-chih-tu-lun says, "Supposing that there be two men, each of whom has a relative drowning. One man, being vexed and excited, jumps straight into the water to save. Because he has no power of expediency, both parties, his relative and he, are drowned. The other man has an expedient device. He goes to fetch a bamboo raft. Riding upon it, he rescues by pulling the drowning man up. Both of them get to be free from the drowning difficulty.

"The bodhisattva who has just newly made the resolve to seek Bodhi is exactly like this. Not yet having attained the power of the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng, he is unable to save sentient beings. Because of this, he ~~must~~ always be near the Buddha. Once he has attained the power of the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng he becomes, at that moment, capable of saving sentient beings, like the one who has acquired a boat."¹¹³

Further, the Ta-chih-tu-lun says, "...Supposing that there be an infant who should not leave his mother. But suppose he leaves his mother and sometime later, he falls into a pit. Thirsting for milk, he dies. Again, supposing that there be a chick whose flight feathers have not yet matured. It has to be dependent upon the

branches of trees and is unable to go far. When the roots of its flight feathers have grown fully, it will thence be able to fly through space, freely and unhindered."¹¹⁴

"The ordinary person is without strength. But he has only to exclusively think upon Amitābha Buddha and immediately he will accomplish the samādhi. Because the practice is completed, when the devotee approaches his death he concentrates on being born and he will definitely and without doubt see Amitābha Buddha.

"After he has verified (for himself) the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng he returns to the three worlds. Riding upon the raft of the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng, he saves suffering beings, and he performs on a wide scale the work of the Buddha, freely and in any way he so wishes."

Therefore the Ta-chih-tu-lun says, "...To roam and sport in hell. After the practitioner has been born in the Pure Land and has attained the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng, he then returns to enter the world of birth-and-death, to teach and convert the hells and to save suffering beings."

Because of this cause and condition one seeks to be born in the Pure Land. May you comprehend its teaching! Therefore the Shih-chu-n'o-sha-lun designates it as the path of "easy practice".¹¹⁵

The Second Doubt.

Question: The substance of all dharms is empty(空), and originally there is no arising(無起). All dharms are the same, tranquil and quiet. Now, however, you would abandon this and seek that other birth in the Western Pure Land of Amitābha.

Is this not contradicting the fundamental principle ?

Further, a sūtra¹¹⁶ says, "...If one would seek the Pure Land, first purify one's mind. Because the mind is pure, therefore the Buddha-land is pure."

As for this, how is one to understand?

Answer: In explaining there are two meanings. First is concerned with the general answer and second, the answer from a different standpoint.

The general answer: if you say "to seek after birth in Ni-t'o's Western Pure Land is to abandon this and seek after that, and that this is not within the fundamental principle" then you are grasping onto (the view of) staying here; as far as not seeking after the Western Land is concerned, it is to abandon that and to become attached to this. This is still to bring about sickness, and is not within the fundamental principle.

Turning the suggestion around, one may say that one does not seek birth in this world nor in that world. As for this, it is the cessation and extinction view.

Therefore the Chin-kang-po-ho-ching says, "O Subhuti, if you think this thought, namely that the one who manifests the Supreme, perfect Bodhi teaches that dharmas have cessation and extinction as their mark: do not think this thought. And why? It is because the one who manifests the Supreme, perfect Bodhi does not teach the mark of cessation and extinction has reference to dharmas."¹¹⁷

Second, the answer from a different standpoint: now, as for "neither arising nor extinguishing" (不生不灭) it means that in the midst of the conditions of arising various dharmas are

harmoniously combined, and that they do not maintain their individual self-nature(不守自生).

Though one inquires into the substance of arising, even so one cannot get at this arising. When such arising occurs, there is no place from which it comes. Therefore, it is called "non-arising".

As for "not extinguishing", it means when dharmas are dispersing, they do not maintain a self-nature and so we speak of the ego(我) being extinguished. At the time of dispersing, although (the dharmas) are gone there is no place to which (they) reach. Therefore one speaks of "not extinguishing".

This does not mean that apart from conditioned arising there is no such thing as being born and being extinguished.

Also, do not regard "non-arising"(不生) as not seeking birth in the Pure Land.

On account of this, the Chung-lun says, "The dharmas which are produced by causes and conditions, I teach that they are, in fact, empty, also they are termed false names; this is called the principle of the Middle Way."¹¹⁸

It also says, "Dharmas are not self-produced, nor are they produced from something else; neither arising together with, nor without primary causes. For this reason, one knows (them to be) "non-arising".¹¹⁹

Again, the Wei-mo-ching says, "Although one knows that all Buddha-lands and all sentient beings are empty, yet one always cultivates the Pure Land to teach and convert all classes of beings."¹²⁰

It also says, "...Supposing that there is a man who is erecting a dwelling. If it rests upon empty ground then he will build it

as he so wishes without being hindered. If it rests upon hollowness then even at the end (of his life) he will not complete it." 121

The Dharma taught by all Buddhas rests always in the (above) two truths. Not destroying the false names yet they teach that all dharmas are, in fact, appearances.

The wise earnestly seeks to be born in the Pure Land. He comprehends that the substance of birth cannot be attained and that this is, in fact, the true "non-arising".

This is what is meant by saying that "if your mind is pure, then the Buddha-land is pure."

The foolish is bound by the idea of arising. On hearing of "arising" he immediately forms an understanding of arising. He does not know that arising is, in fact, non-arising and that non-arising is, in fact, arising.

Not comprehending this fundamental principle he stubbornly declares one true and the other false, and he is angry at the other for seeking to be born in the Pure Land.

How mistaken!

As for this man, he is an offender who slanders the Dharma, a non-Buddhist of heterodox views.

The Third Doubt

Question: The dharma-nature and meritorious virtues of the Pure Lands of all Buddhas of the ten directions are the same, and the practitioner could think (in a general way) on all the meritorious virtues to be born in all the Pure Lands.

Now, then, to seek exclusively the Pure Land of one Buddha is to contradict ~~the~~ equality of their natures. Thus, how could one be reborn in the Pure Land ?

Answer: All the Buddha-lands are truly equal, but the sense faculties of sentient beings are dull, very impure and confused. If such a one does not exclusively bind the mind to one object then one's samādhi will be difficult to accomplish. The exclusive (practice of) thinking of Amitābha Buddha is, in fact, i-hsiang-san-mei (一心三昧), and by means of "one-pointedness of mind" (一心三昧) one gets to be born in that land.

As the Sui-yuan-wang-sheng-ching says, "The Bodhisattva P'u-kuang (普廣菩薩) asks the Buddha, "In all the ten directions, there are Pure Lands. For what reason World-Honoured One, do you exclusively praise the Western Pure Land of Amitābha as that to which one is to be especially sent to be reborn ?" The Buddha answers Bodhisattva P'u-kuang saying, "The minds of the living beings of Jambudvīpa are full of impurities and confusion. It is for this reason that I exclusively praise the Pure Land of a single Buddha in the West and cause the sentient beings to be single-minded on one sphere so that they may easily obtain rebirth."¹²² If one were to think (參) in a general way of all the Buddhas one's object of nien-fo would be very broad and one's mind would become scattered and diffused; samādhi would be difficult to achieve and consequently, one would not get to be reborn (in the Pure Land).

Further, to seek after the meritorious virtues of one Buddha is no different from seeking after the meritorious virtues of all

Buddhas. On account of this reason that the nature of the Buddha-dharma is the same, to think(念) of the Buddha Amitābha is in fact to think(念) of all Buddhas; to be born in one Pure Land is in fact to be born in all Pure Lands.

Therefore, the Hua-yen-ching says, "The bodies of all Buddhas are in fact the body of one Buddha; be it with one mind or with one wisdom, they are all the same in their powers, and in their states of fearlessness."¹²⁵

It also says, "...Supposing that the pure, full moon is universally reflected in all waters. Although the images are innumerable yet, the original moon has never been increased to two; in this way, an unobstructed wisdom attains to Perfect Enlightenment and manifests itself in response to every place. The body of the Buddha has never been two."

The wise will understand by means of a metaphor. The wise, just as he is able to understand that all the moon images are simply one moon image and one moon image is all moon images, and further that there are no two moon images so too, he will understand that one Buddha is really all Buddhas and all Buddhas are really one Buddha and that there are no two Dharma bodies. Therefore, when one is zealously being mindful(念) of one Buddha one is in fact being mindful(念) of all Buddhas.

The Fourth Doubt.

Question: Such as this, thinking of seeking to be born in a particular Buddha Pure Land: why should not one among the Buddha-lands of the ten quarters, get to go and be born (in that land) which one happens to be thinking upon at that moment? Why should

one thinks(念) exclusively of the Western Land of the Buddha Amitābha ?

Answer: The ordinary man is without wisdom and does not dare to take upon himself responsibility. Because he resorts exclusively to the Buddha's words, therefore, he is able to be exclusively mindful of Amitābha Buddha. How does one resort to the Buddha's words ? Śākyamuni's lifetime of teaching the Dharma in various places was only to urge all living beings to single-mindedly think(念) of Amitābha Buddha, and seek to be born in the Western Land.

Because the Wu-liang-shou-ching, the Wang-sheng-lun and more than several tens of other literature like these in the group of sūtras and their commentaries have all earnestly indicated and exhorted birth in the Western Land, therefore one practises only this nien (on the Buddha Amitābha).

Moreover, Amitābha Buddha has specifically forty-eight greatly compassionate vows to receive and lead all sentient beings.

Further, in the Kuan-ching,¹²⁵ the Buddha Amitābha has eighty-four thousand major characteristics and each major characteristic has eighty-four thousand minor signs; each minor sign gives off eighty-four thousand lights which completely illuminate the worlds and the sentient beings who practise nien-fo(念 佛), taking hold of all (into his Pure Land) and abandoning none. If there is a man who practises nien(念) then the "potentiality and response"¹²⁶ are in accord with one another and he will certainly get to be born (in the Pure Land).

Further, the A-mi-t'o-ching,¹²⁷ the Ta-wu-liang-shōu-ching,¹²⁸

the Ku-yin-wang-t'o-lo-ni-ching¹²⁹ and others like these say that at the time when the Buddha Śākyamuni taught this sūtra, all the Buddhas of the ten directions--as numerous as the Ganges sands--unfolded their tongues, and covering three-great-thousand-worlds, testified to the fulfillment that all the sentient beings who are mindful (念) of Amitābha Buddha and avail themselves of the Buddha's power of the original vow of great compassion will certainly get to be born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

One should know that Amitābha Buddha and this world have a special interrelationship. By what means does one get to know?

The Yu-liang-shou-ching says, "During the last period of the destruction of the Dharma, this sūtra shall be kept for a generation of a hundred years, to receive and lead sentient beings to be reborn in that other land."¹³⁰

Therefore, one knows that Amitābha Buddha and the greatly suffering beings of this world have a special interrelationship.

Although there are one or two sūtras which do briefly encourage rebirth in the Pure Lands of all the other Buddhas, these are unlike the land of Amitābha, rebirth in which is earnestly encouraged in many places in the sūtras and in their commentaries.

The Fifth Doubt.

Question: The bad karma of the ordinary man who is completely in bondage is weighty; not even one atom of the troubles and vexations (煩惱) has been cut off. Since the Western Pure Land lies outside of the three worlds, how can the ordinary man in complete bondage get to be born there?

Answer: There are two kinds of causes(二種緣). One kind is "self-power"(自力) and the other is "other-power"(他力).¹³¹

As for "self-power", it means cultivating the way in this world. Truly, it does not obtain birth in the Pure Land.

For this reason, the Ying-lo-ching¹³² says, "The ordinary man in complete bondage does not yet understand the Three Jewels, he does not know about the resulting fruits produced by good and bad causes. If such a one first produces the thought of Bodhi, faith will be its foundation. If one resides in the school of Buddhism, the precepts will serve as the basis. If one receives the bodhisattva precepts, these precepts shall be practised continuously in body after body, through one, two and three kalpas until one arrives at the abode of the initial production of the thought of Bodhi(初發心位).¹³³ In such a manner does one practise innumerable practices and vows, such as the ten (stages) of faith¹³⁴ and the ten pāramitās¹³⁵ uninterruptedly for a complete ten thousand kalpas until one arrives at the sixth abode of correct mind (第六正心位).¹³⁶ If one further advances, one will arrive at the seventh abode of non-backsliding(第七不退位)¹³⁷ which is in fact the position of the seed nature(種子位).

This is according to "self-power". In the end, one does not get to be born in the Pure Land.

Other-power: if one has faith that the power of the vow of great compassion of Amitābha Buddha takes hold of sentient beings who practise nien-fo then one becomes able to produce the thought of Bodhi, cultivate nien-fo-san-mōi, resolve to leave the three

worlds, begin to practise generosity, morality and cultivate merit. In each one of these practices, he dedicates it to the resolve to be born in that Pure Land of Amitābha. Availing himself of the power of the Buddha's vow, the potentiality and response will correspond and he will get rebirth.

For this reason, the Shih-chu-p'o-sha-lun says, "With regard to cultivating the way in the world, there are two sorts. The first is the way of difficult practice, and the second is the way of easy practice."¹³⁸

The way of difficult practice: during the period of the five pollutions and the evil times, although one searches through innumerable Buddha-eras for the "stage of no-retreat" (無退轉) it is still very difficult to attain. Its difficulties are as countless as dust particles. To speak of it, one could not exhaust (its difficulties). Roughly, however, there are five:

- 1) The non-Buddhist teaching of relative good may confuse the bodhisattva dharma.
- 2) Untrustworthy and evil men may break his excellent virtues.
- 3) Any inversion of the good fruit is able to destroy the conduct of purity.
- 4) The self-benefits of the śrāvakas obstruct the Great Compassion.
- 5) If one thinks that there is only "self-power" and that there is no taking hold of "other-power" this is like a lame man who walks on foot. In a day, he does not cross more than several li yet he suffers extremely great hardships. This is called "self-power".

The way of easy practice: it is to have faith that the Buddha's words teach (the practice of) nien-fo-san-mei-- if one vows to be born in the Pure Land and avails himself of the power of the vow of Amitābha Buddha to support and assist, one will certainly go to be born. This is, indeed, not to be doubted !

This is like someone who travels by waterways. Because of the power of the boat one arrives at a thousand li in an instant. This is called "other-power".

This is like an inferior man who follows the Wheel-rolling Monarch. In a single day and night, he encircles the world; it is not by his own power, but by the power of the Wheel-rolling Monarch.

If one says that an ordinary man with "outflows"¹³⁹ cannot get to be born in the Pure Land, one may say, too, that an ordinary man with "outflows" should not get to see the body of the Buddha because nien-fo-san-mei comes about through "good roots without outflows."¹⁴⁰

Yet the ordinary man with outflows may, according to his particular class get to see the coarser characteristics of the Buddha-body, while bodhisattvas may see the finer characteristics.

The Pure Land is also like that. Although it is the product of the good roots without outflows nevertheless an ordinary man with outflows who produces the peerless Bodhi-thought and seeks to be born in the Pure Land and always practises nien-fo will subsequently subdue and destroy the troubles and vexations and get to be born in the Pure Land. According to his class, he will get to see the coarser characteristics, whereas a bodhisattva

shall get to see the finer characteristics.

As for this, what is there to doubt ?

Therefore, the Hua-yen-ching says, "All the Buddha-lands are equal, universally glorious and pure. Because the karmic deeds of sentient beings are varied, therefore that which each sees is not the same." This is its meaning.


The Sixth Doubt.

Question: Even though we cause the ordinary man in complete bondage to get to be born in that land, such things as "false views"¹⁴² and the "three poisons"¹⁴³ are always arising. How can one get to be born in that land and instantly attain no-retreat and cross over the three worlds ?

Answer: With regard to being born in that land, there are five causes and conditions (being responsible for) no-retreat. Which are the five ?

First, the power of the vow of great compassion of Amitābha Buddha receives and leads (sentient beings). As a consequence, living beings obtain no-retreat.

Second, because the Buddha's light is always shining forth, therefore the thought of Bodhi constantly advances without retreating.

Third, all these, the waters, birds, trees, wind and music, teach the truth of "pain and emptiness"¹⁴⁴. Those who hear will give rise to the mind which is mindful () of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Consequently, they do not retreat.

Fourth, in that land the sincere bodhisattvas are the good

friends, there are no spheres of evil conditions. Outwardly, there are no spirits or demons; inwardly, there are no such things as the three poisons. The troubles and vexations will eventually not arise. Therefore, one does not retreat.

Fifth, if one is born in that land one's length of days will be of infinite kalpas, being equivalent to that of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Therefore, one does not retreat. >

In this evil period when the lifespan is short, after passing through innumerable kalpas, one still does not give rise to the troubles and vexations. If for a long period of time one cultivates the way, how can one not get the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng ! These principles are clearly set forth and need not be doubted.

The Seventh Doubt.

Question: The Bodhisattva Maitreya succeeds to the place (vacated by the Buddha Śākyamuni in Tusita Heaven). Persons who have practised in a superior form the ten virtues attain in that place and meet the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Together with him they will be born again in this world, and during his three preachings they will naturally attain the "Holy Fruit".¹⁴⁵ Why is there need to seek birth in the Western Pure Land ?

Answer: The power and desire connected with seeking birth in Tusita Heaven where each day one hears the teaching and meets the Buddha may seem similar in appearance (to the Pure land of Amitābha). However, when one carefully compare (them) there is plenty of good and bad. Let us now discuss two kinds:

First, even though one observes the ten virtues one may perhaps

not get to be born. On what basis does one get to know? The Mi-lo-shang-sheng-ching says, "When one practises all the samadhis and enters deeply into the power of right concentration (三昧),"¹¹⁶ it is at that moment that one gets to be born (in Tusita Heaven). There is utterly no principle of expediency to receive and lead (all beings into the Heaven). This is unlike the power of Amitābha's original vōw and the power of (his) glorious rays of light which take firm hold of sentient beings who practise nien-fo and which abandon not one of them.

Moreover, Śākyamuni Buddha taught nine grades of teaching as expedient devices to receive and lead (all beings into the Pure Land); he earnestly taught, causing all to be born into that Pure Land.

There is nothing but for the sentient beings to be able to practise nien on Amitābha Buddha, then the potentiality and response will be in mutual accord and they will certainly get to be born. This is similar to the present world where the one who loves will be the one who is able to receive love; the opportunities being mutually in harmony, one will definitely accomplish one's business.

Second, the heavenly palace of Tusita is a passion-ridden realm and there are many who are slipping from their position. There are no streams, birds, groves, wind or music which, on hearing, the sentient beings, all, become mindful (念) of the Buddha, manifest the thought of Bodhi, subdue and destroy the troubles and vexations.

Further, there are women who prolong the heavenly attachments

and the mind that is attached to the five desires. Also there are goddesses who are subtle and mysterious so that all the devas are addicted to pleasure and sports and are unable to constrain themselves. This is not like the streams, birds, groves, wind and music of the Pure Land of Amitābha, which, on hearing, the sentient beings, all, produce mindfulness of the Buddha, manifest the thought of Bodhi, subdue and destroy the troubles and vexations.

In addition, there are no women nor the "mind of the two vehicles" (二乘之心); there are only the chaste and good companions of the pure, unique Great Vehicle.

On account of this the troubles and vexations and the bad karma will eventually not arise. Consequently, one arrives at the birthless stage.

When one compares (them) in this manner, the good and bad are set forth clearly. What need is there to cause one to doubt?

When Śākyamuni Buddha was in the world, those who saw the Buddha and yet did not attain the Holy Fruit were as many as the Ganges sands. When Maitreya comes into the world it will also be like that: there will be many who will not attain the Holy Fruit. Such is not the case with the Pure Land of Amitābha. They have only to be born in that land and henceforth, all will get the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng. There will not be anyone who will recede and fall into the three worlds and be bound by the karma of birth and death.

Furthermore, I have heard the Hsi-vi-ch'uan¹⁴⁷ saying that there were three bodhisattvas; Asaṅgha, Vasubandhu and Simhabhadra.

These three men swore their determination to be born together in Tusita and they resolved to meet Maitreya. They vowed that if one were to die first and get to meet Maitreya, he would come back to inform the others. Simhabhadra died. Although he had gone for several years he still did not return. Later, when Vasubandhu was nearing the end, Asaṅgha said to him, "If you meet Maitreya, immediately return to tell me." Vasubandhu died. He did come back but he did so only after an interval of three years. Asaṅgha inquired, "Why did you allow so much time to pass before coming?" Vasubandhu said that he had arrived there (in Tusita Heaven), had listened to the Bodhisattva Maitreya preached an entire sermon, had reverently circumnambulated him and had returned instantly, but on account of the days being long in that Heaven, therefore three years have already passed in this place. Asaṅgha again asked, "Where is Simhabhadra now?" Vasubandhu replied that because Simhabhadra had experienced such heavenly delights he was still enjoying the five desires. Consequently, he dwells in the external household and he has never seen Maitreya since the time he left !

Even inferior bodhisattvas who are born in that (place) are still attached to the five desires. How much more so the common man !

On account of this, one resolves to be born in the Western Land where one will definitely obtain the stage of no-retreat. One does not seek to be born in Tusita Heaven,

The Eighth Doubt.

Question: Sentient beings, from beginningless time to the present, have created boundless karma. Now that they are born again they still do not meet up with good teachers; they again commit all the bad karmic actions and there will be no evil that they will not commit.

How, at the time of death, will the ten thought accomplishment (十念成就) instantly attain for them the future life (in the Pure Land) and get them out of the three worlds? How is one to thoroughly understand passion-created karma?

Answer: As to how much or little, strong or weak, are the good and bad karmic seeds (業種) of sentient beings from beginningless time to the present, we can never get to know. But if one is able to meet good teachers and the ten thought accomplishment, these are all the good karma of former lives. If the good karma is strong then one gets to meet good teachers and the ten thought accomplishment.

If one's bad karma is much one cannot meet up with good teachers, much less the ten thought accomplishment.

Moreover, as for your taking the bad karma of beginningless time to the present to be heavy on the one hand, and the ten thoughts at the time of death to be light on the other, there are three kinds of principles by means of which one should compare (the workings of karma); lightness and heaviness are neither fixed nor do they depend on time-periods of either long or short, much or little. What are the three?

First, that which resides in the mind (心); second, that

which resides in external conditions(在緣); and third, that which resides in the (devotée's) certainty (of his rebirth into the Pure Land)(在決定).

Concerning that which resides in the mind: when one commits a transgression, such is produced from one's own empty, false delusions. On the other hand, nien-fo is produced from hearing a good teacher teach the real and meritorious name of Amitābha Buddha.

One is false, and the other real. How can we compare them ! It is like a house which has been in darkness for ten thousand years; suddenly, sunlight reaches it, and the darkness is instantly dispelled. How can any age-old darkness resist being dispelled ?

Concerning that which resides in external conditions: when one commits a transgression, such is deludedly produced from the empty, false, stupid and dark mind that is dependent upon the empty and false external conditions. The mind of nien-fo is produced from the mind which hears the Buddha's pure, real and meritorious name which is connected with the highest Bodhi.

One is real, and the other false. How can we compare them ! This is like a man being shot with a poisoned arrow; the arrow goes deep and the poison penetrates; the flesh is damaged and the bones are broken. But upon hearing the sound of the drumming¹⁴⁸ of the antidote, the arrow is immediately taken out and the poison removed. How can the poison that has penetrated deeply by means of the arrow resist being brought out ?

Concerning that which resides in the (devotee's) certainty (of rebirth into the Pure Land): when one commits a transgression, there are intervening thoughts and there is the final thought. When one practises nien-fo there are no intervening thoughts, nor any final thought, and so when one is about to part with life, the good mind is intense and because of this one is instantly born (in the Pure Land).

It is like (the case of) a thousand men not being able to manage a thickly woven rope, which however, a boy brandishing a sword can cut in two in a moment. Again, it is like fuel that has been accumulating for a thousand years, which when set on fire with a small flame is completely consumed within a short time. Again, it is like a man who, because he has been cultivating the ten good actions since the time he was born, ought to get to be born in the heavens. At the time of death, if it happens that in a moment of thought he becomes fixed to some heterodox view, he would then fall into the avīci hell.

Although bad karma is unreal and false, because it is fierce and sharp it is still able to dispose of the good works of a lifetime and cause a man to fall into the evil paths.

Therefore, how can the unceasing, real and good karma of the mind being intense on nien-fo be unable to dispose of the bad karma of beginningless time and so achieve rebirth in the Pure Land! Such will not take place.

It¹⁴⁹ is also said, "An instant of nien-fo extinguishes the transgressions (committed during) birth and death in eighty million kalpas."

It is because the mind is intense at the time of nien-fo that it can subdue and destroy bad karma, and ensure that one gets to be born (in the Pure Land). There is no need to doubt !

The ancient records that have been transmitted from generation to generation have evaluated the ten thought accomplishment and formulated the idea of (spiritual rewards at) a later date (別時). But this cannot be. How does one know this ?¹⁵⁰

The Shê-lun says, "...it is only from producing the vow; there is absolutely no other practice..."¹⁵¹

The Tsa-chi-lun says, "...if one vows to be born in the Land of Bliss, one has immediately attained it. If one hears the undefiled name of the Buddha, one has attained Anubodhi..."¹⁵²

These are all primary causes for a later period, and there is absolutely no other religious practice (necessary).¹⁵³

If one holds that the intense and good practice of ten continuous thoughts at the time of death is that which is of a later period, how mistaken he is !

Let the practitioner ponder deeply this principle, and secure his mind; do not believe differing views, nor allow yourself to fall (from Truth) !

The Ninth Doubt.

Question: The Western Land is a thousand million kotis of Buddha-lands away from here. The ordinary man is inferior and weak; how could he go there ?

Moreover, the Wang-sheng-lun says, "Women, those defective in sense organs and persons of the two vehicles are not born (in the Pure Land)"¹⁵⁴ Since there is this teaching, one should know that

women and those defective in sense organs will certainly not get to go and be born in the Pure Land.

Answer: It is to agree with the common man's physical eye and the samsaric mind that one reckons and speaks of the Western Pure Land as a thousand million kotis of Buddha-lands away from here.

However, concerning the success of the action of sending sentient beings to the Pure Land, the mind of samādhi is, in fact, the mind being born ~~at~~ to the Pure Land. Starting to be mindful of the Buddha is, in fact, the moment when one is born into the Pure Land.

On account of this, the Kuan-ching says, "The country of Amitābha is not far from here."¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, the power of karma is inconceivable. One thought immediately gets (one) to be born (there). There is no need to be anxious that it is far. Again, it is like a man dreaming: although the body is in bed, the mind, the thoughts and the perceptions extensively reach all other places and worlds just like in daily life. There is, indeed, no difference ! Being born in the Pure Land is also like that: to call to mind the Buddha is to arrive. One must not doubt !

As for "women and those defective in sense organs, and persons of the two vehicles not being born (in the Pure Land)" - this only says that among those who have been born in that land there are not any women nor any who are blind, deaf or dumb; it does not mean that in this (present) world women and those defective in sense organs will have no opportunity to be reborn in the Pure Land. If there be a man who speaks like this, he is ignorant and

unenlightened; he has totally misunderstood the meaning of the sūtra.

Moreover, it is like (the instance of) Lady Vaidehī: she has requested to be born in the Pure Land. And to the mistress and her five hundred maids, the Buddha gave the prediction that all will get rebirth in that land.

If only the minds of the women and the blind, the deaf and the dumb of this world will be mindful of the Buddha, then they will all be born in that land and from that time on they shall never again receive the body of a woman or that which is defective in sense organs.

If the persons of the two vehicles will turn their minds towards vowing to be born in the Pure Land they will reach that (place) and they will not have again the grasping mind of the two vehicles. On account of this, it is said, "Women, those defective in sense organs and persons of the two vehicles are not born in the Pure Land." This does not mean that the women and those defective in sense organs in this (present) world will not get to be born (in the Pure Land).

Therefore, the forty-eight vows of the Wu-liang-shou-ching say, "Supposing that I attain Buddhahood and all the women in the worlds of the ten directions who call upon my Name and who are disgusted with their female bodies yet receive again, after death, a female body may I then not obtain true enlightenment."¹⁵⁶

How then could one be born in that land and yet receive once more the body of a woman!

It is also thus for those defective in sense organs.

The Tenth Doubt.

Question: One who presently longs for the certainty that he would be born in the Pure Land may not know what activities (of thought, word, and deed) to perform. How then should one sow the (karmic) seeds that would lead to rebirth in that land?

Also, common persons all have wives and children, and have not cut off their sexual passion; can they get to be born there?

Answer: As for desiring for the certainty of being born in the Western Land, there are two kinds of practices which determine that one gets to be born there. First is the practice of being wearied of the world and leaving it (厭世行) and the second is the practice of being joyous in the vow (欣願行).

Speaking of the practice of being wearied of the world and leaving it: from beginningless time to the present, the common person has been inextricably bound by the five desires, and transmigrating in the five planes of rebirth.¹⁵⁷ Although he has received all kinds of sufferings yet he does not give rise to the mind that is wearied of the five desires. There has never yet occurred an opportunity to come out (of the transmigratory cycle). On account of this, one must always contemplate this body-- its blood, excrement and urine; all these disgusting things are then revealed to be unclean, foul-smelling and filthy.

Therefore, the Nich-p'an-ching says, "This body is like a city within which an ignorant raksasa is dwelling. Who, among the wise, would rightly delight in such a body?"¹⁵⁸

And the sūtra also says, "This body is where all the miseries of existence accumulate. The whole (of it) is, all, unclean. It

harbours such things as abscesses. Basically, it is without value. When one ascends (the scale) to the heavenly bodies, all are also like this."¹⁵⁹

The practitioner, whether walking, sitting, sleeping or awake, should always contemplate this body to be only suffering, lacking happiness and should produce a deep feeling of weariness.

Even if he is unable to sever relations with his wife immediately he should, little by little, give rise to a feeling of disgust as he performs the contemplation of the seven kinds of impurities: first, contemplate that this body of desires is produced from the affliction of desire. That is to say, the seed is impure; second, when the father and mother have intercourse, the red(blood) and white(sperm) unite. That is to say, the begetting of life is impure; third, being in the mother's womb is to be beneath the organ of birth and to be above the organ of maturation. That is to say, the dwelling is impure;¹⁶⁰ fourth, during gestation period, the only source of food comes from the mother's blood. That is to say, the process of eating is impure; fifth, when days and months are fulfilled, the head emerges from the womb, and blood and pus gush forth together with it. It is foul, dirty and messy. That is to say, being born is impure; sixth, a skin membrane covers the top and within the membrane, all is blood and pus. That is to say, the entire body is impure; seventh, in such a manner (is the nature of the body) till after death when it bloats up and rots away; its bones and flesh are in disarray, and it is devoured by wolves. That is to say, it is impure till the end.

One's body is like that; another's body is also likewise. One

should produce an intense weariness for such as the male and female bodies and objects of desire, and should always contemplate (them) to be impure.

If one is able, like this, to contemplate those things of the body which are impure, then the sexual passion will gradually diminish. In addition, one should perform various contemplations as the ten thoughts(十想), as widely taught in the sūtras.

Moreover, one should produce a vow-- "I vow that I may always be apart from the male and female body in the three worlds, the body which is greatly addicted to the five desires, foul-smelling with pus, blood and impurities, and eating foods; I vow to obtain a body produced of the dharma-nature of the Pure Land."

This is called the practice of being wearied of the world and leaving it.

To clarify the meaning of rebirth: the reason one seeks to be born in the Pure Land is because one desires to remove the sufferings of all sentient beings. Thus, one thinks, "I am at present powerless. Suppose I stay in the evil world where the sphere of troubles and vexations is violent, then I, myself, will be bound by karma and will sink deeply into the three evil paths. Passing through several kalpas, I will like this transmigrate. From the beginningless time to the present I have never once rested. When then will I be able to get to save the suffering beings? For this reason I seek to be born in the Pure Land where I will be close to the Buddhas. If I attain the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng, then I should be able to save suffering beings in this evil world."

Therefore, the Wang-sheng-lun says, "That is spoken of as 'manifesting the thought of Bodhi', it is just the thought to become a Buddha. As for the thought resolving to become a Buddha, it is the thought of saving sentient beings. As for the thought of saving sentient beings, it is the thought of taking in sentient beings to be born in the Buddha-land."¹⁶²

Furthermore, if one resolves to be born in the Pure Land, then one must complete two practices: first, one must leave far behind the three things that hinder the way of Bodhi and second, one must obtain the three things that are in accord with the way of Bodhi.

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

First, by cleaving to the gate of wisdom, one does not seek for one's own pleasure and by such means one leaves far behind the 'I' and the mind that is attached to one's own person.

Second, by cleaving to the gate of compassion, one uproots the sufferings of all sentient beings and by such means one leaves far behind the mind that is not disposed to comfort sentient beings.

Third, by cleaving to the gate of expedient devices, one properly sympathizes with all sentient beings and desires their happiness and by such means one leaves far behind the mind that venerates and nourishes one's own body.

If one is able to leave far behind these three things that hinder Bodhi, then one obtains the three things that are in accord with Bodhi.

First is the stainless and pure mind. Because one does not seek pleasures for one's own self, Bodhi is stainless and pure.

If one seeks pleasures for one's self then one's mind is stained and the Bodhi-gate is hindered.

Second is the serene and pure mind. Because one uproots the sufferings of all living beings, Bodhi is the pure abode that comforts and feels grief for all beings. If one does not produce the mind to rescue all living beings and cause them to be separated from the pains of birth and death, then one opposes the Bodhi-gate. Hence, a serene and pure mind is in accord with the Bodhi-gate.

Third is the happy and pure mind. Because one desires to cause all living beings to attain the great Bodhi and Nirvāṇa, Bodhi and Nirvāṇa are the ultimately, eternally blissful realm. If one does not produce a mind which would cause all beings to attain ultimate and eternal bliss, then it hinders the Bodhi-gate.

As for this Bodhi, it is by means of what cause that one attains ?

The essential cause is birth in the Pure Land and never being separated from the Buddha; after attaining the recognition of the principle of wu-sheng one could then save suffering beings in the realm of birth and death. Compassion and wisdom are balanced, eternally glowing, always beneficial, independent and without obstruction. This then is the mind of Bodhi. This is the evident meaning of birth (in the Pure Land).

Second, to clarify the joyous mind that vows to seek (rebirth

in the Pure Land). The mind which hopes (for rebirth) should give rise to a thought which has as its object the Buddha Amitābha's Dharma-body or his Reward-body et. cetera, his gold-coloured rays of light, his eighty-four thousand major characteristics, each major characteristic having eighty-four thousand minor signs, and each minor sign giving off eighty-four thousand lights which constantly brightens up the universe and which draw in sentient beings who practise nien-fo.

Also, one should contemplate such things as the seven treasures, the adornments and the wonderful delights of the Pure Land as provided in the sixteen contemplations et. cetera found in the Wu-liang-shou-ching.

And one should transfer all good actions-- the constant practice of nien-fo-san-mei, generosity, morality, et. cetera-- to all living beings for all to be born together in that land. Certainly such a one will obtain rebirth.

This is called the gate of joyous vow.

FOOTNOTES.

1. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 77b-81b.
2. There is at present one English translation of the text:
"Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun(Treatise on the Ten Doubts Concerning
the Pure Land)." Tr. by Leo Pruden. The Eastern Buddhist.
Vol. VI, I (May, 1973): 126-157.
3. Mo-ho-chih-kuan. T 46, 1f.
4. T'ung-meng-chih-kuan. T 46, 462f.
5. Wu-fang-pien-nien-fo-men. T 47, 81cf.
6. Pan-chou-san-mei-ching. T 13, 897f.
7. Wen-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-ching. T 8, 726f.
8. Pan-chou-san-mei-ching. T 13, 899a: 9-14; 28 and 899b: 1-3.
9. Ibid. 899b: 25-29 and 899c: 1.
10. Mo-ho-chih-kuan. T 46, 12c: 19f.
11. Soothill, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, pp 9.
12. See Hirai Shun'ei, Chugoku Nannya Shisoshi Kenkyu (A History
of Prajñāpāramitā Thought in China) pp 653ff. (section
entitled "Ichigyusanmai to Kuganshiso(The Samādhi of One Act
and the Idea of Insight into Emptiness)").
13. Wen-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-ching. T 8, 731a: 26-27.
14. Ibid. 731b: 1-6; 8-9.
15. Mo-ho-chih-kuan. T 46, 12a: 19-21 and 12b: 18-20; 23-24.
16. Ibid. 12b: 24-27; 29 and 12c: 1-4; 7-8; 12-15.
17. T'ung-meng-chih-kuan. T 46, 467a: 8.
18. Ibid. 467a: 9.
19. Ibid. 467b: 3-4.
20. Mo-ho-chih-kuan. T 46, 13c: 7.

21. Ibid. 11a: 11-12.
22. Ibid. 11b: 21-23; 27-29 and 11c: 1.
23. Ibid. 11b: 9-13; 16-17.
24. Ibid. 12c: 13-15.
25. Wang-sheng-lun-chu. T 40, 826a-844b.
26. An-lo-chi. T 47, 1f.
27. Kuan-ching-shu. T 37, 245f.
28. Wu-liang-shou-ching. T 12, 265f.
29. A-mi-t'o-ching. T 12, 346f.
30. Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching. T 12, 340f.
31. Amītayur-dhyāna-sūtra. Sacred Books of the East, vol. 49, part II, pp 197.
32. Ch'en, Kenneth. Buddhism in China, pp 343-344.
33. Ibid. pp 344.
34. Wang-sheng-lun-chu. T 40, 843c-844a: 28f.
35. Larger-Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra. Sacred Books of the East, vol 49, part II, pp 15.
36. An-lo-chi. T 47, 13c: 6.
37. Ibid. 13c: 10.
38. Ibid. 13c: 10-11.
39. Ch'en, Kenneth. Buddhism in China, pp 346.
40. Kuan-ching-shu. T 37, 272a-272b: 29f.
41. Ibid. 272b: 10.
42. For details, see "Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun(Treatise on the Ten Doubts Concerning the Pure Land)." Tr. by Leo Pruden. The Eastern Buddhist, vol. VI, I (May, 1973), pp 128-130.

43. See Pruden's "Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun(Treatise on the Ten Doubts Concerning the Pure Land)", pp 127.
44. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 78b:7.
45. Ibid. 78b: 12.
46. Ibid. 78b: 8-9.
47. Ibid. 78b: 8.
48. Ibid. 78b: 9.
49. Ibid. 78b: 8-9.
50. Ibid. 78b: 16-17.
51. Ibid. 78b: 20-21. See also Ta-fang-kuang-fo-hua-yen-ching.
T 10, 122c: 19-20.
52. Ibid. 78b: 17.
53. Ibid. 78b: 22.
54. Ibid. 78b: 9.
55. Ibid. 78b: 15.
56. Mo-ho-chih-kuan. T 46, 11b: 23.
57. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 78b: 9-10.
58. Mo-ho-chih-kuan. T 46, 12c: 14-15.
59. Ibid. 12b: 27.
60. Ibid. 12c: 13-14.
61. Luch-lun-an-lo-ching-t'u-i. T 47 1c: 10.
62. Soothill, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, pp 9.
63. Ibid. pp 9.
64. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 79a: 7.
65. Ibid. 79a: 10.
66. Ibid. 79a: 9.
67. T'an-luan uses the terms "t'a-li" and "tzu-li" in his

- Wang-sheng-lun-chu. T 40, 844a: 24-27. See Roger J. Corless, "T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourses: An Annotated Translation and Soteriological Analysis of the Wang-sheng-lun-chu (T 1819)." (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1973).
68. The two terms "i-hsing-tao" and "nan-hsing-tao" occur in the Shih-chu-pi-p'o-sha-lun which is attributed to Nāgārjuna. T 26, 41b: 3. #1521. T'an-luan, in his Wang-sheng-lun-chu, elaborates upon Nāgārjuna's classification. T 40, 826a-826b. See David W. Chappell, "Tao-ch'o (562-645): A Pioneer of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism." (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1976), pp 133.
69. T'an-luan, in his Wang-sheng-lun-chu, uses the term yuan (緣) to describe t'a-li (他力). T 40, 844a: 20.
70. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 79b: 20.
71. The term "fruit of Buddhahood" (佛果) occurs in the Su-p'o-t'ung-tzu-ch'ing-wen-ching (蘇婆呼童子請問經), T 18, 722b: 25.
72. Ta-jih-ching. T 18, 1b: 25-26; 29 and 1c: 1.
73. Although the analogy of plant growth is not found in the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun still the growth imagery is repeatedly used by the text to explain the distinction between the advanced bodhisattvas and the newly initiated bodhisattvas. The former have attained the "recognition of the principle of wu-sheng" while the latter have not yet attained it (新發意菩薩 未得忍加). The advanced bodhisattvas are like the birds whose wings have fully developed (翅羽成熟) while the new bodhisattvas are like the young birds whose wings are not yet developed (鳥子翅羽未成). Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 77c: 16f.

Also, it may be interesting to note that the image of a man ploughing the field and sowing paddy occurs in the Su-p'o-hu-t'ung-tzu-ch'ing-wen-ching. T 18, 722b: 26.

Finally, it may be noted that in Soothill's Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, the term "chung" (種) is explained in relation with two other terms, "shu" (熟) and "t'uo" (脫):

"The seed of Buddha-truth implanted, its ripening and its liberation or harvest." (Soothill, pp 426).

74. The term "seed of Bodhi" (菩提種子) occurs in the Su-p'o-hu-t'ung-tzu-ch'ing-wen-ching. T 18, 722b: 27-28.

75. The Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun discusses the path of difficult practice in terms of the ten abodes (十住) among which the seventh is the abode of non-retreat (第七不退住) pp 79a: 5. As for Pure Land rebirth, the text says,

"When one gets to be born in that country there are five causes and conditions (which ensure) non-retreat." (pp 79b: 6).

76. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 79a: 11.

77. The Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun explains, in the Fifth Doubt, that tzu-li or self-power kind of practices are those which are directed towards the various attainments associated with the ten abodes (十住). What, then, are these attainments which are associated with the various abodes? Hurvitz, in his book called Chih-I (538-597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk, describes these various abodes as essentially stages of wisdom. For example, Hurvitz writes,

"Fa-hsin-chu(發心住)...In this abode, wherein the bodhisattva for the first time acquires anāsrva-jñāna(wu-lou-chih 無漏智), i.e. wisdom free of any influences conducive to remaining in the world...

"Cheng-hsin(正心), rectification of mind. Here the bodhisattva acquires a correct, unbiased view of "emptiness"...

"Pu-t'ui(不退), non-backsliding. In this abode, where the bodhisattva rids himself of the errors of thought on all three levels of the Tridhātu... he is assured that he shall never return to the Tridhātu again." (Hurvitz, Chih-I, pp 363-364).

Although the Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun does not give specific examples of tzu-li or self-power kind of practices we may assume that nien-fo could become such a self-power practice if it is intended to obtain for the practitioner the various abodes.

78. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 81b: 8-10.

79. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 81b: 8-10. It should be noted that although the text instructs the practitioner "to give rise to a thought, a thought having as its object the Buddha O-mi-t'o's Dharmakāya or his Sambhogakāya..." (Pruden's translation) it does not mention that the practitioner should also meditate on the appearance of Amitābha to be the product of causes and conditions, and hence, ultimately empty. Rather, the practitioner is instructed to think of the Buddha's gold-coloured rays of light as "always illuminating the universe and embracing those multitudes that meditate upon the Buddha"

(Pruden's translation). If we compare the above passage with Chih-i's discussion of ch'ang-hsing-san-mei, we note an interesting difference: Chih-i does not instruct the practitioner to think of the Buddha's rays of light as embracing those beings who meditate on the Buddha. Instead, Chih-i instructs the practitioner to think of the appearance to be the product of causes and conditions.

80. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 79a: 7-8.

81. Ibid. 77c: 26.

82. Ibid. 79a: 12-13.

83. In the path of difficult practice, the production of the Bodhi thought(發菩提心) is seen as the first step which leads to the fa-hsin-chu(發心住), an abode in which the bodhisattva acquires wu-lou-chih(無漏智). See footnote 73. That is, the development of the Bodhi-thought is discussed in terms of various kinds of wisdom attained. Such an interpretation differs from that expressed in the Wang-sheng-lun.

84. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 81a: 11-13.

85. Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching. T 12, 346a: 12f. See also Takakusu's translation in Sacred Books of the East, v.49, pt.II, pp 197-198.

86. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 78b: 9.

87. Ibid. 80a: 16-19.

88. Ibid. 80a: 6-10.

89. It may be interesting to note the following passages taken from the Platform Sūtra:

"The purity of the nature of man in this world
is like the blue sky, wisdom is like the sun,

knowledge like the moon. Although knowledge (知) and wisdom (慧) are always clear, if you cling to external environments, the floating clouds of false thoughts will create a cover, and your own natures cannot become clear." (Yampolsky, Philip B. (tr.) The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch, pp 142).

"People of shallow capacity...Although these people have prajñā wisdom and are not different from men of great knowledge, why is it that even though they hear the Dharma they are not awakened? It is because the obstructions of their heterodox views are heavy and the passions deep-rooted. It is like the times when great clouds cover the sun; unless the wind blows the sun will not appear. There is no large and small in prajñā wisdom..." (see Yampolsky's Platform Sūtra, pp 150).

Also, the Ch'an Master Lin-chi(? 867) says,

"If you do not want to be different from the old masters, don't seek outside yourself. The light of purity which shines out of every thought of yours is the Dharma-Body within you. The light of nondiscrimination that shines out of every thought of yours is the Body of Bliss within you. The light of nondifferentiation that shines out of every thought of yours is the Transformation Body within you. These Three Bodies are you who are now listening to my talk on the Law... It is clear that the body of Dharma-Nature and its ground are but reflections of light. Reverend Sirs, know and get hold of this person who handles this light, for he is the original source of all Buddhas...Your bodily

make-up of the four elements...does not understand how to talk or listen...Then who understand how to talk or listen? It is the single light which is formless but very clear before your eyes..." (de Bary, Sources of Chinese Tradition, v.I, pp 361-362).

90. Soothill, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, pp 453.

91. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 78c: 16 and 19.

92. Ibid. 80b: 14.

93. Ibid. 80a: 20.

94. Ibid. 80a: 23-24.

95. Ibid. 80a: 7-8.

96. Ibid. 80b: 11-12.

97. Ibid. 80b: 13-14.

98. Ibid. 80a: 23-24.

99. Ibid. 80b: 14.

100. Ibid. 80a: 17.

101. Ibid. 78b: 9.

102. Ibid. 80a: 17.

103. Ibid. 80b: 11-12.

104. Ibid. 80a: 9.

105. Soothill, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, pp 389.

106. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun. T 47, 77c: 19.

107. 三界 The three worlds: 1) The world of sensuous desires. It includes the six heavens of desire, the human world, and the hells. 2) The world of form above the lust world. It includes the Brahmaloкас. 3) The formless world of pure spirits. See Soothill, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, pp 70.

108. 三 It refers to the five pollutions of the present world:

1) It is a period of war, natural disasters etc. 2) It is a period in which heresies flourish. 3) It is a period in which passions are strong, 4) It is a period in which people are physically and mentally weak. 5) It is a period in which the span of life is short. Soothill, pp 122.

109. 三 The three evil paths of transmigration, the hells, hungry ghosts and animals. Soothill, pp 65.

110. For a detailed discussion of the references for this passage in the Ta-chih-tu-lun see Pruden's translation: "Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun (Treatise on the Ten Doubts Concerning the Pure Land)." Tr. by Leo Pruden. The Eastern Buddhist. Vol. VI, I (May, 1975), pp 133.

111. 三 It refers to the path which leads to salvation through self-help. Soothill, pp 411.

112. Taisho 14, pp 542a: 14-15.

113. T.25, pp 275c: 6-7. For further discussion of the passage see Pruden's translation, pp 134.

114. T.25, pp 489c: 9.

115. T.26, pp 41a: 13ff.

116. The quote is probably from the Wei-mo-ching. T.14, pp 538c: 4-5.

117. T.8, pp 752a: 22-25.

118. T.30, pp 33b: 11-12.

119. T.30, pp 2b: 6-7.

120. T.14, pp 550a: 1-2.

121. T.14, pp 538a: 26-28.

122. T.21, pp529c: 4-14.
123. T.10, pp68c: 13-14. I have adopted Pruden's wording.
124. T.10, pp122c: 19-20.
125. T.12, pp345b: 23-26.
126. 機應 is a technical term referring to the mind which is capable of responding to the Buddha. 應 refers to the response of the Buddha to sentient beings, namely the power of Amitābha Buddha to lead sentient beings to his Pure Land. Soothill, pp448.
127. T.12, pp348a: 3.
128. T.12, pp273a: 22.
129. T.12, pp352b: 15. See Pruden's translation, pp 140.
130. T.12, pp279a: 11-13.
131. See the Wang-sheng-lun-chu, T.40, pp 844a: 20ff.
132. See T.24, pp1017a: 8ff.
133. See Hurvitz, L. Chih-i (538-597). An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk, pp 363.
134. 十信 The ten degrees of faith are the first ten of the fifty-two stages of bodhisattvahood: faith, mindfulness, effort, wisdom, concentration, no-retreat, merit-transference, protection of the Dharma, discipline and vow. Soothill, pp 45.
135. 十波羅蜜 The ten cardinal virtues essential to every bodhisattva and representing the bodhisattva path, namely dāna, śīla, ksānti, virya, dhyāna, prajñā, upāya, pranidhāna, jñāna, and bala. The term "pāramitā" refers to the crossing over from this shore of birth and death to the other shore of nirvāna. Soothill, pp267.
136. The sixth stage is that of obtaining the correct view of

"emptiness". See Hurvitz, Chih-i, pp 364.

137. The seventh stage stands for a state of attainment in the practice of a bodhisattva from which he can never slide back.

See Hurvitz, Chih-i, pp 364.

138. T.26, pp 41b: 3.

139. 有漏: 漏 is another name for 煩惱. It is that which flows from the six organs ceaselessly, i.e. illusions which bind one to continued rebirth in the three worlds. Soothill, pp 214.

140. 無漏善根. Untainted roots of merits, i.e. the basis or roots of goodness which do not lead to rebirth in the three worlds but rather, lead to enlightenment. Soothill, pp 380.

141. T.10, pp 68c: 17-18.

142. 邪見. Heresy. One of the five false views (五見). This is the view which negates the law of cause and effect. Accordingly, it does not accept morality and religious practice. Soothill, pp 247.

143. 三毒. The three poisons, namely covetousness, anger and delusion. Soothill, pp 69.

144. 四諦. refers to the truth that pain is a necessary concomitant of sentient existence. 空 refers to the truth that all elements in the world are non-substantial, namely one understands that all beings and forms of existence in this world are born or produced on the basis of the law of causation and, therefore, they have no self-nature (無自性). Soothill, pp 313

145. 聖果. Fruit of the saintly life, i.e. Bodhi, Nirvāṇa.

146. T.14, pp 420a: 12.

147. T.51, pp 896a: 16. See Pruden's translation, pp 147.

148. This is a highly obscure statement. It is difficult to know what is meant by the imagery of drumming.
149. The sūtra in question is the Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching, Taisho, vol.12, pp 346a: 20.
150. I have adopted Pruden's interpretation.
151. See the Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, T.31, pp 121b: 14, and its commentary, T.31, pp194b: 8.
152. T. 31, pp 752a-b. See Pruden's translation for a discussion on the authorship of the text based on this particular passage.
153. Adopted Pruden's wording.
154. T. 26, pp 231a: 14.
155. T. 12, pp 341c: 5.
156. T. 12, pp 268c: 21-24.
157. 五道. The five stages of rebirth: in the hells, and as hungry ghosts, animals, men and devas.
158. T. 12, pp 367b: 3, 5, 9-10; T. 12, pp 606c: 8-10,15.
159. T. 12, pp 373b: 12-14; T. 12, pp 613a: 8-10.
160. Adopted Pruden's rendition of the passage.
161. Adopted Pruden's rendition of the passage.
162. Pruden has pointed out in his translation (pp 155) that the passage is not in the Wang-sheng-lun, but in the Wang-sheng-lun-chu (T. 40, pp 842a: 17f).

Bibliography.

Works in Chinese

A-mi-t'o-ching 阿彌陀經 Translated by Kumārajīva. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 366.

Chih-i 智顗. Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun 淨土十疑論. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 1961.

No-ho-chih-kuan 摩訶止觀. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 1911.

T'ung-meng-chih-kuan 童蒙止觀. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 1915.

Wu-fang-pien-nien-fo-mên 五方便念佛門. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 1962.

Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching 觀無量壽經. Translated by Kalayaśas. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 365.

Pan-chou-san-mei-ching 般舟三昧經 Translated by Lokaraksa. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 418.

Shan-tao 善導. Kuan-ching-shu 觀經疏. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 1753.

T'an-luan 曇鸞. Wang-sheng-lun-chu 往生論註. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 1819.

Tao-ch'o 導. An-lo-chi 安樂集. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 1957.

Wen-shu-shih-li-so-shuo-ching 文殊師利所說經. Translated by Man-t'o-lo-hsien 慧嚴. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 252.

Wu-liang-shou-ching 無量壽經. Translated by Sanghavarman. Taisho Shinshu Daizōkyō, No. 360.

Secondary Works (in English).

Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts. Translated by E.D. Cowell, F. Max Müller

and J. Takakusu. Sacred Books of the East. Vol. XLIX.

London: Luzac and Co., 1952.

Ch'en Kenneth. Buddhism in China. A Historical Survey. N.J.:

Princeton University Press, 1964.

"Ching-t'u-shih-i-lun(Ten Doubts Concerning the Pure Land)."

Translated by Leo Pruden. The Eastern Buddhist. Vol.VI. I

(May 1973): 126-157.

Corless, Roger J. "T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse.

An Annotated Translation and Soteriological Analysis of the

Wang-shêng-lun-chu(T. 1819)." Ph.D. dissertation,

University of Wisconsin, 1973.

Chappell, David. "Tao-ch'o(562-645): A Pioneer of Chinese Pure Land

Buddhism." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976.

Eliot, Charles. Japanese Buddhism. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Ltd., 1969.

Hirai Shun'ei. Chugoku Hannya Shisoshi Kenkyu(A History of

Prajñāpāramitā Thought in China). Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1976.

Hurvitz, Leon. Chih-I(538-597). In Melanges chinois et bouddhiques

12 (1962).

Jan, Yün-hua. Chronicles of Buddhism in China. Santiniketan: Visva

Bharati, 1966.

Pas, Julian. "Shan-tao's Commentary on the Amitāyur-Buddhānusmṛti-

sūtra." Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University, 1973.

Soothill, William E. A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms. Taipei:

Ch'eng Wen Publishing Co., 1976.

Yampolsky, Philip B. The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch.

New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Welch, Holmes. The Practice of Chinese Buddhism. Cambridge, Mass.:

Harvard University Press, 1967.