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Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism

By

Eric Matthew Greene

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

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in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Robert H. Sharf, Chair
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Professor Mark Csikszentmihalyi
Professor Jacob Dalton

Spring 2012

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Abstract

Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism

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Professor Robert H. Sharf, Chair

This dissertation explores the development of Buddhist meditation in China between 400 and 600 CE. Although texts discussing Buddhist meditation were known in China from the end of the second century, only during this period did it become a commonly practiced form of Buddhist training, and did Indian meditation masters come to China in appreciable numbers. Focusing on a body of meditation texts written in China during the first half of the fifth century, I argue that Chinese Buddhists came to understand the practice and meaning of Buddhist meditation in relation to rituals of repentance, which during this time became the core of Buddhist liturgical life. Meditation was thought to produce a state of visionary sensitivity in which practitioners would obtain visions attesting to their karmic purity or impurity, and hence to either the success of or need for rituals of repentance.

To Lauren, Sophie, and Little Raspberry

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Conventions

All translations into English are mine unless otherwise noted.

Transcriptions of Chinese are given in Pinyin, and when citing modern authors who have used other systems I have converted any relevant words to Pinyin.

Chinese words have been romanized following the American Library Association-Library of Congress guidelines (<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsd/romanization/chinese.pdf>), which in general call for a space between each character (*lao shi* 老師) except for toponyms (Beijing 北京) and proper names (Zhiyi 智顓).

“Song dynasty” refers to the so-called Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty (420–479 CE) unless otherwise noted.

The notation for textual emendation of primary sources in Chinese is as given in the introduction to appendix three.

For all other abbreviations, see the bibliography.

Introduction: Buddhist Meditation in China

The earliest surviving Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist texts are those traditionally attributed to An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 149–168),¹ active in the Chinese capital of Luoyang 洛陽 during the waning years of the Han dynasty. An Shigao coined dozens of Chinese translations for the technical vocabulary of Indian Buddhism, most of which continued to be used for centuries, and many of which remain part of the standard Chinese Buddhist lexicon to this day. His basic approach was remarkably consistent—titles of people or offices (such as *bhikṣu*, *śramaṇa*, or *buddha*) were transcribed, but other technical terms were translated. Though some of these translations were of dubious philological accuracy, An Shigao evidently felt comfortable at least trying to find Chinese equivalents for a host of difficult terms, such as *nirvāṇa*, *saṃsāra*, and *karma*, words that, by way of comparison, often remain untranslated in modern writings on Buddhism. There was, however, one important term that An Shigao might have tried to translate but did not, *dhyāna*, which in its Chinese transcription *chan* 禪 became and has remained the most basic Chinese word for “Buddhist meditation.”

That An Shigao did not attempt to translate this word suggests that the practice of Buddhist meditation had no satisfactory parallels in the pre-Buddhist Chinese imaginaire.² Indeed unlike in English, where we must preface “meditation” with “Buddhist,” in China there never was anything other than “Buddhist” *chan*. More so even than *fo* 佛, *buddha*, which on the popular level ultimately becomes a more or less generic designation for a god, the term *chan* remained exclusively Buddhist.³ As scholars have pointed out, despite the ubiquity of “Buddhist meditation” in the modern West, and the claims made concerning the centrality of this discipline in traditional Buddhism, it is surprisingly difficult to specify precisely what we mean by this word or to find an exact equivalent for it in Indian Buddhist languages.⁴ In China, however, the

1 All dates are CE unless otherwise specified. For the sake of convenience I will refer to An Shigao as if he were a single person solely responsible for the translations carried out under his name. In reality it is almost certain that these texts were translated through a complex process involving numerous actors, and as with many later Indian or Central Asian “translators” in China An Shigao’s own role may have been rather limited.

2 It has often been argued, in contrast, that perceived similarities between Buddhist and “Daoist” meditation fostered initial Chinese interest in these practices. I have elsewhere argued that this conclusion is largely without foundation. See Eric M. Greene (n.d.), “Healing Breaths and Rotting Bones: On the relationship between Buddhist and Chinese meditation practices during the Han-Three Kingdoms period,” unpublished paper.

3 There does eventually develop in China a pan-sectarian notion of “meditation,” captured in modern Mandarin using expressions such as *da zuo* 打坐 (“sit [in meditation]”). Note that the practices often seen as pre-Buddhist Chinese parallels to Buddhist meditation do not specify a seated posture, and indeed often explicitly recommend that they take place while lying down (Maspero 1987, 501–515). Eventually, however, some forms of Daoist cultivation do come to take place in the Buddhist posture for seated meditation, and by the Song dynasty (960–1279) even the Confucians were proposing that “silent sitting” (*jing zuo* 靜坐) be done in the Buddhist cross-legged (*jia fu* 跏趺) posture (Gernet 1981, 292). It is interesting to note that what links these activities is a physical posture, not a mode of thought, and in this respect the perceived connection is rather different than in the diverse disciplines united by the English word “meditation.”

4 Sponberg 1986. As Sponberg points out, the terms in Indian Buddhist languages denoting what we would like

situation is clearer, perhaps because unlike their Indian counterparts Chinese Buddhists were not obliged to explain how their program of cross-legged exertion differed from outwardly similar practices of other sects.⁵ So too prior to the seventh century, when new debates within Chinese Buddhism occasionally gave the word *chan* a polemical status, there was little disagreement about the importance or value of *chan*, at least theoretically. Accordingly whatever the difficulties of circumscribing the topic of “Buddhist meditation” within Buddhism as a whole, in the case of Chinese Buddhism the practice and theory of *chan* provides a clear object of study.⁶

This dissertation is an attempt to explicate certain aspects of the Chinese understanding of *chan* as it developed between roughly 400 and 600 CE, with an emphasis on sources dating from the first half of the fifth century. My reasons for focusing on this time period in particular are twofold. First, though texts discussing *chan* had been known in China since the time of An Shigao, as I will argue in chapter one only beginning in the early fifth century did appreciable numbers of Chinese Buddhists actually take up this practice in an organized or regular form. Second, this is when Chinese compositions (as opposed to translations of Indian texts) specifically devoted to *chan* first appear, something almost certainly connected to the increasing importance of *chan* as an actual practice. Though these texts quickly entered the Chinese Buddhist canon and are normative and prescriptive in character, they were composed in an environment in which *chan* practice was fast becoming a regular part of Chinese Buddhist monastic life, at least for some. Thus while we do not know to what extent the specific meditation techniques they proposed were ever put into practice, these texts are not merely theoretical reflections. Even if the authors of these texts did not themselves engage in any of the stipulated practices, contemporaneous readers would have taken them as attempts to explain practices that were just then beginning to have a real presence within Chinese Buddhism. Indeed it was during this time period, I will suggest, that certain key ideas about the nature, meaning, and practice of Buddhist meditation became established, ideas that would continue to inform the Chinese approach to this discipline in the ensuing centuries.

The importance of this period in the development of the Chinese understanding of Buddhist meditation has, moreover, generally been overlooked. This is owing at least in part to the historically strong influence of Japanese sectarian considerations on the study of medieval Chinese Buddhism. Since the later lineages of Chinese Buddhism most associated with

“Buddhist meditation” to denote tend to be either too narrow, referring to specific states of absorption (*dhyāna*, *samādhi*, *samāpatti*), or too broad, referring to nearly all aspects of religious practice (*bhāvanā*). The word *yoga* may also be an appropriate equivalent to “Buddhist meditation,” but this term is not used in early Buddhist writings, and was adopted only later when Buddhism entered into a period of more direct dialog and confrontation with Brahmanism (Bronkhorst 2011, 165–167).

5 Thus Sponberg (see previous note) ultimately concludes that what we usually call “Buddhist meditation” is “*dhyāna* undertaken for the sake of *bhāvanā*,” and this caveat is necessary because the tradition considers that *dhyāna* is something also practiced by non-Buddhists. In China, however, *chan* 禪 was usually assumed to be something undertaken to achieve Buddhist goals.

6 Throughout this dissertation, unless otherwise specified, the words “meditation,” “Buddhist meditation,” or “meditation practice” can be assumed to be English translations of *chan*, though in chapter three I will propose that when *chan* refers to a specific state of consciousness, that is to say the hoped-for fruit of the practice of meditation, it should be translated as “trance.”

meditation practice were Chan (禪)⁷ and Tiantai (天台), both of which eventually became distinct institutions in Japan, Japanese scholars have tended to approach the early development of Chinese Buddhist meditation through the traditional historiography of these schools. This has led to a great deal of interest in the distinctive approach to meditative cultivation associated with early Chan (beginning primarily from the late seventh century), as well as a large scholarly output concerning the meditation teachings associated with Zhiyi 智顓 (538–597), founder of the Tiantai tradition.⁸

One problem with the sectarian approach is that it tends to ignore everything that came before. The early Tiantai writings in particular have generally been seen as the wellspring from which most later Chinese approaches to meditation derive, even though from a historical point of view they loom as large as they do in the minds of scholars only because almost all other sixth-century Chinese writings on *chan*, of which we know there were many, have been lost.⁹ But perhaps more perniciously, each side tends to see its founders as the progenitors of a unique and unprecedented form of meditation, viewing all other approaches as representative of “traditional” Indian understanding. Those studying Chan have thus tended to see Zhiyi as promoting a traditionally Indian “gradual” conception of meditation, one that Chan went beyond through its teachings of “sudden” awakening.¹⁰ In contrast Tiantai scholars have seen in Zhiyi’s later writings (which in Tiantai historiography are the full expression of Zhiyi’s thought) a criticism of the exclusive emphasis on concentration meditation (*dhyāna*, i.e. *chan*) characteristic of both early Chan and generic “Indian” or “Hīnayāna” meditation practice.¹¹

Regardless of which side one chooses to exalt as its final flowering, the Chinese understanding of Buddhist meditation is thus assumed to have had little or no independent development prior to the late sixth century. Indian approaches, on the level of both theory and practice, are accordingly assumed to have arrived in China at an unspecified date and simply continued unaltered until being revolutionized by either Zhiyi or Bodhidharma depending on one’s chosen perspective. Common sense suggests that this model, more often implied than actually argued for, cannot be entirely correct. Nevertheless Chinese approaches to Buddhist meditation prior to the late sixth century have remained more or less unexplored. These are what I will attempt to uncover in this dissertation. And though the sources that give us access to these earlier Chinese traditions do not necessarily reveal the nuances of their historical development

7 Following scholars such as T. Griffith Foulk I restrict the word Chan (capital “c”) to those groups who beginning in the late seventh century traced their spiritual lineage to Bodhidharma (Foulk 2007). While those claiming such lineage did often attempt to appropriate the word *chan*, i.e. “Buddhist meditation,” this appropriation was multifaceted, and they did not simply endorse meditation practice as it was understood by other Chinese Buddhists. Moreover other groups continued to use the word *chan* in a non-sectarian way, though this became more difficult as the influence of the Chan lineage grew and the word *chan* became more and more associated with it.

8 Zhiyi would not have thought of himself in these terms, and the notion of a Tiantai lineage developed only slowly in the years after his death (Penkower 1992 and 2000; Chen 1999).

9 The Tiantai texts were preserved only because they were taken to Japan and Korea during the Tang dynasty, from where they were reintroduced to China in the tenth century (Brose 2008).

10 See for example Bielefeldt 1988, 78–106 who, though providing a nuanced account of how early Chan meditation teachings departed from the standards set by Zhiyi, tends to equate Zhiyi’s approach with “traditional” Indian methods of meditation. A similar approach is taken by McRae 1992.

11 Sekiguchi 1969, 123–142

during the fifth and sixth centuries, they do allow us to reconstruct some of the most important and shared features of how *chan* was thought about during this time, and what mastering and practicing it was thought to entail.

Most of the sources I will draw from have been known to scholars of Chinese Buddhism and are contained within the so-called Chinese Buddhist canon (*da zang jing* 大藏經). Despite their ready availability, their importance for our understanding of the history and development of Chinese approaches to Buddhist meditation during the fifth and sixth centuries has not been sufficiently appreciated.¹² Here again at least some blame can be laid at the feet of the Japanese sectarian approach to Chinese Buddhist history, as the two key texts I will draw from, the *Scripture on the Secret Essential Methods of Chan* (*Chan mi yao fa jing* 禪祕要法經, *Chan Essentials* hereafter) and the *Essential Methods for Curing Chan Sickness* (*Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法; *Methods for Curing* hereafter), have usually been examined not in connection with later Chinese writings on *chan*, which given their titles and content one might expect to be the logical point of comparison, but as the background material for understanding the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (*Guan wu liang shou fo jing* 觀無量壽佛經), a so-called apocryphal Chinese scripture compiled sometime during the fifth century that serves as a key text in the Japanese Pure-land (*Jōdo* 淨土) schools.

As I will discuss in chapter two there is indeed a close historical connection between these texts, and also a larger corpus of fifth-century Chinese scriptures known as the Contemplation Scriptures (*guan jing* 觀經). If the goal is to contextualize the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are thus indeed quite helpful. The problem, however, is the tendency to approach these sources *only* as precursors to the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*. On the one hand this results in examining primarily those features of the texts that directly pertain to their supposed successor(s).¹³ On the other hand it means that scholars have tended to overlook the importance of these texts for understanding later Chinese approaches to *chan*. This is because in the traditional Japanese reading the key import of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is the promotion of a *non-meditative*¹⁴ practice of intoning the name of Amitābha, something that supposedly replaced the various complex meditative practices previously considered necessary for salvation.¹⁵ The *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* have thus been seen as part of a tradition of meditation practice that, while perhaps popular in Central Asia, was superseded in China by the “Pure-land” practices of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, practices that were, supposedly, sharply distinguished from *chan per se*.¹⁶

12 In English, the most detailed study of many of the major sources I will use in this dissertation is Yamabe 1999b, and Yamabe’s studies have been instrumental in my work on this material.

13 Thus most Japanese studies of the *Chan Essentials* have focused on how this text treats “contemplating the Buddha” (*guan fo* 觀佛) or “bringing to mind the Buddha” (*nian fo* 念佛), the main practice promoted in the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*.

14 In the traditional terminology, *san* 散 as opposed to *ding* 定 (this later word, it must be noted, is usually considered equivalent to *chan* 禪).

15 For a consideration of the difficulty in separating “Pure-land” and “Chan” approaches to liberation in somewhat later times, see Sharf 2002b, though his study concerns Chan more so than *chan*.

16 A further point is that both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are, with only a few exceptions, patently non-Mahāyāna in both narrative style and assumed soteriology, while the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*

Introduction: Buddhist Meditation in China

In this dissertation I thus aim to break free of the sectarian typologies that have informed scholarly approaches to early Chinese Buddhist meditation and in the process uncover certain features of a basic Chinese understanding of *chan* that, I will argue, crystallized during the first half of the fifth century. The traditions of meditation that developed during this time, both the concrete regimes of practice (whose existence can be known only indirectly) and the texts that those who followed or promoted such practices produced, seem to have come into being in south China during the Song dynasty (420–479 CE), a time and place during which were active a large number of Indian missionaries claiming to be, or at least remembered as, “meditation masters” (*chan shi* 禪師), a title not used in Chinese Buddhism prior to this time. The *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* can be read, I will suggest, as stemming from this milieu, and as reflecting the understanding that developed among the followers of these foreign meditation masters, who seem to have established the first enduring traditions of Buddhist meditation practice in China.

* * *

Such is the basic historical context within which I will situate my study of fifth- and sixth-century Chinese Buddhist meditation texts. As for the questions I will attempt to answer, stated in broadest terms they are twofold. The first concerns the nature and meaning of the experiences Buddhist meditation was thought to produce; the second concerns the way these experiences were understood to relate to other forms of Buddhist ritual and practice. Put slightly differently, what was meditation thought to do, and what were people thought to do with meditation? Although these questions are quite general, they are, I believe, foundational. To a great extent the concept of “meditation” has been naturalized in scholarly discussions on Buddhism, such that “meditation texts” and “meditation practices” are often mentioned without feeling the need to specify just what kind of thing “meditation” really is or was thought to be in these cases. Part of my aim in this dissertation has thus been to question some of these assumptions, or at least to look at them afresh in the context of a careful analysis of a cohesive body of primary sources usually described using this word.

I thus begin with the question of *experience*, and in particular the “meditative experiences” thought to result from meditation practice. Because my own approach to this question will differ somewhat from them, I must first discuss, if only schematically, the principal ways that scholars of religion, and so-called mysticism and Buddhist meditation more particularly, have approached this at times controversial topic. For heuristic purposes three basic methodologies may be distinguished, which I will refer to as the “perennialist,” “constructivist,” and “performative.”¹⁷

(and indeed the remainder of the Contemplation Scriptures) are in contrast written in the style of Mahāyāna scriptures and present distinctly Mahāyāna ideas. As I will discuss in chapter one, scholarly analysis of the history of Chinese Buddhist meditation has tended to conflate “Hīnayāna” with “Indian.” Apparently “Hīnayāna” texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are often assumed to have been of little interest or influence in China, and to have served only as the precursors or raw materials out of which Chinese approaches to meditation were devised.

17 The designations “perennialist” and “constructivist” are relatively common in the literature (e.g. Forman 1990).

In the perennialist approach “religious experience” explains religion.¹⁸ The doctrines, rituals, and literature of religious traditions are explained as the expressions of one or many experiences. The “constructivist” approach, which became dominant in the academy beginning in the 1970s,¹⁹ is the precise opposite of this—experiences become what need to be explained. Among scholars favoring this understanding so-called mystical experiences, taken by the perennialists as prior to language and culture, are discussed as “constructed” from the beliefs, practices, and expectations of those who have them, and exploration of these domains is taken as a way of explaining those experiences.²⁰

Scholars studying Buddhist meditation have if not followed then at least mirrored these contrasting approaches. It was thus once common to interpret Buddhist doctrines as elaborations of meditative experiences.²¹ The contrasting approach, which emerged later, was in keeping with the constructivists—rather than explaining Buddhist doctrines as interpretations of meditative experiences some scholars began to think of Buddhist meditation as the generation of “deliberately contrived exemplifications of Buddhist doctrine.”²² In this understanding Buddhist meditation texts are not records of the experiences of past virtuosos, but practical guidebooks for inculcating experiences that conform to the expectations of the tradition.

What I will dub the “performative” approach can be seen as a criticism of both the perennialists and the constructivists.²³ Rather than positing experience as an explanation (in the manner of the perennialists) or trying to explain the experiences people claim to have (as would the constructivists), the “performative” approach questions the explanatory value of the category “experience” at all, since “experience” as an inner event to which the subject has privileged access by definition cannot impinge on publicly available discourse.²⁴

To this methodological question about how we might use, or not, the category “experience” to interpret or explain our data, Robert Sharf adds a historical conclusion specific

18 Only beginning in the late 18th century was “religious experience” discussed in the now familiar terms. This idea is usually traced to Schleiermacher, who argued that the essence of religion was an inner, personal “intuition” or “feeling” (Proudfoot 1985). However Schleiermacher did not himself use the word “experience” (*Erlebnis*), and his ideas were linked to debates about “religious experience,” a term originally used in the context of conversion experiences among Anglo-American Protestants, only towards the end of the 19th century (Taves 2004).

19 The 1978 publication of *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* edited by Steven Katz, though not the beginning of the revolution, marks the moment when it had gotten fully under way. Precursors to the constructivist trend can be found from the very beginning of the modern study of mysticism, and one scholar has noted Rufus M. Jones’ *Studies in Mystical Religion* from 1909 as perhaps the earliest example (Almond 1990, 212).

20 Wayne Proudfoot’s *Religious Experience* stands as the most articulate presentation of this position. Scholars must, he suggests, ultimately provide an *explanation*, an account of “why the subject was confronted with this particular set of alternative ways of understanding his experience and why he employed the one he did” (Proudfoot 1985, 223).

21 See for example Conze 1968, 213. For a sophisticated attempt to demonstrate this in the case of one particular doctrine, see Schmithausen 1973. For a more recent analysis in this vein, see Obeyesekere 2012, 19–30.

22 Gimello 1978, 193

23 For the purposes of this introduction the “performative” approach is that articulated by Sharf 1995 and 1998. For criticisms of Sharf’s attempts to apply this approach to Buddhism and Buddhist meditation, see Gyatso 1999 and Dreyfus 2011.

24 As Sharf puts it, “while experience—constructed as that which is ‘immediately present’—may indeed be both irrefutable and indubitable, we must remember that whatever epistemological certainty experience may offer is gained only at the expense of any possible discursive meaning or signification” (Sharf 1998, 114).

to Buddhism—namely, that taking the telos of religious forms to lie in a special kind of personal experience is a modern rather than traditional way of approaching Buddhism in general and Buddhist meditation in particular. Buddhists, Sharf argues, did not partake of our post-Cartesian sensibilities in which inner experience stands over and against outward performance. Not judging personal experiences privileged sources of authority or knowledge, they did not seek them out through meditation (its commonly understood purpose) but rather aimed to *embody* the Buddhist teachings, to “enact” rather than generate ideal states of experience through, loosely put, “ritual,” an activity that Sharf insists should not be thought of as mere show.²⁵ Sharf does not deny that Buddhist meditators had experiences, but he suggests that such experiences “were not considered the goal of practice,” and moreover considers that Buddhists themselves, at least the sophisticated ones, appreciated the epistemological problems inherent in any attempt to ground public claims to authority in private experiences.²⁶

My own approach to these questions begins with the recognition that what we have before us are *texts*, not experiences. The primary subject of my investigation is thus not meditative experiences per se, but the understanding of meditative experience that fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts presuppose. And indeed these texts speak of little else, such that we cannot help but confront this question. Their “rhetoric of meditative experience,” however, is indeed very different from what Sharf identifies in the case of modernist Buddhist movements, the “extolling [of] experience as a superior form of knowledge, i.e. superior to ‘second-hand’ knowledge gleaned from teachers or texts,”²⁷ and in contrast to this our texts patently assume that the significance of meditative experiences will not be transparent to the subject. Accordingly though I will follow Sharf and refrain from applying what he calls the “hermeneutic of experience” (invoking “experience” as either an explanation or what is explained),²⁸ I will not ignore what these texts have to say about the importance of the personal experiences obtained through meditation. Rather I will take as the object of my study the strategies the texts themselves use for interpreting or explaining the significance of the experiences they assume people will have.

The most important meditative experiences discussed by texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are what I will call “verificatory visions,” a concept that I will introduce in chapter one. I use the term “visions” because they are presented as the sudden arising of new objects of consciousness described in primarily visual terms, as something the meditator suddenly “sees.” By “verificatory” I mean that these visions are not significant merely as acts of perception or as the acquisition of knowledge relative to the object seen. Rather the occurrence of the vision—having this particular experience—is deemed to signify something about the person to whom it appears. Indeed given the assumption that meditation is part of a path to liberation, all meditative experiences in Buddhism must have been understood to have this quality, at least in part. Even when the results of meditation are said to be insight into some

25 Sharf 1995, 269; Sharf 2005

26 Sharf 1998, 99

27 Sharf 1995, 269

28 Sharf ascribes a “hermeneutic of experience” to modernist Buddhists or modern scholars who interpret the ultimate referent of Buddhist rituals, doctrines, or texts as specific, identifiable experiences in the minds of practitioners (Sharf 1995).

particular doctrinal truth, the point is not that by having such an experience the meditator finally becomes convinced of these truths or finally understands what they really mean; or at least this is not the only point. Having such an insight has soteriological value, and this means that having this experience “verifies” that the meditator has reached a certain level of attainment.²⁹

While all accounts of Buddhist meditation are thus predicated on the idea that meditative attainment is “verificatory” in this manner, the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* illustrate this point particularly clearly because they describe “verificatory visions” that are *symbolic*. I use *symbol* here in the tradition of Peirce’s tripartite division of signs into icons, indexes, and symbols³⁰—a *symbol* has only a conventional relationship to its object, contrasted with an *icon*, which designates by way of similarity or likeness (such as a map) or by partaking in the very substance of what is designated (a lover’s hair), and an *index*, which has a dynamic or temporal connection to its object (such as a stop sign, whose location indexes the place where one should stop, or crying, which indexes the presence of sadness).³¹

To understand what I mean when I say that in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* meditative experiences (in particular “verificatory visions”) are *symbolic* we may contrast them with the way that the stages of Buddhist meditation are more typically depicted and, more to the point, the way such accounts are typically read. Consider the canonical stock passage describing the first *dhyāna*, the most basic attainment of Buddhist meditation:

Here, oh monks, having separated from desires, having separated from unwholesome dharmas, a monk reaches to and then abides in the first *dhyāna*, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, and endowed with bliss and joy.³²

29 This makes Buddhist accounts of meditative experience rather different from the classical descriptions of mystical experience given by William James or others, where mystical experiences are sources of direct or unmediated knowledge, and are deemed important largely because they prove, at least to the subject, the existence of God or attest to other potentially disputed religious truths. As those who have studied the notion of religious experience have noted, the elaboration of this concept since the late 18th century has occurred largely in a polemical context where the validity of religious truths were being questioned (Proudford 1985; Taves 1999). One reason for appealing to supposedly direct, unmediated “experience” was thus to forestall criticism about such truths—these things are known to be true because they have been observed using a faculty carrying the objective validity of sense perception, the basis upon which scientific truths are established. (The similarity between mystical experiences and sensory perception is a major theme in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.) And while Buddhist doctrinal texts do, in the context of polemical debate, sometimes aver to “yogic perception” (*yogi-pratyakṣa*) as proof (*pramāṇa*) for certain truths, Buddhist meditation texts almost always preach to the choir, presuming that the truths of Buddhism are accepted by the reader or practitioner. Directly perceiving these truths through insight is thus held to be significant not because this is what finally allows the practitioner to be convinced that they are true, but because this is what attests to the practitioner’s attainment of specific stages along the path to awakening. In East Asia this understanding indeed seems to have often been explicit, and one of the most basic words for soteriologically significant meditative attainment is *zheng* 證, “verification.”

30 Peirce 1955. See also Burks 1949. In Peirce’s writings these terms refer not to different signs but different relationships between what he calls the “sign form” and the “object,” what Saussure would call the signifier and the signified (Hanks 1996, 39). My attempts here to apply Peircian terminology to something like experience, which is not overtly framed as an act of communication, is deeply indebted to Rappaport’s use of this framework in his analysis of ritual and religion more generally (Rappaport 1979, 173–246; 1999).

31 A stop sign also communicates symbolically in that only by convention does an octagonal red placard at a street intersection mean “stop.” The indexical component is the “here” of the placard’s full meaning, “stop *here*.”

32 *Idha bhikkhave bhikku vivecc’ eva kāmehi vivicca askulalehi dhammehi savitakaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajam*

The typical approach is to assume that this provides both an ontological account of what the first *dhyāna* is and a phenomenological account of *what it is like* to reach it or abide in it. Because the discussion here concerns, at least in part, the mind and consciousness (though “bliss” is interpreted as a bodily sensation), our Cartesian habits make this reading natural. But when we consider the “verificatory” character of meditative attainment the arguably more important question is a semiotic one—what is it that *verifies* or communicates to the meditator (or anyone else) that the first *dhyāna* has indeed been obtained? When we assume that for meditative states there is a one to one correspondence between ontology and phenomenology then the semiotic question has a trivial answer—a description of what the first *dhyāna* is is also a statement about the experience that verifies that one has reached it.

In Peircian terms we may say that a phenomenological reading of Buddhist meditation texts assumes, among other things, that the semiosis of meditative experience is exclusively *iconic*—that, for example, what communicates the attainment of *dhyāna* can only be an experience describable in terms reminiscent of or equal to the ontology of the first *dhyāna* itself as a particular mental (and also perhaps bodily) state. This seems to be at least part of what we might mean by saying that the experience of verification is *direct*.³³ However traditional Buddhist meditation texts rarely give clear reasons for assuming this reading. Thus the canonical account of the first *dhyāna* cited above does not say, after listing the mental and bodily factors present in the first *dhyāna*, that verification of the attainment of the first *dhyāna* takes place only by direct observation of those self-same factors. In fact early Buddhist sources are generally silent as to how meditative attainments are to be verified.

The later “meditation manuals” that I will examine in this dissertation address such questions directly. Thus in the *Meditation Scripture (Zuo chan san mei jing 坐禪三昧經)*, a fifth-century Chinese translation of an Indian meditation manual that I will discuss in more detail in chapter one, the method for obtaining *dhyāna* through the so-called “contemplation of impurity” (in which the meditator focuses his mind on a skeleton) concludes as follows:

If the mind remains fixed for a long time [on the bones] then it will begin to accord with the factors of *dhyāna*. When one obtains *dhyāna* there are three signs. [First,] the body will feel blissful, relaxed, and at ease. [Second,] from the white bones [that the meditator has been contemplating] light will stream forth, as if they were made of white jade. [Third,] the mind becomes calm and still.³⁴

This passage, parallels to which occur in many contemporaneous sources, reveals a concern not merely with methods for reaching *dhyāna* or with the mental factors that characterize it, but with providing experiential criteria for determining when *dhyāna* has in fact been obtained.

pītisukham pathamam jhānam upasampajja viharati (SN, 5.307).

33 Part of what those who have emphasized the immediate or direct nature of “religious experience” seem to be trying to describe is what I here call an “iconic” experience. Indeed those who discuss such experiences often explicitly contrast them to “symbolic” forms of knowledge or communication. See for example Wayne Proudfoot’s discussion of Schleiermacher and those following after him (Proudfoot 1985, 1–40; note in particular the examples from the writings of Ernst Cassirer on p.26–27).

34 For more details on this passage see chapter 1.

Three signs are given here whereby a meditator can know that *dhyāna* has been obtained. Two of them—the relaxed body and the calm mind—can indeed be thought of as *iconic* because they are similar to the factors that actually characterize the state of *dhyāna*. But the third sign cannot. Here verification occurs not through an internal observation of the mind or body but through a change in the *object* of the mind. In other words the meditator has a vision. Because the content of the experience (what it is “about” in a phenomenological sense) is not directly connected with *dhyāna* itself as a state of body and mind (what it is “about” in a semiotic sense), this experience can be called *symbolic*.³⁵ A principal conclusion of this dissertation is that Buddhist meditation texts, such as the *Meditation Scripture* here, often explicitly allow for a non-iconic semiotics of meditative experience in this sense.

What I will call “verificatory visions” are thus *symbolic* experiences that verify the attainment of particular meditative states. These were the experiences that fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts thought that meditators would have. That they were symbolic in this way allowed them to become both varied and elaborate, for as symbols they were no longer constrained by similarity to what they designated. Indeed we will see in chapters three and four that in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* they occasionally reach epic proportions. But in all cases the meaning of these visions was assumed to be at least potentially opaque to the uninitiated (another inherent feature—or bug—of symbolic communication).³⁶ Indeed an entirely different kind of symbolic vision was also thought to be possible, indicating not success but the presence of obstacles (we will see many examples of these in chapter four). Providing a means to distinguish between evil visions and auspicious visions seems to have been one of the principal functions of these texts. Neither records of the experiences of past virtuosos nor guidebooks for self-consciously generating normative experiences, these texts present themselves as handbooks for the interpretation of visions.

Using the distinction between *iconic* and *symbolic* experiences we can see how fifth-century Chinese Buddhists may have been deeply concerned with securing *personal* experiences without attributing to them Cartesian assumptions. Here “personal” can, perhaps, be seen as corresponding to the final Peircian sign, the *index*. “Verificatory visions” verify something about the person to whom they appear, and this creates what Peirce called a “dynamic” connection between the sign-form (the appearance of the vision) and its meaning (“attainment for *you*”). I would thus suggest that fifth-century Chinese Buddhists did think that *chan* would lead to

35 Though the tradition would not necessarily distinguish these as iconic versus symbolic (direct versus conventional), a similar distinction does seem to be made by Zhiyi, who in the context of these same verificatory visions distinguishes the arising of mental states that bear a resemblance to the previous mental states of which they are result (and hence “iconic” by my definitions) from the appearance of new objects of consciousness, which as the ripening of karma (*vipāka*) are of a different character than their causes (see chapter four). Indeed *vipāka*, “karmic fruition,” may be the perfect emic category for what I am here calling the “symbolic.” The most important point is thus perhaps not that “symbolic” communication is conventional (something that, in any event, is always at least a second-order observation, signifiers and signifieds having, for those who use them, an apparently *necessary* relationship—see Benveniste 1969), but that unlike “iconic” communication it is *obscure*, such that the relationship between cause and effect, between signifier and signified, is assumed to be difficult to determine.

36 As Rappaport notes symbolic communication, by separating signifier and signified, allows for the possibility of lying in a way that is impossible, or at least more difficult, when one is restricted to icons (Rappaport 1979, 223–227).

personal experiences in this sense. But this does not mean that they held the symbolic meaning of such experiences to be immediate or indubitable. The full meaning of a meditative attainment as understood by fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts is thus “attainment for *you*.” While “for you” is understood directly, “attainment” (or conversely, “hindrance”) is the symbolic component, whose meaning can be, and indeed must be, determined through eminently public means.

This then brings us to the second question: the connections thought to exist between meditative experiences and other Buddhist rituals and practices. As I phrased it above, what did people do with meditation? In many ways this is the heart of my project, and it connects to the broader question of just what Buddhist meditation was ultimately thought to be. As I will show in chapters four and five, one of the most distinctive features of fifth-century Chinese meditation texts is the way that meditative experiences are taken to signify not just inner mental attainments, but the fruits of, or conversely the need for, *rituals*, specifically practices of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔). Indeed in fifth- and sixth-century China *chan* seems to have been valued in large measure as a means of divining the efficacy of such rites, which during this time were beginning to form the core of Chinese Buddhist liturgical life. In order to make clear what is distinctive about this way of understanding the connections between meditation, its fruits, and the broader ritual or liturgical context within which it was practiced, we need to first review the “canonical” understanding of this question.

The most basic Buddhist presentation of the relationship between meditation and other forms of religious practice is the so-called path to liberation or *mārga*, which according to classical interpretations comprises three components: *śīla* (“good conduct”), *samādhi* (“concentration”; sometimes given as *dhyāna*), and *prajñā* (“wisdom”). A slightly more inclusive version adds to the head of the list *dāna*, “giving” (in a traditional context making donations to the Sangha), and combines *samādhi* and *prajñā* into a single item, *bhāvanā*, “cultivation.”³⁷

A full exploration of the various meanings of these terms is beyond the scope of this introduction and even the dissertation as a whole, and I present them here schematically only so as to make clear that traditional Buddhist soteriology does posit an undeniable hierarchy between the “external” practices of “conduct” and “giving,” technically classified as actions of body or speech, and the “internal” practice of meditation, action of the mind.³⁸ In other words the dependence among the elements of the path is unidirectional, such that while it is possible to fully cultivate *dāna* and *śīla* without significant attainment in *dhyāna* or *prajñā*, not so the reverse. One result of this is that in classical or even post-classical formulations of the Buddhist path external and internal practices are segregated. Once having begun to cultivate *samādhi* or *dhyāna* further progress is presented as something that takes place within and by the mind alone.

37 Though *bhāvanā* is sometimes translated as “meditation,” etymologically “cultivation” is preferable since as the verbal noun of the causative form of √bhū, “to exist,” its literal meaning is something like “bringing into being.” Following our discussion above, I would suggest that, in contrast to “meditate,” “cultivate” also better captures the “verificatory” nature of Buddhist meditation by referencing the way that the fruits of meditation are the creation or generation of attainments pertaining to the meditator.

38 Thus in the traditional division of the elements of the so-called noble eight-fold path into *śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā* it is explained that *śīla* pertains to actions of body and speech (“right speech,” “right action,” and “right livelihood”), while the remaining members pertain to mind.

Moreover with this schema in place the telos of each practice only ever points “upward,” and just as in the “hermeneutic of experience” noted by Sharf among modern interpreters the purpose of external behavior (such as *śīla*) lies in its ability to help engender specific inner, or at least mental experiences.

This teleological understanding is the one generally deployed by modern scholars to explain why it is that meditation depends on “pure” *śīla*, a requirement mentioned in all traditional Buddhist meditation texts. Though often passed over quickly or in silence,³⁹ those who do address this question usually interpret the teleology of the *mārga* in psychological terms, such that *śīla*, refraining from unethical actions, becomes a preliminary meditation practice, the restraint of the gross evil mental tendencies that lead to external actions of body and speech.⁴⁰

Although it is surely correct to insist that *śīla* was traditionally valued in terms of the overall path of practice, defining it solely as “ethics” or “morality”⁴¹ risks overlooking the connection between *śīla* and formal ritual. Indeed pure *śīla* was neither simply the absence of wrongdoing nor a personal commitment to a set of abstract moral guidelines, but a positive condition generated by taking on a specific set of vows, an event whose validity depended not on the mind, but on actions of body and speech (in a word, ritual).⁴² In other words one needed to become and remain a formal member of the Buddhist community through the proper performance of publicly verified rites, and strictly speaking even the most “ethical” person cannot successfully practice meditation until they have undergone ordination (formally, a public undertaking of a set of vows), while a serial murderer who ordains as a monk or nun can, without in any way expiating his past sins, succeed in meditation practice, as illustrated in the famous story of the killer turned arhat Aṅgulimālya.⁴³ The organization of the *mārga* thus implies that success in meditation depends on performing the rituals that create pure *śīla*, both

39 Thus Edward Conze, in his dated but in its time influential introduction to Buddhist meditation devotes only a single sentence to this question, noting that before beginning meditation practice “the observance of the moral rules must in any case have become nearly automatic” (Conze 1975, 20). More recent compendiums have even less to say about the matter (Bucknell and Kang 1997; Shaw 2006). Similarly the most important collection of scholarly studies of the Buddhist path (*mārga*) in a pan-Buddhist perspective says almost nothing about *śīla*, the articles being entirely devoted to various approaches to “meditation” as either *dhyāna*, *prajñā*, or both (Buswell and Gimello 1992). Attempts to compare Buddhist meditation to “meditation” in other traditions, or to study the neurological effects of meditation practice, also usually end up defining “meditation” in terms that implicitly sever any connection to external practices (Kohn 2009; Lutz et. al 2007).

40 Vajirañāṇa 1962, 79; King 1980, 28; Gunaratana 1985, 16; Gethin 1998, 170. Note, however, that the technical explanation in the Pāli texts from which the above authors draw is different, namely that breaking one’s *śīla* will produce “remorse,” *kaukrītya*, the presence of which impedes *dhyāna* (Gunaratana 1985, 15). In other words the traditional explanation is not that refraining from misdeeds trains the mind and allows it to practice meditation, but that *committing* misdeeds generates something that actively prevents meditation.

41 As does, for example, Winston King, who explains only that to practice meditation one must be “a morally sincere person” (King 1980, 28).

42 The specific items in the various sets of “rules for training” (*śīkṣāpada*) are often called “precepts,” but this translation is misleading. They are not merely “commands or injunctions” (as “precept” is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*; <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/149594>, accessed April 6th 2012), but things to which one has made a formal commitment. The translation “precept” no doubt stems from this word’s formerly common use in reference to the Ten Commandments, which to early Western scholars of Buddhism no doubt seemed the closest Occidental parallel.

43 Another way to say this is that question of the purity of one’s *śīla* is very different from the question of one’s *karma*, though as we will discuss in chapters four and five this distinction gradually becomes more porous.

ordination itself and also the *poṣadha*, the fortnightly rite of confession and atonement.

That fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts would posit an essential link between meditation and rituals of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔) is thus not unexpected. What does seem unprecedented is that in these texts significance flows not merely “upwards” from external ritual to internal meditation, but “downwards,” from meditative experiences to public ritual practice. This occurs because rather than presenting *chan* as something only accessible to those with pure *śīla*, fifth-century Chinese texts present *chan* as a crucial means of revealing when one is pure or not, and hence when one needs to perform further rituals. The dependence of *dhyāna* on *śīla* is taken to mean not simply that those with impure *śīla* fail to garner significant experiences while meditating, but that a meditator’s impure *śīla* will be revealed during meditation through a variety of inauspicious visions.

The difference between this understanding and the classical one is striking, and fundamental changes are evident on a number of levels. Perhaps the most interesting point is that (im)purity of *śīla* has evidently transformed from something easy to determine through publicly available means into something profoundly obscure. Phrased differently, whether a given ritual or purification had actually “worked” or not seems to have become a major concern. But in terms of the actual practice and meaning of meditation the main point is that successfully atoning for transgressions—verifying the purity of one’s *śīla*—seems at times to have become not a prerequisite for meditation but the reason for engaging in it, or at the very least something the need for which will continue all the way along the path to liberation. Rather than a linear path leading from external rituals to internal meditation, this is a soteriology in which ritual practice continues to play an integral, and not merely preparatory role at all stages. Meditative experiences are thus here no longer (if ever they really were) simply iconic experiences signifying increasingly rarefied or liberated states of consciousness, but symbolic experiences whose significata include ritual practices and their fruits.

* * *

This dissertation is divided into five chapters and three appendices, the third of which contains complete annotated translations and critical Chinese editions of the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*. Chapter one provides the background context by examining the rise of *chan* practice among Chinese Buddhists during the fifth century and the numerous “*chan* scriptures” (*chan jing* 禪經), as they were called, that were translated into Chinese during this time. I will also here introduce the notion of “verificatory visions,” which can be seen not only in the fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts but also in contemporaneous Indian sources. Chapter two discusses the composition, structure, and textual history of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*. Unlike the texts examined in chapter one these two texts were almost certainly composed in China, and as such they provide us with information directly relevant to Chinese Buddhist understanding. In chapter three I commence the heart of my exploration of the importance and function of “verificatory visions” in the fifth-century Chinese understanding of *chan*, and I will begin my analysis by showing that we must indeed think of the elaborate

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imagery in these texts as descriptions of visions, not as prescriptions for “visualization” meditation as has usually been assumed. In chapter four, I look more closely at just what these visions were thought to mean, and it is here that the intrinsic connection between meditative experience and repentance comes to the fore. This understanding, I will show, was foundational not just for the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, but also for the more developed systems of meditation and ritual seen in the writings of Zhiyi in the late sixth century. Finally in chapter five I will look at repentance rituals where *chan* practice comes to play a crucial role. In particular I will examine a style of repentance rite that seems to have developed in fifth-century China as a way of combining *vinaya* rituals for monastic reintegration with Mahāyāna rites promising the elimination of evil karma.

1. Chinese Meditation Texts of the Fifth Century (I)

Chan practice in China before the fifth century

Although better known for his elegant translations of key Mahāyāna scriptures and treatises, the first text produced by Kumārajīva upon his arrival in Chang'an 長安 in February of the year 402 was a short treatise on *chan* 禪. The circumstances of this event are related in a preface for the text composed a number of years later by Sengrui 僧叡 (352–436), originally a student of the famous Dao'an 道安 (312–385), and by all accounts Kumārajīva's first Chinese disciple:

The practice of *chan* is the first gate in the path leading to the Way, the route which leads to *nirvāṇa*. Formerly in this land [of China] the [*Scripture on the Stages of Cultivation*], the large and small versions of the [*Scripture of the Twelve Gates*], and the larger and smaller *Anāpāna* [*Scriptures*] were translated. Though these texts do indeed pertain to this matter [of *chan* practice], they are not comprehensive, and furthermore [despite the presence of such texts] there have been no [masters] from whom one can receive instructions. A proper course for those studying [*chan*] has thus been wanting.

The master Kumārajīva came to Chang'an from Guzang¹ on the twentieth day of the twelfth month of the Xinchou year [February ninth 402], and on the twenty-sixth day of that month I [Sengrui] received from him instructions for *chan* practice.² Only having been blessed with this edifying instruction did I know that study [of *chan*] has a prescribed standard, and that its teachings have a prescribed arrangement.³ As said in the *Sūraṅgama-sūtra*,⁴ though one studies the Way in the mountains, without a master one will never succeed. Thereupon I was fortunate enough to obtain these three fascicles [from Kumārajīva], compiled from the *chan* manuals (禪要) of various masters.⁵

1 Guzang 姑臧, located along the Gansu corridor near the modern city of Wuwei 武威, was an important Buddhist center that during the fourth and early fifth centuries served successively as the capital of a number of small but strategically important states (the various Liang 涼 kingdoms).

2 By “instructions for *chan* practice” (禪法) Sengrui seems to mean the text in question itself.

3 Here “arrangement” is a translations of *tiao* 條, literally “article” or “provision.”

4 Presumably this refers to Kumārajīva's translation of the *Sūraṅgama-samādhi-sūtra* (*Shou leng yan san mei jing* 首楞嚴三昧經, T.642), but if so I have not been able to locate the passage in question.

5 禪法者，向道之初門，泥洹之津徑也。此土，先出修行、大小十二門、大小安般。雖是其事，既不根悉，又無受法，學者之戒蓋闕如也。究摩羅法師，以辛丑之年十二月二十日，自姑臧至常安。予即以其月二十六日從受禪法。既蒙啟授，乃知學有成准，法有成條。首楞嚴經云：人在山中學道，無師道終不成，是其事也。尋蒙抄撰眾家禪要，得此三卷。(Records of the Canon, T.2145: 55.65a20–27)

Kumārajīva is not described in any other sources as a master of meditation, nor even said to have had any particular interest in or devotion to it.⁶ That he began his missionary career in China with the translation of a meditation treatise has accordingly been seen as a reflection of the inclinations of his Chinese disciples who, it would seem, were keenly interested in learning about *chan* but felt that previously available instructions in this discipline, in the form of either authoritative texts or skilled teachers, were sorely insufficient.

Although it is not clear if Sengrui himself specifically requested Kumārajīva to translate a text on *chan*,⁷ his preface does suggest dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs.⁸ Indeed we might take Sengrui's meaning to be that, to his knowledge and experience at least, *chan* practice was simply not very common in China at all; the available texts were unclear, and finding a teacher qualified or even capable of guiding a student in this practice was almost impossible. Sengrui's lament may, of course, simply be effusive praise for the newly translated text and its author Kumārajīva, something to be expected in a preface such as this. And if so it might be of little historical value for determining whether or not Chinese Buddhists had an active tradition of meditation practice prior to this time.

Nevertheless similar complaints about the lack of knowledge of *chan* practice in China, practical or otherwise, are also found in the writings of Sengrui's teacher, Dao'an,⁹ as well as Sengrui's elder co-disciple Huiyuan 慧遠 of Mt. Lu (334–416).¹⁰ There thus may be some grounds for taking Sengrui's comments as more than just fulsome praise for Kumārajīva, and as reflecting, however indirectly, actual historical conditions. Of particular interest, I believe, is his comment that despite the presence of *texts* pertaining to *chan* practice there had previously

6 Kumārajīva's biographies devote considerable attention to his prowess as a reciter of texts and an exegete, but they do not mention skill or even experience in meditation (on Kumārajīva's life, see Ōchō and Suwa 1982).

7 Many scholars conclude from the above passage that Sengrui himself specifically asked Kumārajīva to translate texts on *chan* (Mizuno 1957, 27; Donner 1977, 58; Kamata 1982, 2:267; Yamabe and Sueki 2009, xviii; Xu 2004, 30). However the passage as we have it does not appear to make this explicit. In their biography of Kumārajīva, Ōchō Enichi and Suwa Gijun are more cautious, and note that Kumārajīva may himself have been responding to the interests of the Chinese monks in Chang'an (Ōchō and Suwa 1982, 216–217).

8 One of the most common explanations has been that Sengrui and other Chinese Buddhists of his generation were dissatisfied with the absence of "Mahāyāna" methods for meditation practice (Ōchō and Suwa 1982, 216).

9 In his preface to the *Yin chi ru jing* 陰持入經, a key translation of An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 149–168), translator of the earliest Chinese Buddhist texts pertaining to *chan*, Dao'an writes: "In China the practice of *chan* contemplation has [since An Shigao's time] been neglected, such that though there are many Buddhist followers, there are none who have extinguished their defilements. Indeed the reason for this is that it is through *chan* meditation that one guards the mystery, refines the subtle and enters into tranquility, such that one may attain whatever [Buddhist] path one so desires just as readily as discerning an object in the palm of one's hand. Thus with this essential method [of *chan*] being abandoned it is no wonder that it has been difficult for those hoping for realization." 斯晉土，禪觀弛廢。學徒雖興，蔑有盡漏。何者，禪思守玄，練微入寂，在取何道，猶覘于掌。墮替斯要，而悞見證，不亦難乎？(T.2145:55.45a2–4).

10 In his preface to Buddhahadra's (佛陀跋陀羅) translation of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* (on which see below p.48), Huiyuan writes "I have long lamented that even though the great teaching [of Buddhism] has spread to China [the teachings and practice] of *chan* have been limited. With the three trainings [of precepts, meditation and wisdom] thus incomplete, the Way is surely in a fragile state!" 每慨大教東流，禪數尤寡，三業無統，斯道殆廢 (T.2145:55.65c28–66a2). Huiyuan's statement might be interpreted merely as expected praise for Buddhahadra's translation of a new *chan* text. But in Dao'an's case (see previous note), the preface being written long after the text was translated, it seems likely that Dao'an really felt that his fellow Buddhists were neglecting *chan* practice. Whether this was actually the case, of course, is a different matter.

been “no [masters] from whom one could receive instructions” (又無受法). In other words prior to this time *chan* had been difficult to study because no one was teaching it.

In this chapter I will examine the numerous texts pertaining to *chan* practice that became available in China during the early fifth century. Kumārajīva’s texts, discussed by Sengrui above, were the first of these. But before looking at the contents of these texts I want to follow the lead offered by Sengrui and consider how, if at all, the sudden appearance of this new corpus of texts—which at least theoretically contained instructions in the practical discipline of meditation practice—may have been related to the realities of monastic training. In other words what connection was there, if any, between the study and translation of such texts and actual *chan* practice? Sengrui’s comments above seem to suggest that while he was familiar with a number of texts treating the subject of *chan*—texts which he presumably read and studied as part of his clerical education—he had not been personally initiated into such practices, despite desiring such training. To what extent might these comments reflect historical conditions at this time? In other words is there any truth to the idea that prior to the early fifth century Chinese Buddhists did not generally attempt to practice *chan*? And, more importantly, did this situation change beginning in the early fifth century, as Sengrui suggests it did, at least for himself?

I do not intend this question as a normative one. One might suppose, for example, that Sengrui in fact knew of many Buddhists in China claiming to practice or teach methods of *chan*, methods that Sengrui judged inauthentic or ineffective in comparison with Kumārajīva’s. What I will argue below, however, is that Sengrui’s comments should rather be taken at face value—that prior to the early fifth century there really were very few if any Chinese Buddhists who claimed to teach or to have mastered *chan*. This period was, I believe, a watershed not only in terms of the introduction of new *chan* texts and new theoretical elaboration of *chan*, but in the actual practice of this discipline among Chinese Buddhists.

The early fifth century was an especially fertile time for nearly all areas of Chinese Buddhist thought, and Chinese Buddhists during this time obtained much new grist for their intellectual mills. Within the span of less than thirty years a number of prolific translators such as Kumārajīva, Buddhahadra, and Dharmakṣema produced dozens of new, gracefully translated scriptures, including several enormous Mahāyāna sutras such as the *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經 (*Avatamsaka-sūtra*) and the *Mahāparnirvāṇa-sūtra* (*Da ban nie pan jing* 大般涅槃經) that would prove to be rich sources for centuries of scholastic reflection and cultic practice. Also translated during this time were hundreds of fascicles of texts pertaining to monastic discipline (*vinaya*), none of which had been previously known in China, as well as a vast collection of scholastic commentaries such as the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (*Da zhi du lun* 大智度論). No matter where one looks in later Chinese Buddhism one finds the influence of texts and ideas introduced to China during this time.

Among this massive output were many texts pertaining to *chan* practice. The first of these were translated by Kumārajīva, discussed in Sengrui’s preface above, but there were many others as well. By the mid fifth century Chinese Buddhists thus had access to a number of specialized, authoritative Indian works explicating the procedures for and expected results of meditation practice. But the changes that occurred during this time in the Chinese appreciation for Buddhist meditation were not limited to new texts. On a practical level too a significant

development seems to have taken place, and there are reasons for thinking that this is when Chinese Buddhists first began to actually practice meditation in a regular fashion.

It is true that Chinese and especially Japanese scholars have traditionally considered there to have existed two “lineages” of “meditation” (*chan* 禪) in China prior to the fifth century, stemming from the two principal Han-dynasty translators of Buddhist texts—the “Hīnayāna” meditation of An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 147–168) and the “Mahāyāna” meditation of Lokakṣema (Zhi Loujiachen 支婁迦讖,¹¹ fl. 178–189).¹² Usually, however, these two traditions of *chan* are discussed without consideration for what precisely they were, such ambiguity being allowed more easily in Chinese and Japanese in which the precise meaning of the word *chan* need not be specified. A review of the evidence suggests, however, that these “lineages” did not have any concrete, historical reality.

Indeed the scholars who first proposed this framework for understanding *chan* in early Chinese Buddhism were not so much interested in the history of early Chinese Buddhism as they were with providing a critical, historical account of the rise of the so-called “Chan school” (*chan zong* 禪宗) associated with the eventually famous (though historically nebulous) Indian monk Bodhidharma.¹³ According to the studies of early twentieth-century Japanese scholars such as Matsumoto Bunzaburo 松本文三郎, Nukariya Kaiten 忽滑谷快天, and Itō Kokan 伊藤古鑑, “meditation practice” (*chan*) in China initially comprised these two lineages—one devoted to Indian yogic practices (associated with the translations of An Shigao) and the other to Mahāyāna philosophy (associated with the translations of Lokakṣema). The basic argument was that the arising of the Chan school in the sixth and seventh centuries, explained within the tradition simply as the transmission of Bodhidharma’s lineage from India to China, could be understood from a more objective point of view as the fusion of these two trends that had existed since the early days of Buddhism in China. This thus accounted for the fact that Chan was at least nominally devoted to actual meditation practice, as its name (*chan*) implies, but approached this practice on the basis of Mahāyāna emptiness philosophy rather than on the “Hīnayana” theories found in most of the formal Indian presentations of *chan* known in Chinese translation (such as the translations of An Shigao).¹⁴

These scholars aimed to explain later Chan as something new and unique while at the same time maintaining a plausible historical development within the broader stream of Chinese Buddhism. To accomplish this each had their own way of dividing up the earlier tradition. Nukariya Kaiten, for example, presented early (pre-Bodhidharma) Chinese *chan* as comprised of 1) practitioners of the “*chan* numbers” (*chan shu* 禪數),¹⁵ described as either Hīnayāna or

11 Literally “Lokakṣema the Yuezhi.” The ethnicon Zhi 支 refers to his nationality, probably of the so-called “Greater Yuezhi” 大月支 nation (the Kuṣān empire). The name *Lou-jia-chen* (also pronounced *chan*) 婁迦讖 has traditionally been reconstructed as *Lokakṣema*, but this is not certain.

12 See for example Sakaino 1935, 858–862; Sasaki [1936] 1978, 41–57; Tang [1938] 2000, 1:115–117; Kamata 1982, 1:162; Ren et al. [1985] 2009, 1:371–380; Xuan 2001, 235–271; Xu 2004, 13–29.

13 More recent Western scholarship has often questioned the assumption that there is any necessary *historical* connection between earlier traditions of meditation practice (*chan*) and the “Chan school” that traced itself to Bodhidharma (Foulk 1987; Foulk 1992; Foulk 2007). Indeed those who considered themselves followers of Bodhidharma often took great pains to distinguish themselves from “mere” practitioners of meditation (*chan*).

14 Matsumoto 1911; Nukariya 1925, 183–210; Itō 1931, 8–18.

15 The term “*chan* numbers” 禪數 was used in early Chinese Buddhist historiographical sources to describe the

“gradual” Mahāyāna meditation methods, and 2) the “*chan* teachings” (*chan jiao* 禪教), by which he meant Mahāyāna emptiness philosophy, whose roots he traces to Lokakṣema’s texts.¹⁶ Drawing inspiration from the biographies of the early Chinese “*chan* practitioners” (*xi chan* 習禪) from the sixth-century *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳), Nukariya portrayed early Chinese practitioners of the “*chan* numbers” as eremitic ascetics. Followers of what he called the “*chan* teachings,” in contrast, were devoted to intellectual speculation and exegesis of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, which they pursued at the expense of actual meditation practice. Only with Bodhidharma, Nukariya concluded, were these two opposing trends united in what he called “pure *chan*” (*junzen* 純禪), the Chan school itself.¹⁷

Nukariya’s attempts to give the Chan school a real history in China were thus partially vitiated by conflicting necessities—insisting on the originality of Bodhidharma’s approach, he also wanted to provide it with a historical genealogy.¹⁸ In hindsight it would seem that Nukariya simply took what he felt to be the two key features of later Chan and assigned each to a distinct historical trajectory, destined to be united by Bodhidharma and his followers. It is interesting to observe, moreover, that the history of Chinese Buddhist meditation that Zen historians such as Nukariya developed was also adopted and adapted to explain other “schools” of Chinese Buddhism that emphasized meditation. In 1936, for example, Sasaki Kentoku told more or less the same story about the rise of Tiantai 天台, though in this case it was Zhiyi 智顛, not Bodhidharma, who eventually united the two previously separate streams.¹⁹

earliest Chinese Buddhist texts on *chan*, likely because these texts contained many numerical lists.

16 Nukariya 1925, 187

17 Other scholars have also portrayed early Chinese interest in the *prajñā* teachings of emptiness as little more than idle philosophy, disconnected from serious practice (Ōchō 1958–1979, 1:199–200).

18 As Carl Bielefeldt has noted, this problem frequently occurs among Japanese sectarian scholars who face the potentially contradictory demands of portraying the sect founder as both eminently traditional, and hence authentic, yet also utterly unique (Bielefeldt 1985).

19 See Sasaki [1936] 1978. This is the basic argument of Sasaki’s survey of early Chinese Buddhist meditation (*zenkan* 禪觀), which begins with An Shigao and Lokakṣema and ends with Zhiyi. This appears to be a Tendai response to Nukariya Kaiten’s 1925 book, which treats the same subject from the perspective of the rise of Zen (Nukariya 1925). See in particular Sasaki’s comments on p.55, where he notes that though Lokakṣema did not translate “even a single *chan* scripture (禪經),” when we consider that his translation of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (*Ban zhou san mei jing* 般舟三昧經) would become the scriptural basis for one of the Tiantai four kinds of *samādhi* (四重三昧), it becomes clear that “while An Shigao was the founder in China of traditional style *dhyāna* practice (禪數), Lokakṣema must be taken as the forefather (遠祖) of Mahāyāna contemplation (大乘禪觀).” Note how Sasaki avoids calling An Shigao’s methods “Hīnayāna.” In discussing An Shigao himself Sasaki notes that his methods would be considered Hīnayāna from the point of view of later Buddhists, but that “actually at that time Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna had not yet separated” (p.46). Similarly later, in discussing the works of the third-century translator Dharmarakṣa (法護), who translated both Mahāyāna scriptures and one key traditional meditation text (the *Xiu xing dao di jing* 修行道地經), Sasaki takes pains to point out that early Mahāyāna meditation retained the outward form of the practices that later would be called Hīnayāna, even though they conformed to the Mahāyāna ideal of saving all beings (p.73). Sasaki appears to be trying to walk a careful line. Mindful of their prominent role in Zhiyi’s meditation manuals, Sasaki argues that traditional meditation practices such as breath counting are not *necessarily* to be seen as Hīnayānic, and this can be understood as a response to Nukariya Kaiten’s book in which these practices are labeled as entirely Hīnayāna. (We should note that breath-counting and similar exercises do not figure in the Chan/Zen reworkings of Zhiyi’s meditation manuals, so Nukariya did not need to account for them in the same manner.) At the same

All of these early scholarly accounts of the history of *chan* in Chinese Buddhism tended to equate *chan* in the sense of the traditional four *dhyānas* (*si chan* 四禪) and related exercises with “Hīnayāna” practice and understanding. The explanation was then that these “Hīnayāna” practices emphasized “concentration” (*samādhi*) at the expense of “wisdom.”²⁰ Perhaps the boldest claims in this regard were those of Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), whose had a decisive impact on Japanese scholars of early Chan. Hu Shi interpreted this supposed contrast between “concentration” and “wisdom” as the difference between Indian and Chinese approaches to meditation and Buddhism more generally. The “sudden enlightenment” of the Sixth Patriarch of the Chan school, Huineng 慧能, was thus, Hu Shi claimed, a dramatic shift in understanding that replaced Indian emphasis on “concentration” (*ding* 定) with a Chinese emphasis on “wisdom” (*hui* 慧). In short for Hu Shi *chan* practice in China prior to this time was focused only on “concentration” (定), and was “gradual” (*jian* 漸).²¹ Although Hu Shi never went into further details about the early history of meditation practice in China, his basic division lines up with the approach taken by Mastumoto Bunzaburo and others, who similarly posited a sharp early separation between the teachings of concentration (An Shigao) and wisdom (Lokakṣema), and similarly tended to conflate “Mahāyāna,” “wisdom,” and “sudden” on the one hand, then opposing them to “Hīnayāna,” “concentration,” and “gradual” on the other.

But returning to a consideration of the history of Chinese Buddhist meditation *practice*, it is clear that the two “lineages” of *chan* identified by Japanese and Chinese scholars should be understood as two *textual* lineages. These lineages represent the two streams of thought prominent in later Tiantai and Chan, both of which advocated “meditation” (*chan* 禪), the earliest Chinese exposition of which is found in the texts of An Shigao, but explained the ultimate import of this practice using the language and philosophy of Mahāyāna sutras, first translated by Lokakṣema.

But the situation becomes more complicated when we try to find out who, if anyone, was actually practicing something called *chan* 禪 in early Chinese Buddhism. One thing is clear, however—there was no obvious connection between the texts translated by Lokakṣema and the practice of *chan*, something pointed out a number of years ago by Jan Yün-hua 冉雲華.²² The texts in question that many scholars have considered representative of Lokakṣema’s “Mahāyāna meditation,” though containing the word *samādhi* (*san mei* 三昧) in their titles, do not provide any obvious practical meditation instructions. Theoretically they might serve as philosophical reflections on the nature of Buddhist cultivation techniques, but we do not have evidence that this is how they were used.²³ Indeed the few early prefaces to these works do not draw such

time Sasaki is leaving room for Zhiyi to be construed as eventually developing a more complete system, and he still ends up implying that Zhiyi’s system is unique in having united the two streams represented by An Shigao and Lokakṣema, even though he eschews the strict Mahāyāna / Hīnayāna distinction between these two “lineages” that Nukariya had proposed.

20 The few Western scholars who have covered this ground have followed the Japanese scholarship closely. See for example Dumoulin [1958] 1994, 1:63–83; Donner 1977.

21 I here draw from Gong Jun’s 龔隼 insightful summary of Hu Shi’s theories (Gong 2006, 42–50).

22 Jan 1990, 50–53

23 Even in India, the meaning of the word *samādhi* in the titles of these texts did not necessarily indicate a meditation practice, at least not in the traditional sense of the word (Skilton 2002).

connections. Most importantly, later Chinese Buddhist historiographers do not connect Lokakṣema's texts to famous early meditation masters (*chan shi* 禪師).

An Shigao's legacy is somewhat clearer, though not entirely so. Never himself described as a master or even practitioner of meditation,²⁴ beginning from at least the fourth century Chinese authors did take An Shigao's texts as the source of the Chinese study of *chan*. This can be seen in Sengrui's preface above, where An Shigao's translations are mentioned prominently.²⁵ So too in his *Biographies of Eminent Monks* Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554) writes, in his concluding comments to the biographies of “practitioners of meditation” (*xi chan* 習禪), that:

Since the beginning of the transmission of Buddhism to China the path of *chan* has been taught. First there were the *chan* sutras (*chan jing* 禪經) translated by An Shigao and Dharmarakṣa, and based on them monks such as Sengguang and Tanyou cultivated their minds, ultimately becoming supremely adept.²⁶

Huijiao here refers to two fourth-century figures supposedly known for having practiced meditation on the basis of An Shigao's texts, Sengguang 僧光 and Tanyou 曇猷.²⁷ Curiously, however, turning to the actual biographies of these monks in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, we find no mention of An Shigao or his texts at all. We do know that An Shigao's texts were studied by fourth-century Chinese Buddhists, and that famous Chinese masters such as Dao'an 道安 composed commentaries to them. These commentaries do not survive, but we do have a few fourth-century prefaces to An Shigao's *chan* texts written by the authors of these commentaries, giving us some glimpse of how *chan* was understood at this time.²⁸ But we look in vain in these prefaces, meager as they admittedly are, for any indication of the practical details of *chan* in the sense of a ritualized practice of seated meditation. In other words even though Huijiao, writing in the early sixth century, connected An Shigao's texts to two monks remembered for their practice of *chan*, Huijiao himself had little or no evidence for a tradition of *chan* practice actually associated with An Shigao, even in the loose sense of *chan* practitioners, or even a single one, known for their interest in An Shigao's texts.

Tracing the so-called lineages of Lokakṣema and An Shigao thus does not seem to get us any closer to understanding what role *chan* practice may have played in China prior to Kumārajīva's arrival in 402. A more promising approach might be to examine the hagiographies

24 Scholars have frequently described An Shigao as an accomplished master of meditation (Tsukamoto 1968, 304; Yamabe 1997, 824). However as far as I know traditional sources do not actually say this, noting only that he was famous for having memorized the *chan* scriptures (*chan jing* 禪經).

25 He also mentions Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Scripture on the Stages of Cultivation* (*Xiu xing dao di jing* 修行道地經) a text also mentioned in Huijiao's comment cited here.

26 自遺教東移，禪道亦授。先是世高、法護譯出禪經，僧[先]{光}、曇猷等，並依教修心，終成勝業。(T.2059: 50.400b25–27). I emend to 僧光 following the Song and Yuan editions. This must refer to the monk Bo Sengguang 帛僧光 from the *chan* practitioners' biographies (T.50:2059.395c6–25).

27 T.50:2059.395c6–25 and 395c27–396b17 respectively. Both monks supposedly died towards the end of the Taiyuan 太元 reign period (376–396 CE).

28 For studies of the Chinese understanding of *chan* evinced by such sources, see Ōchō 1957; Tamaki 1971, 319–405; Xuan 2001, 326–378.

of the early Chinese monks known as “practitioners of *chan*” (*xi chan* 習禪), who were given an entire chapter in the early sixth-century *Biographies of Eminent Monks*.²⁹ Studies of such sources by scholars interested in the early history of Buddhist meditation in China have appeared fairly regularly over the years.³⁰ And indeed among these stories we do find records purporting to describe the lives and doings of famous practitioners of *chan* active prior to the fifth century.

However when we look more closely at these records a number of points emerge to suggest that, in fact, prior to the fifth century *chan* practice may not have occurred among Chinese Buddhists with any regularity or even at all. The poverty of our data—fewer than a dozen such biographies plus the names of a few more—makes any definitive historical statement impossible. Nonetheless what our sources reveal does seem to point, however tentatively, to a real historical change beginning in the early fifth century.

The most significant point is a negative one—prior to the fifth century none of the famous Buddhist missionaries from India or the “western regions” (*xi yu* 西域) are mentioned as having any particular mastery of *chan* practice. At least in the minds of those who recorded the biographies, miracle tales, or other stories eventually compiled into the three surviving sixth-century collections,³¹ prior to the fifth century foreign Buddhist monks in China were either translators or, more rarely, miracle workers (which in practice might have meant ritual masters). Moreover even though later Chinese Buddhist hagiography often highlights the connection between thaumaturgy and *chan* practice, this association is entirely lacking in the accounts of early foreign miracle workers such as Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (d. 348), whose biographies never imply that mastery of *chan* was the root of their powers. The training and skills of Fotudeng, the best documented of such monks, are described in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* only as follows:

He was a native of the Western regions. His surname prior [to becoming a monk] was Bo. When he was young he ordained and devoted himself diligently to his studies. He could recite several hundreds of thousands of lines of scripture, and well understood their

29 Judging from its surviving table of contents, the slightly earlier (and now largely lost) *Biographies of Famous Monks* (*Ming seng zhuan* 名僧傳) also had a chapter devoted to such monks.

30 Mizuno 1957; Ōtani 1970, 1972; Murakami 1961; Furuta 1980; Sakamoto 1981, 1982; Mutō 2004.

31 The three principal sources for the lives of foreign Buddhist monks in China during this time are biographies in the *Records of the Canon* (*Chu san zang ji ji* 出三藏記集), the *Biographies of Famous Monks* (*Ming seng zhuan* 名僧傳), of which only the table of contents and a few selected and possibly abridged biographies survive, and the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳). To these can be added miscellaneous sources such as stories from the *Shi lao zhi* 釋老誌 chapter of the *Wei shu* 魏書 (Tsukamoto [1964] 1974), and excerpts of now lost collections, preserved in sources such as Liu Jun’s 劉峻 (465–521) commentary to the *Shi shuo xin yu* 世說新語 and, most importantly, the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林), a seventh-century Buddhist encyclopedia. In considering any of these sources it is difficult to know to what era we should assign their historical records. Strictly speaking any given story may be no earlier than the date of the compilation of the collection in which it appears. In practice, however, these collections drew most of their stories from other, earlier sources. Leaving aside the historical accuracy of the stories themselves, in a rough and general way we can likely date the tales to the eras in which their protagonists lived, although there are surely exceptions. On the sources of the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, see Wright 1948, 415–424. For general observations on the source materials of these collections, see Shinohara 1988.

meaning.³²

Based on how they are described later in his biography, Fotudeng's miraculous powers seem to have derived from rituals such as the recitation of spells. Obviously we cannot know to what extent the historical Fotudeng would have averred to *chan* as the root of his powers. But we can say that the Chinese public who recorded his exploits did not seem to make any such connection.

In contrast to these foreign translators and magicians, all of the pre-fifth-century "*chan* practitioners" mentioned in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* and the *Biographies of Famous Monks* appear to have been Chinese. The *Biographies of Famous Monks* is explicit about this, as it divides each of its categories into "Chinese" and "foreign" exemplars, and from the surviving table of contents we can see that foreign specialists in *chan* first appear only in the early fifth century.³³ More generally, within the biographies themselves even though texts pertaining to *chan*—notably those mentioned by Sengrui in his preface and Huijiao in his concluding comments—are named and discussed in association with their translators, the foreign monks who translated (or brought and/or recited) these texts are never themselves said to have been practitioners of *chan*, let alone specialists in this vocation.

The biographies of Chinese practitioners of *chan* active prior to the fifth century also share certain noteworthy features. Most importantly these monks are all portrayed as hermit figures living in mountain caves or other inaccessible locations. No mention is ever made of how they learned to practice *chan*, or of their study under Indian or even other Chinese masters. Usually these biographies devote only a few sentences to the monks' backgrounds. Thus of Zhu Faxian 竺法顯 (fl. 318–322), we learn only that "he was from the north. He was resolute in his asceticism and enjoyed restraint. He did not eat meat, chanted the scriptures, and endeavored at *chan* as his major occupation. He frequently lived alone in the mountains and forests, roaming beyond the reach of men."³⁴ Of Bo Sengguang 帛僧光 (d. ~376–396) we are told even less: "His origins are unknown. In his youth he cultivated the practice of *chan*."³⁵ None of these monks are portrayed as prominent or important members of the clergy, nor is there ever any discussion of their association with prominent laypersons, or of their having been patronized by officials or other persons of power.

In contrast in the tales of *chan* practitioners active in the fifth century and beyond we find a mixture of both reclusive hermits *and* famous, often politically active monks. A clear model for

32 T.2059:50.383b18. For a comprehensive study of the records pertaining to Fotudeng, see Wright 1948.

33 X.1523:77.348b22–c6. The categories in the *Biographies of Famous Monks* also resolve some ambiguous cases from the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* who bear foreign ethnicons such as Bo 帛 or Zhi 支. Although these characters were used as surnames for foreign monks, Chinese Buddhists often took them on prior to the standardization of the surname Shi 釋 in the fourth century, and we can see from the table of contents in the *Biographies of Famous Monks* that the early *chan* practitioners who bear these surnames are classified as Chinese, not foreign. Note also that the *Biographies of Famous Monks* includes in its list of foreign *chan* specialists a number of monks who in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* are classified as translators. But these monks too all arrived in China only from the early fifth century onward.

34 T.2059:50.295b24–25. I here translate *tou tuo* 頭陀 as "roaming." This word transcribes *dhūta*, and technically refers to a set of twelve or thirteen ascetic practices permitted to Buddhist monks and nuns (Ray 1994). However in Chinese hagiography *tou tuo* tends to refer specifically to monks and nuns without fixed abodes who live wandering, or hermit-like lives.

35 T.2059:50.295c6

these new career possibilities is seen in the case of Xuangao 玄高 (d. 444), who studied *chan* with Buddhahadra in Chang'an in the early fifth century.³⁶ Xuangao later served Juqu Mengsun 沮渠蒙遜 (r. 401–433), ruler of the Northern Liang 北涼 kingdom. When the Northern Liang was invaded by the Wei 魏 armies in 439, Xuangao was relocated to the Wei court, where he was eventually executed after plotting a rebellion with one of Emperor Taiwu's 太武 sons.³⁷ But in addition to having led an illustrious, if ill-fated career as a court monk, Xuangao's life as recorded in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* is peppered with references to both his attainments in *chan* and, perhaps more interestingly, his discipleship under and confirmation by Indian meditation masters such as Buddhahadra.³⁸

Although Xuangao's story is not necessarily typical, by the middle of the fifth century mastery of *chan* had apparently come to be seen as potentially the province not only of reclusive hermits, but also of famous monks sought out and employed by regional governments or other wealthy patrons. In this, at least, Xuangao was not anomalous. The revival of Buddhism in Chang'an following the 446 suppression under the Wei emperor Taiwu 太武 was spearheaded by a certain Sengliang 僧亮, a disciple of the eminent *chan* practitioner Sengzhou 僧周, who had established a community in the mountains to the south-west of Chang'an during the suppression. Sengliang's biography reports that when he returned to Chang'an he was greeted with great fanfare by the local magnate, the lord of Yongchang 永昌王:

Before [Sengliang] arrived in Chang'an, the lord [of Yongchang] and the people [of the city] swept and cleaned the streets and alleys. Arriving at [Sengliang's] quarters so as to welcome him, the lord personally descended from his carriage and bowed his head to [Sengliang's] feet so as to express his reverence.³⁹

36 Historians have debated whether or not Xuangao actually studied with Buddhahadra, as the dates of Xuangao's life in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* contradict the timetable of Buddhahadra's stay in Chang'an. Either the story was made up to bolster Xuangao's legitimacy, or some of these dates have been incorrectly recorded (Xu 2004, 50–51). For my present purposes the historicity of Xuangao's discipleship under Buddhahadra is not particularly important. Chen Jinhua has recently suggested that Xuangao's birth date is simply recorded incorrectly in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (Chen 2010).

37 Tang 2001, 2:98–100

38 Concerning Xuangao's study with Buddhahadra, the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* states: "[Xuangao] was bright and precocious, and learned [Buddhism] easily. At fifteen he was already lecturing to the other monks. After receiving the precepts he devoted himself assiduously to the study of *chan* and the monastic regulations. He then heard that *chan* master Buddhahadra was transmitting the teachings at the Shiyang monastery near Chang'an. So Xuangao went there and took him as his teacher. After a dozen or so days he had reached a profound meditative attainment. Buddhahadra said to him: 'Excellent indeed, oh child of the Buddha, is your profound awakening!' Thereafter Buddhahadra became deferential towards Xuangao and refused to be treated as a teacher." 聰敏生知學不加思。至年十五已為山僧說法。受戒已後專精禪律。聞關中有浮馱跋陀禪師在石羊寺弘法。高往師之。旬日之中妙通禪法。跋陀歎曰。善哉佛子。乃能深悟如此。於是卑顏推遜不受師禮。(T.2059:50.397a19–24). Later Xuangao studied with yet another foreign "*chan* master" named Dharmapriya (Tanwupi 曇無毘), whose portrait survives in cave 169 at Binglingsi 炳靈寺 (Wang 2005, 22, figure 1.11). On some questions concerning the identity of this Dharmapriya, see Mei 2005.

39 未至之頃，王及民人掃灑街巷。比室候迎，王親自枉道，接足致敬。(T.2059:50.398c1–2). Sengliang then rebuilds the temples in Chang'an, and I presume that *shi* 室 here refers to Sengliang's temporary quarters in Chang'an, not to his original temple in the Han 寒 mountains.

Such patronage was equally if not even more common in South China under the Song 宋 (420–479) court, where by the mid fifth century numerous foreign and native Buddhist teachers were known for their mastery of *chan*.⁴⁰ As a representative example of the stories surrounding these monks we may provisionally note Huilan 慧覽 (d. ~457–464), a colleague of Xuangao who eventually ended up in the south. Born in Jiuquan 酒泉 along the Gansu corridor, he traveled across Central Asia to somewhere in greater Gandhāra (Jibin 罽賓), where he studied *chan* under Indian masters. Upon return to China he was invited by Song emperor Wen 文 (r. 424–453) to reside at the imperially sponsored Dinglin 定林 temple on Mt. Zhong 鍾. When emperor Xiaowu 孝武 (r. 453–464) had the Zhongxing 中興 temple built, Huilan moved there, and was known as the instructor of “all the *chan* monks in the capital region.”⁴¹ Two prominent laymen, Shen Yanzhi 沈演之 and Meng Yi 孟顛, are further said to have been his patrons. Thus while not reaching the political heights attained by Xuangao, unlike the Chinese *chan* practitioners of the fourth century Huilan had a known pedigree of *chan* training, lived at various imperially-sponsored temples where he instructed disciples, and was patronized by aristocrats. In these respects Huilan was by no means unique, and causal references in other sources suggest that *chan* masters throughout the Song dynasty were regularly patronized by the upper echelons of society.⁴²

Representations of Chinese-born practitioners of *chan* thus changed dramatically around the turn of the fifth century. This change went hand in hand with the first appearance of Indian or Central Asian missionaries known for their skill in this practice, and as mentioned above prior to the early fifth century there were no such foreign monks at all, or at least none that were remembered. But beginning in the first half of the fifth century a wave of foreign missionaries claiming to be (or regarded as) teachers of *chan* arrived in China, most of whom became famous without recourse to traditional areas of specialization such as translation.⁴³

At the same time that foreign masters of meditation were becoming an increasingly visible presence in China, actually studying *chan* under such a qualified “meditation master” (*chan shi* 禪師), as they came to be known, became an expected part of training for anyone who

40 Tang 2001, 2:445–446

41 京邑禪僧皆隨踵受業 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.399a11–22). The surviving fragments of the *Biographies of Famous Monks* also contain some information about Huilan (X.1523:77.356a7–15).

42 The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* thus mentions that Zhicheng 智稱 (d. 501) studied in his youth with *chan* master Yin 印, who had been invited by emperor Xiaowu 孝武 (r. 453–464) from Yizhou 益州 (modern Chengdu 成都 in Sichuan) to the southern capital (T.2059:50.402b10–11). Zhicheng’s “record of conduct” (*xing zhuang* 行狀) preserved in the *Extended Records of Proselytizing* (*Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集) states that *chan* master Yin served as “imperial teacher” (*di shi* 帝師) during his time in the South (T.2103:50.269a2).

43 The table of contents to the *Biographies of Famous Monks* lists ten such foreign monks known for their practice of *chan*, the earliest being Punyatāra 弗若多羅 (X.1523:77.348b22–c4), better known as the first reciter of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Shi song lü* 十誦律) for Kumārajīva’s translation (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.333a13–24). That he is mentioned in the *Biographies of Famous Monks* as a *chan* specialist is not easily explained, perhaps the result of a confusion with another Punyatāra mentioned elsewhere as the teacher of the famous meditation master Buddhasena, the teacher of Buddhahadra (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.89b28). The known biographical sources for Punyatāra the reciter of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* make no mention of *chan* practice (though they do say that he was held to have attained one of the four fruits).

would later claim mastery of this subject. Mentioning a period of such discipleship becomes standard in hagiographies of Chinese *chan* practitioners, even in the very brief ones otherwise similar to those of the *chan* practitioners active in earlier times, such as that of Huitong 慧通:

Shi Huitong was from the region around Chang'an. As a youth he stayed for a while at the Taihou temple in Chang'an. He did not eat meat, and knew spells. He could recite the *Ekottarāgama* scripture. He first received instruction in *chan* from *chan* master Huishao of Liangzhou, and he roamed masterfully through many different contemplations.⁴⁴

Moreover it is not just that prior to the fifth century discipleship under an authorized teacher of *chan* was rarely recorded—it does not even seem to have been considered a possibility, a point revealed by the striking fact that Buddhahadara, who arrived in China in 406,⁴⁵ is the first recorded person in Chinese history to bear the title “*chan* master” (*chan shi* 禪師).⁴⁶ Yet soon thereafter the Chinese Buddhist world was flooded with such monks, such as the Gandhāran *chan* master Dharmamitra 曇摩密多, who settled in the southern capital where he founded the famous Dinglin 定林 temple.⁴⁷ There was also the *chan* master Dharmapriya, mentioned above as the second teacher of Xuangao.⁴⁸ Not all such masters were famous, such as *chan* master Saṅghānanda 僧伽難陀, mentioned but briefly in the biography of the Chinese monk Tanyi 曇翼

44 釋慧通關中人。少止長安太后寺，蔬食持呪，誦增一阿含經。初從涼州禪師慧紹諮受禪業，法門觀行多所遊刃。(T.2059:50.398c7–14). Huitong's dates are unclear. The Taihou temple is mentioned in several sources as a prominent temple in Chang'an where Dao'an once lived (*Biographies of Famous Monks*, X.1523:77.357a24). The *Ekottarāgama* (*Zeng yi a han jing* 增一阿含經) was translated in Chang'an in 384 (Tsukamoto 1985, 744). Meanwhile Huishao 慧紹 of Liangzhou had an entry in the *Biographies of Famous Monks* in the chapter on Chinese-born *chan* masters (X.1523:77.348c9), and apparently died in the Jin 晉, thus sometime before 420. Huitong was thus presumably active during the early fifth-century. Some have suggested that the Huishao in question may have actually been Xuanshao 玄紹, mentioned in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* as a disciple of Xuangao (T.2059:50.397b11–16; Jan 1990, 18).

45 Although Buddhahadara eventually settled in the south, he began his missionary career in Chang'an during the first decade of the fifth century, at the height of Kumārajīva's translation activity. A number of other prominent Indian and Central Asia masters had also been assembled under the patronage of the warlord Yao Xing 姚興 (r. 399–416). Buddhahadara's eventual departure from Chang'an in 411 has been explained in several ways. His biography suggests that he was expelled (T.2145:55.103c25). Doctrinal rivalries between Buddhahadara and Kumārajīva may also have played a role, though we may presume that politics and patronage were the main sources of the tension. Kumārajīva died in the eighth month of 409, and Buddhahadara left Chang'an shortly thereafter (Öchō and Suwa 1982, 245).

46 For the early sources that assign Buddhahadara this title, see below note 53. Concerning the rise in prominence of “*chan* masters” during this time we should also note a curious episode in the biography of Falang 法郎 (fl. mid fifth century), a monk from Liangzhou 涼州 who eventually moved to the Silk Roads oasis Kucha (Qiuci 龜茲). According to Falang's biography: “The king of Kucha made an agreement with a great *chan* master of that country that if someone with attainment were to arrive there [in Kucha] the *chan* master would inform the king so that he might make offerings to him. When Falang arrived the *chan* master told the king, and the king treated [Falang] with the honor due to a saint.” 龜茲王與彼國大禪師結約，若有得道者至，當為我說，我當供養。及朗至，乃以白王，王待以聖禮。(T.2059:50.392c18–20).

47 *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.342c8–343a29

48 See note 38.

and unknown from other sources.⁴⁹

Not only was Buddhahadra the first person with the title “*chan* master,” the very notion of such a thing may have been unknown in China prior to this time. This word did not, for example, appear in translated Buddhist scriptures prior to Buddhahadra’s time,⁵⁰ and even those reclusive Chinese hermits known in theory for their practice of *chan* did not take on, or were not given, this title, at least as far as the meager records pertaining to them reveal.⁵¹ Buddhahadra is also the first person, foreign or Chinese, recorded unequivocally as giving actual instruction in the practice of *chan* to a Chinese audience,⁵² and we have at least one contemporaneous record of this, a letter written by Sengzhao 僧肇 (384–414) stating that Buddhahadra had several

49 *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.356a7–8

50 Even in later times the term is rare in translated texts. The earliest example may be Zhu Fonian’s 竺佛念 translation of the *Chu yao jing* 出曜經, a commentary to the *Dharmapāda*. The dates of the translation are difficult to pin down, though it probably did not take place until after Buddhahadra’s arrival. According to the catalog section of the *Records of the Canon* the *Chu yao jing* was translated in Chang’an sometime between 373 and 383 (T.2145:55.10c5–6. The *Li dai san bao ji* 歷代三寶紀 gives 374; T.2034:49.77a12). But these dates are flatly contradicted by Zhu Fonian’s biography in the *Records of the Canon*, which explains that while Zhu Fonian first translated scriptures during the rule of the warlord Fujian 符堅 (r. 357–384), the *Chu yao jing* was translated during a second period of activity during the reign of Yaoxing 姚興 (r. 399–415), after Kumārajīva and others had arrived (T.2145:55.111b21–23; note that the biographies in the *Records of the Canon* were generally written earlier than the catalog section). It thus seems quite likely that Zhu Fonian’s work on the *Chu yao jing* did not occur until after Buddhahadra had become famous as the resident “*chan* master” (for some general comments on Zhu Fonian, the most prolific translator prior to Kumārajīva, see Zürcher 1972, 202). It is further noteworthy that the context in the *Chu yao jing* suggests that the passage may be a secondary commentary, perhaps added by the translators. The initial commentary explains the *Dharmapāda* verse “Be firm and do not be neglectful” 定則不放逸 as referring to zealous practice of meditation. Within this commentary is the line “[Using] the *chan* tablet, the *chan* ball, and the Dharma-staff, control the mind and sit in meditation” (禪[睡]{鎮}禪毬法杖檢心坐禪). The word *chan shi* 禪師 occurs in a later section that explains the terms in the initial commentary: “The *chan* tablet is a rock placed on the head and fastened behind the ears with string. If one falls asleep [during meditation], [the falling rock] then wakes one up. As for the *chan* ball, the *chan* master holds the *chan* ball in his hands and throws it at anyone he notices sleeping.” 禪[睡]{鎮}者，以珂著頭上，以繩屬耳，睡則自寤。禪毬者，禪師手執禪毬，伺於睡者，以毬往擊。(T.212:4.639c24–28; on these devices, which are discussed in *vinaya* literature, see Hirakawa 1975). A phrase very similar to the one here in the commentary occurs regularly in Buddhavarman’s translation of the *Māhāvibhāṣā* carried out in the 420s (頂安禪鎮行禪毬法杖; *A pi tan pi po sha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論, T.1546:28.101b13–14; 163c15; 254c29), and thus may have been a stock phrase in Vaibhāṣika literature denoting zealous meditation practice. This suggests that the explanation of terms such as “*chan* ball” (禪毬) may have been supplied to help explain their meaning to a Chinese audience, and if so “*chan* master” here might be Zhu Fonian’s own explanation in which he would have drawn from the terminology that was beginning to become common in Chinese circles.

51 Thus we find, to take but one example, that the *chan* practitioner Zhu Tanyou 竺曇猷, active during the fourth century, is in his biography referred to by others as *fā shi* 法師, “Dharma master” (T.2059:50.396a6, b10), not “*chan* master.” “Dharma master” is of course a generic appellation for a Buddhist priest, but it still seems significant that the title “*chan* master” is not used in any of these early stories.

52 Sengrui’s comments (see p.15) that he “received the method of *dhyaṇa*” (從受禪法) from Kumārajīva might possibly indicate this as well, but since the context is the translation of a text, the emphasis appears to lie on the transmission of written instructions. Furthermore the absolute lack of other reference to Kumārajīva as personally trained in *chan* practice suggests that even if initially Sengrui looked to him as a teacher of meditation, this role was quickly forgotten once Buddhahadra had arrived.

hundred followers whom he “trained in the practice of *chan*” (教習禪道).⁵³

To the extent that hagiography reflects ideals and expectations about what is possible, a real historical difference exists between the fourth century and the fifth century in terms of the presence and role of *chan* practice and *chan* masters in the lives of Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns. Prior to the fourth century *chan* practice was associated almost exclusively with mysterious Chinese recluses with hazy life stories. These were not thought to be the kind of monks who interacted with major patrons or political figures. Simply put, *chan* practice was not associated with the monks that ordinary people might reasonably expect to encounter.⁵⁴ Seen in this light we are, I believe, justified in taking as historically plausible Sengrui’s assertion, cited at the beginning of this chapter, that formerly even those who wanted to practice *chan* had no means of learning how.

But beginning in the early fifth century a change occurred. Though mysterious *chan* practitioners living in caves and declining to interact with the world did not lose their place in social memory, there appeared an increasing number of stories about *chan* practitioners integrated into the larger Buddhist community, some of whom attained great fame and influence. There similarly began to appear stories about Chinese monks actually learning *chan* from foreign and eventually Chinese “*chan* masters.” Although how the title “*chan* master” was chosen or perhaps assigned⁵⁵ remains unclear, that no Buddhist monk, Chinese or otherwise, is given this title prior to the early fifth century is a sign that devotion to or mastery of *chan* was not normally associated with Buddhist monks in China. But in the fifth century monks known as *chan* masters were famous teachers living in large temples in or near the capital, and such sites became known as active centers of *chan* training. The Zhihuan (祇洹; Jetavāna) temple, for example, the largest, most famous, and most powerful monastery in South China during the

53 The letter, written to Liu Yimin 劉遺民 (d. 410) in south China, is preserved in the *Zhao lun* 肇論 (T.1858:45.155c14–15; Tsukamoto 1955, 44–45). Liu Yimin died in 410, so the letter must have been written before then. According to the Tang dynasty *Records of the Transmission of the Flower Ornament Scripture* (*Hua yan jing chuan ji* 華嚴經傳記), Buddhahadra had “six hundred” followers in Chang’an whom he instructed in *chan* (T.2073:51.154b11). Other contemporaneous sources confirm that Buddhahadra was called a “*chan* master” even while alive. Slightly later than Sengzhao’s letter is the brief reference to Buddhahadra under the title *chan shi* 禪師 in Sengrui’s essay *Clarifying Doubts* (*Yu yi* 喻疑; *Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.41b17–18). Similarly in a colophon to Buddhahadra’s translation of the *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經, carried out between 418 and 420, he is again titled the “Indian *chan* master” (天竺禪師; T.278:9.788b6), and this title also appears in a post-face to his translation of the *Mahāsaṅghika-vinaya* (*Mo he seng qi lü* 摩訶僧祇律; T.1425:22.548b9).

54 Though sources outside of hagiography are limited, there are other, vague indications that prior to the fifth century the actual practice of *chan* was rare or even nonexistent. Consider, for example, the monastic rules supposedly instituted by Dao’an in the fourth century. Though the rules themselves do not survive, the topics covered—procedures for lectures on Buddhist topics, daily liturgies, meals, and the fortnightly *poṣadha* confession ceremony—are mentioned in Dao’an’s biography (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2085:50.353b24–27; on Dao’an’s rules and scholars’ interpretations of them, see Yifa 2002, 8–13). While we can hardly derive from this a complete picture of fourth-century monastic life, we may say that *chan* practice, at least in an organized, ritualized form, was not considered an essential or even regular aspect of monastic life.

55 Precisely what entitled a monk or nun to use titles such as “dharma master” (法師) or “*chan* master” (禪師) is unclear. I know of one case in which the title “dharma master” was granted by the Wei emperor Xuanwu 宣武 (r. 499–515) to a layman (*Wei shu*, 84.1854), but it is not clear whether in general these titles were granted by secular or clerical authorities or simply chosen informally by local communities or individuals.

early Song dynasty, was remembered (in the sixth century) as where foreign monks of all stripes came to both translate scriptures and “give instruction in the methods of *chan*” (訓授禪法).⁵⁶

Even if these stories reflect historical reality but vaguely, they indicate that in general understanding *chan* practice had changed, from a mysterious discipline undertaken only by hermits into a training that well connected monks might expect to pursue if desired. Temples begin to be described as having a dedicated “*chan* cloister” (禪房), “*chan* hall” (禪堂), or “*chan* chamber” (禪閣),⁵⁷ and meditation itself becomes more visible, as illustrated by the brief biography of the Indian monk Ratnamati (阿那摩低), who arrived in China between 454 and 456, and was known for meditating beneath a tree within the Waguan 瓦官 temple in the southern capital.⁵⁸ Encountering a monk meditating beneath a tree in a major temple thus seems to have been something that fifth-century readers would have found plausible. Finally there are indications the cultivation of *chan* was being promoted among the laity, and a fifth-century catalog of Chinese Buddhist compositions lists, within the imperial collection, a “Procedures for *chan*: instructions for cultivating concentration as a layman” (禪定義在家習定法).⁵⁹

Over a century ago, in one of the earliest critical studies of the history of the Chan school, Mastumoto Bunzaburo 松本文三郎 proposed that before the fifth century the study of

56 This is recorded in the biography of the famous Huiyi 慧義 (372–444), who helped Liu Yu 劉裕 overthrow the Jin dynasty by obtaining favorable omens (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.50:2059.368c18–20). Huiyi was eventually installed at the abbot of the Zhihuan temple and given the full support of the imperial clan. On Huiyi and the Zhihuan temple, see Tsukamoto 1974, 77; 83–89.

57 It is not always clear for what use these structures were intended and we have records of a “*chan* cloister” used for translation activity (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.13a18–19). Some kind of ritual activity is implied for the “*chan* chamber” (禪閣) constructed by Dharmamitra at the Changsha 長沙 temple in Sichuan, where this Gandhāran *chan* master “prayed fervently for a relic” (翹誠懇惻祈請舍利; *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.342c27). However the word *chan* was also used more loosely as an architectural term. Huiyuan apparently constructed a “*chan* grove” (*chan lin* 禪林) on Mt. Lu, used as a garden or strolling park (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.358b6–7; *Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.109c2). The earliest reference to a dedicated structure for *chan* may be a passage in the *Wei shu* 魏書 describing the early dynastic history. In 398, shortly after establishing his capital at Datong 大同, the founding emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. 386–409) began to promote Buddhism, and built a major temple within the city that included a five-story pagoda, “Vulture-peak” and “Sumeru” halls (this presumably refers to the basic pagoda/Buddha-hall arrangement), “a lecture hall, a *chan* hall, and a *śramaṇa* seat” (別構講堂、禪堂、及沙門座; *Wei shu*, 114.3030; Tsukamoto 1974, 151). The version of this passage cited in Falin’s 法林 (570–640) *Refutation of Heresies* (*Po xie lun* 破邪論) reads *chan shi* 禪室 (T.2104:52.368a15–16), while that cited in the *Extended Record of Proselytizing* gives *chan fang* 禪房 (T.2103:52.101c29). Regardless, we do not know if this is an accurate record of the structures built in a temple during the late fourth century, or if the sixth-century author of the *Wei shu* used vocabulary from his own day to describe what had by then become the normal buildings of a Buddhist temple.

58 *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.345a15–17

59 *Fa lun mu lu* 法論目錄 (on this catalog, see below p.34), cited in *Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.84b5. The complete title of the text is 聞慧思修禪定義在家習定法. The parsing of the title here is unclear. This text is also listed in the *Tang Catalog of Buddhist Scriptures* (*Da tang nei dian lu* 大唐內典錄), with the slightly different title 問慧思修禪定義在家習定法 (T.2149:55.328c12). Neither of these readings makes sense of the first three characters. If 問 is correct, then 慧思 might be the name of an interlocutor (though chronologically this could not be the famous Huisi 慧思 teacher of Zhiyi 智顛).

*chan*⁶⁰ by Chinese Buddhists had been entirely theoretical, and that its actual practice began only among the disciples of Kumārajīva and Buddhahadra.⁶¹ When Mastumoto was working the basic chronology of the key primary sources for early Chinese Buddhism had not yet been firmly established, and the Dunhuang documents, which would fundamentally change scholarly study of early Chan, were not yet available. Moreover some of his explanations seem, from a more contemporary perspective, somewhat naïve.⁶² As far as I have been able to determine Matsumoto's conclusion have thus not been taken seriously by subsequent scholars. Nevertheless despite the limitations of the sources used to reach them, I believe that his basic contentions are sound, as I have tried to demonstrate more rigorously in the above pages. While the *idea* of mental tranquility was no doubt known and even endeavored for,⁶³ and the theoretical importance of *chan* along the path appreciated, prior to the fifth century organized meditation practice does not seem to have played even a minor role in Chinese Buddhism.

Meditation scriptures and meditation masters

Beginning in the early fifth century both north and south China thus witnessed an influx of foreign monks sought after for their mastery of *chan*. Skill in this practice soon became a valuable commodity, and “*chan* masters,” a newly minted title, began to attract prestige and patronage. Beginning with the disciples of Buddhahadra (first in Chang'an, then later in south China) an increasing number of Chinese Buddhists were remembered for having personally studied *chan* under the tutelage of these foreign, and eventually native Chinese *chan* masters.

Regardless of whether the surviving biographies of these teachers and their disciples are accurate historical accounts, legends told and re-told as the origin stories of cultic sites, or a combination of both, that the study of *chan* under a qualified master became an increasingly common trope suggests that such training had actually become both possible and expected. Chinese Buddhists seem, moreover, to have been aware that a shift had occurred. Thus, for example, a late fifth-century biography of the fourth-century monk Huijing 惠精 (also known as Tanjie 曇戒) indicates that he practiced *chan*. But it adds that: “Since at that time the methods of *chan* (*chan fa* 禪法) had not yet been transmitted, [Huijing] followed [the instructions in] the scriptures, and sat by himself.”⁶⁴ Fifth-century writers, when remembering or imagining *chan*

60 Mastumoto does not distinguish Chan as the school of Bodhidharma and *chan* as “Buddhist meditation,” so his study of the time before the rise of the Bodhidharma school ends up, from our perspective, as a study of the later.

61 Matsumoto 1911. Matsumoto seems to be responding to Sakaino Kōyō, who had earlier argued that the absence of detailed records pertaining to early *chan* specialists did not imply that there were none (Sakaino 1907, 133).

62 For example he suggests that the Chinese had not previously taken up *chan* practice because it was “contrary to the Chinese way of thinking” (支那思想の之に適せなかったから), such that many centuries were required before it could become accepted (Matsumoto 1911, 239).

63 See for example Zhidun's 支盾 (314–366) poem *Yong chan si dao ren* 詠禪思道人, written for what appears to have been a painting of a meditating monk (*Extended Records of Proselytizing*, T.2103:52.351a18–b2).

64 時禪法未傳，依經獨坐。(Biographies of Famous Monks, X.1523:77.357a23). The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* records Huijing under the name Tanjie 曇戒, but does not mention his practice of *chan* (T.2059:50.356b25–c6). For a translation of that biography, see Kieschnick 1997, 5.

practice during the fourth century, thus pictured a lone monk attempting to meditate with only written texts to guide him, and this was implicitly contrasted with what had apparently become the norm.

That in the fifth century training in *chan* became a possibility for Chinese Buddhists has important consequences for how we understand the nature and significance of the surviving texts from this period that discuss this practice. As mentioned above prior to the fifth century a number of important texts outlining the methods and expected results of *chan* practice had been available in China. Fifth-century *chan* texts, however, were translated, composed, and circulated by and among Chinese Buddhists who were also attempting, at least occasionally, to put such ideas into practice. Even though we do not know the exact relationship between any given text and specific individuals, we do know that most fifth-century *chan* texts were at least associated at the time with monks known as *chan* masters, and this contrasts markedly with earlier times, when there was no particular association between translating *chan* texts and personal mastery of *chan* practice.

For the historian, regardless of the context in which they were written or translated, texts describing *chan* practice remain prescriptive rather than descriptive sources. We cannot know precisely how any given text was used, though we do occasionally find internal evidence suggesting a practical, didactic use. (They contain, for example, the earliest surviving instructions for correct meditation posture.)⁶⁵ Still, precisely as prescriptive texts they can be read as descriptive of ideals. And not just abstract ideals unconnected to Buddhism “on the ground.” For during this time mastery of *chan* was coming to be seen as accessible to Chinese Buddhists and foreign masters residing in China. Thus while a Chinese reader of the fourth century may have encountered texts describing *chan* and been amazed by the attainments of mysterious hermits or Buddhist saints in the magical land of India, in the fifth century *chan* texts would have been read as, at least in part, descriptions of the practices and experiences of living Chinese Buddhists. And for some Buddhist clergy and perhaps laypersons as well,⁶⁶ they would even have been read as descriptions of things they themselves were actively hoping to achieve.

In other words in the fifth century we find three things forming a potentially coherent whole—*chan* texts as descriptions of ideal attainments, *chan* practice as a concrete, ritualized activity, and *chan* masters as visible, living persons believed to have attained the results described in *chan* texts. Thus *chan* texts from this period—most especially those composed or compiled in China—reveal not merely abstract ideals, but the ideals used by at least some Chinese Buddhists to frame and understand the practices in which they engaged, the people who surrounded them, and, at least occasionally, their own experiences.

Surviving *chan* texts from the fifth century occur in an assortment of styles and genres, and it is difficult to concisely summarize their contents. Some can be attributed to specific translators or authors based on reliable, contemporaneous records, such as for the texts produced by Kumārajīva. The origins of many others, however, are unclear, and the information concerning these texts found in later catalogs is often questionable. Since these texts often have very similar titles, difficulties of identification also abound, occasionally making it difficult if not impossible to be certain which catalog records correspond to which extant texts. (A specific

65 See appendix three, section 1.9.

66 On the possibility that *chan* was also being promoted among the laity, see above p.29.

case of this problem will be explored in more detail in chapter two.)

But before looking at the contents of the surviving texts, I want to consider the question of genre. Indeed “*chan* texts” is not simply my own second-order designation, but a rough translation of what Chinese commentators called “*chan* scriptures” (*chan jing* 禪經). This term, attested since the middle of the fourth century, does not appear to correspond to an explicit Indian Buddhist bibliographic category.⁶⁷ The Chinese, however, felt that it referred to a specific genre of texts compiled by various Indian masters after the Buddha’s demise.⁶⁸ And while most texts referred to as such are, stylistically, similar to Indian Buddhist commentarial literature, in the prominent cases of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* we have texts written as discourses delivered by the Buddha.⁶⁹

Despite the apparent absence of an Indic Buddhist parallel for it, the notion of a genre of canonical or near-canonical texts devoted to *chan* captured the Chinese imagination from an early date, and in addition to “*chan* scriptures” we find related terms such as “the *chan* canonical

67 As Florin Deleanu has noted, “*chan* scripture” (*chan jing* 禪經) does not seem to be the calque of an Indic term (Deleanu 2006, 1:157). Possibly the earliest attested example of this word is the anonymous commentary to the *Scripture on the Twelve Gates* (*Shi er men jing* 十二門經), a text attributed to An Shigao and recently re-discovered at Kongō-ji 金剛寺 temple in Japan (Ochiai 2004, 198 line 411). Here, however, the meaning may be “*chan* teachings,” as in Han-dynasty Buddhist texts the word *jing* 經 often translates *dharma*, not *sūtra* as it would later. The first unambiguous example of the meaning “*chan* scripture” is Dao’an’s fourth-century preface to this same text, which he calls the “the most detailed of all the *chan* scriptures” (比諸禪經最為精悉; *Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.46b7–8). Note, however, that none of the texts Dao’an lists in his 374 CE catalog, the *Zong li zhong jing mu lu* 綜理眾經目錄, use this word as part of their titles. Though speculative, it is not impossible that Dao’an used the word in his preface after having read it in the *Scripture on the Twelve Gates*, such that the entire notion of a “*chan* scripture” might have been a confusion generated by the changing use of the word *jing* 經 in Chinese Buddhist translations. Later the word is used frequently in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (*Da zhi du lun* 大智度論), where, however, it often seems to refer to Kumārajīva’s own earlier translations, notably the *Meditation Scripture* (to be discussed in more detail below), so here too it is not clear if the intention was as a proper name or the name of a genre. There are also at least two texts in the Āgama / Nikāya collections that might have born the title *dhyāna-sūtra*. In the Pāli canon we thus find the *jhāna-sutta* or *jhānissaya-sutta* (AN, 4.422), and in the *Madhyamāgama* (*Zhong a han jing* 中阿含經) the *Scripture on the Practice of Dhyāna* (*Xing chan jing* 行禪經; T.26:1.713c22–716b12). Though these are not the same texts, both are structured around an exposition of the four *dhyānas* and four *arupya-samāpattis*. In the *Yogalehrbuch* (on which see note 155 below), we find the term *yogaśāstra* (Schlingloff 1964a, 86), certainly a plausible candidate for an Indic equivalent of *chan jing* 禪經. Interestingly, however, the *Yogalherbuch* uses this to refer not to itself, but to a different body of texts. Finally we may note that the term *yoga-sūtra* is well known from non-Buddhist Indian traditions, though as far as I know there are no known references to Buddhist *yoga-sūtras*.

68 See Huiyuan’s preface to the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.65c10–19 and 66a10–12). Similarly the *Si fen lü xing shi chao pi* 四分律行事鈔批, a Tang-dynasty sub-commentary to Daoxuan’s *vinaya* commentaries, explains that the *chan jing* 禪經 are texts that “teach the procedures for meditation using words [drawn from] the sutras” 教坐禪法，用經語也。(X.736:42.1010c4–7).

69 Interestingly, however, in this case both texts comprise more than one such sutra, each with a standard opening and closing formula. Outside of the Āgama collections this is a most unusual format for Chinese Buddhist texts. And indeed later Chinese catalogers treated these two texts, which as I will argue in chapter two may have originally been a single collection, not as sutras but as “compilations of [past] saints and sages” (賢聖撰), a category indicating compilations and extracts made by Indian Buddhists and translated as such into Chinese (*Fajing’s Catalog*, T.2146:55.144b25). This classification was maintained until the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* in 730, which reclassified the texts as sutras.

texts” (*chan dian* 禪典), and the “basket [pertaining to] meditation” (*ding zang* 定藏).⁷⁰ Even in later Chinese Buddhism, when *chan* often became associated with something outside or beyond the traditional Buddhist canon, similar associations persisted. Zongmi’s 宗密 (780–841) influential collection of the sayings and doings of early Chan masters, for example, was referred to by his contemporaries as the “Chan basket” (禪藏), a title that self-consciously invokes the notion of a special canonical collection of Chan / *chan* texts.⁷¹

The desire for a discrete corpus of *chan* texts was correlated with a pattern, observable in China beginning in the fifth century, of conflating the “three baskets” (*tripiṭaka*) of Buddhist canonical texts—*sūtra* (discourses), *vinaya* (monastic rules), and *abhidharma* (doctrinal exegesis)—with the so-called three trainings of *śīla* (precepts), *samādhi* (meditation), and *prajñā* (wisdom), the basic model of Buddhist soteriology. Although Chinese catalogs of Buddhist texts from the seventh century onward generally organize Indian canonical texts according to the three baskets, earlier catalogs did not follow this system.⁷² One such example is the *Catalog in Seven Sections* (*Qi lu* 七錄) compiled by Ruan Xiaoxu 阮孝緒 (479–536), which contains one of the earliest attempts to create an official catalog of the Buddhist canon.⁷³ Though the catalog is lost according to the table of contents, preserved in the *Extended Records of Proselytizing*,⁷⁴ Ruan grouped Buddhist texts into five categories: “the division of the precepts and regulations” 戒律部, “the division of *chan* meditation” 禪定部, “the division of wisdom” 智慧部, “the division of works of dubious authenticity” 疑似部, and “the division of treatises and other records” 論記部.⁷⁵ The monk Baochang 寶唱 (464– sometime after 514) used a similar system in his catalog compiled under the auspices of emperor Wudi 武帝 (r. 502–550). In this case the first three categories were “sutras” (經), “*chan* scriptures” (禪經), and “precepts and regulations” (戒律).⁷⁶

These catalogs thus organized Buddhist texts according to the three trainings, not the three baskets, and some version of this bibliographic method dates from at least the middle of

70 For *chan dian* 禪典, see Huiguan’s 慧觀 (375–445) preface to the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.66b4), and also Sengzhao’s 僧肇 essay *Nirvāṇa Has No Name* (*Nie pan wu ming lun* 涅槃無名論; T.1858:45.160c25). This term was rare after the fifth century. On *ding zang* 定藏, see note 78 below.

71 The expression “Chan basket” (*chan zang* 禪藏) is not found in Zongmi’s extant writings, but it is used in the introduction to Zongmi’s *Chan Preface* (*Chan yuan zhu quan ji du xu* 禪源諸詮集都序) written by Zongmi’s patron Bei Xiu 裴休 (T.2015:48.398b10). Zongmi’s biography in the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* also uses this word: “[Zongmi] gathered the Chan sayings of the various schools so as to create a ‘Chan basket’” 又集諸宗禪言為禪藏 (T.2061:50.742a6–7). This word even appears on Bei Xiu’s epitaph for Zongmi (Gregory 2002, 322n33).

72 Chinese Buddhist catalogs in general include two separate organizational systems: one in which texts are classified by translator, usually ordered by the understood chronology of the translations, and another in which presently extant texts are organized into a single canon. I speak here only of the second of these two systems, as in the first case the organization is, obviously, constrained by other factors.

73 Li and He 2003, 62

74 T.2103:52.111a14–19

75 This final category refers to texts written by Chinese authors.

76 The table of contents of this now-lost catalog is listed under the title *Liang shi zhong jing mu lu* 梁世眾經目錄 in the *Li dai san bao ji* 歷代三寶紀 (T.2034:49.126b5–c9). Some scholars question whether this really represents Baochang’s catalog (Tan 1991, 185).

the fifth century. Thus in a catalog of Buddhist writings compiled for emperor Mingdi 明帝 (r. 465–472) by Lu Cheng 陸澄 (420–494),⁷⁷ we find a “basket of the discipline” (律藏), “basket of meditation” (定藏), and “basket of wisdom” (慧藏), though this catalog is of texts by Chinese authors, not Indian canonical works, and there are several other categories beyond these three.⁷⁸

Using the three trainings as a bibliographic scheme may have been at least partially based on theories found in Indian texts translated into Chinese during the fourth and early fifth centuries. The earliest of the three Chinese translations of the *Vibhāṣā*,⁷⁹ completed in 383, thus defines the three baskets in reference to the three trainings: the *vinaya* discusses discipline, the *sūtras* meditation, and the *abhidharma* wisdom.⁸⁰ Although the pairing of *vinaya* with *śīla* makes obvious sense (perhaps especially in Chinese, as both *vinaya* and *śīla* were often translated as *jie* 戒), and the link between *abhidharma* and wisdom is also attested elsewhere, a generic connection between the *sūtras* and meditation seems somewhat hard to explain or justify.⁸¹

Whether inspired by this or not, the Chinese eventually connected “wisdom” not to the *Abhidharma* but to a more generic category of “scriptures” (*jing* 經), or sometimes “scriptures

77 For Lu Cheng’s biography, see *Nan qi shu*, 9.681–685.

78 *Fa lun mu lu* 法論目錄 (*Records of the Canon*, T.55:2145.84a2–b23). It is notable that the “basket of meditation” here comprises mostly prefaces to the texts generally classified as “*chan* scriptures,” including both An Shigao’s early translations and the later translations of Kumārajīva and Buddhahadra.

79 The three Chinese versions of the so-called *Vibhāṣā* are really translations of three different texts, but for the sake of convenience I refer to them here and throughout this dissertation as different translations of a single text.

80 “Furthermore all buddhas preach the three baskets, namely *sūtra*, *vinaya*, and *abhidharma*. Question: What differences is there between these three? Answer: According to one mode of explanation, there is no difference. Why? In as much as they all emerge from a single sea of wisdom, they all are produced from great compassion, they all benefit sentient beings, and they all effectuate entry into the single gate of liberation, there is no difference. But according to a different mode of explanation, there is a difference: the *sūtras* speak about various things, the *vinaya* speaks about precepts, and the *abhidharma* speaks about the characteristics [of *dharma*s]. Or else it is explained that the *sūtras* rely on [the buddhas’] might, the *vinaya* on their great compassion, and the *abhidharma* on their fearlessness. **Or else it is explained that the *sūtras* speak of the higher consciousness, the *vinaya* speaks of the higher discipline, and the *abhidharma* speaks of the higher wisdom.** 復次一切佛世尊出世說三藏。契經律阿毘曇。問曰。契經律阿毘曇何差別。一說者無差別。何以故。答曰。從一智海出故無差別。大悲出故無差別。欲饒益一切眾生故無差別。入一解脫門故無差別。或曰。有差降。契經說種種。律說戒。阿毘曇說相。或曰。契經依力。律依大悲。阿毘曇依無畏。或曰。契經說增上意。律說增上戒。阿毘曇說增上慧。(T.1547:28.416b24–c9). “Higher consciousness,” “higher discipline,” and “higher wisdom” are translations of *adhicitta-śikṣāpada*, *adhiśīla-śikṣāpada*, and *adhiprajñā-śikṣāpada*, a common way of referring to the three trainings of, following the order given here, *samādhi*, *śīla*, and *prajñā*.

81 Particular collections of the *sūtras* were also sometimes associated specifically with meditation. In China the major source for this understanding was the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* (*Sa po duo pi ni pi po sha* 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙), which distinguishes the four Āgamas according to content and purpose: “[The Buddha’s] occasional preachings for various gods was collected into the *Ekottarāgama*, and this collection is the one studied by missionaries. His preaching of deep truths for those of sharp faculties [was collected] and named the *Madyamāgama*, and this is studied by [those devoted] to scholasticism. His preaching of the various factors associated with *dhyāna* forms the *Samyuktāgama*, and this collection is the one studied by meditators. The *Dirghāgama* [is for those wishing to] refute heretics.” 為諸天世人隨時說法，集為增一，是勸化人所習。為利根眾生說諸深義，名中阿舍，是學問者所習。說種種隨禪法，是雜阿舍，是坐禪人所習。破諸外道，是長阿舍。(T.1440:23.503c27–504a1). In later China the association between the *Samyuktāgama* (*Za a han* 雜阿舍) and the practice of *chan* was frequently discussed by Zhiyi (*Miao fa lian hua jing wen ju* 妙法蓮華經文句, T.1718:34.1c8–10).

and commentaries” (經論), while “meditation” was linked to a special collection of texts. The first steps in this direction had already occurred by the early fifth century. Thus Huiyuan, in his preface to the *chan* text translated by Buddhahadra, writes:

[Previously] I had frequently lamented that ever since the great teaching [of Buddhism] began spreading eastward [towards China] the [texts on] “*chan* numbers” have been especially few. With the “three trainings” thus incomplete, the noble way has been in danger of decline. Recently Kumārajīva has transmitted the works of Aśvagoṣa, and thus only now has there come to be this “training” [here in China].⁸²

Here Huiyuan invokes Kumārajīva’s then-recent translation of the *Meditation Scripture*, the same compilation for which Sengrui wrote his preface mentioned above, as a recent contribution that increased the availability of the “training” (*ye* 業) of *chan*. The term “training,” and especially the “three trainings” (*san ye* 三業), which Huiyuan also uses, unambiguously refers to discipline (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). However what Huiyuan seems to consider necessary for these to be complete is the availability of specific kinds of *texts*. Huiyuan’s biography makes it clear what he (or at least his biographer) thought these three kinds of texts were:

When the scriptures (經) first came to south China, many were missing. Little was heard of methods for *chan* (禪法), and the basket of the discipline (律藏) was fragmentary. Grieving that the Way was incomplete, Huiyuan sent his disciples Fajing, Faling and others to seek scriptures (眾經) in distant lands. They traversed deserts and mountains, returning only after long years. All obtained Indian texts, which were eventually translated.⁸³

It would seem here that “scriptures” (經), “methods for *chan*” (禪法) and “basket of the discipline” (律藏) refer to three different categories of texts. This is made clear in the next line:

[Huiyuan] invited *chan* master [Buddhabhadra to Mt. Lu] so as to put an end to his exile [from Chang’an].⁸⁴ [At Mt. Lu, Buddhahadra] translated *chan* scriptures.⁸⁵ [Huiyuan] further asked the Gandhāran monk Saṅghadeva to translate *abhidharma* (數經) texts.⁸⁶ By means of these [translations] it came to pass that methods for *chan* (禪法), scriptures

82 每慨大教東流，禪數尤寡，三業無統，斯道殆廢。頃鳩摩耆婆宣馬鳴所述，乃有此業。
(T.2145:55.65c28–66a1)

83 初經流江東，多有未備。禪法無聞，律藏殘闕。遠慨其道缺，乃令弟子法淨、法領等，遠尋眾經。踰越沙雪，曠歲方反，皆獲梵本，得以傳譯。(Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2059:50.359b15–18). A nearly identical passage appears in Huiyuan’s slightly earlier biography in the *Records of the Canon* (T.2145:55.110a14–17). I have here benefited from Zürcher’s translation (1972, 246).

84 After Buddhahadra was expelled from Chang’an he moved temporarily to Mt. Lu before eventually settling in Jiankang 建康, the southern capital, where he continued his work as a translator and teacher of *chan*.

85 This refers to the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* (*Da mo duo luo chan jing* 達摩多羅禪經). See p.48 below.

86 This refers to Saṅghadeva’s translation of the *Abhidharma-hrdaya* 阿毘曇心 and the **Tri-dharmaka-śāstra* 三度論 (see his biography in the *Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.99c18).

(經), and precepts (戒) totaling nearly a hundred fascicles were translated at Mt. Lu.⁸⁷

Among Huiyuan and his followers the three trainings as a division of Buddhist practice and attainment were thus linked to a three-fold division of texts that, while not precisely equal to the three baskets, was similarly intended as a complete description of the Buddhist canon. It is interesting to note how, particularly in the case of *chan*, this creates an ambiguity—“methods of *chan*” (禪法) refers simultaneously to the practice of *chan* and to the texts that provide instruction in this discipline.⁸⁸ A similar tension occurs with the *vinaya*. To “uphold the *vinaya*” (持律) thus meant not only to follow the regulations precisely (as this expression would eventually mean in normal use), but also to transmit and memorize *vinaya* texts.⁸⁹

From the early fifth century onward these three categories were portrayed as the totality of Buddhist practice and study. Well-rounded monks were not supposed to “narrowly investigate a single canonical corpus (典),” but to “comprehensively master *chan* (禪), master the regulations (律), and become fully adept in the scriptures and treatises (經論).”⁹⁰ Thus Fa’an 法安, a disciple of Huiyuan, though classified in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* as an exegete (義解), “properly maintained the precepts (戒), could expound on the scriptures, and furthermore trained in *chan*.”⁹¹ Ratnamati “always sat in *chan* beneath a tree within the temple, yet he was also versed in the scriptures (經) and the regulations (律).”⁹² Xuanchang 玄暢 (416–484) “had a thorough understanding of the scriptures and the regulations, and was also deeply versed in the essentials of *chan*.”⁹³ As a youth the Gandhāran *chan* master Dharmamitra “recited the scriptural collections, firmly upheld the regulations, and was especially fond of *chan*.”⁹⁴ Anbin 安廩, a monk active in North China during the sixth century, “studied scriptures and treatises (經論) with Master Rong at the Guangrong temple in Sizhou. Rong’s instruction in the regulations (律) was strict and severe, such that [Anbin] was austere shaped into a perfect vessel [for the dharma] . . . [Anbin] also received training in the methods of *chan*, exhaustively reaching the profound attainments.”⁹⁵ Guṇavarman, famous for transmitting the *bhikṣunī* precepts to China in the early fifth century, “had a comprehensive command of the four Āgamas, and could recite tens of millions of words of the scriptures. He also had a profound mastery of the canon of the

87 迎請禪師解其擯事，傳出禪經。又請罽賓沙門僧伽提婆出數經。所以禪法、經、戒，皆出廬山，幾且百卷。(T.2145:55.110a18–21).

88 A similar ambiguity occurs with the expression “essentials of *chan*” (*chan yao* 禪要), also used as a title for certain kinds of texts.

89 See note 104 below.

90 These remarks are drawn from Huijiao’s concluding essay (論) to the biographies of the translators in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T.2059:50.345b14–346a23).

91 善持戒行，講說眾經，兼習禪業。(Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2059:50.362b29)

92 恒於寺中樹下坐禪，又曉經律。(Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2059:50.345a15–17). On this passage see also p.29 above.

93 洞曉經律，深入禪要。(Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2059:50.377a15–16)

94 諷誦經藏，堅持律部，偏好禪那。(Biographies of Famous Monks, X.1523:77.355b2). The version in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* is worded somewhat differently (T.2059:50.342c10–12).

95 於司州光融寺容公所，採習經論。容，律訓嚴凝，肅成濟器 . . . 又受禪法，悉究玄門。(Further Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2060:50.480b13–17)

regulations (律品), and was marvelously proficient in the essentials of *chan* (禪要).”⁹⁶

The notion that Buddhist practice consisted in the study of *chan*, mastery of scriptures, and training in monastic regulations, was further connected with the basic division of the clergy into “dharma masters” (法師), “vinaya masters” (律師), and “*chan* masters” (禪師), titles so familiar to students of medieval Chinese Buddhism that their novelty has rarely been noticed. In some cases we can even watch as the Chinese, exposed to Indian Buddhists classified under slightly different rubrics, re-imagined things in this more appealing framework. For example Sengzhao 僧肇, writing as it was taking place, describes the Buddhist activity in Chang’an under the patronage of the ruler Yao Xing 姚興 (r. 399–416) as follows:

[Yao Xing] is by nature inclined towards the Way and is possessed of natural ease. His innate capacities are well beyond the ordinary. He protects the Three Jewels and endeavors to spread the [Buddhist] teachings. Through his efforts extraordinary scriptures and eminent monks have been brought from distant lands, such that here in China it is once again as it was in the days when the Buddha himself taught on Vulture Peak . . . [in addition to Kumārajīva] he has invited one Mahāyāna *chan* master, one dharma master versed in the three baskets (三藏法師), and two Vibhāṣā dharma masters (毘婆沙法師). Kumārajīva has been translating the new scriptures at the Dashi temple, and from this basket of the teachings (法藏), which is wide and profound, new and marvelous things are heard each day. In the Wagan temple the *chan* master [Buddhabhadra] instructs and trains several hundred disciples in the path of *chan*. They do not tire, day or night, solemnly practicing in utmost delight. In the Central Temple the dharma master versed in the three baskets has been translating the basket of the regulations (律藏). [Translated] in its entirety, it is detailed and complete, [such that hearing it is] as if witnessing [the Buddha’s] original institution [of the rules].⁹⁷ [Finally] at the Shiyang temple the Vibhāṣā dharma masters are translating the *Śāriputrābhidharma*.⁹⁸

Sengzhao thus describes four specializations—three kinds of “dharma masters” (法師), textual experts specializing in *sūtras*, *vinaya*, and *abhidharma*, and one “*chan* master,” who does not translate texts but teaches meditation practice.⁹⁹ On the one hand there is thus a division between

96 博曉四含，誦經百餘萬言，深達律品，妙入禪要。(《Biographies of Eminent Monks》, T.2059:50.340a27–29).

97 Sengzhao here emphasizes that this was the first Chinese translation of a complete *vinaya*.

98 道性自然，天機邁俗，城塹三寶，弘道是務。由使異典勝僧，方遠而至，靈鷲之風，萃於茲土 . . . 請大乘禪師一人、三藏法師一人、毘婆沙法師二人。什法師於大石寺出新至諸經，法藏淵曠，日有異聞。禪師於瓦官寺教習禪道，門徒數百，夙夜匪懈，邕邕蕭蕭，致可欣樂。三藏法師於中寺出律藏，本末精悉，若觀初制。毘婆沙法師於石羊寺出舍利弗阿毘曇。(《Zhao lun 肇論》, T.1858:45.155c8–18; Tsukamoto 1955, 43–44). Most of this passage is incorporated into Sengzhao’s biography in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T.2059:50.365b12–24). The monks mentioned here are as follows: the “dharma master versed in the three baskets” is either Puṇyatāra 弗若多羅, who recited the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Shi song lü* 十誦律) or Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍, who translated the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* (*Si fen lü* 四分律; Tsukamoto, et al. suggest that Buddhayaśas is the more likely referent. See Tsukamoto 1955, 100n128); the *chan* master is Buddhabhadra; the two “Vibhāṣā dharma masters” appear to be Dharmayaśas 曇摩耶舍 and Dharmagupta 曇掘多.

99 Buddhabhadra had a second career as a translator in south China, but he did not translate or recite texts while in

memorization and exegesis of texts, and meditation practice, which is the basic two-fold categorization of monastic vocation familiar from Indian texts.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand the textual specialists are further subdivided according to the three baskets, creating a four-fold division, one that is moreover found in contemporaneous Chinese translations of Indian texts. The *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Shi song lü* 十誦律), the translation of which Sengzhao mentions in his letter, thus notes that one should praise a dying monk based on his attainments during life, which might comprise either having practiced meditation, studied the *sūtras*, studied the *vinaya*, or having been a “dharma master” (法師), explained as an *abhidharma* specialist.¹⁰¹ These four categories also indicated classes of attainment. Thus the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*, a commentary to the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* that appeared in China during the early fifth century, notes that while making false claims to sanctity leads to expulsion from the monastic order (a *pārājika* transgression),¹⁰² lesser boasts are also subject to censure. Thus it is a *sthūlātyaya* offense, a transgression second only to the *pārājika* in severity, if:

Not being a reciter of the four Āgamas one claims to recite the four Āgamas; not being an *abhidharma* master one claims to be an *abhidharma* master; not being a *vinaya* master one claims to be a *vinaya* master; not actually being a forest-dwelling meditator, one claims to be a forest-dwelling meditator.¹⁰³

Chang’an.

100The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, for one, often speaks in general terms of “two vocations” for monks, meditation and recitation of texts (*Kṣudrakavastu*, *Gen ben shuo yi qie you bu pi nai ye za shi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜, T.1451:24.267c4–5; see also *Vinayavibhaṅga*, *Gen ben shuo yi qie you bu pi nai ye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, T.1442:23.658c6–7; 796a12–13). This division is well known from Pāli sources as the distinction between the *ganthadhura* and the *vipassanadhura* (Gombrich 1988, 152–153). Other sources often mention a third option, “administrator.” Thus according to the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*, monks have three “vocations” (業): seated meditation (坐禪), recitation of scriptures (誦經), and administrative duties (佐助眾事; T.1435:23.334c10–12. See also a similar passage at 347c17–18). These three categories are mentioned casually in a number of other texts translated into Chinese during the late fourth and early fifth centuries. See for example the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* (T.1440:23.506c28–29), the *Scripture of the Wise and the Foolish*, where it is interesting to note that “reciting scriptures” is replaced by “study” (學問; *Xian yu jing* 賢愚經, T.202:4.376c27–28), and the *Chu yao jing* 出曜經, the *Dharmapāda* commentary translated by Zhu Fonian in the early fifth century (T.212:4.614c17–20; 615a8–11; 639a8–10; 647c21–23; 680c7–9. On this text see note 50 above). This three-fold division was known among the Chinese clergy during the late fourth century even before the above texts were translated. Thus Huiyuan, writing to the warlord Huan Xuan 桓玄 sometime between 402 and 404 explained that: “According to what is taught by the [Buddhist] scriptures there are three basic tasks [for the clergy]: the first are those who through *chan* meditation enter into the sublime; second are those who recite and study the texts bequeathed [by the Buddha]; third are those who establish and promote the blessed enterprise [of the Buddhist church].” 經教所開，凡有三科。一者，禪思入微；二者，諷味遺典；三者，興建福業。(Records of Proselytizing, T.2102:52.85b13–15). Although the meaning of the expression “establish and promote the blessed enterprise” is not entirely clear (in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* for example the category *xing fu* 興福 refers to those who help sponsor the construction of temples), Huiyuan’s divisions here seem to correspond to the meditator / reciter / administrator scheme.

101T.1435:23.205c20–27

102On what precisely “expulsion” meant in the case of *pārājika* transgressions, see chapter five.

103若不誦四阿含，自言誦四阿含；非阿毘曇師，自言阿毘曇師；非律師，自言律師；實非坐禪作阿練，若自言我是阿練若。(T.1440:23.519a14–18)

Sengzhao's account of the different masters in Chang'an thus conformed to a well-accepted Indian classification of the different areas in which a Buddhist monk could obtain renown.

However Sengzhao's colleague Sengrui, writing at least a decade after the fact and having since relocated to south China, described the relevant persons in different terms:

[At that time] Buddhist masters and [new] scriptures were all assembled. Dharma master Kumārajīva came from Kucha, masters of the canon versed in the *vinaya* (持律三藏) came from Gandhāra, and the *chan* master [Buddhabhadra] and his disciples also gathered. For over a dozen years Chang'an was a flurry of activity. Truly it was the second flourishing of the great teaching!¹⁰⁴

Although the differences between Sengzhao's live report and Sengrui's reminiscence are slight, they are revealing, and we see that Sengrui remembered or at least chose to summarize the key figures as a "dharma master" (法師), an "upholder of the *vinaya*" (持律), and a "*chan* master" (禪師).¹⁰⁵

This framework of Dharma masters, *vinaya* masters, and *chan* masters, expected to have expertise in "wisdom," "discipline," and "meditation" respectively, has continued to inform Chinese presentations of Buddhism (and presentations of Chinese Buddhism) down through the ages. So entrenched did it become as a way of conceptualizing the different areas of Buddhist mastery that it continued to reappear in later eras under new guises, such as, during the Song dynasty (960–1279), the three "schools" (really master-disciple lineages) that monopolized the abbacies of public monasteries—Tiantai (and perhaps sometimes Huayan) or "teachings" (*jiao* 教 or *jiang* 講), Nanshan *vinaya* (南山律), and Chan (*chan* 禪).¹⁰⁶

Even modern scholars have, perhaps unwittingly, reproduced it, albeit using different terminology. Thus John Kieschnick, in his study of traditional Chinese Buddhist hagiography, eschews the more detailed divisions of different specialties used in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* in favor of his own three-fold typology of asceticism, thaumaturgy, and scholarship.¹⁰⁷

104持法之宗亦並與經俱集。究摩羅法師至自龜茲。持律三藏集自罽賓。禪師徒眾尋亦並集。關中洋洋十數年中。當是大法後興之盛也。(Records of the Canon, T.2145:55.41b16–19). The date of this essay by Sengrui, preserved under the title *Clarifying Doubts* (*Yu yi* 喻疑), is uncertain. But it mentions Faxian's 法顯 translation of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, which took place in 418. Sengrui left Chang'an in 417 after the city was recaptured by the Xia 夏 armies, and he died in the south in 436 (see Wright 1957).

105Although Sengrui does not use the word "*vinaya* master" (律師), this title would soon become common. The earliest reference to a living person in China bearing this title may be Vimalakṣa (卑摩羅叉), Kumārajīva's preceptor who came to Chang'an to finish reciting the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* after Puṇyatāra, who had begun it, died unexpectedly. Vimalakṣa eventually settled in the south, where he became known as the "blue-eyed *vinaya* master" (青眼律師; *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.333c14). I have not found any contemporaneous material proving that this title was used while Vimalakṣa was alive, though from sources such as the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* it would seem that, like "*chan* master," by the mid fifth century "*vinaya* master" was a common title for both foreign and Chinese masters specializing in the recitation and study of the *vinayas*.

106The full institution of these three as distinct lineages did not occur until the Southern Song (1127–1279), when "*vinaya* temple" (律寺) began to designate not simply ordinary, hereditary temples whose abbacy passed to an heir of the previous abbot, but to public monasteries, with imperially appointed abbots, in the so-called Nanshan *vinaya* lineage (Foult 1993, 166; Schlütter 2005, 152–157).

107Kieschnick 1997

Kieschnick rightly treats these not as distinct groups of monks, but as themes running through Chinese Buddhist hagiography as a whole, and as he notes, most monks were expected to have at least some expertise in all three areas. Although the terms he chooses differ slightly, it is possible to see these three themes as paralleling the more explicit categories of “dharma master” (scholarship), “*vinaya* master” (asceticism), and “*chan* master” (thaumaturgy) respectively. This shows, I would suggest, that this three-fold division was not merely a set of three possible titles, but a deeper ordering principle that structured how the Chinese conceived of just what it was that Buddhist monks and nuns were supposed to be doing.

We can now understand, I believe, some of the reasons why the Chinese came to think of the “*chan* scriptures” as a separate body of textual knowledge, and why fifth- and even sixth-century Chinese Buddhists were concerned to ensure their adequate supply. Rather than making a division between mastery of texts on the one hand and meditation practice on the other, Chinese Buddhists seem to have felt that each area of Buddhist study, corresponding to the three trainings as discussed above, would and indeed should have a relevant corpus of texts. Of course it was obviously possible to distinguish between the *mere* study of meditation texts and actual practice of it, and as we saw at the beginning of this chapter this was the thrust of Sengui’s complaints about the situation prior his meeting with Kumārajīva. But crucially Sengui did not suggest that the solution was merely practical instructions for meditation or better explanation of the previously available texts. Indeed his comments are made in the context of the translation of new, better *chan* texts. For Sengui, authoritative teaching about meditation practice by definition required authoritative meditation texts.¹⁰⁸

All of this is, I think, broadly in keeping with traditional Chinese notions of learning (*xue* 學) more generally. Thus while, as suggested above, fifth-century Chinese Buddhists seem to have begun actually practicing *chan* in a manner that was rare or even unheard of in previous eras, this did not mean that texts on *chan* became less important. Quite the contrary. For *chan* practice to be accepted as a legitimate monastic vocation, as occurred during the fifth century, an authoritative set of canonical writings was deemed essential.

And while there existed individual Indian Buddhist texts devoted to these topics, there does not seem to have been an Indian Buddhist bibliographic category precisely matching what the Chinese had in mind by the “*chan* scriptures,” a *chan* counterpart to the sutras (and commentaries) and the *vinaya*. Indeed it is interesting to observe that many of the so-called *chan* scriptures, such as Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* for which Sengui wrote his preface, were not translations of integral Indic originals, but compilations based on multiple sources (we will discuss this in more detail below). It may have been this slight gap between the Chinese desire for a canonical collection of *chan* texts and the ways that information about this subject were organized in Indian Buddhist texts that contributed to an ongoing feeling among Chinese Buddhists that a complete collection of the “*chan* scriptures” was still lacking. Thus for example the early sixth-century catalog of Buddhist texts compiled by Baochang (see p.33 above) recorded only thirty-eight fascicles (卷) of texts for its division of the “*chan* scriptures,” while

¹⁰⁸Many of the common Chinese expression for *chan* practice at least potentially include the idea of studying texts. Thus “practice” (*xi* 習), the most common verb applied to *chan*, is also something that one does to “scriptures” (經), and as mentioned above expression such as “*chan* methods” (禪法) or “essentials of *chan*” (禪要) can refer to both concrete practices and textual genres.

the other categories each had several hundred.¹⁰⁹ It is thus perhaps not surprising that around this same time emperor Wu apparently sent a mission of monks abroad specifically in search of more of these mysterious and ever insufficient “*chan* scriptures.”¹¹⁰

In the following sections of this chapter and the next I will consider in detail the major surviving fifth-century “*chan* scriptures.” What unifies these texts is not their content per se (though they do share much in common), but the fact that these are the texts that Chinese Buddhists turned to as the official exemplars of what *chan* practice was supposed to be. In chapter two I will turn to those *chan* scriptures that seem likely to have been actually written in China. In the remainder of the present chapter I will first examine the texts that, with varying degrees of certainty, seem to be more or less direct translations of Indian or Central Asian material. These texts provide at least some evidence for the teachings on meditation practice that were current in northwest India and Central Asia during the fourth and fifth centuries. In the present context such material is important first and foremost because it shows the kinds of things to which fifth-century Chinese Buddhists interested in *chan* would likely have been exposed. Since almost no comparable material survives in Indian languages, these Chinese sources are also extremely valuable in terms of the history of Indian Buddhist meditation more generally.

Kumārajīva’s *chan* texts

In considering the “*chan* scriptures” that circulated during the fifth century the natural starting point is Kumārajīva, whose compilations on *chan* were recorded by Sengrui (see p.15) and were the first new texts on this subject to appear in China in over a century. Though late catalogs and the printed editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon attribute to Kumārajīva a number of such texts, early catalogs and prefaces connect him to only two extant works, the *Zuo chan san mei jing* 坐禪三昧經 (*Meditation Scripture*)¹¹¹ and the *Chan fa yao jie* 禪法要解 (*Explanations of Meditation*).¹¹²

Of these the former is the main text mentioned in Sengrui’s preface discussed above. In addition to describing the circumstances whereby Kumārajīva produced the text, Sengrui also gives precise information about its contents, listing the names of the various Indian masters whose “*chan* manuals” (*chan yao* 禪要) Kumārajīva supposedly summarized. The *Meditation Scripture* is thus best described as a greatest-hits of Indian meditation literature. One of the masters Sengrui mentions by name is Aśvagoṣa, and portions of the *Meditation Scripture* indeed

109See above note 76.

110Sengyou’s 僧祐 (445–518) now-lost collection of Buddhist miscellanea, the *Fa yuan za yuan yuan shi mu lu* 法苑雜緣原始集目錄, contained a record of a mission of Buddhist monks sent abroad by Liang Wudi in search of “*chan* scriptures,” as can be seen from the text listed in surviving table of contents to this collection titled “Record of emperor [Wu’s] dispatching of various monks to foreign lands in search of *chan* scriptures” 皇帝遣諸僧詣外國尋禪經記 (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.93b10).

111For a complete English translation of this text, see Yamabe and Sueki 2009.

112On these two texts and their production, see Ikeda 1937. We should also note the *Chan yao jing* (禪要經, T.609), which appears to be a partial, alternate version of the *Explanations of Meditation* (Greene 2006, 170–184).

correspond to sections of Aśvagoṣa's famous poem the *Saundarananda*.¹¹³ Though these are the only passages from any fifth-century Chinese *chan* text with known extant Indic parallels, that Sengrui accurately reported Aśvagoṣa's contributions has led scholars to accept that his other identifications are correct, and that much of the *Meditation Scripture* is indeed comprised of selected translations from the works of the specified Indian masters.

Sengrui specifically says, however, that Kumārajīva "extracted and compiled" (*cha xuan* 抄撰) the material, suggesting an active editing process. Kumārajīva's other *chan* text, the *Explanations of Meditation*, is similarly said to have been "compiled" (撰) on the basis of other texts, and not simply "translated" (譯) from a unitary original.¹¹⁴ The *Meditation Scripture* also contains a section describing "bodhisattva" *chan* practices, which Sengrui says Kumārajīva compiled on the basis of Mahāyāna sutras. Thus while the *Meditation Scripture* can be taken, *grosso modo*, as a translation of Indian sources, its final form and arrangement was the result of a process of selection and compilation.¹¹⁵ Indeed the very constitution of a separate "*chan* scripture" may well have been at least partially a concession to the Chinese desire, as discussed above, for teachings pertaining to *chan* to have their own textual corpus. Indeed, even though Sengrui attributes the various parts of the *Meditation Scripture* to the "*chan* manuals" (*chan yao* 禪要) of the masters in question, those of Aśvagoṣa, as mentioned above, apparently came from a poem whose main subject was not meditation per se.

This raises the more interesting question of to what extent Kumārajīva may have consciously or unconsciously modified the *content* of what he was translating and arranging in response to the needs and desires of his Chinese audience.¹¹⁶ If we knew the precise sources Kumārajīva used, we could compare them to his finished product, and this might allow us to discern something of the interests, inclinations, and understandings of fifth-century Chinese Buddhists. And though this question lies beyond the scope of my present inquiry, and answering it may well be impossible given the available sources, there is indeed reason to believe that at least some parts of the *Meditation Scripture* are not simply Kumārajīva's translations but his own responses to his students' inquires.

For example Stefano Zacchetti has shown that portions of the *Meditation Scripture*'s discussion of breath meditation (*ānāpāna*; *an ban* 安般) bear an unmistakable resemblance to passages from the *Scripture on Mental Restraint through Breath Meditation* (*An ban shou yi jing* 安般守意經), one of the foundational "*chan* scriptures" of Chinese Buddhism and a text much discussed and commented on by Chinese authors, including Sengrui's first teacher Dao'an, during second half of the fourth century.¹¹⁷ In other words it would appear that the *Meditation*

113Matsunami 1967, 128–144; Shi Huimin 2001; Kannō 2002. The *Saundarananda* is the earliest presentation of many doctrines that would eventually be included in the *Śrāvaka-bhūmi*, and is considered by many scholars to be among the earliest texts of the so-called *yogācāra* tradition (Yamabe, Fujitani, and Harada 2002).

114For a detailed analysis of the sources Kumārajīva seems to have used, see Ikeda 1937.

115That these texts have nonetheless been labeled in traditional records as "translations" is by no means unusual. Many texts that early records describe as compositions or compilations carried out by Indian monks in China were eventually remembered simply as "translations" (Funayama 2006).

116Such questions may of course be asked even of texts translated directly and integrally from a single Indic original, but they are perhaps more relevant when we know that the material was being actively rearranged and selected by someone in China.

117Zacchetti 2008, 442

Scripture is not merely a collection of translations arranged by Kumārajīva. At least part of it is Kumārajīva's direct engagement with questions brought to him by his Chinese audience, who had been studying previously available “*chan* scriptures” such as the *Scripture on Mental Restraint through Breath Meditation*.¹¹⁸ It is noticeable, for example, that the explanation of breath meditation (*a na ban na* 阿那般那), where we find the parallels to the *Scripture on Mental Restraint through Breath Meditation*, is several times longer than the other sections, and is moreover peppered with the “questions” (問) of an anonymous interlocutor. While such questions could have been part of whatever source(s) Kumārajīva used, they might also represent Sengrui's (and perhaps others') questions, answered by Kumārajīva.

However while the *Meditation Scripture* (and perhaps also the *Explanations of Meditation*) might, in this way, shed light on how the Chinese themselves understood *chan*, the passages identified by Zacchetti are too few to draw any significant conclusions, and as mentioned above we have minimal knowledge of the specific sources Kumārajīva used. In most cases our only viable option is to read these texts as revealing something of the content and style of meditation teachings current in Gandhāra (where Kumārajīva trained as a youth) and Central Asia, specifically Kucha (where he was born and lived for many years), during the second half of the fourth century.¹¹⁹ They are also valuable as reference points for examining later Chinese presentations of meditation, as they give us a sense of what was available to the Chinese in authoritative texts, and indeed the *Meditation Scripture* would eventually exert a considerable influence on some later Chinese authors.¹²⁰ In terms of Chinese understanding of *chan* during the fifth century, however, their importance and value is more difficult to determine, and any argument that features of these texts reflect specifically Chinese concerns will likely remain tentative at best.

In terms of their content Kumārajīva's two *chan* texts are both technical treatises describing the path of meditation practice. However they arrange their material rather differently. The *Meditation Scripture* presents the path to attainment for three kinds of practitioners—*śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas—and in this respect it parallels roughly contemporaneous Indian works such as *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. In the *Meditation Scripture*, the path for the *śrāvaka* begins with a detailed presentation of the different forms of basic *chan* practice, preparatory exercises to be assigned based on the student's particular disposition. This

¹¹⁸There may also be some truth to Tsukinowa Kenryū's hypothesis that the *Meditation Scripture* was written by Sengrui himself (Tsukinowa 1971, 55). Tsukinowa reaches this conclusion by taking the words 蒙抄撰 from the preface to mean “I [Sengrui] was given the opportunity to make an extract and compilation . . .” rather than “I was granted an extraction and compilation [made by Kumārajīva].” Both readings seem theoretically possible, though scholars usually have not followed Tsukinowa's hypothesis (Yamabe 1999, 83). In any event since portions of the *Meditation Scripture* match the *Saundarananda*, even if Sengrui was the major editor he must have based himself on new translations carried out by Kumārajīva.

¹¹⁹Apart from the *Saundarananda* we do have one example of the kinds of materials from which Kumārajīva was drawing, the *Stages of the Path of Practice* (*Xiu xing dao di jing* 修行道地經) supposedly written by a certain Saṅgharakṣa, which survives in the late third-century Chinese translation of Dharmarakṣa (Demiéville 1954). In considering the question of genre, however, it is interesting to note that this text is far longer than any of the “*chan* scriptures” from the fifth century, and it contains a great deal of doctrinal material that has no parallels in texts such as the *Meditation Scripture*.

¹²⁰Andō 1988

system of classification is a common strategy for presenting the diverse meditation practices found in the sutras, and is also seen in contemporaneous works from other areas of the Buddhist world, such as the *Visudhimagga*. As in the *Visudhimagga*, the *Meditation Scripture* begins by indicating that the meditation teacher must scrutinize the disciple's speech and behavior so as to determine the appropriate initial practice. Five methods are then given depending on the meditator's primary defilement: the contemplation of the impure (*bu jing guan* 不淨觀; *aśubha-bhāvanā*) for those beset by lust, the cultivation of love (*ci xin* 慈心; the four *apramāṇa* meditations)¹²¹ for those with aversion, the contemplation of dependent origination (*yin yuan* 因緣; *pratītyasamutpāda*) for those with ignorance, meditation on the breath (*nian xi* 念息; *ānāpāna-smṛti*) for those with “excessive thinking” (多思覺人; *vitarka*), and finally recollection of the Buddha (*nian fo* 念佛; *buddhānusmṛti*) for those with “equally distributed” (等分) defilements.¹²²

In China these five practices were eventually known as the “five gates of *chan*” (五門禪), and became a standard arrangement in later writings on meditation.¹²³ Though lists based on similar principles are found across a range of sources from all periods of Buddhism, lists of five practices are most common in texts associated with the so-called *yogācāras* of northwest India.¹²⁴ The most important surviving source for these ideas, the *Śrāvaka-bhūmi*, even cites an otherwise unknown sutra as a canonical source for this arrangement.¹²⁵ However the *Meditation Scripture* differs from the known Indian examples by including *buddhānusmṛti*, the recollection of the Buddha (*nian fo* 念佛), in place of *dhātu-prabheda*, “analysis according to the elements,” a practice in which the meditator contemplates his body as composed of the four (or six) primary elements so as to counteract the defilement of “pride” (*māna*).¹²⁶

Because of the importance of *buddhānusmṛti* in East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism, and its relatively undistinguished (though by no means absent) role elsewhere, many scholars have seen

121Technically *ci xin* 慈心, “the mind of love,” is a translation of *maitrī*, but as a meditation practice this refers to all four of the *apramāṇas*, one of which is the cultivation of *maitrī*.

122Note that while this is the explanation given in the initial presentation (T.614:15.271c4–5), the *Meditation Scripture* later gives other reasons for undertaking *nian fo* 念佛.

123Fujihira 1986

124Ōminami 1977, 80–81; Sakurabe 1980; Myōjin 1993, 248; Ōdani 1995, 69.

125“‘And how does [a practitioner] fix his mind to an appropriate object? If, oh Revata, the meditation practitioner monk is one who inclines towards lust, then he should fix his mind to the object of impurity. This is what is meant by fixing the mind to an appropriate object. Similarly one who inclines toward hatred [should fix his mind] on love, one who inclines toward confusion on dependent origination, and one who inclines toward pride on analysis according to the elements. If, of Revata, the meditation practitioner inclines towards cogitation, he should fix his mind on mindfulness of breathing.’” *katham anurūpa ālambane cittam upanibadhnāti / saced revata, bhikṣur yogī yogācāro rāgacarita eva sann aśubhālambane cittam upanibadhnāti / evam anurūpa ālambane cittam upanibadhnāti, dveṣacarito vā punar maitryām / mohacarito vitarkacariṭa eva sann ānāpānasṁtau cittam upanibadhnāti* (ŚrBh, 2:52). The title of the sutra from which this passage is drawn is not given, and it is introduced merely “as the Blessed One said to the venerable Revata” (*yathoktaṃ bhagavatāyusmantam revatam ārabhya*).

126In China this slightly different grouping of five was also known, and was usually presented under the name *wu ting xin* 五停心, the “five methods for concentrating the mind” (Sakurabe 1980). As Sakurabe notes, there does not appear to have been any specific Indic term to refer to this or any other similar set.

its presence here among the other, more traditional meditation practices as a sign of something significant, especially since it appears even in the path of practice recommended for *śrāvakas*. As discussed above scholars of East Asian Buddhism have been keen to determine when and how “Mahāyāna” meditation methods were developed and introduced to China. And indeed the second-half of the *Meditation Scripture* does present a path of *chan* practice explicitly aimed at bodhisattvas, where *buddhānusmṛti* is a practice to be carried out by everyone and is explicitly linked to the arousing of *bodhicitta*, the aspiration to become a Buddha that characterizes the ultimate goal of Mahāyāna practice. Some scholars have thus interpreted the apparent elevation of *buddhānusmṛti* to one of the five principal kinds of *chan* practice in the *śrāvaka* section of the *Meditation Scripture* as Kumārajīva’s own attempt to integrate Mahāyāna methods into the more traditional texts from which he was working. Others, meanwhile, have suggested that attempts to “synthesize” Mahāyāna methods with more traditional meditation practices were probably widespread at this time in northwest India.¹²⁷ Although I will not here pursue the question further, this kind of analysis suffers from the tendency to hypostatize “Mahāyāna” as a discrete entity that should necessarily have its own distinct meditation practices.

I now want to say a few more things about the structure of the *Meditation Scripture* as a whole. Having presented in considerable detail the above five methods for beginning one’s practice of meditation, the *Meditation Scripture* next considers the remainder of the path. The assumption is that the meditator will use one of the five methods to calm the mind and enter *dhyāna* (*chan* 禪), “trance.” All practitioners then must proceed to develop wisdom (*prajñā*) by cultivating the four “foundations of mindfulness” (*si nian chu* 思念處; *smṛtyupasthāna*). Following this, one moves through the so-called four *nirvedha-bhāgīya-kuśalamūla* (*si shan gen* 四善根), the “roots of good that lead to liberation,” which in the Sarvāstivādin system are the highest levels of mundane accomplishment.¹²⁸ This in turn leads to the so-called “path of vision” (*darśana-maraga*), a sequence of sixteen mental moments in which, by means of insight into the four noble truths, the meditator uproots his defilements and obtains the four higher fruits culminating in arhatship.¹²⁹

The text then moves to the path for bodhisattvas, seemingly intended to convey only what differs from the path of the *śrāvakas*.¹³⁰ Since the details here become quite technical, and

127One of the first scholars to consider these questions was Sakaino Kōyō, who noted that even though the first half of the *Meditation Scripture* nominally has practices for the *śrāvaka*, it contains some seemingly Mahāyāna ideas within the section on *buddhānusmṛti* (Sakaino 1935, 879). A similar observation was made by Demiéville (1954, 356), who saw in this text an example of a tendency among the Buddhists of northwest India to “synthesize” the two vehicles, a trend he observed in other texts translated by Kumārajīva. Although he relegates it to a (long) footnote, Demiéville poses some important questions about the possible influence of Chinese interests on Kumārajīva’s arrangement in the *Meditation Scripture* (Demiéville 1954, 357n8). Other scholars have argued that despite such features the *śrāvaka* section remains resolutely non-Mahāyāna, but that the mere presence of *buddhānusmṛti* as one of the five principal methods of *dhyāna* indicates the adoption and modification of Mahāyāna methods of contemplation (Myōjin 1993, 247).

128On the *nirvedha-bhāgīya-kuśalamūla* in the Sarvāstivādin system, see Hurvitz 1977 and Buswell 1997.

129I here simplify considerably the details, which are not of immediate concern. In general the presentation here conforms to the description of the path found in Sarvāstivāda / Vaibhāṣika sources. For a summary of this scheme (which, of course, varies in its particulars depending on the source), see Guenther 1957, 215–232; Frauwallner 1995, 149–184.

130Thus while a different version of the *darśana-marga* is given (T.614:15.285a), in which the bodhisattva

are not necessarily relevant to the question of basic *chan* practice, I will not delve any further into the structure of the path as presented by the *Meditation Scripture*. It is worth noting, however, that despite creating a clear division between the *śrāvaka* and bodhisattva paths, the practice of *chan* for these two groups is not radically different. Though as mentioned above Japanese and Western scholars have often tried to find in Kumārajīva's system the foundations for a "Mahāyāna" meditation practice differing clearly from "Hīnayāna" approaches, as Yamabe Nobuyoshi has pointed out the *Meditation Scripture* gives the same basic practices regardless of intended soteriology,¹³¹ the main difference being the attitude with which the practices are performed.

The bodhisattva practice of the contemplation of impurity, for example, is more or less identical to that in the *śrāvaka* section in terms of concrete steps. But it also includes numerous warnings that the bodhisattva must use this practice only to eliminate lust, and must not, as a result of practicing it, become so disgusted with the world that he seeks immediate *nirvāṇa*. Rather a bodhisattva should use this practice to perfect himself, so that he may more effectively teach and help other beings.¹³² Notably, however, the contemplation of impurity given in the *śrāvaka* section in no way contradicts this. There too the contemplation of impurity is presented as a means of eliminating lust. There is no specific warning against becoming overly disgusted with *samsāra*, but nor is there any encouragement in this direction. Thus while Kumārajīva appears to have envisioned the bodhisattva approach to *chan* as having different ultimate goals, he also seems to have considered the methods of *chan* found in ordinary, *śrāvaka-yāna* sources to be entirely appropriate for an aspiring bodhisattva, so long as they were undertaken with the proper attitude.

Turning now to Kumārajīva's other known *chan* text, the *Explanations of Meditation*, we find a presentation similar in style to the *Meditation Scripture* but differently arranged, and the emphasis is not on the formal structure of the path but on a detailed analysis of the four *dhyānas*, the four *apramāṇas*, and the four *arupya-samāpattis*, a scheme that would have been familiar to the Chinese under the name "the twelve gates of *chan*" (十二門禪).¹³³ Unlike the *Meditation Scripture*, the *Explanations of Meditation* gives almost no details about how one is supposed to enter these states, and the opening section of the text provides only a single example, the contemplation of impurity.¹³⁴ The *Meditation Scripture* and the *Explanations of Meditation* thus

develops the three "realizations" (*ren 忍; kṣanti*) that culminate in the so-called "realization of the non-arising of *dharmas*" (無生法忍; *anutpatika-dharma-kṣanti*), much of what leads to this stage apparently overlapped with the *śrāvaka* path and is accordingly not repeated.

131 Yamabe 2010, 55–59

132 T.614:15.281c

133 Yamabe notes the possibility that the familiarity of Kumārajīva's Chinese students with this arrangement may have prompted him to use it as a framework (Yamabe 1999, 84).

134 T.616:15.286b17–287b3. Note that the *Explanations of Meditation* introduces this by saying that "those in whom desire is in excess should be taught the contemplation of impurity" (若婬多者，應教不淨觀), as if there were also other methods for those with different tendencies. This is confirmed by a latter passage. Having described the attainment of the first *dhyāna*, the text explains how one should progress to the second *dhyāna*: "Having obtained the first *dhyāna*, [the practitioner] should bring to mind the gate that he originally cultivated [to obtain *dhyāna*], or else a different object. That is to say he brings to mind the *samādhi* of the recollection of the Buddha, or else impurity, the cultivation of love, and so forth." 既得初禪，念本所習修行道門，或有異緣。

appear to have been deliberately crafted so as to avoid undue overlap. After spending the entire first fascicle on the five methods for entering *dhyāna*, the *Meditation Scripture* only briefly mentions the characteristics of *dhyāna*, the remaining three *dhyānas*, the four formless attainments (*arupya-samāpatti*), the four *apramāṇas*, and the attainment of the six powers (*abhijñā*),¹³⁵ and the discussion quickly moves on to the higher stages of the path itself. The *Explanations of Meditation*, in contrast, gives most of its attention to precisely these topics,¹³⁶ while the stages of further progress on the path are entirely ignored.

The *Explanations of Meditation* thus may have been intended as a supplement to the *Meditation Scripture*, filling in the missing details. In any event apart from a few brief investigations that have noted the close similarities between it and sections of Kumārajīva's masterwork, the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, the *Explanations of Meditation* has received little scholarly attention, and a detailed study remains a desideratum. A preliminary survey reveals at least some potentially interesting material. The account of the supernatural powers (*shen tong* 神通; *abhijñā*), for example, is considerably more detailed than what is found in comparable sources (more detailed even than the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*), and includes both a relatively sophisticated explanation of why *dhyāna* leads to these powers, as well as practical steps for obtaining them.¹³⁷

所謂念佛三昧，或念不淨、慈心觀等。(T.616:15.288c2–5). The text thus presupposes a variety of means of obtaining the first *dhyāna*, even though it initially presents only the contemplation of impurity.

135T.614:15.277c13–278b27. While the *Meditation Scripture* presents the cultivation of *maitrī* (慈心) as a method for attaining *dhyāna* for those of hateful temperament, it also mentions a more advanced cultivation of the *apramāṇas* that occurs on the basis of higher levels of attainment (T.614:15.278a28–b3), where it uses the words *ci xin san mei* 慈心三昧, *bei xin san mei* 悲心三昧, *xi xin san mei* 喜心三昧, and *hu xin san mei* 護心三昧 respectively (here translating “love” *maitrī*, “compassion” *karuṇā*, “joy” *muditā*, and “equanimity” *upekṣā*). Combined with the four *dhyānas* and the four formless attainments, this yields the so-called “twelve gates” that form the backbone of the *Explanations of Meditation*. It is interesting that here Kumārajīva renders *upekṣā* as *hu xin* 護心, a translation that does not appear in any other translations by Kumārajīva, and is very rare in any case. The *Explanations of Meditation*, for example, uses Kumārajīva's standard term *she* 捨. Yet we do find *hu* 護 translating *upekṣā* in An Shigao's *Scripture on the Twelve Gates*. As mentioned above (note 133) scholars have suggested that interest in the *Scripture on the Twelve Gates* among his Chinese audience may have prompted Kumārajīva to organize the *Explanations of Meditation* around this structure. The presence of the otherwise extremely unusual translation *hu xin* 護心 here in the *Meditation Scripture* suggests that the *Scripture on the Twelve Gates* was indeed familiar to Kumārajīva's students.

136Beginning from T.616:15.287b4 and continuing until the end of the text.

137T.616:15.295a27–297c12. The basic explanation is that the meditator gains control over matter (*rūpa*) from the realm of form (*se jie* 色界; *rūpa-dhātu*), which is lighter, and more purified than the matter comprising human bodies. By entering *dhyāna* a meditator accumulates this purer matter within his body, allowing him, for example, to fly. This understanding of the *abhijñā* and their connection to *dhyāna* is presupposed, but not fully elaborated, by the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.98a7–8; 240b29; 264c20–25; 306a19; 699a20). Other Abhidharma texts translated into Chinese during this period show a similar understanding (*Za a pi tan xin lun* 雜阿毘曇心論, T.1552:28.920c19), but the *Explanations of Meditation* gives the most detailed account.

Buddhabhadra and the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*

Apart from the *Meditation Scripture* and the *Explanations of Meditation*, the only other fifth-century *chan* text for which we have reliable bibliographic information is that translated by Buddhabhadra. As discussed above, according to his biographies Buddhabhadra was an eminent “*chan* master” who trained in Gandhāra (Jibin 罽賓). According to these sources sometime in the early fifth century Buddhabhadra was invited to China by the Chinese monk Zhiyan 智嚴, who was in Gandhāra studying *chan* with Buddhabhadra’s teacher Buddhasena, the most famous meditation master of the region.¹³⁸ According to his biographies Buddhabhadra first arrived at the north-east port of Donglai 東萊,¹³⁹ from where he proceeded to Chang’an.¹⁴⁰ As discussed above Buddhabhadra acquired a reputation in Chang’an as teacher of meditation, and appears to have been the first person in China to bear the title “*chan* master.”¹⁴¹ Eventually expelled from Chang’an, together with his students he traveled south, first to Mt. Lu 廬山, where the aged Huiyuan welcome him. According to its two contemporaneous prefaces,¹⁴² it was here that Buddhabhadra translated the text now titled *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* (*Da mo duo luo*

138 *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.334c19–21; 339b

139 Located on the southern edge of the Bohai 渤海 sea, in modern Shandong 山東 province.

140 Buddhabhadra’s exact itinerary is problematic. Zhiyan’s biography says the pair “traveled east, crossing deserts and mountains before arriving in Chang’an” (T.2059:52.339b9), suggesting the overland route. Buddhabhadra’s biography, however, portrays a different and indeed bizarre itinerary, saying that he first “traversed the Pamir mountains” (度蔥嶺), then traveled through the “six countries” (六國), but then arrived in Vietnam (交趾), from where he took a boat. As a further complication Buddhabhadra’s biography does not mention Zhiyan’s presence. The Pamirs separate the Tarim basin from greater India, such that Buddhabhadra’s itinerary begins as if he were traveling overland through Central Asia, and indeed “the six countries” apparently refers to the city-states of the Tarim basin (*Gao seng fa xian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳, T.2085:51.857c1). To have then somehow reached Vietnam would be a remarkable, if unlikely journey. It seems possible that two different stories of Buddhabhadra’s journey have been combined.

141 As mentioned above the earliest attested example of the term *chan shi* 禪師 is a letter by Sengzhao written in the first decade of the fifth century (note 53). Buddhabhadra is given this title throughout the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*. In the table of contents to the *Biographies of Famous Monks*, several other contemporaneous foreign monks are listed in the category “foreign *dhyāna* masters” (外國禪師). These include Puṇyatāra (弗若多羅), the monk who recited the copy of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* from which Kumārajīva made his translation, and Dharmayaśas 曇摩耶舍, a student of Puṇyatāra also in Chang’an at this time translating Abhidharma texts. (X.1523:77.348b22–24). Though Puṇyatāra is mentioned only briefly in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, Dharmayaśas does appear there and is presented as both a master of the Abhidharma and a teacher of meditation. Indeed teaching meditation seems to have been his major occupation after leaving Chang’an for the south following the collapse of the former Qin kingdom (T.2059:50.329b16–c27). But unlike Buddhabhadra Dharmayaśas is not elsewhere called “*chan* master” (禪師), but rather the “great Vaibhāṣika” (大毘婆沙) on account of his mastery of the Abhidharma. In the end it is difficult to be entirely certain if Buddhabhadra really was the first Chinese “*chan* master,” but even if not it is clear that the title had only been in use for a short time prior to his arrival.

142 The prefaces are preserved in the *Records of the Canon* as the *Lu shan chu xiu xing fang bian chan jing tong xu* 廬山出修行方便禪經統序 (“A general preface to the *chan* scriptures on the methods for cultivation translated on Mt. Lu”), by Huiyuan, and the *Xiu xing di bu jing guan jing xu* 修行地不淨觀經序 (“Preface to the scripture on the contemplation of impurity of the stages of cultivation”), by Buddhabhadra’s disciple Huiguang 慧光 (T.2415:556b24–66a23; 66b4–67a13).

chan jing 達摩多羅禪經). Modern scholars have concluded that this title is a mistake, and that the text contains the teachings of Buddhasena, not Dharmatrāta.¹⁴³ It has further been suggested that the original title may have been *Yogācāra-bhūmi*,¹⁴⁴ and some scholars thus refer to it as the *Yogācāra-bhūmi of Buddhasena*.¹⁴⁵ To avoid confusion, however, I will use the received title.

Despite Buddhahadra's renown as a "chan master," the contents of *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* appears to have exerted little direct influence on later Chinese Buddhism,¹⁴⁶ though it did become associated with the eventually important notion of a "transmission" of *chan* teachings (the foundational myth of the Chan school). Both of its prefaces include lists of Indian masters who "transmitted" teachings on *chan* through several generations and finally to China, and these lists are the earliest prototypes for early Chan lineages in the seventh century, though by that time Buddhahadra had been replaced by Bodhidharma.¹⁴⁷ Even the term "transmission of the flame" (*chuan deng* 傳燈), the veritable rallying cry of the Chan school, first occurs in Huiguang's preface.¹⁴⁸ None of these ideas derive from the contents of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* itself, and later Chinese Buddhists seem to have kept the notion of a "chan" transmission while ignoring the text itself. Indeed, the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* effectively drops off the map, and was, as far as I can determine, never cited by later Chinese authors.

Since the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* is almost certainly an authentic translation of an Indian or Central Asian text, it has attracted scholarly attention as one of the few surviving sources associated with the so-called *yogācāras* of northwest India, a group whose existence has been inferred from passages in Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma sources. Who precisely these *yogācāras* were and whether or not they can be considered a distinct group has been a subject of considerable debate. Scholars have tried to uncover the doctrines of this group, their possible connections to the "mind-only" (*viññānavāda*) Yogācāra school, their connection to Maitreya

143Sakaino 1935, 910–912; Lin 1949, 341–346; Demiéville 1954, 362. This point is not as clear as has been presumed. Indeed Huiyuan's explicitly says that "what has today been translated comes from Dharmatrāta and Buddhasena" (今之所譯出自達磨多羅與佛大先; T.2145:55.66a10–11). Scholars have concluded that this comment betrays some confusion on Huiyuan's part, even though this preface is the earliest reference to the text at all. Lin Li-k'oung argued that later catalogs confused what the *Records of the Canon* called *Chan jing xiu xing fang bian* 禪經修行方便 (translated by Buddhahadra) with another text named "the *chan* scripture compiled by Dharmatrāta" 達磨多羅菩薩撰禪經. The later is listed in the *Records of the Canon* as an anonymous translation, and was still extant in the early sixth century (T.2145:55.30c3). But even if there has indeed been confusion concerning the *titles* of these texts (which I agree seems likely), Buddhahadra's text may still have been thought to include the work of Dharmatrāta, as Huiyuan indicates. Indeed Huiyuan's preface bears the unusual title *tong xu* 統序, a peculiar word that seems to mean "comprehensive preface." This may indicate *more than one text*. This admitted speculative conclusion is supported in that the text now called *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* indeed seems to be a synthesis of two very different sources, for while the entire first section (discussing *ānāpāna*, *aśubhā*, and *dhātu-prabheda*) is entirely in verse, the remainder, which discusses other practices, is in prose. Like Kumārajīva, Buddhahadra may have compiled together multiple sources.

144The evidence for this is a note in the *Records of the Canon* catalog where the *chan* text translated by Buddhahadra is recorded as the *Chan jing xiu xing fang bian* 禪經修行方便 ("methods for cultivation [according to] the *chan* scriptures"), with a note added saying that "another copy of the text bears the title *Yu jia zhu lu fu mi* (庚伽遮羅淨迷), meaning 'the stages of path of cultivation' (修行道地)" (T.2145:55.11c13). This transcription can only indicate the title *Yogācāra-bhūmi*.

145Yamabe 1999, 72–76

146Though there does exist an anomalous eighteenth-century Japanese commentary (Mohr 2006).

worship, and their role as a “bridge” between traditional Buddhist groups and the Mahāyāna.¹⁴⁹

The issues here are complex, and for the most part lie beyond both the scope of this dissertation and the competencies of its author. I will only say that I am uncertain how precisely we might connect the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* to other information about the *yogācāras* of greater Gandhāra, or just what it might mean to do so. Certainly we should avoid a circular logic, often implied in discussions of this topic, that postulates a group to explain the existence of a text whose contents then characterize the group. Buddhahadra was from Gandhāra, so by definition he transmitted teachings on meditation from that region. But we cannot assume that the other Gandhāran “*chan* masters” in China at this time would have been transmitting meditation practices or texts with any particular connection to Buddhahadra’s.¹⁵⁰

A full analysis of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* would constitute a dissertation in itself.¹⁵¹ It is, moreover, an extremely difficult text to understand (at least in its Chinese translation), and this was almost certainly partially responsible for its eventual obscurity in China. For my purposes its importance lies in being, almost certainly, the translation of an Indic text, and it serves as a useful point of comparison when considering some of the slightly later *chan* texts whose status is less clear. In the remainder of this section I will therefore limit myself to a brief survey of the text’s overall structure, followed by a more detailed analysis of one particular feature of the text that will prove to have a close resonance with the later material studied in chapters three and four.

Structurally the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* is different than either of Kumārajīva’s *chan* texts.¹⁵² Rather than a structured path leading to specific fruits (the *Meditation Scripture*), or a precise analysis of all the stages of *dhyāna* (the *Explanations of Meditation*), the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* appears as simply a compendium of different meditation practices, each labeled as a different “contemplation” (*guan* 觀).¹⁵³ As noted many years ago by Inokuchi

147McRae 1986, 80–82

148Jan 1990, 15

149The most comprehensive study of the doctrinal views of the *yogācāras* mentioned in Vaibhāṣika sources is Nishi 1975, 123–374. See also Kodama, Nakayama, and Naomi 1992 and 1993, who further draw from the Chinese translations supposedly associated with them. On the *yogācāras* as a “bridge” between more traditional groups and the Mahāyāna, see Ōdani 1996 (similar ideas are adumbrated in Demiéville 1954). Note, however that as Jonathan Silk shows (1997; 2000), the word *yogācāra* generally did not have a specific vocational or institutional meaning, and it is difficult to know what coherence there may have been, if any, to the various different people or groups referred to by this name.

150Thus in principle there is nothing objectionable about statements to the effect that “early Śrāvakayāna *yogācāras*, although never listed as an independent sect (*nikāya*) in Buddhist sources represented one or several groups of Buddhist ascetics whose specialization in yoga-praxis led them to elaborate their own views, which appear to be an original blend of practices and ideas encompassing early canonical traditions, Abhidharma categories as well as possible influences from other Śrāvakayāna schools and Mahāyāna Buddhism, to which we must add their own insights and developments” (Deleanu 1993, 4). But it seems to me that this description would surely have characterized any number of diverse communities.

151For an attempt to isolate some of its more interesting features, see Deleanu 1993. See also Demiéville 1954, 360–363. The introduction to Satō Taishun’s *Kokyaku issaikyō* translation remains a helpful guide to the text (Satō 1931, 343–349).

152I compare the text to those translated or written by Kumārajīva because these are the key *chan* texts that Buddhahadra’s students may have been familiar with.

153Seven distinct practices are presented: 1) mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasmṛti* 安那般那念), 2) the

Taijjun¹⁵⁴ this arrangement is similar to that in the Sanskrit meditation text known among scholars as the *Yogalehrbuch*, discovered near Kucha.¹⁵⁵ As in the *Yogalehrbuch*, the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* does not attempt to impose an overall order or sequence. However it does often refer, in passing, to the basic outlines of the path as presented in Vaibhāṣika sources.¹⁵⁶ Similarly despite the eventual introduction of various other methods, the text begins by promising to explain only two practices, the “two gates of ambrosia” (二甘露門; *amṛta-dvāra*), the standard term in Vaibhāṣika sources for the two possible starting points of the path, breath contemplation (*ānāpāna-smṛti*) and the contemplation of impurity (*āśubha-bhāvanā*).¹⁵⁷ In the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* these practices are then each divided into four stages:¹⁵⁸ “backsliding” (退), “stagnation” (住),¹⁵⁹ “progress” (升進) and “mastery” (決定).¹⁶⁰

Although unlike Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* there is no list at the beginning of the

contemplation of impurity (*bu jing guan* 不淨觀), 3) contemplation (觀) of the elements (*dhātu*; 界), 4) the *samādhi* of the ‘four immeasurables’ (*apramāṇa*; 四無量三昧), 5) the contemplation of the aggregates (*skandha*; 陰), 6) the contemplation of the sense-spheres (*āyatana*; 入), and 7) the contemplation of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*; 十二因緣). The first three are in verse, and the later four in prose, a point that as I suggest above (note 143) may indicate several distinct sources.

154Inokuchi 1966, 10–12

155*Yogalehrbuch* is the German word (“a meditation manual”) used by Schlingloff to refer to the text, whose original title is unknown (Schlingloff 1964a), and is come to serve among scholars in lieu of a proper name. Another meditation text was also discovered among these fragments, bearing the name *Yogavidhi* (“method for yoga”), but this text is both far more fragmentary than the *Yogalehrbuch* and also more schematic (Schlingloff 1964b). For the text of the *Yogalehrbuch* itself, one should now consult the re-edited version of Schlingloff’s original edition, which includes new fragments discovered in the intervening years (Hartmann and Röllicke 2006). Concerning its contents, in addition to Schlingloff’s own introduction, see Inokuchi 1966; Ruegg 1967; and Bretfeld 2003. The text has also been of interest to some art historians in connection with the paintings from the Kizil caves (Howard 2007).

156For example see T.618:15.308b5–7.

157T.618:15.301c2. Interestingly, however, known Vaibhāṣika sources invariably list the contemplation of impurity first. Those texts that pair a larger number of possible practices with specific defilements (such as Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*) also invariably begin with the practices of impurity, *maitrī*, and *pratītyasamutpāda*, matching the three defilements of lust, hatred, and confusion, listing *ānāpāna* only later. One of the most interesting features of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* is thus that it highlights *ānāpānasmṛti*, and in this regard is most reminiscent of the canonical *smṛtyupasthāna* texts.

158The text also deploys the further two-fold classification of “preparatory path” (*fang bian dao* 方便道) and “superior path” (*sheng dao* 勝道), so each practice is actually divided into eight. What these terms correspond to is not clear, though *prayogamarga* and *viśeṣamarga* have been suggested (Demiéville 1954, 363n1).

159That *zhu* 住 here carries a negative meaning is clear from the contents.

160These correspond to a four-fold classification of *dhyāna* found in Indian sources: *hānabhāgīya*, *sthītibhāgīya*, *viśeṣabhāgīya*, and *nirvedhabhāgīya*. The *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* uses these to classify the different levels of “pure” (*śuddhaka*) *dhyāna*, which falls between “defiled” (*āsrava*) and “undefiled” (*anāsrava*) *dhyāna* (AKBh, 445.5–16). The idea is that this mode of *dhyāna* leads towards progress along the path, and is thus not “defiled” *dhyāna*, but also does not yet cut off the *kleśas*, and is thus not “undefiled” *dhyāna* either. This four-fold classification is known from canonical sources, such as the Pāli *Dasuttara-sutta* where it is applied to four kinds of *samādhi* that are “hard to penetrate” (*duppaṭivijjhā*; DN, 3.277; interestingly this passage is not found in the Sanskrit *Daśottara-sūtra*, where the four noble truths are given instead; see Mittal 1957, 64). Similarly the *Paṭisambiddhāmagga* uses these four to classify different levels of each of the four *jhānas* and four *arūpyasamāpattis* (Paṭis, 1.35–36). Elsewhere, however, this scheme is used to classify anything that leads to diminution, stasis, progress, and realization along the path (e.g. *Nibbānasutta*; AN, 2.167). Thus, for example, the *Visuddhimagga* uses it to classify different levels of mastery of *śīla* (Vism, 14–15; Ñāṇamoli 1976, 18).

text indicating the totality of meditation exercises and the practitioners for whom they are suitable, a similar understanding is occasionally presupposed. The opening passages thus says that a practitioner should “cultivate the [method] most suitable for him” (修向所應作), referring it seems to the choice between breath contemplation and the contemplation of impurity. Later sections explicitly correlate the different practices with specific defilements in a manner similar to the *Meditation Scripture*. Thus “one should practice breath meditation (*ānāpāna*) if one is disturbed by cogitation (*vitarka*; 覺),”¹⁶¹ the same pairing given in the *Meditation Scripture*. Other such correlations are scattered throughout the text, and a passage from “the contemplation of the elements” (*guan jie* 觀界)¹⁶² says that *aśubhā* counteracts lust, contemplation of the *dhātus* pride, and the *apramāṇas* aversion.¹⁶³ Similarly the contemplation of *pratītyasamutpāda* is clearly stated to be an antidote for ignorance.¹⁶⁴ At the same time many of the individual sections refer to advanced attainments, suggesting that, as in the *Meditation Scripture*, each practice was seen as a possible starting point for the complete path.¹⁶⁵

Nevertheless it is not entirely clear that this understanding is shared equally by all parts of the text. Thus while the section on the “the contemplation of the elements” (*guan jie* 觀界) says that the *apramāṇas* are the antidote for aversion, this is not mentioned in the actual section devoted to the *apramāṇas*, which recommends them simply “if a practitioner wishes to broadly cultivate love.”¹⁶⁶ The contemplation of the *skandhas* and the *āyatanas* similarly do not mention

161T.618:15.306a26

162The *Śrāvaka-bhūmi* calls this *dhātu-prabheda* (see note 125); the *Yogalehrbuch* uses the term *dhātu-prayoga* (Schlingloff 1964a, 86).

163T.618:15.318b1–5. This passage also seems to mention *ānāpāna-smṛti* using the words “the sixth recollection” (第六念), perhaps referring to *ānāpāna* as the sixth of the traditional six *anusmṛtis*. Strangely there is no mention here of a practice counteracting ignorance (though this is mentioned later in the text; see the next note). However the passage mentions “five objects of contemplation” (五念處), while only listing four different practices, so perhaps a reference to the contemplation of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the usual exercise for those with excessive ignorance, has somehow fallen out of the text.

164“Having already explained the [previous] antidotes and what they counteract, the antidote to ignorance must now be explained” 已說諸對治及所治，愚癡對治，是應分別。(T.618:15.322c27).

165For example in the contemplation of the *skandhas* one reaches the level wherein one contemplates the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths (四諦十六; T.618:15.321b9), and attains the stages of “heat” (*uṣmagata*; 煖法), “summit” (*murdhān*; 頂), and “realization” (*kṣanti* 忍), three of the four *nirvedhabhāgīya-kuśalamūla* (T.618:15.321b). As mentioned above, in the case of the first two meditations—contemplation of the breath and contemplation of impurity—there is a formal division into four stages: *hānabhāgīya*, *sthitibhāgīya*, *viśeṣabhāgīya*, and *nirvedhabhāgīya* (see note 160). It is certainly possible that the final stage here, *nirvedhabhāgīya* (translated here as *jue ding* 決定, “mastery”) was understood to be connected to the *nirvedhabhāgīya-kuśalamūla*, and thus to mark formal attainments along the path. Note however that the four-fold division of *hānabhāgīya*, *sthitibhāgīya*, *viśeṣabhāgīya*, and *nirvedhabhāgīya* (in the Chinese, “backsliding” 退, “stagnation” 住, “progress” 升進 and “mastery” 決定) is only given for the first two practices, and is not formally enunciated in the other sections. This could mean 1) that the later meditations were understood as advanced practices that depended on first accomplishing the four stages of one or both of the preliminary practices, or 2) that the later practices are simply based on a different system. In any event the long initial section, nominally devoted to *ānāpāna-smṛti*, also contains general information seemingly applicable regardless of the chosen object of meditation (T.618:15.301c11–305b21). This is rather similar to what we see in a text such as the *Visuddhimagga*, where a large number of independent meditation practices are given, with many general features pertaining to all of the practices discussed only in the first listed practice (the earth *kaṣiṇa*).

166修行者，若欲廣修慈心。(T.618:15.319c6)

specific defilements. There is even some suggestion that these were thought of as advanced practices, appropriate only after having completed earlier exercises.¹⁶⁷ The opening passage of the third practice, the contemplation of the elements, similarly suggests that one must first master the contemplation of the breath and impurity.¹⁶⁸ In the end it is not entirely clear whether the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* presents a sequential path of meditation, a compendium of different techniques suitable for different practitioners, or some combination of these two.

Turning now to its contents, as discussed above the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* has been seen as one of the few surviving documents of the mysterious *yogācāras* of northwest India. Whether or not this label denotes a coherent group in any sense, this text does almost certainly reflect at least *some* of the approaches to meditation practice current in greater Gandhāra during the fourth and fifth centuries. What then are the notable features of this text compared with other, more familiar systems of meditation?

Although I cannot here do justice to the entire text, I will discuss one key feature that has attracted the attention of previous scholars, namely the strange and unusual imagery found in a number of passages. It is these sections in particular that make this text seem rather different in style than the more “traditional” meditation texts translated by Kumārajīva. Scholars have furthermore interpreted this unusual imagery as anticipating later genres of meditation texts from both in China and elsewhere. As Florin Deleanu writes:

Another feature [of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*] bordering on Mahāyānist and even Tāntrik practices is the importance gained by the visualization techniques with their peculiar symbols. The “signs” (*nimitta*) appearing during meditation and their correlation to levels of concentration are also known in traditional Buddhism and Buddhaghosa treats them in detail in his *Visuddhimagga*. However the . . . [*Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*] goes further and makes deliberate use of images and symbols which become now an important part of the meditative process.¹⁶⁹

Yamabe Nobuyoshi has similarly noted the importance of “mystical” imagery in the prose sections of the text, which he contrasts with both the verse portions and the more “straightforward” *chan* texts of Kumārajīva.¹⁷⁰ Yamabe further observes that an emphasis on unusual visual imagery is also found in the *Yogalehrbuch*, and becomes the dominant style in later Chinese meditation texts such as the so-called Contemplation Scriptures (*guan jing* 觀經). As Deleanu notes, these features of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* seem to have some connection to the idea, well known from other streams of Buddhism, that progress in meditation is marked by the appearance of certain “signs” (*nimitta*) that both correlate with and attest to the

167The opening line of the “contemplation of the aggregates” thus reads: “If the practitioner has accumulated merits for a long time and has previously cultivated *dhyāna* . . . then he will be able to meditate upon and investigate the five aggregates.” 若修行者。久積功德曾習禪定 . . . 即能思惟觀察五陰。(T.618:15.320b20–21).

168有因先修習，安般不淨念，然後觀諸界，安樂速究竟。(T.618:15.317c11–12). This passage seems to say: “Some, having first practiced *ānāpāna* and the recollection of impurity, afterward contemplate the elements (*dhātu*) and thereby quickly achieve joy and happiness.”

169Deleanu 1993, 6

170Yamabe 1999, 72–76. While Yamabe is correct to note that the prose portions contain more of them, as I show below similar images are also present in the verses.

practitioner's level of concentration. Yet Deleanu also suggests that the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* goes beyond the more "traditional" presentation of these ideas found in texts such as the *Visuddhimagga* and "makes deliberate use of images and symbols." But precisely how the presentation of these images and symbols in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* is related to the better known systems, and in what specific ways it may differ, has not yet been made sufficiently clear. This will be my goal in the next several pages.

Firstly, Deleanu's observation that the appearance of "signs" (*nimitta*) during meditation is "known in traditional Buddhism" is somewhat misleading, and reflects a common tendency to treat material in the Pāli commentaries as early or primitive rather than the developments of a specific branch of Buddhism (the Theravāda tradition) during the first few centuries of the common era.¹⁷¹ Indeed Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture* and the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* date from roughly the same era as the *Visuddhimagga*. This material, from opposite sides of the Buddhist world, should thus be studied as contemporaneous approaches, not earlier and later developments. Let us then look more closely at how the Pāli commentaries—chiefly the *Visuddhimagga*—discuss these "signs." As I will show, the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* actually share certain key ideas about this topic.

In the *Visuddhimagga* a meditation practitioner first takes up (or is assigned) a "meditation subject" (*kammaṭṭhāna*), a specific object contemplation. Though the details vary, the overall conception is the same in each case, and the practitioner reaches *dhyāna*¹⁷² by concentrating his mind on the chosen object to the exclusion of everything else. The description of the actual attainment of *dhyāna* is similar to what is seen in early Buddhist sutras or the *abhidharma*, which explain entry into *dhyāna* as the acquisition of certain refined states of mental attention, as well as feelings of mental joy and bodily bliss.¹⁷³ Higher levels of *dhyāna* then involve various modifications to these factors, and scholars who have studied the traditional Buddhist understanding of *dhyāna* have for the most part focused on exploring these factors, their precise referents, and the processes leading to their change and development.

But in the *Visuddhimagga* the higher states of meditation are also marked by changes in the *object* of the practitioner's mind. Meditation begins by focusing the mind on the chosen object, which in the case of the first meditation subject is a physical object, the so-called earth *kaṣīna*. The practitioner stares at a patch of flattened earth until it can be "seen" even with the eyes closed.¹⁷⁴ This preliminary mental object is termed the "learning sign" (*uggahanimitta*),

171 Thus, for example, according to Sarah Shaw the *Visuddhimagga* reveals "how these [canonical] meditations were undertaken in the centuries after the time of the Buddha" (Shaw 2009, 69), but takes the *Yogalehrbuch*, which she herself dates to the same fifth century in which the *Visuddhimagga* was written, as new material that was "emerging in this period" (ibid., 188).

172 For the sake of clarity I will use the Sanskrit form here even though I am discussing Pāli materials.

173 For a summary of this process, see Cousins 1973.

174 One "advert[s] [the mind], now with the eyes open, now with the eyes closed. Up to a hundred or a thousand times or even more, in this manner one 'develops' up until such time that the 'grasped sign' arises. When to the one cultivating in this way [the sign] comes into the range [of his mind] when he advert[s] [his mind] with his eyes closed just the same [as it does] when his eyes are open, then this is what is called the arising of the grasped sign." *kālena ummīletvā kālena nimmīletvā āvajjitabbaṃ. yāva uggahanimittam n' uppajati, tāva kālasatam pi kālasahassam pi tato bhiyyo pi eten' eva nayena bhāvetabbaṃ. tass' evaṃ bhāvayato yadā nimmīletvā āvajjantassa ummīlitakāle viya āpātham āgacchati tadā uggahanimittam jātam nāma hoti* (Vism, 125). Although above I summarized this description by saying that the meditator must "see" the object even with his

literally the “sign [as it has been] grasped [by the mind].”¹⁷⁵ The meditator then continues to focus his mind on this learning sign.¹⁷⁶ As he repeatedly “strikes” his mind against the learning sign, the defilements subside and he eventually enters “access concentration” (*upacārasamādhī*), a state that while not yet full *dhyāna* is nevertheless momentous. Indeed at this moment a new object “arises” (*uppajati*) to the mind, the “counterpart sign” (*paṭibhāganimitta*).

The counterpart sign is described in distinctly visual terms as a purified version of the object. In the case of the earth *kaṣiṇa*, “like a mother-of-pearl dish well washed, like the moon’s disk coming out from behind a cloud.”¹⁷⁷ For the other physical meditation objects, the emphasis is on the counterpart sign being static and pure in contrast to the flickering original (in the case of fire and water, for example).¹⁷⁸ Thus while the learning sign for the water *kaṣiṇa* has “bubbles and froth,” the counterpart sign “appears inactive, like a crystal fan set in space.”¹⁷⁹ For the fire *kaṣiṇa* it is “motionless like a piece of red cloth set in space, like a gold fan, like a gold column.”¹⁸⁰

Perhaps unexpectedly, the counterpart sign is described with visual attributes even when the initial meditation subject is not a physical object. In the case of breath-meditation, for example, where the initial object of attention is the meditator’s own breath:

[The counterpart sign] appears to some like a star or a cluster of gems or a cluster of pearls, to others with a rough touch like that of silk-cotton seeds or a peg made of heartwood, to others like a long braid string or a wreath of flowers or a puff of smoke, to others like a stretched-out cobweb or a film or cloud or a lotus flower or a chariot wheel or the moon’s disk or the sun’s disk.¹⁸¹

In short regardless of how meditation begins, attainment of the initial levels of trance is marked by the transformation of the object of the meditator’s consciousness, and this new object is frequently described in visual terms, even though strictly speaking it is not a visual object in the abhidharmic sense.¹⁸² Another point worth mentioning is that the counterpart sign apparently

eyes closed, literally the sign “comes into the range” (*āpātham āgacchati*) of consciousness when the eyes are closed in the same manner that it does when the eyes are open. Indeed as a “sign” (*nimitta*) the object is technically grasped not by consciousness (*viññāna*), as would be a perceptual event, but by “ideation” (*saññā*). It is, in other words, a *concept*.

175 Later commentaries call the physical object itself the *parikammanimitta*, the “prepared sign” (or perhaps “preparatory sign”), though this word is not used in the *Visuddhimagga*.

176 He “again and again directs his attention to it, striking at it with his mind and with his thought.” *punpappunaṃ samannāharitabbaṃ, takkāhataṃ vitakkāhataṃ kātabbam* (Vism, 125).

177 *sudhotasankhathālaṃ viya, valāhakanatarā nikkhantacandamaṇḍalaṃ viya* (Vism, 126; Ñāṇamoli 1976, 125).

178 The transition from the “learning sign” to the “counterpart sign” thus actually seems to involve a *loss* of visual detail, a further point support my contention (below, and in greater detail in chapter three) that the concept of “visualization” is entirely inappropriate to describe this kind of meditation practice.

179 Ñāṇamoli 1976, 166

180 *ibid*, 167

181 Vism, 285; Ñāṇamoli 1976, 277

182 Although the language here describes the counterpart sign in an apparently visual manner, the *Visuddhimagga* also makes clear that the sign is not “cognizable by the eyes” (*na cakkhuvīññeyyaṃ*), and therefore has no “color” (*vaṇṇa*). It is, rather, “born of conception” (*saññaja*). Note that some of the counterpart signs clearly include non-visual components. Thus one of the possibilities in the case of breath-meditation is that the sign appears “with a rough touch like that of silk-cotton seeds” (*kharasamphassaṃ hutvā kappāsaṭṭhi viya*), here

might appear differently to different people (as in the case of breath-meditation cited above).

While it is impossible to determine exactly when this understanding of the process of entering *dhyāna* became standard in the Theravāda tradition, it does not necessarily date much earlier than the *Visuddhimagga* itself. For one thing the terms “learning sign” (*uggahanimitta*) and “counterpart sign” (*paṭibhāganimitta*) appear only in the Pāli commentaries, whose *terminus ante quem* is the same as that of the *Visuddhimagga*. More significantly, while the basic distinction between the learning sign and the counterpart sign can be found in the *Vimuttimagga*, a slightly earlier compendium whose content and structure is very similar to the *Visuddhimagga*, the *Vimuttimagga* never discusses the counterpart sign as having new *visual* attributes.¹⁸³ Although firm conclusions here are difficult given that the *Vimuttimagga* is both of uncertain date and for the most part available only through a poor Chinese translation, the difference between these two texts in this regard is quite possibly significant. At the very least it should remind us that great care is needed before assuming the antiquity of any particular feature of the *Visuddhimagga*.

Before turning to the treatment of these “signs” in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, it will be helpful to look first at Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*. In this text, as in the *Visuddhimagga*, the achievement of the initial stages of *dhyāna* is marked by various “signs” (*xiang* 相), a word used here more broadly than the *nimitta* in the *Visuddhimagga* account, but which does include the idea of changes in the visual appearance of the object of contemplation. Interestingly, this process is discussed only for the first meditation exercise, the contemplation of impurity. Furthermore unlike the *Visuddhimagga* there is no mention here of “access concentration” or any other pre-*dhyāna* stage of attainment, and “signs” occur only with the attainment of *dhyāna* itself, described as follows:

If the mind remains fixed for a long time [on the bones] then it will begin to accord with the factors of *dhyāna*. When one obtains *dhyāna* there are three signs. [First,] the body will feel blissful, relaxed, and at ease. [Second,] from the white bones [that the meditator has been contemplating] light will stream forth, as if they were made of white *ke*-jade.¹⁸⁴ [Third,] the mind becomes calm and still.¹⁸⁵

When *dhyāna* is obtained changes thus occur in three distinct areas: 1) the meditator’s body, 2) the object of the meditator’s mind, and 3) the mind itself. It seems, moreover, to have been a relatively common understanding that attainment of *dhyāna* is marked by “signs” in these three areas. The *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* thus similarly gives these same three places as the loci where “signs” will arise, and here they are explicitly labeled as “body” (依; *āśraya*),

evidently contrasted with “producing a light touch like cotton” (*sukkhassamphassaṃ uppādayamāno tūlapicu vīya*) given just before. Here the sign seems to have included a tactile component (*samphassaṃ*).

183Ehara 1961, 77–78; *Jie tuo dao lun* 解脫道論, T.1648:32.413c20–414a4. In the case of breath meditation, the *Vimuttimagga* mentions only the tactile signs (see previous note), and gives none of the elaborate visual imagery seen in the *Visuddhimagga* (Ehara 1961, 158–159; note that the translation of Ehara et al. is often unreliable).

184On the meaning of *ke* 珂, see the notes to section 1.11 in appendix three.

185若心久住，是應禪法。若得禪定，即有三相：身體和悅，柔軟輕便；白骨流光，猶如白珂；心得靜住。(T.614:15.272a20–23). The proper parsing of the three is confirmed by the explanation in the next line.

“object” (緣; *ālambana*), and “mind” (念; *citta*?).¹⁸⁶ Although the *Visuddhimagga*’s classification is different, if we look past the stated categories the same idea is present, and the achievement of access concentration includes not only the arising of the counterpart sign (the new or transformed object of consciousness), but the arising of the so-called “*dhyāna* factors” (*dhyānāṅga*) that characterize *dhyāna* as a novel bodily and mental state, endowed with attributes such as bodily bliss, mental happiness, and concentration.

But of the three types of “signs” in the *Meditation Scripture* that which concerns us most here is the second: the manifestation of new *objects* of consciousness. Although the description in the *Meditation Scripture* is brief, the mechanics of the arising of this vision appear to be similar to what the *Visuddhimagga* describes as the arising of the counterpart sign. Thus having concentrated his mind on the skeleton, the basic activity in the contemplation of impurity as the *Meditation Scripture* presents it, *dhyāna* is finally obtained, and when this happens the object of the meditator’s mind, the bones, begin to radiate light, seeming thereby to transform into a more purified version, just as the counterpart sign that is a purer version of the learning sign.

It is important to realize that, like the counterpart sign in Pāli texts, this white light is *not* presented as something that the practitioner is supposed to intentionally bring to mind. The actual practice of meditation involves merely focusing the mind on the bones themselves. The occurrence of the vision of the white light is rather a *sign*, that is to say a semiotic event that verifies that the mind has achieved full concentration. “The white bones radiate white light” is the answer to the question “how do I know that the mind has entered *dhyāna*?”

Although in principle for the *Meditation Scripture* the signs indicating the attainment of *dhyāna* occur in several areas, it is the arising of new objects of consciousness that becomes the most important part of this process in later Chinese *chan* texts. As outlined in the introduction, we can formally distinguish these signs as *symbolic* rather than *iconic* experiences, as they verify the practitioner’s attainment not by being similar to what the state of *dhyāna* is (a calm mind, or a blissful body), but through a more obscure and potentially flexible process. I will henceforth use the expression “verificatory vision” to denote this process of the arising of a new object of consciousness as a symbolic sign indicating a given meditative attainment.

As mentioned above, even though these “verificatory visions” play a prominent role in the *Visuddhimagga*, their antiquity in the Pāli tradition is by no means clear, and in the earlier *Vimuttimaggā* the so-called “counterpart sign” is described without distinctly “visual” language. It is thus quite interesting to observe that the use of these verificatory visions in the *Meditation Scripture* may also have been a somewhat recent development among the traditions from which this text derived. Indeed the passage cited above describing the various “signs” of *dhyāna* occurs within a short section of the text that, according to a note written in small characters, was not present in the original source material. This note appears immediately after the basic procedure for the contemplation of impurity, and says that “from here onward the scripture originally proceeded [directly] to the beginning of the second gate.”¹⁸⁷ Following the note are additional

186T.618:15.322a22–b2. The meaning of these words is made clear in subsequent lines, where they are explicitly described as the “three locations” (三處) where the signs can be perceived.

187此下經本至二門初 (T.614:15.272a6–7). This note is, according to the Taishō apparatus, absent in P, but this appears to be a unique reading, which I have verified to likely be correct by consulting both Q and the *Yong le bei zang* 永樂北藏, where the note is indeed present (*Yong le bei zang*, 129:806). We have no copy of the *Meditation Scripture* from either K¹ or J, but I have consulted a manuscript copy of the text (Kg), where the note

explanations concerning the first gate, the contemplation of impurity, material apparently not part of the “original scripture.” And it is here that we find the explanation of the various “signs” of the attainment of *dhyāna*.¹⁸⁸ It is not clear whether this note is an admission that what follows was not part of Kumārajīva’s translated text, or if it was rather written by Kumārajīva or his assistants to indicate that the source of this passage differed from the source(s) used elsewhere. In any event it is interesting to observe that subsequent passages in the *Meditation Scripture* discussing the “signs” (相) of the attainment of *dhyāna* mention only new bodily sensation and new mental factors.¹⁸⁹ There is, in other words, no further discussion of “verificatory visions.”¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile Kumārajīva’s other *chan* text, the *Explanations of Meditation*, also ignores verificatory visions in its discussion of the signs indicating the attainment of *dhyāna*.¹⁹¹

It would thus seem that the major sources from which Kumārajīva drew to compose or translate his *chan* texts did not particularly emphasize what I have termed “verificatory visions,” though Kumārajīva himself, or perhaps his disciples, were indeed aware of them, and eventually mentioned them in the *Meditation Scripture*, if only briefly. And though we cannot even begin to

appears. I wish to thank Hayashidera Shoshun of the International College of Postgraduate Buddhist Studies for furnishing me with a copy of this version of the *Meditation Scripture*. (On the editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon referred to here, see the introduction to appendix three).

188In addition to this description of the signs indicating the attainment of *dhyāna* we also find here an account of something called the “contemplation of purity” (淨觀). The pairing of “purity contemplation” with the contemplation of impurity is also found in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, and indeed this section of the *Meditation Scripture* bears some resemblance to that section of the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, where the purity contemplation is presented as the third of the eight *vimokṣa*, and is referred to specifically as the “purity *vimokṣa*” (淨背捨觀; T.1509:25.215b16–23). This section of the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* further includes the expression “radiant light of the white bones” (白骨流光), the same wording in the *Meditation Scripture*, so it seems possible that this section may have been added to whatever source was originally used based on the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*.

189T.614:15.277c13–24

190However the fifth practice, the “recollection of the Buddha” (*nian fo* 念佛; *buddhānusmṛti*), possibly refers to this idea implicitly. This is quite interesting when we consider that in the *Meditation Scripture* this practice, together with the contemplation of impurity, structurally resemble the *kaṣiṇa* exercises of the Pāli tradition (which are not found as such outside of the Pāli commentaries). In the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* from the *Meditation Scripture* the meditator first gazes at (*guan* 觀) a physical image of the Buddha. Having “grasped” (取持) its “image” (*xiang* 相), the meditator then “contemplates the Buddha-image with his mind’s eye” (心眼觀佛像). When the mind is fully concentrated, he “then suddenly, with his mind’s eye, sees the image of the Buddha-image become bright and radiant, [so clear] that it is exactly as if he were seeing it with his eyes” (是時便得心眼見佛像相光明，如眼所見無有異也; T.614:15.276a21–22). This sequence follows the basic pattern from the *Visuddhimagga* concerning the generation of the counterpart sign, and is also similar to what we see in the case of the contemplation of impurity, where the bones change by radiating light. Note that the line “as if he were seeing it with his eyes” (如眼所見無有異) does *not* seem to mean that the meditator now sees the Buddha-image exactly as when he was looking at the physical object. Rather the idea seems to be that the practitioner now sees a *glowing* Buddha-image, patently not what he initially contemplated, one that appears as vividly as if he were seeing a real glowing Buddha-image (or a real buddha?) with his eyes. We should also note here the contrast between the verb *guan* 觀, “to contemplate,” used to describe the act of directing the mind’s attention towards the object (in this case the Buddha-image), and *jian* 見, “to see,” used to describe the perception of the object in its newly transformed guise. I will return to this point in chapter three.

191*Explanations of Meditation*, T.616:15.288b14–19

speculate on the source(s) of these perhaps somewhat new ideas, it is notable, I believe, that in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* verificatory visions become a matter of central importance.

These visions, “signs” (相) as the text describes them, are first mentioned briefly in the initial portions of the text, only to note that they will disappear if the meditator stagnates or backslides.¹⁹² The first real descriptions of them occur later, in the beginning of the section outlining the stage of “progress” (升進; *viśeṣabhāgīya*) in the case of breath contemplation. At first the arising of these visions is mentioned indirectly, as something that occurs when the mind reaches concentration:

The wise person, skilled in the techniques [of meditation], arouses his mind and diligently cultivates . . . Entering the very subtle realm, he must not follow along with the flow of thoughts. The wise person keeps his mind still, concentrating it on what he should. The marvelous merit in which he then resides is pure without stain. Becoming fulfilled and not diminishing, [the meditator] abides in purity and calm. Unified and clear in every way, fixed and unmoving,¹⁹³ the object [of the mind] is stimulated into existence,¹⁹⁴ and when the moment has passed it disappears. Visible signs (色相) arise in succession. Many different kinds of signs come forth. [Because] the meditator is engaged in correct contemplation, his body and mind feel pleasure and joy . . . bodily pleasure having been aroused, the mind too feels peaceful.¹⁹⁵

The attainment of the initial stages of concentration is thus described here in a familiar manner, and in addition to changes in the meditator’s body and mind, such as feelings of joy and ease, there arise new “objects” (緣) of the mind, described as “visible signs” (色相)¹⁹⁶ that appear in

192T.618:15.302c12–16; 304b2–11, in the sections concerning “backsliding” (退, *hānabhāgīya*) and “stagnation” (住, *sthītibhāgīya*). On the overall structure of the text and these divisions, see notes 160 and 165 above.

193Though it might be possible to read these two lines as a further description of the meditator’s increasing concentration, I construe them forward with “this object” (是緣), the subject of the next clause. This seems plausible to me as the expressions used here, such as “clear” (鮮明) and “fixed” (凝定), can be read as describing the appearance of the new object. The expression “unified” (純一) also seems to work in this way, and it is used later in the text in this meaning (T.618:15.308c6).

194是緣由感有. Here I take *yuan* 緣 as the “object” that arises to the practitioner’s mind, a meaning standard throughout the text, though 緣由 could also be construed here as a compound meaning “based on” or “because of.” The meaning of 感有 is not clear. I have tentatively read *gan* 感 in a very Chinese meaning, that the object is “stimulated” into being. A doctrinally more pleasing meaning might be that 感 is an error for 想, often a translation of *saṃjñā*. This would be supported by the discussion in the *Visuddhimagga* concerning the fact that the so-called counterpart sign is “born of conception” (*saññāja*; see note 182 above), and more generally by the fact that a “sign” *nimitta* is usually understood as the object of the mental faculty of “conception” (*saṃjñā*). In this case we would read “this object arises from conception” (是緣由想有).

195慧者善方便，起意勤修行 . . . 將入微妙境，勿隨流注想。慧者攝心住，如應善守持，所住妙功德，澄淨無垢濁，具足無減少，清淨安隱住。純一普鮮明，凝定而不動，是緣由感有，時過復歸無。色相次第起，種種眾相生。修行正思惟，身心生喜樂 . . . 既能起身樂，心亦正安隱。(T.618:15.307c28–308a10)

196The meaning is likely connected to the theory, attributed to the *yogācāras* in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*, that the *nimitta* that arises during meditation is a kind of matter, *rūpa* (色). I will discuss this passage from the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* in chapter three. The signs are thus not necessarily “visible” in the sense of being perceivable by the eyes (and indeed the intention is probably to specifically exclude this), but that they are

succession.

The *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* eventually provides a more detailed description of these verificatory signs, and here we begin to see what Deleanu and Yamabe have referred to as “symbolic” or “mystical” visions.

[Then] the subtle and marvelous signs of merit all arise in accordance¹⁹⁷ . . . [there arise] all the signs [of this stage of] “progress” (升進), many signs¹⁹⁸ strange and wondrous: lotus flowers, myriad jeweled trees, fine and beautiful vessels and clothing, blazing lights, and innumerable ornamented objects. Oh practitioner carefully listen as I now explain in full detail the many marvelous signs that the wise ones say will arise for one (?)¹⁹⁹ who reaches [the stage of] “progress” on the superior path.²⁰⁰ Above there is a disc (*maṇḍala*),²⁰¹ from which there appear many pure signs, a shower of descending light, clear and pure like glass. This light fills [the practitioner’s] body, making it extremely relaxed. It then emerges from the body, and gradually flows downward, going near or far depending on the strength of the practitioner’s roots of goodness.²⁰²

Although portions of this passage are difficult to understand, the basic idea is clear: reaching the stage of “progress” (升進) the practitioner will encounter these “signs” (*xiang* 相). Some of

“visual” in the sense of being the mind’s apprehension of a special kind of matter (*rūpa*).

197Following this is a technical exposition of how the mode of appearance of the sign indicates different things.

198Tentatively emending 印 to 相.

199I am not certain how we are to interpret the line 功德住升進. Provisionally, I take the full clause, 為勝道功德住升進, to mean “[one] who when undertaking the superior path [has] the merit of abiding in [the stage of] progress.”

200As discussed above (note 160) each of the four stages comprises a “preparatory path” (方便道) and a “superior path” (勝道). The passage here describes the stage of “progress” (升進) on the “superior path.”

201This seems to be the meaning, though literally we might want to read it as “on the upper *maṇḍala*” (於上曼荼邏). The use here of the term *maṇḍala* (in transcription, so there is no doubt about the original term) has been noted by Deleanu, who suggests that it “is one of the earliest instances of such a use which echoes Tāntrik practices” (Deleanu 1993, 7). However I do not think the meaning here has any connection with the Tantric use of this word. Indeed the word here simply seems to mean “disc.” If there is a technical meaning, it is probably cosmological. Thus elsewhere is mentioned the “wind-*maṇḍala*” (風輪) as the lowest realm of the cosmos (“upwards to the heaven of the fourth-*dhyāna* and downwards to the realm of the wind-*maṇḍala*” 上際第四禪，下極風輪界。T.618:15.311a22). And indeed three elemental *maṇḍalas* (earth, water, wind) as cosmological terms appear in Indian sources, and also in the *Yogalehrbuch* (Schlingloff 1964a, 87; see also Schlingloff’s discussion of these on p.32n1). In the present passage from the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* “upper-*maṇḍala*” may thus refer to the summit of the universe, though I have not found any other examples to support this reading. That the term is here transcribed rather than translated may have some significance, pointing to a technical, cosmological meaning rather than a simple “disc” in the air. On the other hand a few lines above the term is translated as *lun* 輪 (“the various signs of the upper and lower wheels also appear in this manner.” 上下輪諸相，亦復如是現。T.618:15.308c19–20), so the perhaps there were metrical reasons for choosing one over the other.

202微妙功德相，一切隨順生 . . . 一切升進相，殊妙種種[印]{相?}。蓮花眾寶樹，靡麗諸器服。光炎極顯炤，無量莊嚴具。慧說為勝道，功德住升進，所起諸妙相，我今當具說，修行者諦聽。於上曼荼邏，純一起眾相，流光參然下，清淨如頗梨。其光充四體，令身極柔軟。又復從身出，漸漸稍流下，隨其善根力，遠近無定相。(T.618:15.308b29–c10)

these signs are described as unusual bodily sensations, but for the most part they are presented in visual terms. Moreover these signs comprise not simply a change in the object of contemplation, but the manifestation of “jeweled trees” and other elaborate visions that have no particular connection with the object of contemplation (the breath) per se, and in this regard they are perhaps most similar to the “counterpart signs” associated with breath meditation in the *Visuddhimagga* (see above p.55).

Perhaps most interestingly the way these signs manifest is explicitly correlated with the nature of the practitioner’s attainment. Thus, as the above passage goes on to explain: “when [the practitioner] has entered the in-breath *samādhi*, [the signs] fill the lower direction. When [he has entered] the out-breath *samādhi*, they fill the upper direction. When both [in-breath and out-breath *samādhi*] are perfected, [the signs] fill all directions.”²⁰³ Similarly it is said that if the sign is “distant” (遠), this indicates that the “fruit” (果) is still distant. In this final example we seem to see a new range of possible significations—not merely success, certain signs apparently could also indicate the lack of success or details about its proximity.

We find similar descriptions of possible verificatory visions in the next section of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, the contemplation of impurity. The most noteworthy of these occurs during a description of the so-called “purity liberation” (淨解脫),²⁰⁴ a meditation practice that in Vaibhāṣika sources is usually presented as the third of the so-called eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), a set of meditation practices that begins with the contemplation of impurity and ends with the “trance of cessation” (*nirodha-samāpatti*).²⁰⁵ In the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, however, this “purity liberation” is presented as a further development of the normal contemplation of impurity.²⁰⁶

The contemplation of impurity [as described above] is the antidote for those who conceive their bodies as pure. Not craving, stopping desires, [such a person] should meditate on and cultivate disgust [towards the body]. There is further a “pure” antidote.²⁰⁷ [For this,] one does not give rise to any conception of disgust [towards the impure body] . . . then, from the impure object of the white bones, light streams forth. There then arises in succession marvelous blue, yellow, red or bright white jeweled-trees, with branches and leaves the same [color], fine clothing and pearl necklaces, and all manners of marvelously wondrous forms. These are called the signs of the “purity liberation” method of the meditation practitioner.²⁰⁸

203入息三摩提，遍充滿下方，出息三摩提，遍充滿上方，二俱滿十方。(T.618:15.308c26–27)

204The expression seems to derive from the canonical descriptions of the third *vimokṣa*, which begin: *śubham vimokṣam kāyena sākṣātkrvā* (“having realized that pure liberation through the body.”) See AKBh, 455, where moreover the third *vimokṣa* is referred to as “the pure *vimokṣa*” (*śubho vimokṣaḥ*).

205On the “purity liberation” in Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika sources, see Dhammajoti 2009, 10–13 and 17–20.

206Note that this mirrors the “purity contemplation” (*jing guan* 淨觀) in the *Meditation Scripture* in the passage that was, according to the note, not in the “original” version (see note 188 above).

207The idea seems to be that while the contemplation of impurity counteracts lust, it does so by generating disgust, which must then be further countered by the purity liberation.

208於身起淨想，不淨觀對治，不求止貪欲，思惟習厭患。更有淨對治，不作厭患想 . . . 謂於不淨緣，白骨流光出，從是次第起，青色妙寶樹，黃赤若鮮白枝葉花亦然，上服珠瓔珞，種種微妙色。是則名修行，淨解方便相。(T.618:15.316b27–c6)

Avoiding any conception of disgust (厭患), the practitioner continues to contemplate the “object of the impurity [contemplation]” (不淨緣), that is to say the “white bones” (白骨). From this object a variety of other “signs” then appear, similar to those that appeared in the case of the contemplation of the breath.²⁰⁹

In the later, prose portions of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* we find an increasing number of passages in which the meditator encounters such strange and unusual sights. As discussed above these passages have been taken by some scholars to indicate the growing importance of “visualization practices” (see above p.53). What I would like to suggest, however, is that for the most part these visions and images are best understood as “verificatory visions.” Although I cannot here explore the entirety of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, many if not most such passages in the prose sections of the text are compatible with this interpretation. Thus as part of the “contemplation of the aggregates” (觀陰), we read:

The practitioner then ponders inwardly, desiring to traverse the ocean of the defilements . . . if he firmly restrains all distracted thoughts, he will be able to give rise to ultimate, perfected wisdom. If [in regards] his original object of contemplation he remains firm and clear, he will give rise to *samādhi*, parting from all confused conceptions and eliminating his defilements. At this time various marvelous signs will appear, like wondrous, pure beryl, or like crystal baubles.²¹⁰

The basic system here is arguably the same as found even in the *Visuddhimagga*—upon successful attainment of *samādhi* the practitioner sees various “signs,” described in visual terms as a variety of marvelous objects. The above passage does not instruct the practitioner to visualize “pure beryl” or “crystal baubles”—rather these are the visions that will communicate to him that he has in fact reached *samādhi*.

It thus seems to me that even the prose sections of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* do not necessarily present any radically new techniques of meditation compared with what is known from other sources. What is potentially novel about the text is rather its understanding of how success in meditation is verified and confirmed, and the importance it accords in this regard to what I have called “verificatory visions.” Such ideas are not, however, unattested elsewhere, and as I have argued they are central to the presentation of *dhyāna* in the *Visuddhimagga* as well. They are not, however, necessarily of great antiquity, and we have seen above a few indications (such as their absence in the *Vimuttimaggā* and their general neglect in the *chan* texts of Kumārajīva) that this understanding of what we might call the semiotics of *dhyāna* may indeed have been somewhat novel in the fourth century.

Stylistically and in terms of genre we may say that what distinguishes the prose portions of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* from the verse portions, and also from texts such as the

209Cf. Dhammajoti 2009, 19, who translates: “in the object of the impure [contemplation], the white bones, light [is visualized] to issue” (謂於不淨緣，白骨流光出). In my understanding this is not about “visualizing” white light. Rather the light is a verificatory vision that occurs when the practitioner has successfully focused on the “impure object,” the white bones, without any conception of disgust.

210修行者，內自思惟，欲渡煩惱海 . . . 攝諸亂意，能起究竟成就智慧。若根本觀處堅固明淨，能起三昧，離諸亂想，滅除煩惱。諸微妙相，於是悉現，如淨妙瑠璃，如水淨泡。(T.618:15.320b23–28)

Visuddhimagga and the *chan* texts of Kumārajīva, in that they devote far more attention to verificatory visions, and they present verificatory visions with more elaborate content. Indeed describing these visions and explaining their meaning becomes the major preoccupation of the text and, as we will see in the next section of this chapter and in the remainder of this dissertation, this tendency becomes even more pronounced elsewhere.

Although the above points hardly exhaust the potential interest of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, owing either to the difficulty of the original, the quality of the Chinese translation, or both, the text is often very hard to understand, making a comprehensive analysis impractical given our, or at least my, current level of understanding. However our inability to study this text in greater depth is not terribly problematic given the larger project of understanding the Chinese development of *chan* during the fifth century, since it would appear that the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* exerted almost no direct influence in China. Perhaps for some of the same reasons that the text remains obscure to us, it seems to have simply disappeared from view soon after it was translated (apart from its prefaces, which as mentioned above were foundational in the development of the Chan lineage). However even if the text of the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* itself was apparently neglected in China, it clearly reflects, at least to some degree, elements of the teachings of meditation masters such as Buddhahadra that did attract sustained interest and attention from Chinese Buddhists. Indeed as we will see many of the fifth-century *chan* texts that did become influential emphasize the notion of verificatory visions in a manner quite similar to the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*. In the final section of this chapter I will discuss the first of these, a short text known in extant copies as the *Wu men chan jing yao yong fa* (五門禪經要用法, T.619, *Five Gates* hereafter).²¹¹

The Five Gates

The translation of the *Five Gates* is attributed in early sources to Dharmamitra 曇摩密多 (356–442), a Gandhāran native who came to south China in 422 or 424, where he won the patronage of the Empress Wenyuan 文袁 and other court notables during the early years of the Song dynasty.²¹² In addition to the *Five Gates*, Dharmamitra is also credited with the translation of two of the so-called Contemplation Scriptures (which I will discuss in more detail in chapter two), the *Samantabhadra Contemplation* (*Guan Puxian pu sa xing fa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經) and the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* (*Xukongzang guan jing* 虛空藏觀經).²¹³ However Dharmamitra's biographies do not emphasize his work as a translator, which is mentioned

211 The meaning of this title is not entirely clear. Based on its contents, I would suggest that we translate it as “Essential Methods [drawn from] the Five-gate Meditation Scriptures.” In other words the text is a collection of certain “essential methods” taken from a larger group of “five-gate meditation scriptures,” that is to say meditation scriptures (*chan jing* 禪經) that teach the so-called five gates of *chan* (五門禪).

212 The three early sources for Dharmamitra's life are his biographies in the *Records of the Canon* (T.2145:55.105a1–b16) the *Biographies of Famous Monks* (X.1523:77.355b1–11), and the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T.2059:50.342c8–343a29). For a synopsis of his life based on these sources, see Schuster 1984.

213 For further details on the texts attributed to Dharmamitra, see chapter two.

briefly in only a few lines. They focus instead on his activities as a ritual master who organized and conducted “retreats” (*zhai* 齋) for his noble patrons, and his career as a “*chan* master,” a title by which he was apparently known. Indeed on the basis of their contents many scholars have questioned whether the texts traditionally associated with Dharmamitra are truly translations at all. In the case of the *Five Gates*, however, it is very difficult to reach any firm conclusions about these matters. As I will discuss below, although the present version of this text does seem to be the conflation of at least two distinct Chinese sources, much of its contents may well be the translation of an Indic source, or at the very least a set of notes or teachings delivered in China by an Indian *chan* master such as Dharmamitra. Whether Dharmamitra himself should be associated with the text is probably impossible to determine for certain. But it seems probable that it was at the least associated with someone very much like Dharmamitra, that is to say one of the numerous foreign *chan* masters active in south China during the early fifth century.

Like the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, the *Five Gates* is a difficult read, but in this case the problems lie not in the obscurity of any given passage, but in the seemingly disorganized arrangement of the text as a whole. In its present state it is difficult to determine if the text ever contained any system of organization at all, or if it was simply a haphazard collection never intended as a comprehensive or unified set of teachings.

As an initial step towards sorting out some of the organizational problems, we may make a basic division between two groups of passages. On the one hand we find a number of sections with nearly exact parallels in an another Chinese text, also likely written during the fifth century, the *Concise Essentials of Meditation* (T.617, *Si wei lue yao fa* 思惟略要法, *Concise Essentials* hereafter). This text too is of uncertain origin.²¹⁴ Although eventually attributed to Kumārajīva, the bibliographic evidence for this is weak.²¹⁵ Without going into too much detail, in a general way the *Concise Essentials* seems indebted to the *chan* texts of Kumārajīva, and thus most likely did not appear any earlier than the first decade of the fifth century. In addition to stylistic similarities, it shares the *Meditation Scripture*’s unusual five-fold list of introductory meditation practices,²¹⁶ though it lacks anything comparable to that text’s technical discussions of the path.

I will call the portions of the *Five Gates* that overlap the *Concise Essentials* the “format B” sections.²¹⁷ The remaining “format A” sections have no parallels in the *Concise Essentials*,

214A complete, though unsatisfactory English translation of the text can be found in Mukhopadhyaya 1950. For a summary of the opinions of Japanese scholars on the texts origins, see Yamabe 1999, 98–99.

215The *Records of the Canon* (T.2145:55.6a16) actually attributes it to the second-century translator An Shigao, clearly impossible as it uses terminology that appeared only beginning with the translations of Kumārajīva.

216The text begins with an introduction that likens the three primary mental defilements to the three *doṣas* of Indian medicine. But it then presents five different practices to enter the first *dhyāna*, the same five that feature in the *Meditation Scripture*. The individual methods, however, are often considerably more developed than what is seen in the comparable sections of Kumārajīva’s texts, particularly the passages giving instructions for different meditations on the Buddha. There is, for example, an entire section devoted to the “contemplation of the Buddha of immeasurable life” (觀無量壽佛法), an exercise that recalls the famous *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*. The final section of the text, moreover, presents something called the “contemplation method of the Lotus-*samādhi*” (法華三昧觀法). Scholars have noted this as the earliest known precursor to the later “Lotus-*samādhi*” meditation rituals associated with Zhiyi and others (Lai 2001).

217Yet another version of some of this material occurs on Dunhuang manuscript Stein 2585, in a short text entitled *Fo shuo guan jing* 佛說觀經 (included in the Taishō as number 2914). In general this version is close the

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and are also written in a very different style (which I will examine in detail below). The *Concise Essentials* is often more developed than the corresponding format B sections of the *Five Gates*, suggesting that the *Five Gates* preserves an older form of this material.²¹⁸ One such passage showing this relationship concerns the contemplation of impurity:

<i>Five Gates</i> (T.619:15.332c7–25)	<i>Concise Essentials</i> (T.617:15.298b18–c18)
<p>自觀察，從頭至足，薄皮裹之，內無一淨者。腦、膜、涕、唾、膿、血、屎、尿，略說則有三十六物，廣則無量。猶如農夫開倉，善分別麻、麥、粟、豆，行者深觀見此身倉，種種惡露，</p> <p>[The practitioner] contemplates that from head to toe, bounded by skin and flesh, within [his body] there is not a single pure thing: [there is only] brains, brain membranes, tears, spit, pus, blood, shit, piss, and so forth. Stated concisely there are thirty-six things. [Stated] at length, there are an unlimited number [of impure things]. Just as when a farmer opens up his storehouse he can clearly distinguish the hemp, wheat, millet, and beans [within], the practitioner carefully contemplates this storehouse of his body [as filled with] various kinds of impurities,</p>	<p>諦心觀察，從足至髮，從髮至足。皮囊之裏，無一淨者。腦、膜、涕、唾、膿、血、屎、尿等，略說則三十六，廣說則無量。譬如農夫開倉，種種別知，麻、米、豆、麥等，行者以心眼，開是身倉，見種種惡露：</p> <p>[The practitioner] contemplates that from head to toe, bounded by skin and flesh, within [his body] there is not a single pure thing: [there is only] brains, brain membranes, tears, spit, pus, blood, shit, piss, and so forth. Stated concisely there are thirty-six things. [Stated] at length, there are an unlimited number [of impure things]. Just as when a farmer opens up his storehouse he can differentiate between the various kinds of seeds, hemp, rice, beans, wheat and so forth, the practitioner, with his mind's eye, opens up this storehouse of his body and sees various kinds of impurities:</p> <p>肝、肺、腸、胃、諸蟲動食。九孔流出不淨，常無休止，眼流眵淚，耳出[結]{盯}²¹⁹，鼻中涕流，口出嘔吐，大小便孔，常出屎尿。雖復衣食障覆，實是行廁身狀如此，何由是淨。又觀此身，假名為人，四大和合，譬之如屋。脊骨如棟，脇肋如椽，骸骨如柱，皮如四壁，肉如泥塗，虛偽假合，人為安在。危脆非真，幻化須臾。脚骨上，脛骨接之；脛骨上，髀骨接之；髀骨上，脊骨接之；脊骨上，髑髏接之。骨骨相拄，危如累卵。諦觀此身，無一可取。如是心則生厭惡。常念不淨，</p>

Concise Essentials, but the order is not the same, and the precise wording often differs.

218 The format B material is arranged somewhat haphazardly within the *Five Gates*, and Yamabe Nobuyoshi thereby concludes that passages from the *Concise Essentials* have been borrowed into the *Five Gates*, such that the *Concise Essentials* versions may be older. He notes, for example, that some parallel passages occur in the *Five Gates* in a confused order compared with the *Concise Essentials*. For example one passage, common to both texts, says that if the previous method is not successful one should proceed to the “white bone contemplation” (*bai gu guan* 白骨觀), which in the *Concise Essentials* is the next passage, but which in the *Five Gates* occurs earlier in the text (Yamabe 1999, 88; see also Yamabe 2001). Yamabe further notes that the *Five Gates* includes clear textual errors vis à vis the *Concise Essentials*. Yet these points are not as conclusive as Yamabe suggests. Indeed a priori there is no reason to suspect that a better organized version of a given body of material should be the primary source. On the contrary all things being equal the more organized version is more likely to be a later attempt to improve or correct the more poorly organized version.

219 Following P, S, Y. The *Glosses on the Canon* here explains *cheng* 盯 as “ear gunk” (耳垢; T.2128:54.796c9).

Chapter 1: Chinese Meditation Texts of the Fifth Century (I)

<p>三十六物如實分別。內身如此，當知外身亦不異此。and just as they really are discerns the thirty-six [impure things]. One's own body [impure] in this manner, one knows that other bodies are no different.</p>	<p>[such as] the liver, the lungs, the intestines, the stomach, and the many worms that move about and feed. The nine openings [of the body] leak impurity without cease. The eyes leak tears, the ears leak wax, the nose leaks snot, the mouth leaks spit, and urine and feces perpetually come forth from the excretory holes. Though one covers it over with clothing and [feeds it] food, in truth it is but a walking toilet. The body being like this, how could it be pure? Further [the practitioner] should contemplate that this body is only provisionally called a person; really it is but a coming together of the four elements. It is like a house: the spine is the ridgepole, the ribs the roof beams, the bones the pillars, the skin the four walls, and the flesh the plaster. It is an empty, false conglomeration. Where is there a person here? It is fragile and insubstantial, transitory like an illusion. The shin bone connects to the foot bone, the thigh bone to the shin bone, the spine to the thigh bone, and the skull to the spine. Each bone rests against the other, as precarious as a pile of eggs. Contemplating this body as it truly is, there is not a single bit of it that is desirable, and in this manner the mind feels revulsion. One must constantly bring to mind impurity . . .</p> <p>三十六物，如實分別，內身如此，外身不異。and just as they really are one discerns the thirty-six [impure things]. One's own body is [impure] in this manner, and other bodies are no different.</p>
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The passages shared between the texts are almost identical, and there is clearly a common source. While both texts begin with the example of a farmer inspecting a container seeds, the *Concise Essentials* adds a vivid description of the body's impurity. However the full *Five Gates* passage here closely follows a traditional canonical stock passage, which in a version from Chinese translation of the *Madhyamāgama* reads:

Further a monk contemplates his body as a body . . . from head to toe he contemplates and sees it to be full of many kinds of impurity thus: "Within this body of mine there is head hair, body hair, nails . . . [etc.,] and urine." Like a vessel filled with many kinds of seeds, such that one with sharp eyes would be able to clearly see them all, saying "Rice seeds, millet seeds, turnip seeds (?) and mustard seeds." In this same manner a monk . . . contemplates his body from head to toe and sees it to be full of many kinds of impurity thus: "Within this body of mine there is head hair, body hair, nails . . . and urine." In this manner does a monk contemplate his own body as a body, and so too the bodies of others.²²⁰

220 復次，比丘觀身如身 . . . 從頭至足，觀見種種不淨充滿：我此身中，有髮、鬚、爪 . . . 小便。猶如器盛若干種子。有目之士，悉見分明，謂：稻、粟種、蔓菁、芥子。如是比丘 . . . 從頭至足。觀見種種不淨充滿：我此身中有髮、鬚、爪 . . . 小便。如是比丘，觀內身如身，觀外身如身。(Zhong a han jing 中阿含經, T.26:1.583b4-17).

The *Five Gates* passage is obviously a translation of something very similar to this.²²¹ It thus seems almost certain that the *Concise Essentials* version is an expansion of something similar to what is now found in the *Five Gates*. This does not mean that the *Concise Essentials* was based on the *Five Gates* itself, although this may be true. But even assuming a common source shared between the two texts, it would seem that it is the *Five Gates* that, at least here, preserves an older or more primitive version.

In contrast to the format B sections, the format A sections have few, if any structural or stylistic parallels among known Indian or Chinese meditation texts. Rather than an idealized portrait of progress along a fixed or minimally variable path, these passages describe a series of interactions between a student and a master. Though this kind of framing for meditation teachings is by no means unknown elsewhere, in the *Five Gates* these interactions dominate to an unusual extent. The master gives short directives to the student, who then reports back to the master his subsequent experiences. Based on what is reported the master either confirms the student's progress, inquires further about the practitioner's experiences, or gives new instructions.

Unlike typical accounts of Buddhist meditation the format A passages from the *Five Gates* give almost no attention to the development of particular mental factors, or the precise attributes of the states of body and mind that successful meditation produces. Rather the focus lies almost entirely on the concrete things that the practitioner "sees" while in meditation. This is what the practitioner reports to the master, and based on these visions the master evaluates the practitioner's progress. In the opening passage of the text the meditator is instructed in the practice of the "recollection of the Buddha" (*nian fo* 念佛):

One who has not yet [practiced] the *samādhi* of the recollection of the Buddha should be taught to single mindedly contemplate the Buddha. When contemplating the Buddha, [the practitioner] must fully exert himself in contemplating the Buddha's signs and features,²²² discerning them clearly. Having carefully distinguished them, he should close his eyes and think about them in his mind. If they are not clear, he should open his eyes and look again, and with careful attention clearly discern them. [Having grasped the image in his mind], he should return to [his place of meditation] and sit, straighten his body and align his mind, and concentrate his thoughts before him [until he sees the image] just as clearly distinct as if facing a real buddha.²²³

The meditator thus begins by finding an "image" (像) of a buddha, and then focuses his mind on

221 In fact it may derive from the presentation of the *smṛtyupasthāna* in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.404c5–14), which uses several suspiciously similar phrases, including the unusual expression "storehouse of the body" (倉身).

222 Although *xiang hao* 相好 often refers to the major and minor marks of a buddha, and by extension the depiction of those marks in a statue or other image, here the referent seems to be simply all the visual characteristics of the statue or other image.

223 未念佛三昧者，教令一心觀佛。若觀佛時，當至心觀佛相好，了了分明。諦了已，然後閉目，憶念在心。若不明了者，還開目視極心明了。然後還坐，正身正意，繫念在前，對真佛明了無異。
(T.618:15.325c17–21)

it until it is clear even when his eyes are closed. He then returns to his seat and continues to concentrate his thoughts until the image takes on a new and vivid form, “as if he were facing a real buddha.”

Structurally this sequence matches the *kaṣiṇa* meditations or the contemplation of impurity as described in the *Visuddhimagga* (discussed above). Though the application of this procedure to a statue of the Buddha is not attested in any known Indian sources, it is found, in almost this exact same arrangement, in Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*²²⁴ as well as in a section of the *Concise Essentials* (one that is textually unrelated to this portion of the *Five Gates*).²²⁵ However compared with such texts the *Five Gates* then proceeds in a very different direction. Rather than describing the higher levels of meditation as increasingly rarefied states developed by further application of the mind, the *Five Gates* depicts the practitioner taking part in a repeated, back-and-forth interaction with his meditation teacher. The principal topic of analysis in these interactions is the content of the practitioner’s elaborate visions, which in their complexity resemble the “signs” described in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*:

The practitioner should then get up, kneel before his master, and say:
“Concentrating my mind (係念) in my cell, it is just as if [I were] seeing the Buddha.”

The master should say: “Go back to your seat. Concentrate your mind on your forehead and single-mindedly bring to mind the Buddha.”

[When the practitioner does this], images of buddhas appear on his forehead, from one up to uncountable numbers. If the buddhas seen by the practitioner emerge from his forehead, go a short distance away, and then return, the instructing teacher should know that this person seeks [the path of] the *śrāvaka*. If [the buddhas] go somewhat far away and then return, [he] is someone who seeks [the path of] the *pratyekabuddha*. If they go far away and then return, he is a person of the Great Vehicle.

Having emerged in one of these three ways the buddhas then return close to [the practitioner’s] body and make the ground a golden color. These buddhas then enter entirely into the ground. The ground is level, like the palm of one’s hand, clear and pure like a mirror. Contemplating his own body, [the practitioner sees it to be] as clear and pure as this ground.

This is the verificatory vision (境界) of the attainment of the *samādhi* of the recollection of the Buddha. Having obtained this verificatory vision, [the practitioner] tells the master. The master says: “This is a good verificatory vision. This is called the first gate of contemplation.”²²⁶

224T.614:15.276a7–23

225T.617:15.299a4–13. This section of the *Concise Essentials* bears no obvious relationship to any part of the *Five Gates*, though it does seem indebted to the “bodhisattva” method of *buddhānusmṛti* (*nian fo* 念佛) from the *Meditation Scripture* (see in particular T.614:15.285b22).

226即從座起，跪白師言：我房中係念，見佛無異。師言：汝還本坐。係念額上一心念佛。爾時額上有佛像現，從一至十乃至無量。若行人所見多佛，從額上出者，若去身不遠而還者，教師當知此是求聲聞人。若小遠而還者，求辟支佛人。若遠而還者，是大乘人。三種所出佛還近身，作地金色。此諸佛盡入於地，地平如掌明淨如鏡。自觀己身，明淨如地。此名得念佛三昧境界。得是境界已，白師。師言：是好境界，此名初門觀也。(T.618:15.325c21–326a2)

Earlier in this chapter I introduced the notion of a “verificatory vision,” a new object of consciousness, typically described in visual terms, whose appearance indicates a new, higher meditative attainment. In the *Visuddhimagga* this corresponded to the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*), while in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* these were simply “signs” (相). In the *Five Gates*, and in other texts that we will examine in chapter two, this idea is denoted by the word *jing jie* 境界.

In Chinese Buddhist texts *jing jie* is attested as the translation of a number of different Indic terms, including *viṣaya*, *ālambana*, *gocara*, *jñeya*, and *nimitta*.²²⁷ Although each of these words has its own specialized uses, in the context of meditation they all often refer to the object of meditation, that thing upon which the practitioner is supposed to focus his mind. In fifth-century Chinese meditation texts, however, *jing jie* is more often than not used specifically in the context of what I have called “verificatory visions”—not the object upon which the practitioner concentrates his mind, but the new object that appears as the result of his meditation. If this vision is the right one, it verifies that the desired state of meditation has been obtained, though as we will see in some texts *jing jie* also refers to visions that indicate obstacles or hindrances, not successful attainment. In short while the fundamental meaning of *jing jie* remains “object” (of either the sense organs or the mind), in fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts it often has a more specialized use, and I will translate it as “verificatory vision” to reflect this meaning.

The format A sections of the *Five Gates* revolve almost entirely around the analysis of such visions, something that, at least as depicted in the text, was understood to take place in constant consultation with a qualified master:

[The practitioner] then tells the master what he has seen. The master says: “Good! You have diligently contemplated. This [that you have seen] is the sign of the attainment of concentration.” The master instructs [the practitioner further], saying: “Further contemplate within the navel.”

Having contemplated as instructed, [the practitioner] sees a five-colored light on the crown of his head. Having seen this, he tells the master.

The master says: “Further contemplate the five auspicious signs of these five lights.” Having contemplated as instructed, he sees that there is a buddha in [each] light, sitting in meditation.

[The master] further [directs him to] contemplate: “What auspicious sign do the buddhas in the five lights have?” [The practitioner] then sees that all kinds of lotus flower emerge from the mouths of the buddhas. Having emerged, they fill the earth.²²⁸

It is important to realize that, at least if we follow the narrative of the text, the practitioner is *not* told what he will or should see in his meditation. The “verificatory visions” that the *Five Gates* describes are not presented as topics of meditation. Rather the master instructs the practitioner merely to “contemplate” (觀) various objects that are *already* present in some sense, such as a

227BKGDJT, 238–239. Hirakawa lists as many as twenty-seven different Sanskrit equivalents (*Kanbon daijiten*, 302). Many of these, however, stem from the post-Xuanzang era and are not relevant in the present context.

228即以所見白師。師言：大善。汝好用心觀，此身成定相也。師教言：更觀齊中。即如教觀，見頂有五色光焰。見已白師。師言：更觀五光，有五瑞相。如教觀已，見有一佛在光明中，結加趺坐。更觀五光中佛有何瑞相，即見佛口中種種蓮花出，出已遍滿大地。(T.619: 15.326a26–b2)

part of the body, or an element of a previous vision (that is thus assumed to be already present to the meditator in some way). The new visions that then arise are thus *unexpected*, and indeed the entire structure of the master-disciple interaction assumes this.

In general the *Five Gates* (or more precisely the “format A” sections) seems to be largely concerned with describing the visions that mark progress, those analogous to the “counterpart sign” in the *Visuddhimagga*. However in some cases the content of the vision has a more specific significance, and these passages provide a particularly clear illustration of what we might call their *divinatory* aspect. Thus in the passage cited above, the distance traveled by the stream of buddhas emerging from the practitioner’s forehead is used to determine the practitioner’s appropriate *yāna* (or perhaps to determine which *yāna* he had already begun in a past life).²²⁹ It is clear from the way these passages are structured that the point cannot be that the practitioner simply chooses which vision he would like to have—precisely because it is not known which vision will occur their content can serve to divine the information in question.

It is interesting to note that we find in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* a very similar description of how the “signs” that appear to the practitioner can be scrutinized for meaning:

The marvelous signs [attesting to the practitioner’s] merit then all arise accordingly. If [the signs] remain in the place where [the practitioner] fixes his mind, then these are signs [indicating that the practitioner remains] at the same stage [of practice]. If the signs appear on his body (?), both manifesting and contacting [his body?] then sometimes this means the fruit is near, sometimes that the fruit is not near, or that the fruit is being granted, or that nothing is granted. In the case of the fruit being near, the signs will remain next to [the meditator]. It should be known that if the meditator is not near to the fruit then the sign will be far away.²³⁰

Here the “distance” of the object from the practitioner indicates his “distance” from the attainment of one of the fruits. And while this is rather different from the *Five Gates* passage above, both texts express the idea that spatial or dynamic features of the “sign” or vision will have some important significance that needs to be interpreted.

Although the master-disciple dialog is clear throughout much of the format A sections of the *Five Gates*, in later passages the interaction is more schematic. In these passages the text almost reads like a manual for meditation teachers, detailing the list of contemplations and the “visions” that the student must report before moving on to the next. In the following passage, for example, we find a list of thirty, numbered contemplations followed by the visions that the

229It was a common notion that one’s proper path (Mahāyāna or Śrāvākayāna) could be determined through divination. Such is recorded, for example, in the biography of the Indian translator Guṇabhadra, who worked in south China during the Song dynasty: “[After a short while Guṇabhadra] left the Hīnayāna teacher [with whom he had been studying] and began to study the Mahāyāna. A Mahāyāna master tested him by having him grab a text [at random] from a sutra-case. [Guṇabhadra] selected the larger version of the *Hua yan* scripture. The [Mahāyāna] master was pleased and commended Guṇabhadra, saying ‘You indeed have deep affinity with with the Mahāyāna!’” 頃之辭小乘師進學大乘。大乘師試令探取經匣，即得大品華嚴。師嘉而歎曰：汝於大乘有重緣矣！(*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.344a12–14).

230微妙功德相，一切隨順生。若住繫心處，是則自地相。其相起在身，亦現亦復觸，有時說近果，有時說非近，或復有與果，或空無所與。所謂近果者，是相近邊住，若彼果不近，當知是相遠。
(T.618:15.308b12–21)

practitioner must report after each. Numbers fifteen through twenty are as follows:

Instruct [the practitioner] to contemplate each part of his body, making them all clear. If he says “I see this,” then instruct him to again contemplate beneath the Buddha’s foot. If he says: “I see that beneath the Buddha’s foot there are various lights. They then extend into the four directions. In the lights, within the lotus flowers, there are many buddhas,” then this is the fifteenth thing

Instruct him to contemplate the Buddha. With a joyful mind he should carefully contemplate beneath the Buddha’s foot. If he says: “I see that innumerable suffering beings are illuminated by this light and given peace,” then this is the sixteenth thing.

Instruct him to contemplate his body and make it even clearer. Instruct him to contemplate the navel of one of the buddhas. If he says “I see light emerge from this buddha’s navel, reaching to the horizon in all directions. Standing within the lights are many buddhas,” then this is the seventeenth thing.

Instruct him to contemplate along the lights. If he says “I see innumerable people within the lights all experiencing happiness,” then this is the eighteenth thing.

Instruct him to contemplate his body and make it extremely clear. [Then?] instruct him to again contemplate the two nipples of one of the buddhas. If he says “I see that from this buddha’s two nipples there suddenly comes forth a light that spreads in all directions, and within this light are many buddhas,” then this is the nineteenth thing.

Instruct him to contemplate along the lights. If he says “I see innumerable people within the lights all experiencing happiness,” then this is the twentieth thing.²³¹

Since at least some of the instructions rely on the content of the previous visions, this would seem to be a progressive sequence, though there is little information provided about how or when this sequence was supposed to be undertaken.

As the text progress the practitioner’s visions become more elaborate. At times they are downright bizarre, even as there continues the basic format of “contemplating” (觀) what the master instructs and reporting what has then been “seen” (見):

The master must further instruct him, saying: “From now on abandon the previous two contemplations. Concentrate your mind on your navel.”

Having received the master’s instructions, [the practitioner] single-mindedly contemplates his navel. Having contemplated his navel for a short time, he feels something moving inside his navel. He carefully looks at it, undistracted. He sees that there is something inside the navel, like a heron’s egg, white in color. He goes and tells the master.

231 教令自觀身中支節，悉已明了。若言：我見者，教還觀佛足下。若言：我見佛足下雜光明，然後還至四方，一切諸佛，悉在光上蓮花中。是十五事。教[發]{令}觀佛，喜心諦觀足下。若言：我見佛足下，光出至於大地無有邊際。教乘此光觀。若言：我見苦痛眾生，無量無邊，光所照處，悉皆安樂。是十六事。教觀自身，令復轉明淨。教觀一佛齊中。若言：我見佛齊中，光出遍至四方極遠之處，一切諸佛悉上光住。是十七事。教尋光觀。若言：我見無量人，於光中現悉受快樂。是十八事。教自觀身，令極明淨。教還觀一佛兩乳。若言：我見佛兩乳中，自然光出，遍至四方，一切諸佛，悉在光上。是十九事。教尋光觀。若言：我見此光中，有無量人，悉受快樂。是二十事。(T.619:15.329b24–c12)

Chapter 1: Chinese Meditation Texts of the Fifth Century (I)

The master says: “Look²³² further at this place.” [The practitioner] does as the master instructs. Having contemplated it [further], [he sees that] there is a lotus flower, with a beryl stem, and a golden center platform-bud. On the platform is a buddha, seated in the cross-legged posture. From within this buddha’s navel another lotus flower emerges, atop which there is another buddha sitting in the cross-legged posture. This continues, [buddhas emerging from the navels of other buddhas,] until [the world is filled] up to the [edge of the] ocean. Then, at the edge of the ocean, the last buddha reenters the previous buddha’s navel, and so forth back to the [original] buddha [that had emerged from] the practitioner’s navel.²³³

Despite their rich, evocative content, the precise meaning of the visions is rarely stated. But as in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, there are a few, occasional explanations:

[The practitioner] again concentrates his mind on the white bones. He then sees a bright star appear atop the bones, on the four sides [of which?]²³⁴ there are golden orbs. The star is the verificatory vision (境界) [indicating] purity; the golden balls are the verificatory visions [indicating] wisdom.²³⁵

This can be fruitfully compared with a small number of passages from the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* where the symbolic content of certain images is similarly explained.²³⁶ Thus in these passages just what the “verificatory visions” verify seems to be made clear—seeing these various objects indicates that the practitioner himself has obtained that which they symbolize. In the *Five Gates* there are a few other similar passages.²³⁷ Thus:

The master further instructs [the practitioner] to concentrate his thoughts within his heart and then contemplate the Buddha. [The practitioner] then suddenly sees various buddhas emerge from his heart holding beryl staffs in their hands. From the tips of the staffs emerge people of [each of] the three vehicles, their radiance either great or small [depending on their vehicle (?)] . . . [In what was seen] above, the staff is the sign of concentration, and the radiance is the sign of wisdom.²³⁸

232The verb “look” (*shi* 視) is equivalent to “contemplate” (*guan* 觀) in that it denotes attempting to see, not successful seeing (for more on this contrast, see chapter three).

233師復更教言：汝從今捨前二觀，係心在齊。即受師教，一心觀齊。觀齊不久，覺齊有動相。諦視不亂，見齊有物，猶如鴈卵，其色鮮白。即往白師。師言：汝更視在處。如師所教。觀已，有蓮花，琉璃為莖，黃金為臺。臺上有佛，結跏趺坐。第一佛齊中，復有蓮花出，上復有佛，結跏趺坐。如是展轉相出，乃至大海。海邊末後，第一佛還入第二佛齊，第二佛還入第三佛齊，如是展轉還入乃至人齊佛。
(T.619:15.326a14–22)

234Or perhaps “on his four sides,” meaning in each direction around the practitioner’s own body.

235復更係心白骨，自見骨上有明星出，四邊有金丸。星者，明淨境界。金丸者，智慧境界。
(T.619:15.326c9–10)

236In one section, for example, the text says that the meditator will see a “bright head-jewel” (髻中明珠; the *maṇi* jewel treasure of a *cakravartin*), which “symbolizes *samādhi*” (喻三昧; T.618:15.322c12).

237See also T.619:15.326a8–9; c15–16.

238師復教係念在心，然後觀佛。即見諸佛從心而出，手執琉璃杖。杖兩頭出三乘人，光焰有大小 . . . 上杖者定相也。相光者智慧相也。(T.619:15.326a2–13)

Invoking some of the considerations that I addressed in the introduction, we see here that for texts such as the *Five Gates* supposedly internal states of mind such as “wisdom,” or “concentration” were not expected to be phenomenologically observable as such. This understanding indeed explains why this text is almost entirely silent about such matters, focusing its attention instead on what is presumed to be available to the meditator’s introspection, namely the elaborate visions that meditation practice would produce.

Like the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* the “format A” sections of the *Five Gates* thus emphasize that successful meditation practice will produce, and hence can be judged by, “verificatory visions.” Conceptually the logic here is not unlike the understanding seen in the *Visuddhimagga*’s presentation of the counterpart sign. But whereas the *Visuddhimagga* discusses this topic only at single moment along the meditative path (the attainment of access concentration), in both the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* and the *Five Gates* verificatory visions play a more prominent role, and their semiotic potential is dramatically increased. Indeed describing and analyzing these visions seems to be the *Five Gates*’ primary concern, while the detailed classification of mind and mental states that occupies the vast majority of a text such as the *Visuddhimagga* is effectively absent.

Heuristically we may compare the different approaches here by saying that while texts such as the *Visuddhimagga* or the *Meditation Scripture* address practical questions of how one meditates (what objects of contemplation one should choose), ontological questions concerning what the different states of meditation are (the mental or physical factors that categorize them), and soteriological questions about what results follow from such attainments (the structure of the Buddhist path), the *Five Gates* is concerned almost entirely with how it can be known that one has actually reached these states, something that revolves around the semiotic question of how meditative experiences communicate. Thus while the *Five Gates* is, stylistically, entirely unlike a text such as the *Meditation Scripture*, it is not necessarily incompatible with it. In other words it does not necessarily offer competing answers to, following the above, practical, ontological, or soteriological questions about meditation. What it provides is rather a much expanded response to the question, posed and answered only briefly in the *Meditation Scripture* (see p.56 above), of what “signs” verify successful meditation practice.

But in addition to addressing such questions in the abstract, the *Five Gates* also provides us with a glimpse of how such signs were thought to be interpreted in practice. This kind of information is entirely lacking in the brief references to such signs in the *Meditation Scripture* or even the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, with its comparatively elaborate examples. But if we follow the narrative (to the extent that it can be called such) provided by the master-disciple interaction in the *Five Gates*, a picture emerges, tentative though it may be, that allows us to see how knowledge about the meaning of the various signs might have been deployed in practice. It would seem that relatively simple concentration exercises were understood to give rise to many possible verificatory visions. Such visions were to be reported to a qualified master, who would then be able to judge the practitioner’s progress.

Though the *Five Gates* describes this process in a level of detail unmatched by other sources, we should not take this to be an entirely novel understanding. We may consider the “counterpart sign” as depicted in the *Visuddhimagga*. How was a practitioner supposed to know when the counterpart sign had actually arisen? The *Visuddhimagga* is largely silent on this

matter, and with a cursory reading of the text one might easily come the conclusion that this was supposed to be self-evident to the meditator. Yet upon closer inspection this does not seem to be the case, and in the discussion of the arising of the counterpart signs associated with breath-meditation is the following short but suggestive passage:

And when the [counterpart] sign has appeared in this way, the monk should go to the teacher and tell him, “Venerable sir, such and such has appeared to me.” But the teacher should say neither “This is the sign” nor “This is not the sign”; after saying “So it is, friend,” he should tell him, “Go on giving it attention again and again”; for if he were told “It is the sign,” he might [become complacent and] stop short at that, and if he were told “It is not the sign,” he might get discouraged and give up . . . [the above] is what the Dīgha reciters say. But the Majjhima reciters say that he should be told, “This is the sign, friend. Good man, keep giving attention to your meditation subject.”²³⁹

This passage, brief as it is, points to something that, in its mechanics, is quite similar to the master-disciple interaction in the *Five Gates*. And though this passage also reveals disagreements among commentators about precisely how this interaction was supposed to take place, the presence of this passage at all would seem to suggest that, for some, obtaining the true counterpart sign, though formally only an indication of access concentration, was considered to be a major achievement. But what I think is most important about this brief passage from the *Visuddhimagga* is that it reveals an understanding of the interpretive questions at play here that is quite similar to what is implied by the *Five Gates*. Even though the *Visuddhimagga* provides a welter of details about the changes that access concentration brings about in a practitioner’s consciousness, the presence or absence of these mental factors was, apparently, not something that the practitioner or anyone else was expected to be able to see or verify directly, and the “counterpart sign” plays a crucial role as a vision whose contents can be discussed objectively with an informed third-party, and whose meaning can thus be established.

In discussing the *Five Gates* in the above pages I have focused my attention on the “format A” sections and on the question of “verificatory visions” in particular because these are the topics that will be of most immediate relevance for our subsequent discussion of two much larger and more systematic fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts, the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*. As I will show, moreover, these texts appear to have a direct historical connection to the “format A” portions of the *Five Gates*.

As a final point before moving on, however, I must say a few more words about the origins of the *Five Gates* itself, though we will not be able to reach any definitive conclusions. On the one hand, as we have seen, the text can be divided into two strata (the format A and B sections), and though it is not impossible that the present text of the *Five Gates* is simply the Chinese translation of an Indic text that itself had these multiple layers, it seems more probable

²³⁹*Evam upaṭṭhite pana nimitte tena bhikkhunā ācariyassa santikaṃ gantvā ārocetabbaṃ: mayhaṃ, bhante, evarūpaṃ nāma upaṭṭhātī ti. Ācariyena pana: etaṃ nimittan ti vā na vā nimittan ti na vattabbaṃ; evaṃ hoti, āvuso’ ti vatvā, punappunam manasikarohī ti vattabbo. Nimittan ti hi vutte vosānaṃ āpajjeyya; na nimittan ti vutte nirāso visideyya . . . evaṃ tāva Dīghabhāṇakā. Majjhimbhāṇakā pan’ āhu: nimittam idaṃ, āvuso, kammaṭṭhānaṃ punappunam manasikarohi sappurisā ti vattabbo ti. (Vism, 286). The translation is from Ñānamoli 1976, 278, with slight modifications.*

that the *Five Gates* reached its present form through the combination of (at least) two discrete Chinese texts.²⁴⁰ This, however, does not solve the more fundamental problem of the origin of these individual layers.

Looking in particular at the format A sections, there are only a few clues within the text itself. We find, for example, a number of passages saying that the presentation has been “summarized” (略) from other sources. Thus after listing thirty different verificatory visions that might result from the “contemplation of the buddha” (觀佛), the author says that “many different things [are obtained] while contemplating the Buddha, and I here present thirty of them as a summary so as to instruct practitioners.”²⁴¹ Or, in another section, “in this practice there are a great many possible verificatory visions, and I here present them only in brief.”²⁴²

Were these notes written by a Chinese compiler who was here summarizing material extracted from other Chinese sources? Were they added by the translator and his committee to indicate that only a partial translation was made? Or, are they simply direct translations of the underlying Indic text? Indeed in the *Yogalehrbuch*, the Indic text most closely related to the *Five Gates*, we find similar admissions that the text has been simplified vis à vis other, more extensive sources.²⁴³

But in the end there is no particular reason to doubt that the “format A” sections were translated from Indic sources. As we have seen, though the *Five Gates* emphasizes verificatory visions to a degree not seen elsewhere, the basic understanding of how these work, and of their oftentimes elaborate nature, is compatible with texts such as the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, whose Indian origins are not in doubt. I am thus inclined to accept the Chinese bibliographic tradition, which since the late fifth century associated this text with the *chan* master Dharmamitra, one of the most famous foreign *chan* masters in south China during the early Song dynasty. What role Dharmamitra may have had in the production of this text is not clear, and we can imagine a number of scenarios. If forced to guess I would suggest that the text might be a set of notes compiled by Dharmamitra’s students based on his exposition of Indian meditation texts. We might imagine that these notes were organized by theme, that is by meditation topic, with other material pertaining to these same topics (the format B sections) then added later.

Conclusions

In the above pages I have attempted to lay the groundwork for the remainder of this dissertation by considering how we might go about studying the practice of Buddhist meditation,

240For a more comprehensive analysis of how these layers might be separated, see Yamabe 1999, 84–100.

241觀佛事多。略出三十事，以教行者。(T.619:15.330a20)

242於此事中境界亦多，略出所有耳。(T.619:15.331a6–7). See also 332a12; 326c12.

243In the opening passage of the chapter on “meditation on the elements” (*dhātuprayoga*), we read: “Immediately thereafter the meditation on the elements as expounded in the Yoga treatises should be carried out. Here I will present only the method of practice [from that exposition].” *ato ‘nantaraṃ dhātuprayogaḥ yogaśāstropadiṣṭo ‘nusartavyaḥ iha tu prayogamātraṃ darśayiṣyāmaḥ* (Schlingloff 1964a, 86). The *Yogalehrbuch* thus seems to suggest that what it presents is a summary or extract from the “Yoga treatises” (*yogaśāstra*), something that would seem, *prima facie*, to refer to other, known texts.

Chapter 1: Chinese Meditation Texts of the Fifth Century (I)

chan, in early Chinese Buddhism. The early fifth century, I have argued, was a crucial moment in the development of Chinese traditions of Buddhist meditation. Only during this time did *chan* become an institutionalized monastic discipline, and did “*chan* master” become a career possibility for Chinese monks and nuns. Hand in hand with this development was the production of numerous Chinese texts pertaining to this practice. Although such texts are by nature prescriptive, and thus tell us more about ideals concerning *chan* practice than about the realities of monastic practice, these texts were being produced and circulated in an environment in which practice, mastery, and claims to mastery of *chan* were becoming increasingly important. Living Chinese Buddhists of power and prestige claimed to be, or were held to be, “*chan* masters,” and were known for their mastery of this practice. Fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts thus give us a picture not only of ideals, but of the ideals that were actively interacting with living Buddhist practice.

Of the major fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts we have so far examined those that appear to be Chinese translations of Indian material. Though such texts are important both for historically situating later Chinese practices within the development of Buddhist meditation as a whole and for understanding what new ideas and practices Chinese Buddhists were being exposed to at this time, they are naturally less relevant for understanding the situation in China than compositions (or, at the least, heavily redacted compilations) created in China by Chinese authors. It is to this material, or more specifically one important subset of it, that I now turn.

2. Chinese Meditation Texts of the Fifth Century (II): The *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*

What Bodhidharma didn't teach

Sometime between 774 and 780 disciples of Wuzhu 無住 (714–774), one of a number of eighth-century Chinese monks claiming spiritual descent from the Indian master Bodhidharma, wrote a history of the transmission of Buddhism to China entitled the *Record of the Dharma-jewel Through the Generations* (*Li dai fa bao ji* 曆代法寶記). Like many of the literary products of the interrelated and competing movements that scholars have studied under the rubric of “early Chan,” the history written by Wuzhu’s students sought to establish a historical and genealogical connection to Bodhidharma. One reoccurring strategy for accomplishing this, seen in this text and throughout early Chan writings more generally, was to define the lineage of Bodhidharma as a special of understanding of *chan* 禪, “Buddhist meditation.” Though not the only strategy, this trope became important enough that the groups claiming descent from Bodhidharma eventually referred to themselves as members of the “Chan lineage” (*chan zong* 禪宗), a word that has often, though perhaps erroneously, been translated into English as the “meditation school.” Much has been written about the new understanding of *chan* offered by the early Chan groups. My interests, however, lie in the other direction—not what Wuzhu and his students claimed true *chan* was, but what they claimed it was not.

The *Record of the Dharma-jewel Through the Generations* cites an impressive array of Buddhist scriptures to explicate Bodhidharma’s understanding of *chan* which, it is claimed, is exactly the same as the highest teachings of the Buddha. But also cited are examples of inferior, even incorrect understanding of *chan*, what Bodhidharma most emphatically did *not* teach. And here, moreover, specific texts are named:

The various Hīnayāna forms of *chan* and the various *samādhi* practices are not the tenets of the school of the Patriarchal Master Bodhidharma; examples of the names [of these inferior practices] are as follows: the white bone contemplation, counting breaths contemplation, nine visualizations contemplation, five cessations of the mind contemplation, sun contemplation, moon contemplation, tower contemplation, pond contemplation, Buddha contemplation. The *Scripture on the Secret Essentials of Chan* (*Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經) says, “A person afflicted by a heat illness should perform the contemplation of cold. One afflicted by a cold illness should perform the contemplation of heat. One with thoughts of carnal desire should perform the contemplation of poisonous snakes and the contemplations of impurity. One fond of fine

food and drink should perform the contemplation of snakes and maggots. One fond of fine clothing should perform the contemplation of his body wrapped in hot iron.” There are various other [such] *samādhis* and contemplations.

[On the other hand] the *Scripture of the Chan Gate* (*Chan men jing* 禪門經) says, “In the midst of contemplation in seated meditation, [if] one sees an image of the Buddha’s form with the thirty-two marks, of variegated radiance, soaring in the air and manifesting transformations at will—are these true [signs of attainment] or not? The Buddha said [in response]: “When sitting in meditation, if one sees emptiness then there are no things. If one sees the Buddha with thirty-two marks, of variegated radiance, soaring in the air and manifesting transformations at will, then this means that your own mind is confused, that you are bound up in a demon’s net. To see such things while in the midst of empty quiescence is nothing but delusion.”¹

Early Chan materials frequently contrast a Chan-ish take on *chan* with other, inferior understandings. But this passage is noteworthy because it actually cites examples of these supposedly inferior forms of *chan* from specific texts. What, according to Wuzhu, is wrong with these methods? From the contrast provided by the *Scripture of the Chan Gate*² the problem would seem to be that they all aim for an encounter with a concrete object that will attest to one’s attainment. Any such visions are, it is suggested, not signs of true attainment, only proof that one’s mind is enslaved by demons. With true understanding, no such things appear.

Although some of these supposedly wrong-headed practices appear to derive from the famous *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (*Guan wu liang shou fo jing* 觀無量壽佛經), about which I will say more momentarily,³ the text mentioned by name is the *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經. Interestingly the material cited here does not appear in the text that today bears this name (T.613, *Chan mi yao fa jing* 禪祕要法經; *Chan Essentials* hereafter),⁴ but rather derives from a different text, the *Secret Essential Methods for Curing Chan Sickness* (T.620, *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法; *Methods for Curing* hereafter).⁵ Indeed as I shall discuss below though

- 1 諸小乘禪及諸三昧門，不是達摩祖師宗旨。列名如後：白骨觀，數息觀，九相觀，五停心觀，日觀。月觀，樓臺觀，池觀，佛觀。又禪祕要經云：人患熱病，想涼冷觀；患冷病，作熱想觀；色想，作毒蛇觀，不淨觀；愛好飯食，作蛇蛆觀；愛好衣，作熱鐵纏身觀。諸餘三昧觀等。禪門經云：坐禪觀中，見佛形像，三十二相，種種光明，飛騰虛空，變現自在，為真實耶？為虛妄耶？佛言：坐禪見空無有物，若見於佛三十二相，種種光明，飛騰虛空，變現自在，皆是自心顛倒，繫著魔網，於空寂滅見如是事，即虛妄。The translation is taken from Adamek 2007, 326, with modifications. I have also used Adamek’s edition of the text (the inferior Taishō version, based only a single manuscript, is found at T.2075:51.183a11–22).
- 2 The apocryphal *Scripture of the Chan Gate* was written sometime in the early eighth century and presents a number of positions that would come to be associated with early Chan (Yanagida 1999).
- 3 Though practices such as the “sun contemplation” point to the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, there also existed independent traditions of such methods, such as those mentioned in Shandao’s 善導 seventh-century commentary, the *Guan wu liang shou fo jing shu* 觀無量壽佛經疏 (see Pas 1995, 182–201). Some such practices are, moreover, recommended in early Chan texts such as the *Xiu xin yao lun* 修心要論 attributed to the fifth patriarch Hongren 弘忍 (McRae 1986, 127).
- 4 Adamek, following Yanagida (1976), wrongly gives T.613 as the source.
- 5 Historically 祕 and 秘 were both pronounced *bi* (Pulleyblank 1991, 213), and modern dictionaries often still give this as the formal pronunciation (GHYZD, 829; HYDZD, 2395). Japanese authorities read *pi* (ピ), and a

these two texts are now nominally independent, they likely originally formed a single collection. It was the *chan* of these texts in particular that Wuzhu or his students apparently felt the need to refute. And indeed material from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* seems to have been popular in eighth-century Sichuan, where Wuzhu lived, and excerpts from the *Chan Essentials* were carved on a wall at the Sichuan cave site of Anyue 安岳 in 735, when Wuzhu was 21 years old.⁶ Wuzhu was thus not merely scouring his library for straw men, but responding directly to contemporaries for whom these texts were thought to contain advanced Buddhist meditation practices.

In chapter one I discussed the “*chan* scriptures” (*chan jing* 禪經) translated from Indic sources into Chinese during the first half of the fifth century. The *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* appeared in China at this same time and were also classified as “*chan* scriptures.” However they were almost certainly Chinese compositions, not translations, and are thus valuable as sources for the understandings of *chan* actively developing in China during this time, the period when the practice of *chan* first became a regular part of Chinese monastic life.

The justification for focusing on these two texts in particular is straightforward—they are the only surviving Chinese-authored *chan* texts from this time.⁷ They were, moreover, among the most influential fifth-century *chan* texts period. Even as late as the eighth century they were apparently still important enough that they needed to be denounced by those attempting to articulate a different understanding of *chan*, and their general popularity and importance over the preceding centuries is well attested.

One interesting example of the status enjoyed by these texts is a sixth-century Dunhuang manuscript⁸ bearing a local (though not necessarily local to Dunhuang) monastic code.⁹ Among the provisions we find exhortations for monks to practice the three trainings of discipline,

corresponding Chinese pronunciation *bi* (BKD, 6:402). Though I do not know how the title is pronounced by modern Chinese Buddhist authorities, for the sake of simplicity I will here transcribe these titles using the normal Mandarin pronunciation *mi*. While 祕 and 秘 are interchangeable, and both occur in both titles depending on the edition or catalog entry in question, 祕 is more common in T.613 while 秘 appears more regularly in T.620, and to avoid confusion I will follow this distinction.

6 I was made aware of this inscription by Funayama Tōru, who helped me secure a photograph of the inscription through the good graces of Lothar Ledderose and his “Stone Sutras Project” (www.stonesutras.org).

7 Or rather, the only two whose Chinese authorship can be clearly established.

8 This manuscript was seen by Tsukamoto Zenryū in China in the 1930s, and based on his photographs he later published an edition (Tsukamoto 1974–1975, 3:290–304), now the only known copy of the text. Tsukamoto briefly analyzes the contents, but the most complete study is by Moroto Tatsuo (1990, 68–96), who examines its relationship to the Tang dynasty legal code for Buddhist and Daoist monks, the *Seng dao ge* 僧道格.

9 Tsukamoto (see previous note) suggested that the text was an example of one of the numerous “clerical rules” (*seng zhi* 僧制) instituted by the northern and southern governments beginning in the south during the reign of Song emperor Xiaowu 孝武 (r. 455–464), and in the North with the “rules for monks and nuns” (*Seng ni zhi* 僧尼制) instituted by emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (r.471–500) in 493. Moroto Tatsuo, however, notes that the tone of the text is decidedly pro-clergy, as it focuses on the respect owed to monks by the laity (Moroto 1990, 58–59). He thus argues that it was a local monastic code written in defiance of state attempts to regulate the clergy. He suggests that it may have come from a non-central location, perhaps Gansu, during the Western Wei 西魏 (535–556), when government control over the clergy had become weak. It is known that many private codes were composed during this time (Tsuchihachi 1980, 891–902).

meditation, and wisdom, and the passage encouraging meditation paraphrases a short section of first sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, cited as “a *chan* scripture”:

A *chan* scripture says: If one is able to cultivate the contemplation of the white bones, and if from among the three hundred and sixty bones of one’s body one manages to successfully [see] even a single one, and if later one then does not commit any evil deeds, after death one will go straight to Tuṣita heaven. How much more so one who successfully [contemplates] his entire skeleton!¹⁰

Turning to somewhat later times, both texts are cited prominently in the chapter on *chan* 禪 from the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林),¹¹ a seventh-century Buddhist encyclopedia, and the *Methods for Curing* is also discussed by the prolific *vinaya* commentator Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667).¹² But these texts’ influence was felt even apart from direct citation or reference. In chapter four I will examine their influence on Zhiyi in particular, whose writings became the standard reference works on *chan* for much of the later East Asian Buddhist tradition. The *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are thus in some ways the earliest repositories of many central, enduring Chinese approaches to *chan*.

One reason these texts may have remained influential is that they are written as actual sutras, discourses delivered by the Buddha, in contrast to the “*chan* scriptures” translated from Indian languages which are often explicitly framed as compilations made by later Indian Buddhist masters. Moreover the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are, at least in comparison to most of the translated *chan* texts, practically rather than theoretically oriented. They have little to say about the increasingly refined mental states that formally constitute the higher meditative attainments. Like the *Five Gates* examined in chapter one they focus on describing the kinds of visions *chan* practitioners might encounter, and they moreover contain much information about how *chan* was supposed to be carried out together with other rites, notably rituals of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔). This practical orientation extends even to comparatively simple matters. For example the *Chan Essentials* contains the earliest explicit description in a Chinese text of proper meditation posture, one followed by almost all later Chinese meditation manuals.¹³

10 禪經云：若能修白骨觀，三百六十節中但得一節，於後不作諸惡，是人命終直生兜率天，何況全身得也。(Tsukamoto 1974–1975, 3:295). This appears to be a paraphrase of section 4.72 of the *Chan Essentials* (see appendix three). Note, however, that the line “if later one does not commit and evil” does not appear in the original passage as we have it today.

11 See the appendix to this chapter, number 10.

12 Ibid., number 6.

13 “Spread out a sitting cloth in a quiet place, sit cross-legged, arrange your robes, straighten your body, and sit upright. Uncover your right shoulder and place your left hand on top of your right hand. Close your eyes and press your tongue against the palate.” 敷尼師壇，結跏趺坐，齊整衣服，正身端坐，偏袒右肩，左手著右手上，閉目以舌拄腭。(1.9). This is the earliest Chinese description of the proper arrangement of the hands, as well as the eventually standard instruction to rest the tongue against the palate (Ōtani 1970, 209; Otokawa 1995). Even the most comprehensive earlier Chinese meditation text, Dharmarakṣa’s translation of the *Stages of the Path of Practice* (*Xiu xing dao di jing* 修行道地經), contains only the instruction to “sit cross-legged” (結加趺端坐; T.606:15.195c26). Similar instructions concerning the proper hand posture and placement of the tongue are also found in what I have concluded is the lost *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* (see appendix two).

Another factor no doubt contributing to their success among elite, clerical authors is that even though they seem to have been composed in China, these texts are not blatant fabrications, and contain almost no overt traces of native Chinese cosmology or other telltale signs of Chinese origin. Passing easily for authentic Indian Buddhist scriptures, their origins were never cast in doubt by the later Chinese tradition.

These texts are thus sophisticated products of that segment of the Chinese Buddhist tradition that was attempting, as best it was able, to engage Indian Buddhism on its own terms. Indeed unlike many so-called apocryphal Chinese Buddhist scriptures they do not seem to be trying, overtly or implicitly, to make Indian Buddhist ideas and practices accessible to a Chinese audience concerned with reconciling Buddhism to cherished Chinese beliefs. Thus while the primary context for reading and understanding them is fifth-century China, they are also not irrelevant for our understanding of fourth- and fifth-century Indian Buddhist meditation practices. Indeed to the extent that they are the systematization of the teachings of Indian masters active in China (seemingly the most likely context), they may contain much information about Indian Buddhist meditation more usually confined to oral tradition rather than written text. The practical details of meditation posture is one such example. Indeed as Otokawa Bun'ei has observed the *Chan Essentials* contains the earliest detailed explanation of the proper posture for seated meditation in *any* text in the Buddhist tradition,¹⁴ and information such as this was, in the Indian context, almost never seen fit for inclusion in formal sutra or *sāstra* literature.

In this chapter I will lay a foundation for the study of the contents of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* in chapters three, four, and five by establishing, to the extent possible, the nature and provenance of these texts. I will begin by examining the connections between these texts and the so-called Contemplation Scriptures. Although the Contemplation Scriptures are not my explicit focus, their close historical relationship to the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* necessitates a brief consideration. I will then address some general points concerning the content and organization of these texts in comparison with the (likely) earlier and somewhat different *chan* texts discussed in chapter one. Next, I will present the evidence that these two texts indeed are, as other scholars have proposed though never fully documented, Chinese compositions. This conclusion will then be confirmed through a careful study of the connection between the *Chan Essentials* and the *Five Gates*. As I will show, the Chinese text of the *Five Gates* (or a text very similar to it) was one the sources from which the *Chan Essentials* was composed, and having a direct textual antecedent allows us to see just how much development of this material took place in China among Chinese readers and authors. Finally I will examine the textual history of both the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*, and will conclude that the material now found in these two texts was, when it first appeared in south China during the fifth century, most likely part of a single collection known then as the *Scripture on the Secret Methods of Chan for the Curing of Illness* (*Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要秘密治病經).

Much of this chapter will treat certain fine points of textual history and philology, and I must ask the reader to bear with me as I pursue these matters, which are necessary in order to then use the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* together as a single, coherent source attesting to Chinese understanding of *chan* during the middle of the fifth century.

14 Otokawa 1995

The Contemplation Scriptures

Although the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* were key sources for the Chinese understanding of *chan* until at least the eighth century, to a certain extent they have slipped through the cracks of modern scholarly investigation, fitting poorly into received notions about the development of Chinese Buddhism and Chinese Buddhist meditation in particular. As discussed in chapter one, scholars often present the history of Buddhist meditation in China as the gradual sloughing off of Indian-style *dhyāna* in favor of “Mahāyāna” meditation methods developed by native Chinese Buddhist schools. The *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*, however, are patently “Hīnayāna” in orientation. Not only is their scriptural form modeled after the comparatively sedate Āgama (*a han* 阿含) scriptures rather than the Mahāyāna idiom that was most popular in China, they also quite clearly take arhatship as their highest goal.

These texts have accordingly seemed little more than quaint relics from a period of Chinese Buddhism in which eventually dominant “Mahāyāna” meditation practice had not yet become established. Accordingly most scholars have approached them as preludes to something else, notably the so-called Contemplations Scriptures (*guan jing* 觀經),¹⁵ and their study has largely been confined to those investigating the origins of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (*Guan wu liang shou fo jing* 觀無量壽佛經),¹⁶ historically the most important Contemplation Scripture, especially in Japan.

The Contemplation Scriptures were first identified as a distinct group by Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信享 in the 1940s.¹⁷ These six texts, plus one more that is usually considered lost, all appeared in south China during the Song dynasty, and their origin and nature as either translations or Chinese compositions has been hotly disputed.¹⁸ That there is a historical

15 Modern scholars sometime use the word *guan jing* 觀經 as shorthand for the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, and in English too one occasionally finds this text called “the” Contemplation (or Visualization) Sutra. To avoid confusion I reserve the expression “Contemplation Scriptures” for the texts as a group, and will refer to the individual texts using the names given below (note 18).

16 Important studies of this question include Tōdō 1960a, 1960b; Myōjin 1993a, 1993b; Ōminami 1977, 1995, 2001; Irizawa 1999; Tagawa 1999; Nōnin 1993. The works of Yamabe Nobuyoshi (1999b, 2002, and 2005) are notable for shifting focus away from the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* per se.

17 Mochizuki (1946) was the first modern scholar to have identified these texts as a group. (This is why the editors of the Taishō, working in the 1920s, put these texts in different categories, despite their general efforts to group similar texts together.) Mochizuki’s arguments were quickly followed by those of Tsukinowa Kenryū 月輪賢隆 ([1953] 1971), who went further and argued that they were Chinese fabrications. In contrast Katsugai Shin’ya 春日井真也 proposed that they were probably composed in Central Asia (Kasugai 1953). Though Mochizuki was the first modern scholar to notice the connections, medieval Chinese authors were aware of the “Contemplation Scriptures” as a distinct genre (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.337a16–17).

18 The six texts identified by Mochizuki are: 1) *The Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (*Guan fo san mei hai jing* 觀佛三昧海經, T.643), 2) *The Maitreya Contemplation* (*Guan Mile pu sa shang sheng Doushuai tian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, T.452), 3) *The Samantabhadra Contemplation* (*Guan Puxian pu sa xing fa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經, T.277), 4) *The Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* (*Guan Xukongzang pu sa jing* 觀虛空藏菩薩經, T.409), 5) *The Medicine King Contemplation* (*Guan Yaowang Yaoshang er pu sa jing* 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經, T.1161), and 6) *The Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (*Guan wu liang shou fo jing* 觀無量壽佛經, T.365). For a detailed survey of these texts and the secondary studies that have discussed their interconnections and textual histories,

connection between these texts and the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* is clear.¹⁹ They share a welter of unusual terminology and unique turns of phrase, and early historiographical sources attribute the translations of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* to monks (and one layperson) who were also associated with the Contemplation Scriptures. Though the texts are not likely to be translations, this at least shows that they circulated in similar circles, and most scholars believe that all these texts were composed or assembled in the same general time and place, though where exactly this was remains controversial.²⁰ What is not controversial, however, is that the Indian or Central Asian Buddhist masters associated with these texts were active in south China during the Yuanjia 元嘉 era (424–454), were renowned for their practice of *chan*, and are not otherwise remembered as active translators.²¹ My starting assumption will thus be that the versions of these texts we have today were used, studied and propagated in south China during the Yuanjia era among the followers of these foreign *chan* masters.

The *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* both comprise multiple individual sutras, and both formally treat the practice of *chan* 禪. Though organized differently than the *chan* texts examined in chapter one, they discuss the same “traditional” meditation practices such as the contemplation of impurity and the contemplation of the breath. Despite sharing many linguistic features, the Contemplation Scriptures are stylistically very different, each text revolving around the cult of a specific deity (and providing methods for “contemplating” the physical form of the deity in question), and we find here many of the figures popular in China at this time, including the buddhas Śākyamuni, Amitābha, and Maitreya, and bodhisattvas such as Samantabhadra and Avalokitasvara.²² As we might expect given this cast of characters, the

see Yamabe 1999b, 25–58. The supposedly lost text is the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* (*Guanshiyin guan jing* 觀世音觀經), mentioned in the *Records of the Canon* as a translation of Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲, to whom is also attributed the *Maitreya Contemplation* (T.2145:55.13a10). I argue in appendix two that at least a portion of this text has survived under a different name. David Quinter has recently argued that another extant text devoted to Mañjuśrī, the *Wen shu shi li ban nie ban jing* 文殊師利般涅槃經 (T.463) should also be included in this group (Quinter 2010).

Though the titles of these texts appear to take *guan* 觀 as a verb (*Scripture on the Contemplation of . . .*), as Kasugai Shin'ya observed *guan* may have originally referred to the *genre* of the texts (Kasugai 1953, 40). This is confirmed by the citation of the titles of the texts in ancient sources. Thus in the biography of Dharmamitra, its supposed translator, text number 3) listed above is called “The Samantabhadra Contemplation” *Pu xian guan* 普賢觀 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.343a5), a title used in other early sources (see for example *Tian tai zhi zhe dai shi bie zhuan* 天台智者大師別傳, T.2050:50.191c9). So too Shandao's 善導 commentary to the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* calls the text *Wu liang shou fo guan jing* 無量壽佛觀經 (*Guan wu liang shou fo jing shu* 觀無量壽佛經疏, T.1753:37.246b17). Zhiyi, in the *Great Calming and Contemplation*, similarly calls this text *Wu liang shou guan* 無量壽觀 (T.1911:46.97b10), and so does Jizang's commentary (*Guan wu liang shou jing yi shu* 觀無量壽佛經義疏, T.1752:37.237a18–19). See also the biography of Daochuo 道綽 in the *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T.2060:50.593c25).

19 Tsukinowa was the first to notice this relationship. More recently the connection between these two texts and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* has been explored in great detail by Yamabe Nobuyoshi (1999b, 1999a).

20 I discuss the various scholarly opinions on this issue in the conclusion to this chapter.

21 The one exception is the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, which historical records associated with Buddhahadra, who in addition to his renown as a *chan* master was a prolific translator.

22 Here and throughout this dissertation I write the name of this bodhisattva as Avalokitasvara, rather than the more common Avalokiteśvara, since the Chinese translation of this name, “beholder of sounds” *Guan yin* 觀音 (or *Guan shi yin* 觀世音) is of the name Avalokita-svara (“beholder of sounds”), not Avalokita-īśvara →

Contemplation Scriptures are written in a clearly Mahāyāna mode, featuring bodhisattva protagonists familiar from Mahāyāna scriptures, and the clear articulation of specifically Mahāyāna goals. In contrast the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* are, as mentioned above, modeled after the scriptural style of the Āgamas, in which the principal and indeed only actors are the Buddha and his chief disciples.

There is, however, no reason to see here a historical evolution from “Hīnayana” to “Mahāyāna” methods of practice. Rather the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* on the one hand and the Contemplation Scriptures on the other seem to hail from a similar time and place, aimed at slightly different audiences and intended for slightly different uses. This is at least hinted at in the biographies of the translators associated with these texts. According to the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* the *chan* master Kālayaśas (曇良耶舍)²³ came from the “western regions” (*xi yu* 西域) to the southern capital in the late 420s, where he translated²⁴ the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* and the *Medicine King Contemplation*:

Initially [Kālayaśas] resided at the Daolin monastery on Mt. Zhong, where the monk Baozhi 寶誌 studied *chan* practices with him. The monk Senghan 僧含 asked him to translate the *Medicine King Contemplation* and the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*. Han served as the scribe. As secret techniques for overturning karmic obstructions and the universal cause of [rebirth in] the pure land, these two scriptures were intoned and appreciated, and they spread widely throughout the kingdom of Song.²⁵

Here the biography seems to separate these two Contemplation Scriptures, translated at the request of the famous Buddhist scholar Senghan,²⁶ from Kālayaśas’ instructions to Baozhi, who is mentioned elsewhere in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* as a practitioner of *chan*.²⁷ A similar presentation is seen in the biography of Dharmamitra 曇摩密多, another foreign *chan* master of the Yuanjia era. A *chan* master, much of Dharmamitra’s fame came from his reputation

Avalokiteśvara, “lord who looks down from on high,” a meaning first seen in China with the translation *Guan zi zai* 觀自在 coined by Xuanzang in the seventh century (though *Guan yin* 觀音 remained standard). The reading Avalokitasvara is, moreover, attested in early Indic manuscripts, and may be the original form of the name.

23 The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* groups Kālayaśas among the translators, as it does for all foreign monks, even those not remembered for any translations at all. The *Biographies of Famous Monks*, however, places him among the “foreign *chan* masters” (外國禪師; X.1523:77.348c3), and he is explicitly called a “*chan* master” in two biographies from the *Biographies of the Nuns* (*Bi qiu ni zhuan* 比丘尼傳, T.2063:50.940b26–27; 945c21–22). Kālayaśas’ connection to nuns specializing in *chan* is quite interesting given that the protagonist of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is Queen Vaidehī.

24 I am concerned here with how the connection between Kālayaśas and these texts was presented in this sixth-century hagiography, not with the historicity of his role as the translator. In the *Records of the Canon*, written a number of years before the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, both texts are recorded as “translator unknown,” and many scholars take this to mean that Kālayaśas was not originally associated with these texts (Fujita 1990, 151).

25 初止鐘山道林精舍。沙門寶誌崇其禪法，沙門僧含請譯藥王藥上觀及無量壽觀，含即筆受。以此二經是轉障之祕術，淨土之洪因，故沈吟嗟味，流通宋國。(T.2059:50.343c16–21)

26 On Senghan and his fame as a scholar, see *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.370b14–c2, which does not portray Senghan as having any training or interest in *chan*.

27 Baozhi 寶誌 here is almost certainly the same Baozhi 保志 mentioned in the chapter on wonder-workers, said there to have trained in *chan* at the Daolin temple (T.2059:50.394a15–395b1).

as a ritual master specializing in so-called “Samantabhadra fasts” (普賢齋), a cultic practice popular throughout south China,²⁸ and his clients even included the Empress and her family.²⁹ Dharmamitra’s association with the *Samantabhadra Contemplation*, of which he was remembered as the translator, almost certainly was connected with these practices. At the same time Dharmamitra is also remembered for having instructed advanced disciples in the practice of *chan*, for having founded “*chan* halls” at temples near the southern capital and in Shu 蜀, and for having translated one or two “*chan* scriptures.”³⁰ And though the cultivation of *chan* and devotion to Samantabhadra were potentially connected,³¹ Dharmamitra’s biography nominally segregates these two activities, such that cult devotion to Samantabhadra is presented as having a wide audience, including the empress and her court, while *chan* training is shown to be a specialized discipline taught only to smaller number of Dharmamitra’s monastic disciples.

Thus while the Contemplation Scriptures were associated with foreign monks known for their mastery of *chan*, they were not seen as instructions for *chan* practice. Indeed though presenting techniques for “contemplating” (觀) the Buddha, in sharp contrast to the *Chan Essentials* or *Methods for Curing* the Contemplation Scriptures almost never use the word *chan* itself. At times they overtly distance themselves from the traditional forms of meditation that this word usually denotes. The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* thus disparagingly equates breath meditation (數息) and the contemplation of impurity (不淨觀) with the path of the *śrāvaka*, urging bodhisattvas to devote themselves to repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔) and the recollection of the Buddha (*nian fo* 念佛).³² Likewise in the *Maitreya Contemplation*, the bodhisattva Maitreya, in his final earthly incarnation prior to his rebirth in the Tuṣita heaven as the future Buddha, is described as “not having achieved any stage of sanctity . . . though he has ordained as a monk, he does not cultivate *chan* nor has he severed the afflictions,”³³ which seems to be an attempt to dissociate rebirth in Tuṣita from mastery of *chan*, something with which it had been frequently linked.³⁴ Similarly the *Samantabhadra Contemplation* declares that one can gain a vision of Samantabhadra “merely by chanting [this text] devotedly, without entering *samādhi*.”³⁵

28 On Samantabhadra worship in the fifth century and its connection to Dharmamitra, see Stevenson 1987, 200–214.

29 According to his biography: “When [Dharmamitra] first arrived in the capital he was worshiped by the entire city. The Empress Yuan, the crown prince, and the imperial princess all sponsored purificatory fasts (*zhai* 齋) in the Cassia Palace [the main palace], and received the precepts [from Dharmamitra] in the Flower Wing [the Empress’ quarters]. Messengers wishing to be received [by Dharmamitra] had to wait dozens of days for an audience.” 至京甫爾，傾都禮訊。自宋文哀皇后及皇太子、公主，莫不設齋桂宮，請戒椒掖，參候之使，旬日相望。(T.2059:50.343a2–4). Here 哀 is a mistake for 袁. Empress Yuan (袁皇后; d.441) was the first wife of emperor Wen (文), whose reign covered the entire Yuanjia era (*Song shu*, 41.1283–1286).

30 On the *chan* texts associated with Dharmamitra, see below p.115.

31 Many monks were remembered as devoted to both of these regimes (Stevenson 1987, 203–205).

32 T.643:15.682b26–c3. See also 667a23–25 where it is said that if one maintains the precepts one will be able to obtain the needed visions in dreams “without practicing seated meditation” (雖不坐禪). The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, however, does differ from the other Contemplation Scriptures in occasionally recommending *chan* (647c8; 692c7–8; 695a17; 695b2; 695b22–23).

33 具凡夫身 . . . 其人今者雖復出家，不修禪定不斷煩惱。(T.452:14.418c6–8)

34 Demiéville 1954

35 此觀功德除諸障礙，見上妙色。不入三昧，但誦持故，專心修習，心心相次，不離大乘。一日至三七日，

Although the precise historical relationship between the *Methods for Curing* and the *Chan Essentials* on the one hand and the Contemplation Scriptures on the other is likely to remain obscure, we can perhaps think of these two groups of texts, which appeared in the same time and place and were associated with the same foreign *chan* masters, as two different genres. The first, explicitly devoted to *chan*, are the more specialized, esoteric (intentional kept from wide circulation) teachings that these foreign *chan* masters offered to their advanced, usually monastic disciples. The Contemplation Scriptures, in contrast, were associated with a broader clientele, and were used in conjunction with widespread cults to various buddhas and bodhisattvas. This loose contrast can even be seen in the implied audiences of these texts as revealed in their cast of character. Thus in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* we find the Buddha instructing his monks and, more interestingly, the *disciples* of his primary disciples (in other words, monks of a later generation). In the Contemplation Scriptures in contrast we find a broader set of interlocutors including the Buddha's own father (in the *Ocean-samādhī Scripture*) and the tragic figure Queen Vaidehī (in the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*).

The *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*

The *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* resist easy summary. Despite being written as sutras, neither is unified into a single narrative. At the same time they do not follow the structure of traditional scholastic presentations of *chan*, at least not overtly. As mentioned above the *Chan Essentials* is divided into four individual sutras and the *Methods for Curing* two, each framed by the canonical opening formula “thus have I heard” (如是我聞), a new setting, and new interlocutors for the Buddha. In my translations of these texts in appendix three I have numbered the individual sutras sequentially, sections 1 through 4 corresponding to the *Chan Essentials* and 5 and 6 to the *Methods for Curing*, for as I will suggest below they may originally have formed a single collection in this order.

Each sutra begins by introducing a protagonist, in all cases a monk, who desires to practice *chan* but is beset by particular troubles. Interestingly with the exception of Nandika in the second sutra of the *Chan Essentials* these monks are all presented as disciples of more famous members of the Buddha's entourage. With their own teachers, that is to say the Buddha's chief disciples, having been unable to help, these monks are taken to the Buddha himself who gives special practices suited to their particular conditions.

Although these narratives are quite interesting in their own right (see appendix two), they clearly sit lightly atop an underlying stratum of material. In the first sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, for example, the Buddha's interaction with the protagonist, Kauṣṭhīlananda, occupies only a short section at the beginning (1.1–1.20). After Kauṣṭhīlananda employs the given method and becomes an arhat, the Buddha continues describing what in fact seems to be the continuation of this same practice, though Kauṣṭhīlananda is no longer mentioned. We find a similar pattern in the remaining sutras, and this suggests that the narratives were at some point added as frames to a larger body of originally independent material, a hypothesis that will be confirmed below when

得見普賢。(T.277:9.389c21–24)

we examine the relationship between the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* and a section from the *Five Gates*.

In the *Chan Essentials* the narratives may be an attempt to organize the text along the model of the “five gates of *chan*” (*wu men chan* 五門禪). As discussed in chapter one, the known Indian versions of this arrangement give five different practices for those troubled by lust, hatred, confusion, pride, and distraction respectively, and a similar system is found in Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*, though in place of pride the text gives “equally balanced” (等分) defilements or, in a note, “heavy sins” (重罪).³⁶ Some version of this arrangement seems to inform the narratives in the *Chan Essentials*. Thus in the first sutra Kauṣthilānanda is characterized as prideful. In the second sutra Nandika first requests instructions for those with many “karmic obstructions” (*ye zhang* 業障), and then later requests a different method for those with excessive lust.³⁷ Panthaka in the third sutra is plagued by ignorance and confusion, while Agnidatta from the fourth sutra was a murderer in a previous life, and is thus linked to hatred. Although not a perfect match, this seems to be an attempt to create a system of five different *chan* practices for five different personality types on the model of earlier Chinese *chan* texts.

And indeed the methods given more or less correspond to the expected ones. In the second sutra the Buddha prescribes *nian fo* (念佛) for those with “karmic obstructions” (the same practice given in the *Meditation Scripture* for those with “heavy sins”) and the contemplation of impurity for those with excessive lust. In the third sutra Agnidatta, the former murderer, is told to cultivate the “mind of love” (*ci xin* 慈心), the usual practice for those afflicted by hatred. Meanwhile in the first sutra Kauṣthilānanda, beset by pride, is given the “white bone contemplation” (*bai gu guan* 白骨觀), the practice prescribed in such cases by the *Stages of the Path of Practice*, the most important Chinese *chan* text prior to the fifth century.³⁸

Things do not always line up perfectly, however.³⁹ There is, moreover, an entirely different way of understanding the structure of the *Chan Essentials*, as the first three sutras are divided into 30 numbered sections. Each section concludes with a brief narrative segment that mimics the usual ending of a Buddhist sutra.⁴⁰ A further statement then assigns a number and

36 T.614:15.276a7

37 For a more detailed examination of the characters in these narratives, see appendix two. The story of Nandika differs slightly from the others in that the methods are not prescribed to him, but requested by him for the sake of others.

38 T.606:15.191.c17–192b10. To counteract pride other manuals assign “analysis by elements” (*dhātu-prabheda*). That the *Stages of the Path of Practice* does not otherwise mention *dhātu-praabhea* suggests that these two practices were sometimes seen as equivalent.

39 Thus nothing in the method given to Panthaka in the third sutra is immediately identifiable with the contemplation of dependent origination (*pratīyasamutpada*), the practice traditionally prescribed for those with excess confusion. Similarly while part of the method given in the second sutra for the curing of lust appears, from its content, to be related to the contemplation of impurity (2.59–2.60, and also 2.44), it also includes a section on the contemplation of the breath (2.41), and it is this name that is mentioned at the end where, most unusually, breath contemplation is said to be “the antidote for lust” (貪婬藥; 2.63). Thus while whoever composed or compiled the *Chan Essentials* was clearly familiar with the five-fold division of *chan* practices found in earlier texts, he or she was not entirely constrained by them.

40 The Buddha tells Ānanda to remember what has been taught, whereupon Ānanda “joyfully undertakes to carry out [this duty]” (歡喜奉行). The expression “joyfully undertakes to carry out [this duty]” (歡喜奉行) in particular was a relatively fixed phrase in the translation of Buddhist sutras into Chinese. It is interesting to note,

name to the previous section.⁴¹ Here the wording varies to some extent, but the meaning is always the same—when “one has seen these things” (見此事者), “attained this contemplation” (得此觀者), or “[encountered] a verificatory vision such as this” (如此境界), then the given numbered stage will be complete.

Although the names given to the thirty stages are often unusual, there is a clear pattern. The first 18 are different levels of the contemplation of impurity, beginning with “the first verificatory vision of the contemplation of impurity” (不淨觀最初境界; 1.17), continuing with names such as, for number six, “the contemplation of the mass of worms [within] the skin” (厚皮蟲聚觀; 1.60), and finally concluding with, as number 17, “mindfulness of the body” (身念處觀; 1.139), and as number 18 which collectively designates the earlier sections, “the contemplation of impurity” (不淨觀; 1.182). This concludes the first sutra, and moving through the second sutra we find “the contemplation of breath-counting” (數息觀) as number 20. The third sutra continues with number 21, the “contemplation [leading to the stage of] heat” (暖法觀; 3.17), and number 22, the “stage of summit” (頂法; 3.21). These are followed by a number of curious names that are not immediately identifiable, but we soon arrive at the stages of “stream-enterer” (26), “once-returner” (29), and “non-returner” (30).⁴² Although not included in the numbering system, the fourth sutra is the culmination of the above sequence. In the frame story Agnidatta is, precisely, a “non-returner” (*anāgamin*) who has been unable to progress to arhatship, and the sutra culminates with the attainment of the “gates to liberation” (解脫門; *vimokṣamukha*) in sections 4.63 and 4.64, followed by arhatship in 4.65.

Though filled with unusual names and a few otherwise unknown stages, the above sequence follows, in rough outline, the basic structure of the Buddhist path (*mārga*) as found in the Abhidharma texts of the Sarvāstivāda (Vaibhāṣika) school.⁴³ In this system, one begins with one of two preparatory meditation practices, either the contemplation of impurity or breath meditation. One progresses to the four “bases of mindfulness” (*smṛtyupasthāna*), followed by the four “aids to penetration” (*nirvedhabhāgīya-dharma*; 四善根位) consisting of the stages of “heat” (*uṣmagata*), “summit” (*mūrdhan*), “acceptance” (*kṣanti*), and “highest worldly dharmas” (*laukikāgra-dharma*), before finally obtaining the four fruits.⁴⁴

The numbered sequence in the *Chan Essentials* thus clearly attempts to recreate a version of this well-known path structure, from the contemplation of impurity up to arhatship,⁴⁵ though

however, that the phrase appears almost exclusively at the conclusion of a sutra. Its use here (and also in the *Methods for Curing*) within a single sutra is highly unusual.

41 This is the usual format. In some cases the number is assigned first (1.128), or with no narrative at all (1.131).

42 The first three of the “four fruits,” the four highest human attainments in traditional Buddhism.

43 For a basic overview drawing from the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*, see Gethin 1998, 194–198.

44 Though a complete analysis of these stages in Vaibhāṣika scholasticism has yet to appear, one may consult Buswell 1997a for a concise introduction (see also Hurvitz 1977). In Buswell’s analysis these four attainments play a crucial role because they occupy the transition between the mundane (*laukika*) and the transcendent (*lokottara*), and as such serve to explain how this transition, from conditioned to unconditioned states, is possible. Buswell shows that these states, while still considered mundane, were nonetheless seen as similar to aspects of the transcendent path itself (the *darśana-mārga*).

45 The *Chan Essentials* is a practical text that describes the signs and visions that one may use to verify that these stages have been obtained, rather than a doctrinal treatise that describes their actual nature. We accordingly find few statements about what mental factors characterize them. Occasionally, however, the text alludes to technical

there are some curious omissions, deliberate or otherwise (such as the failure to include the third and fourth *nirvedhabhāgīya-dharmas*).⁴⁶

Reading the *Chan Essentials* as a sequence does not seem to be compatible with reading it as five different methods of *chan* aimed at five different kinds of practitioners, for in that case we would expect each practice to eventually lead, on its own, to the highest goal, something that the individual sutras sometimes even say is possible (see for example 1.175). The sutra narratives, which attempt to link each narrative to a different method of *chan*, and the numbered sequence, which takes the entire *Chan Essentials* as a single path, clearly did not originate at the same time. Either the 30-part structure was added atop the four sutras complete with their narratives, or the four sutra narratives were used to reorganize a single text that originally outlined a complete path.

For its part the *Methods for Curing* follows a different arrangement. The first sutra begins with a story about a group of monks practicing *chan* who, owing to a disturbance as they are immersed in the “contemplation of the wind element” (風大觀), are driven into “madness” (發狂), such that when they emerge from meditation they become “unrestrained” (不可禁制), which here appears to be euphemistic for the violation of the precepts. The Buddha then provides a method for “curing” (治) these monks using a series of imaginative meditations,⁴⁷ and the remainder of the sutra gives similar methods for other problems that might arise during *chan* practice. The medical and soteriological dimensions of this “curing” are intertwined here in a remarkable fashion that is worthy of a more sustained investigation.⁴⁸ Meanwhile the short second sutra of the *Methods for Curing* gives techniques to help practitioners of *chan* avoid the attacks of demons.⁴⁹ Here too there seems to be some connection to the problem of meditators who violate the precepts, for one of the chief consequences of these demonic attacks are

understandings that appear to parallel what is known from Vaibhāṣika sources. Thus, for example, in section 1.111 the text mentions that upon attaining the stage of “summit” (*mūrdhan*) “though the practitioner may again backslide he will have definitively escaped the three evil realms of rebirth.” Vaibhāṣika sources meanwhile say that “summit” (*mūrdhan*) is the highest stage in which backsliding is still possible, and that acquisition of the fruits becomes assured only with the attainment of “acceptance” (Buswell 1997b, 455–458; see also Lin 1949, 293–294). Though the *Chan Essentials* thus presents a different understanding, it seems to be addressing the same set of doctrinal concerns.

46 I do not know how to explain this omission, though note that we do find a stage higher than “summit,” the “accessory to the summit” (助頂法, 3.24). One speculative explanation for the absence of a clear discussion of stages higher than *mūrdhan* would be that some attempt is being made to allow for both *śrāvaka* and *bodhisattva* goals. Indeed according to Vaibhāṣika doctrine once a practitioner has obtained the stage of acceptance (*kṣanti*) it becomes impossible to switch from the *śrāvaka-yāna* to any other *yāna* (Lin 1949, 294).

47 The word “cure” (治) is also used in a *vinaya* context to denote successfully confession and purification after a transgression. The connection between insanity and violation of the precepts is, moreover, an important one in the *vinaya* because one who is “insane” (*mūḍha*) is not responsible for transgressions (Clarke 1999, 166). Even more interesting, the *vinaya* also contains something called the “procedure for the removal of insanity” (*amūḍha-vinaya*), in which a monk is formally declared “not insane.” The purpose of this, however, is to make it official that previously the monk *was* insane, and hence not responsible for actions committed at that time. See for example the provisions in the *Mahāsaṅghika-vinaya* (T.1425:22.332a12–c19).

48 For a study of certain portions of the text in light of other healing practices in medieval Chinese Buddhism, see Salguero 2010, 201–214. The text is also briefly discussed by Birnbaum 1989.

49 This section of the *Methods for Curing* also circulated independently (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.30c8).

nocturnal emissions, said to constitute a transgression (see 6.5).

The *Methods for Curing* thus differs from the *Chan Essentials* in that it provides not methods for practicing *chan*, but remedies for problems that occur when practicing *chan*. Below I will suggest the possibility that the *Methods for Curing* and the *Chan Essentials* were originally a single collection, and if this is so we can easily imagine the *Methods for Curing* serving as a kind of appendix. Indeed many passages in the *Chan Essentials* mention that physical problems might arise as a result of meditation practice, and various remedies are proposed. Monks who practice *chan* are, for example, encouraged to eat meat, lest they “go mad” (發狂) and even die (1.98). Similarly the practitioner is told to consume “milk-based medicines” (酥藥) between meditation sessions so as to avoid dangerous bodily ailments. Interestingly the *Chan Essentials* mentions the possibility of such ailments primarily in sections discussing the so-called contemplation of the four elements (四大觀) within the body. This same meditation practice is mentioned the *Methods for Curing* as a potential source of illness, and the idea here seems to stem from the basic Indian Buddhist explanation that physical maladies result from imbalances of the four elements of the body.

Beyond merely taking medicines or regulating one’s diet, however, the *Chan Essentials* also occasionally gives “meditative” methods for curing such problems similar to what are found throughout the *Methods for Curing*. In section 1.129, for example, the meditator must perform a “restorative contemplation” (補想觀) by imagining various gods pour medicine into and over his body. This practice must be continued for three months, only after which should the meditator continue with his training. Though given here rather briefly, this section of the *Chan Essentials* is similar to in style and tone to the practices in the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing*. The *Methods for Curing* thus seems to represent, at least in part, a more thorough explanation of the various “healing” (治) meditations that will be necessary as one progresses through the system of the *Chan Essentials*.

Compared with other fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts, the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* show a clear similarity to the *Five Gates*, specifically to the “format A” sections, which as discussed in chapter one emphasize elaborate visions at the expense of the detailed analysis of mind and mental states more usually seen in meditation texts. These visions are, I suggested, “verificatory visions.” Seeing such things confirms that a given stage or level of practice has been reached. In the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* such visions are described in even greater detail. To take an example at random from the first sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, a meditator who successfully contemplates his skeleton will then see:

adamantine mountains on all four sides around him. He further sees the ground in front of him as like adamant. He further sees the dragons going up and down the tree, spewing forth pellets of diamond. The tree is thus made secure, and the elephants are unable to move it. There is only the water of five colors, which emerges from the trunk of the tree, flows up into its branches, and reaching top [of the tree] flows back down through the leaves, branches, and trunk.⁵⁰

50 爾時行者，見[已]{己}四邊，有金剛山。復見前地，猶如金剛。復見諸龍，尋樹上下，吐金剛珠。樹遂堅固，象不能動。唯五色水，從樹{莖}上出，仰流樹枝，從於樹端，下流葉間，乃至樹[莖]{莖}。

A large percentage of the *Chan Essentials* is devoted to describing such visions, presented as the “verificatory visions” (*jing jing* 境界) that necessarily appear upon reaching a given stage, and whose occurrence thus verifies the attainment in question. It is rarely explained *why* any particular vision symbolizes the stage that it does, though sometimes we can guess. When the meditator is about to obtain the stage of stream-entry (*śrotāpanna*), for example, he has a vision of eighty-eight snakes being consumed by fire (3.56), and this almost certainly refers to the Sarvāstivādin doctrine that one becomes a *śrotāpanna* upon severing 88 of the 98 defilements (*anuśaya*).⁵¹ Similarly throughout the first sutra the meditator’s progress towards liberation, that is to say the elimination of all 98 defilements, is mirrored concretely in a slowly developing vision of a team of elephants that attempts to tear down a giant tree with 98 roots. The tree itself may represent the meditator’s own bodily existence, for when the roots of the tree are severed and the branches destroyed, “the heartwood remains,” perhaps comparable to an arhat’s bodily existence, continuing after liberation like a tree that produces no more fruits (see section 1.174).

While we may thus infer some of the symbolic meaning of the various images in these visions, successfully reaching the indicated attainment is not predicated on such knowledge. In the *Five Gates* this was made clear by the structure of the master-disciple dialog (see chapter one)—only having reported his experience does the master explain to the meditator its significance. Hints that this understanding also prevails in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* occurs in a ritual of repentance in the first sutra of the *Method for Curing* (this ritual will be analyzed in detail in chapter five). As part of the rite the practitioner’s master assigns various “contemplations” similar to those found throughout the *Chan Essentials*:

Oh monk, contemplate your body as like a golden vase filled with four poisonous snakes, two of which go upwards and two of which go downwards, each spewing poison and very frightful. Next contemplate one dragon with six heads who encircles the vase and spews poison that drips into the mouths of the snakes. A great tree [that covers] the four directions emerges from from the golden vase and fills the three worlds. The black elephant approaches and tries to uproot the tree. On all four sides fire springs forth.⁵²

But only after actually seeing these things in his meditation does the teacher then explain to the practitioner their meaning. The four snakes, for example, are the four elements of the body.⁵³

“Seeing” the four elements within the body is, in other words, not presented here as a “direct” experience. One does not necessarily know just what it is that one has seen. But this is not a problem because seeing such things is not primarily a means of perceiving or gaining knowledge of them. Rather to “see” the four elements is to have reached a certain meditative

(1.141). The full critical apparatus for this and all other passages from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are found in appendix three.

51 On becoming a *śrotāpanna* in Sarvāstivādin sources, see *Jñānaprasthāna* (*A pi tan ba jian du lun* 阿毘曇八捷度論, T.1543:26.811a2–3) and *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.300c25–27).

52 智者應當告言：比丘，汝今自觀汝身，猶如金瓶盛四毒蛇，二上二下，吐毒可畏。復觀一龍六頭繞瓶，龍亦吐毒，滴蛇口中。四方大樹，從金瓶出，遍三界。黑象復來，欲拔此樹，四面火起。(5.69)

53 5.70

attainment, in this case the “contemplation of impurity,”⁵⁴ and seeing the four snakes counts as this whether one knows what they are or not. That meditative “seeing” takes the form not of direct perceptions but of the apprehension of apparently symbolic images is an idea found also in the *Yogalehrbuch*, the fragmentary Sanskrit meditation text from Central Asia that scholars have seen as the closest surviving Indic parallel to the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*.⁵⁵ This text too emphasizes the elaborate visions that meditators encounter, and like the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* explanation of the meaning of the individual images is rare. But we do find a few passages describing the “signs” (*nimitta*) of certain abstract categories from Buddhist doctrinal analysis, and the idea here seems quite similar.⁵⁶

All of this fits, I believe, with the understanding that these meditation texts are concerned not so much with an analysis of the different states of consciousness that meditation will produce, or even with the different techniques of mental training that need be deployed to reach these states, but with the question of just what kind of experiences those who actually reach such states will have; in other words, how one can know when these attainments have occurred. That certain Buddhist meditations involves, for example, coming to “see” the four elements of the body (and hence realize its lack of self, or its impurity) is of course well known, and such ideas are repeated throughout Buddhist texts. But just what exactly does this mean? How does one know if one has actually “seen” the four elements? Perhaps equally importantly, how could one know if someone else had seen them? These texts try to provide an answer to such questions. States of meditation are verified not by direct phenomenological analysis of their characteristics qua states of mind, but by seeing specific “symbolic” images.

The *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* as apocryphal sutras

Before proceeding any further we must now address the status of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* as “apocryphal,” that is to say Chinese-authored scriptures. To my knowledge Tsukinowa Kenryū, in an addendum to his study of the Contemplation Scriptures, was the first person to suggest that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* might be Chinese compositions rather than, as they purport to be, the translations of Indian scriptures.⁵⁷ Although the Chinese Buddhist bibliographic tradition never raised any doubts about these texts, Tsukinowa noticed that ancient catalogs attribute them to two translators to whom are also

54 As will be discussed in chapter five, in the context of this ritual having officially attained the “contemplation of impurity” is significant because this serves as proof that one’s repentance has been successful.

55 On the so-called *Yogalehrbuch*, see p.51.

56 In one passage, for example, the meditator sees the “signs” (*nimitta*) of the six elements (*mahābhūta*) as four snakes (for earth, water, fire, and wind), a conch (*śaṅkha*) for the element of space (*ākāśa*), and a child’s face (*bālādārakhamukha*) for consciousness (*vijñāna*). See Schlingloff 1964, 87; Ruegg 1967, 165. Here the meditator is seeing the six elements within an embryo. He then sees the embryo develop, and the *nimitta* of consciousness changes at each stage. Note that in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* snakes also refer to the four primary elements.

57 Tsukinowa 1971, 102–109. Demiéville suggested that the individual sutras of these texts may have been artificially grouped together, but he did not question their authenticity as translations (Demiéville 1954, 362n1).

ascribed some of the Contemplation Scriptures.⁵⁸ Having concluded that the Contemplation Scriptures were Chinese forgeries, Tsukinowa assessed the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* similarly.

Although Tsukinowa was correct that these two texts share distinctive linguistic features with the Contemplation Scriptures, as Yamabe Nobuyoshi has discussed in the case of the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, the evidence Tsukinowa musters for these texts' apocryphal status is often unconvincing, largely a matter of unusual terms and expressions that he hastily concluded, *ex silentio*, could not possibly have come from an Indic original.⁵⁹ Though these texts do contain many peculiar turns of phrase, Tsukinowa at times stretches credulity in his unwillingness to look for alternative explanations. Thus, for example, he interprets the word *a li le* 阿梨勒 found in the *Methods for Curing* as “fake” Sanskrit invented by a Chinese author.⁶⁰ He either did not realize, or did not mention, that we need assume only a slight orthographic correction to arrive at *he li le*, 訶梨勒 (*harītakī*), an Indian fruit mentioned in numerous unquestionably authentic Chinese Buddhist translations.⁶¹ Thus what Tsukinowa thought was “fake” Sanskrit was simply a textual error. Many of his other objections to supposedly questionable terminology are similarly unconvincing.

But Tsukinowa's errors do serve the useful purpose of reminding us that it is often easy to find “strange” or “Chinese” elements in these or indeed any text if one sets out with such a goal. This is true even on levels somewhat deeper than the lexical peculiarities noted by Tsukinowa. For example the *Methods for Curing* instructs those meditating on the four primary elements of earth, water, fire and wind,⁶² to align their practice with the seasons, meditating on the fire element in the spring (春) and the earth element in the autumn (秋).⁶³ To a Sinologist this passage stands out immediately. Not only are correlations between the seasons and specific meditation practices unheard of (or nearly so) in an Indian Buddhist context, they seem perfectly natural in China. Indeed when I first read this passage I was convinced that it showed evidence of the influence of non-Buddhist Chinese meditation practices.

However closer examination shows that the correlation here is likely derived from Indian Buddhist medical theories. Thus in Dharmakṣema's early fifth-century translation of the *Suvarṇabhāṣottama-sūtra* (*Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經), the four seasons—“rainy” (*varṣaḥ*), “autumn” (*śāradam*), “cold” (*hemantaḥ*), and “hot” (*grīṣma*),⁶⁴ translated as “summer” (*xia* 夏), “autumn” (*qiu* 秋), “winter” (*dong* 冬), and “spring” (*chun* 春) respectively⁶⁵—are correlated with the three “humors” (*doṣa*) of Indian Āyurvedic medicine, “wind” (*vāta*), “bile” (*pitta*), and “phlegm” (here *kapha*, but more often *śleṣman*), and their “combination” (*saṃnipāta*) as the

58 What the catalogs say about these two texts is somewhat more complicated than Tsukinowa assumed, and I will discuss this question in more detail below.

59 Yamabe 1999b, 186–195

60 Tsukinowa 1971, 105

61 This fruit is usually referred to as a potent medicine, and this is indeed the context here (see 5.7).

62 The contemplation of the four elements plays an important role in the *Chan Essentials*, and they occur most prominently in the third sutra where they are correlated, albeit not perfectly precisely, with the attainment of the four fruits.

63 5.16–5.17

64 Nobel 1937, 178

65 T.663:16.351c29–352a1

fourth.⁶⁶

According to basic Indian medical theory illness results from an excess of one of the humors, and the *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra* links such illnesses to the seasons. Thus illnesses resulting from an excess of phlegm occur during the hot season, *grīṣma*, “spring” (春) in Dharmakṣema’s translation. In general Indian medical theories link phlegm (*kapha* / *śleṣman*) with cold.⁶⁷ Thus if “spring” (春) in the *Methods for Curing* refers to the Indian season *grīṣma*, entering the “fire *samādhi*” at this time can be seen as the normal way to cure or avoid the phlegm (cold) illnesses prone to arise at this time.⁶⁸

Of course a Chinese author could have easily drawn on the above theories, since they were available in Dharmakṣema’s Chinese translation. The point is simply that we need not assume influence from a supposedly Chinese propensity to correlate with the seasons in order to understand this section of the *Methods for Curing*, and this shows in a particularly clear fashion that judgments of a Chinese origin based on surface impressions can be risky, especially when one begins by looking for evidence of “native” Chinese thought.⁶⁹

I stress these points not because Tsukinowa’s conclusions turn out to be wrong—indeed that these texts were not simply translated from Indic originals is almost certainly correct—but to show that Tsukinowa’s analysis of the texts as blatant Chinese forgeries is inaccurate. Indeed

66 Other contemporaneous texts containing Indian medical theories translated into Chinese sometimes spoke of only three seasons, easily linked to the three *doṣa*. Thus the Eastern Jin translation of the **Triskandha-dharma* (*San fan du lun* 三法度論) lists three seasons, “summer” 夏, “winter” 冬, and “spring” 春, prone to produce bile (*pitta*; 澹), phlegm (*śleṣman*; 涎唾) and wind (*vāta*; 風) illnesses respectively (T.1506:25.26a23–26).

67 For this reason in many Chinese translations we find *śleṣman* (or *kapha*) translated as “cold,” *leng* 冷, which Pierce Salguero argues was an attempt to correlate Indian medical theories with Chinese ones (Salguero 2010, 123–129). In Dharmakṣema’s translation here, for example, phlegm illness is translated as “lung illness” (肺病). This makes sense, Salguero suggests, when we consider that in Chinese medicine the lungs were strongly associated with *yin* 陰 (cold) illnesses. Eventually, however, the Chinese settled on a direct translation of *śleṣman* / *kapha* as *tan* 痰, a new concept that eventually entered Chinese medical discourse (Endō et al., 1993).

68 The link between “spring” and “cold” (phlegm) illnesses is also mentioned in the short *Fo yi jing* 佛醫經 (T.793:17.737a28–29), an anonymous text of unknown origin that was an important source in China for Indian Buddhist medical theories. Like the *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra* the *Fo yi jing* links wind illness to “summer” (*varṣah*) and “heat” (bile) illnesses to autumn. For winter, however, where the *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra* gives “combination” (*saṃnipāta*), the *Fo yi jing* says that there are prone to be both wind and cold illnesses.

69 Note, however, that I am not able to fully explain the correlation between autumn and the earth element. Though Buddhist medical theories regularly connect the three *doṣa* to three of the four *mahābhūta* (wind → wind; bile → fire; phlegm → water), the earth element (*prthivī*) is usually not linked a single *doṣa*, but associated with illness arising from the “combination” of the three *doṣa*, what the *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra* says will tend to occur in winter (Fukunaga 1980, 57). Nevertheless this was not the only such system. The *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, for example, uses the pair hot / cold rather than the three *doṣa*. “Heat” illnesses are then associated with an excess of either the earth element or the fire element (and cold with with wind / water). Note that this theory would be antithetical to the *Methods for Curing*, for we would not expect the earth element *samādhi* to counteract the “heat” illnesses of autumn. On the other hand the *Fo yi jing* 佛醫經 (on which see the previous note) links excess of the earth element only to excess “energy” (力), while linking the remaining three elements to the three *doṣa* (T.793:17.737a25–27). What “energy” might mean here is not clear. In any event the connection between autumn (*śārada*) and “heat” (bile, *pitta*) illnesses is widely attested. But I have not found any explanation for why the earth element *samādhi* could be expected to counteract this.

though it is customary to divide Chinese Buddhist scriptures into the two hermetically sealed categories of authentic translations and Chinese compositions, many texts fall in between. Japanese scholar Funayama Tōru has suggested referring to such texts as “compiled scriptures” (*henshū kyōten* 編集經典).⁷⁰ Such “compiled scriptures” were produced in a number of distinct fashions, and examples that can be documented include texts written in Chinese by Indian authors, excerpts or rearrangements of previously translated texts,⁷¹ and even entirely new texts put together on the basis of passages culled from multiple previously translated Indian texts.⁷²

Given their diverse methods of composition it is difficult to formulate a universal methodology for studying such texts. As Funayama points out, it would be too hasty to conclude that, having been created in China, such texts are irrelevant for the study of India, and the lectures of an Indian Buddhist master written down in China might well contain much otherwise unavailable information about Indian Buddhism. At the same time such material will surely bear some mark of the Chinese context, and this is especially so for cases where previously translated texts were rearranged or modified by a Chinese author. At the same time these texts will likely reflect the Chinese context rather differently than do “apocryphal” texts written by individuals with limited knowledge of Indian Buddhism, or with the expressed purpose of reconciling Buddhist ideas with indigenous Chinese beliefs or practices.

Tsukinowa’s evaluation of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* thus needs to be refined, and below I will attempt to determine exactly what evidence we have for their Chinese composition. The picture that emerges is of texts that were indeed assembled in China, by Chinese authors and editors, but which drew the majority of their inspiration from Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist texts or other similar sources. For the sake of clarity I will divide the evidence into four categories:⁷³ 1) misunderstanding of key Indic terms, 2) direct borrowing from previously translated texts, and 3) incorporation of clearly Chinese concepts. Following these in a separate section I will discuss the strongest evidence of all, a Chinese text that served as the precursor to the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials*.

1) Misunderstanding of Indic terms

In a number of cases the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* employ, in the same passage and clearly not as synonyms, multiple versions of the same Indic technical term using two different Chinese renderings. A reoccurring case is the “three gates to deliverance” (*san jie tuo men* 三解脫門; *vimokṣa-mukha*), three essentials steps along the path in which the meditator has insight into “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*) “signlessness” (*animitta*), and “desirelessness” (*apraṇihita*). By the fifth-century the Chinese translations of the first two were relatively fixed, *kong* 空 and *wu xiang* 無相 respectively. However the third term, *apraṇihita*, was regularly

70 Funayama 2002, 2007.

71 Such excerpts were known in catalogs as *chao jing* 抄經, “scriptural extracts.” Bibliographers often expressed concern that while useful as teachings tools such works could easily become the heretical composition of new scriptures (Tokuno 1990, 39–40).

72 The existence of such texts has been noted by other scholars as well (Ishibashi 1991)

73 Here and in the next section I discuss only evidence internal to the texts themselves. External evidence, in the form of catalog entries and so forth, will be taken up later.

translated in two different ways: *wu yuan* 無願, “non-wishing,” and *wu zuo* 無作, “non-arising,” translations that reflect two slightly different interpretations of the word.

In the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, however, we often find all four items in a single list.⁷⁴ We even find a case where the author seems to have realized that only three such terms were called for, but instead of omitting one of the two translations of *apraṇihita* (無願 or 無作) instead omits the term for *animitta* (*wu xiang* 無相).⁷⁵ The inescapable conclusion is that the author(s) were drawing from their knowledge of *translated* Chinese Buddhist scriptures and, attempting to be inclusive, failed to realize that *wu yuan* 無願 and *wu zuo* 無作 refer to the same thing.⁷⁶

There are a number of other similar examples. One passage, for example, says that the meditator should practice not only the “four unlimited minds” (*apramāṇa*; 四無量心), but also the “four practices of Brahmā” (*brāhma-vihāra*; 四梵行), two different terms for one and the same set of meditative practices.⁷⁷ A similar situation occurs in a list of the stages of the developing embryo, a sequence that comes up during the contemplation of impurity. Here, the transcription and translation of the same Indic term are treated as distinct items.⁷⁸

A misunderstanding of a different kind occurs in the fourth sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, whose protagonist is a disciple of Mahākāśyapa named Agnidatta 阿祇達多, who “cultivates the ascetic practices and follows the twelve *dhūtas*.”⁷⁹ However Agnidatta is also described here as an “ascetic Nigrantha’s son” (苦得尼捷子兒). Something peculiar is going on here, as the term *ni ta zi* 尼捷子 is a common transcription of the figure who appears in Pāli texts under the name *Nigaṇṭhanātaputta*, “the Nigaṇṭha, son of Nāta,” leader of rival group of ascetics and historically identified as Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. The *Chan Essentials* thus seems to say that this Agnidatta is Mahāvīra. While there may be other explanations,⁸⁰ it would seem that the author of

74 See 2.56, 5.112. In some cases it is absolutely clear that these are intended as four separate items because different explanations are given for each (4.64). This further shows that the inclusion of all four could not have simply been the result of a confusion during the process of translation itself.

75 1.175

76 That all four of these terms do occur together in certain other texts, though never in the context of the *vimokṣa-mukha*, may have added further confusion (see for example *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經, T.278:9.475a3–5).

77 4.87. Some Chinese translations of Indian texts use these two terms in such a way that, without prior knowledge, they could easily be mistaken for separate practices (e.g. *Chang a han jing* 長阿含經, T.1:1.100b8–15).

78 “[Where is the self] at the time when father and mother have joined the red and white essences [at conception]? At the stage [that reassembles] milk-curds (*ghana*)? At the stage [that resembles] a foamy bubble? At the stage [called] *kalala*? At the stage [called] *arbuda*?” 父母和合赤白精時，如乳肥時，如泡時，如是歌羅邏時，如安浮陀時。(1.121). *Bao* 泡, “foamy bubble,” is almost certainly a translation of *arbuda*, “like a swelling,” and is used as such in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* (T.618:15.315c23–24). Other translations of the stages of the developing embryo use the very similar *bao* 胞 (*Bie yi za a han jing* 別譯雜阿含經, T.100:2.476b18–19, corresponding to SN, 1.205). However *an fu tuo* 安浮陀, also in this passage from the *Chan Essentials*, is itself a transcription of *arbuda* (see for example *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, T.374:12.446a27). The same problem occurs with *kalala* 歌羅邏, given in transcription, but whose meaning is the stage when the white and red essences from father and mother (sperm and blood) have first joined. This is thus already covered by the first item in the list (on the meaning of *kalala*, see *Glossary of Indian Words*, T.2130:54.986a18; *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.90a9–10; and *Glosses on the Canon*, T.2128:54.473c20).

79 4.2

80 We might read *er* 兒 as a separate word. Thus perhaps the text is trying to say that Agnidatta is the son (or

the *Chan Essentials*, relying on Chinese translations where it is rarely made explicit that the “Nigrantha’s son” is a proper name,⁸¹ took this word (*ni ta zi* 尼捷子) as a *generic* reference to practitioners of austerities, such that it might also characterize a Buddhist monk.

2) Borrowing from previously translated Chinese texts

The *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* contain a number of direct borrowings from previously translated Chinese Buddhist texts.⁸² Generally not extensive, these point not so much to deliberate copying but to a gradual process, involving either intermediate texts that are now lost, or else simply key passages and phrases filtering from popular sutras into the consciousness of literate Buddhists, who then used them in the composition of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* without necessarily being aware of their origins.⁸³

a) In several passages from both texts the practitioner sees the four elements of his body in the form of snakes (*she* 蛇), often described rather enigmatically as “two going up and two doing down” (二上二下).⁸⁴ This expression appears to derive from Dharmakṣema’s early fifth-century translation of the *Suvarṇa-bhāṣottama-sūtra* (*Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經), where the four elements are compared to four snakes and are described using this expression.⁸⁵ In the original passage the words “two going up and two going down” describe how the body’s elements disperse at death, wind and fire ascending and water and earth sinking.⁸⁶ While by itself this short, four-character phrase could easily be an independent translation, one of the passages from the *Chan Essentials* (4.34) also includes, immediately following, the words “and so too, two-fold in all directions” (諸方亦二), which also occurs in Dharmakṣema’s translation, immediately after the words “two going up and two going down.”⁸⁷ Since there is no other obvious

disciple?) of Mahāvīra. This, however, is equally strange, and nothing else gives any reason to take Angidatta as a non-Buddhist, and indeed he is introduced simply as Mahākāśyapa’s student.

81 We may also note that Mahāvīra appears almost exclusively in the Āgamas, translated into Chinese in large numbers only beginning from the late fourth century. In other words during the first half of the fifth century this Indian name may have still been somewhat unfamiliar even to educated Buddhists.

82 These borrowings also help establish a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*. The latest datable text from which the *Chan Essentials* borrows is Dharmakṣema’s translation of the *Suvarṇabhāṣottama-sūtra*, which according to Chen Jinhua’s exhaustive study was completed no earlier than 420 and no later than 431 (Chen 2004, 258). Note that other scholars favor the slightly earlier date of 412; see Funayama 1995, 9). In the case of the *Methods for Curing*, the latest relevant text is Buddhahadra’s translation of the *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī-sūtra* (佛說出生無量門持經), which the *Records of the Canon* reports was translated sometime between 410 and 420.

83 For a few other cases see the footnotes to sections 4.75, 4.76, 5.18, and 5.117.

84 1.81, 1.86, 4.34 and 5.69.

85 T.663:16.340b1–6

86 The Sanskrit here reads “these snake-elements are fourfold, two are ascending, two descending” (Emmerick 1970, 21), *dhāturaḡās te ca caturvidhāni / dve ūrdhvagāmī dvaya heṣṭagāmī* (Nobel 1937, 58). That this concerns the fate of the elements at death is clear from the next line, which explains that consciousness, for its part, “goes [to a new destiny] in accord with previous karma” *gatvā yathā pūrvakṛtena karmaṇā* (ibid).

87 This rather mysterious Chinese phrase corresponds to *dvayādvayaṃ diśavidīśāsu sarvā* (Nobel 1937, 58), translated by Emmerick as “by twos they go in the directions and subdirections” (Emmerick 1970, 21). The context here is again the dispersal of the elements at death.

connection in content here, I would suggest that these expressions for the nature of the four elements had become common, taken up by the author of the *Chan Essentials* without necessarily having been lifted directly from Dharmakṣema's translation.

b) A similar case occurs in several unusual descriptions of the Buddha's physical form within the practice of "contemplating the image" (*guan xiang* 觀像) in section 2.9 of the *Chan Essentials*.⁸⁸ Here we find a number of short, eight-character phrases taken verbatim from the *Suvarṇa-bhāṣottama-sūtra*.⁸⁹ Again I suspect that this was not a direct copying, but the result of a more complicated process, one for which the presence of Dharmakṣema's translation was nonetheless a necessary precursor.

c) More explicit borrowing occurs in section 5.61 of the *Methods for Curing* where the first several couplets of a long verse have been taken directly from Kumārajīva's translation of the *Pūrṇa-paripṛcchā* (*Pu sa zang jing* 菩薩藏經).⁹⁰

d) A similarly clear case occurs in a section of the *Methods for Curing* that provides a cure for the diarrhea (!) that may afflict those who enter the "water element *samādhi*" (水三昧).⁹¹ To cure this condition the practitioner must meditate upon the statue or image of the "great god of the snowy mountains" (雪山大神) named Uttaraga (鬱多伽), who will then appear to the practitioner along with eleven "gods of white radiance" (白光神). Uttaraga himself and the final three of the eleven gods are otherwise unknown,⁹² but the names of the remaining eight gods are taken directly from Buddhahadra's translation of the of the *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī-sūtra* (*Chu sheng wu liang men chi jing* 出生無量門持經), where they are the eight protector deities "of the snowy mountains."⁹³ Eight different Chinese translations of this text survive, along with a Tibetan version and Sanskrit and Khotanese fragments. Buddhahadra's version, translated no later than 420, was widely used in south China during the fifth century.⁹⁴ There is moreover little doubt

88 The section on "contemplating the image" from the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* contains many similar descriptions, whose origins in previously translated Chinese texts are documented by Yamabe (1999b, 217–245).

89 2.9, paralleling phrases from *Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經, T.663:16.339a14–25.

90 The *Records of the Canon* attributes this translation to Kumārajīva (T.2145:55.11a2). The text has now been incorporated into the *Ratnakūṭa* (*Da bao ji jing* 大寶集經) collection. For the verse, see T.310:11.446c11–14. There is a Tibetan translation of the *Pūrṇa-paripṛcchā* from the Chinese (BKD, 9:237). Since this verse is a general lament on the perils of craving and the impurity of the body, it could easily have become a well-known aphorism, and thereupon been incorporated into the *Methods for Curing*.

91 5.86–5.91.

92 On the possible source of the name Uttaraga, see the notes to passage 5.88 in appendix three.

93 T.1012:19.684c11–16. The *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī* is an important "proto-Tantric" text, and is the earliest known source to discuss seed-syllables (*akṣarabīja* 種子), which appear already in the third-century translation. Among Japanese scholars the text has attracted attention because it recounts the practice and awakening of Amitayus (無量壽佛). The earliest translation (T.1012) is attributed to Zhi Qian 支謙 (d. 252), which appears to be correct (Nattier 2008, 141–142).

94 It is mentioned, for example, among seventeen texts hand copied by the imperial prince and Buddhist devotee Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良 (460–495), kept in his library (*Qi tai zai jing ling wen xuan wang fa ji lu* 齊太宰竟陵文宣

that these names ultimately come from Buddhahadra's translation as they follow Buddhahadra's peculiar choice, unique among the eight Chinese versions, of translating all the names except one, Kumāra (鳩摩羅), inexplicably left as a transcription. That they appear in the *Methods for Curing* as part of a list of twelve rather than eight gods again suggests indirect borrowing.⁹⁵ If the cult to these gods, known under the names from Buddhahadra's translation, was widespread at the time, they may have been incorporated into the *Methods for Curing* simply from the background knowledge of the author/compiler.

3) Chinese concepts

In general neither the *Chan Essentials* nor the *Methods for Curing* makes use of categories, cosmology, or other elements of Chinese thought in a manner that would suggest something other than a translation. Nevertheless I have found at least one reference to a cosmological term from Chinese mythology suggesting that the author, at least here, was drawing on material that originated in China.⁹⁶

In section 5.102 of the *Methods for Curing*, among a list demons, there is mention of the “spirits of the whirlpool-burner mountain of the Avīci hell” (阿鼻地獄沃焦山神). The “whirlpool-burner mountain of the Avīci hell” appears to be a synthesis of Indian and Chinese cosmologies that developed sometime during the fifth century, eventually becoming a standard feature of the landscape of Chinese Buddhist hell.⁹⁷ While the Avīci hell is of course Buddhist, the “whirlpool-burner mountain” first appears in traditional Chinese cosmologies as a large rock in the middle of the eastern ocean where the waters of the sea are sucked in and then evaporated, thus preventing the sea from overflowing despite the continuous influx of the rivers.⁹⁸ In some sources this rock is said to be the remains of one of the suns shot down by the mythical archer Yi 羿.⁹⁹ The connection between the “whirlpool-burner” and the Avīci hell is thus, at first glance,

王法集錄; *Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.86b16). The other texts included in this collection were all important doctrinal and ritual texts of the fifth century.

95 The order of the names, moreover, differs from what is found in Buddhahadra's translation.

96 For two other terms that may show something similar, see my discussions of the “lung point” *fei yu* 肺腧 and “stomach gate” *wei guan* 胃管 in the notes to sections 1.11 and 5.39 in appendix three. These are both technical terms from the Chinese medical tradition.

97 For an encyclopedic study of the cosmology of Chinese hells during this period see Xiao 1989.

98 The earliest firm reference I have found is a citation from the lost *Zhuang zi* 莊子 commentary of Sima Biao 司馬彪 (ca. 237–306), preserved in the *Wen xuan* 文選 commentary to Ji Kang's 嵇康 *Yang sheng lun* 養生論 (cited in *Zhuang zi ji shi*, 565–566). Sima Biao explains the term 尾閭 from the *Zhuang zi*, whose meaning is obscure in the original passage, as “where the water of the rivers gathers.” This place, he says, is also known as the “whirlpool-burner” (沃焦), which he describes as a great whirlpool, with a round rock at the center, located in the far eastern ocean. The water pours into the whirlpool, evaporating as it hits the rock. Although in principle Sima Biao was writing after the introduction of Buddhism to China, this term does not appear in any surviving Buddhist texts from the period, and direct influence of Buddhist ideas on Western Jin literary figures such as Sima Biao is otherwise unattested. It seems far more likely that the term originated in a now-lost portion of the *Shan hai jing* 山海經 (see next note). On Sima Biao and his writings, see Mansvelt Beck 1990, 5–17.

99 This idea is found in Cheng Xuanying's 成玄瑛 Tang-dynasty commentary to the same *Zhuang zi* passage (see previous note). Cheng cites what he claims is a passage from the *Shan hai jing* 山海經 mentioning the

mysterious. However the “whirlpool-burner mountain” is also mentioned in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, where it is explained that the “whirlpool-burner mountain” is not merely a rock in the ocean, but the tip of a mountain extending down to the center of the Avīci hell.¹⁰⁰ Though the ultimate origin of this hybrid cosmology is not clear, it eventually became a popular Chinese way of localizing Avīci,¹⁰¹ and the passage from the *Methods for Curing* may in fact be one of the earliest attested examples of this.

Both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* thus contain overt confusions about Buddhist terminology (albeit confusions understandable even on the part of a well-read Chinese Buddhist of the time), passages borrowed or derived from previously translated Buddhist texts, and at least one synthesis of Buddhist and Chinese cosmologies. These points establish beyond any reasonable doubt that neither of these texts was the simple translation into Chinese of an integral Indic original. But how precisely these texts may have been formed is still far from clear. In the next section, however, I will show that at least part of the *Chan Essentials*, and potentially all of it, was written on the basis of previously existing Chinese meditation manuals that resembled the format A sections of the *Five Gates*.

The *Chan Essentials* and the *Five Gates*

I noted above that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are similar in some respects to the format A sections of the *Five Gates*. I will now show that this similarity is not coincidental. Indeed the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* seems to have been composed on the basis of either the *Five Gates* itself or another Chinese text resembling it in structure, content, and style. The dependence of the *Chan Essentials* on the *Five Gates* is entirely different than the direct or indirect borrowing of selected passages and phrases seen in the examples above. We see here a more complex process of composition, in which a comparatively simple Chinese meditation text such as the *Five Gates* (itself perhaps a translation) was expanded and recast into the more elaborate *Chan Essentials*, which is not only more detailed, but also framed as a sutra.

The correspondence between the two texts covers the entire third sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, paralleling a much shorter section of the *Five Gates*.¹⁰² While the *Five Gates* here is written in the distinctive master-disciple dialog format (see chapter one), the *Chan Essentials* is, as always, framed as the preaching of the Buddha, meditation instructions given to the monk

“whirlpool-burner” 沃焦 as the remains of one of the suns shot down by Yi 羿 (*Zhuang zi ji shi*, 566). Although this passage is not found in the extant versions of the *Shan hai jing*, it may well derive from a now lost passage, and if so this might be the source of the myth.

100T.643:15.668c27–29

101It is deployed, for example, in a passage much indebted to the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, in the *Ci bei dao chang chan fa* 慈悲道場懺法 (T.1909:45.939c4–7), a popular repentance liturgy attributed to emperor Wu of the Liang that remains in use today, particularly in Taiwan (Chappell 1998).

102To my knowledge the first person to have noticed this was Yamabe Nobuyoshi (1999b, 92). However Yamabe believed that the *Five Gates* here summarizes the *Chan Essentials*, which I will argue cannot be correct.

Panthaka. The parallels occur only within the portions of the *Chan Essentials* written as the speech of the Buddha, and the narrative elements of the *Chan Essentials* have no counterparts in the *Five Gates*. Structurally the question is thus whether the Buddha’s preaching in the *Chan Essentials* has been recast as a master-disciple dialog in the *Five Gates*, or vice versa.

The relevant section of the *Five Gates* is prefaced with a title, “Method for the initial practice of seated meditation” (初習坐禪法), and the beginning here lines up with the Buddha’s first instructions to Panthaka. Although extremely simplified in comparison, essential steps from each of the stages in the *Chan Essentials* also occur in the *Five Gates*. A number of exact or almost exactly worded phrases, indicated below in underlined bold-face type.

<i>Chan Essentials</i> (3.5–3.6)	<i>Five Gates</i> (T.619:15.327c18–21)
<p>佛告槃直迦：汝今應當諦觀脚大指節，令心不移。使指節上，漸漸疤起。復令臃脹。復當以意令此臃脹。漸大如豆。[彼]{復}當以意，使臃脹爛壞，皮肉兩披，黃膿流出。於黃膿間，血流滂滂。一節之上，肌膚爛盡，唯見右脚指節，白如珂雪。見一節已，從右脚漸漸廣大，乃至半身，臃脹爛壞，黃膿流血。令半身肌皮，皆兩向披，唯半身骨，皎然大白。見半身已，復見全身，一切臃脹，都已爛壞，膿血可惡。見諸[雄]{雜}蟲，遊戲其中。如是種種，亦如上者。觀見一已，復見二。見二已，復見三。見三已，復見四。見四已，復見五。見五已，乃至見十。見十已，心漸廣大，見一房中。見一房中已，乃至見一天下。</p> <p>The Buddha said to Panthaka: You should now carefully contemplate the bone of the large toe of your foot without distraction. Make a swelling gradually on top of the bone. Then further cause it to swell up. Next use your mind to make this swelling become gradually bigger until it is the size of a bean. Next use your mind to make the swelling rot away, such that the flesh splits open and yellow pus comes flowing out. Amid the yellow pus, blood flows profusely. When the flesh has entirely rotted away from atop the</p>	<p>先教注意觀右脚。 大指上見洪脹</p> <p>以意發[抓]{爪}却之。</p> <p>令黃汁流如膿血出。 肌肉爛盡已，唯見白骨。</p> <p>盡見，應廣教骨觀。若見滿一天下者，宜教大乘。若見近者，宜教小乘。</p> <p>First instruct [the practitioner] to concentrate his mind and contemplate his right foot. On top of the big toe [the practitioner] sees a swelling. Using his mind he should remove his toenail, and make a yellow liquid flow out [of the swelling], as if pus and blood were emerging.</p> <p>When the skin and flesh have rotted away, [the practitioner] sees only the white bones.</p>

<p>single bone, you will see only the bone of the right toe, white like <i>ke</i>-jade or snow.</p> <p>Having seen a single bone in this manner, gradually expand from the right foot until half the body swells up and then rots away, with yellow pus and flowing blood [coming out]. Make the skin and flesh of half the body split apart, with only the pure, shining white bones of half the body remaining. Having seen half the body [in this way], next see the entire body swell up and rot away, [leaking] horrible pus and blood. You will see various worms romping and playing within. The various things of this sort are as has been described earlier.</p> <p>Having contemplated [and] seen one [skeleton], [you must] next see two. Having seen two, next see three. Having seen three, next seen four. Having seen four, next see five. Having seen five, continue until you see ten. Having seen ten, the mind gradually expands, and you see a roomful. Having seen a roomful, continue until you see the entire world [filled with skeletons].</p>	<p>When [this] is completely seen, [the practitioner] should be further taught the bone contemplation. If [the practitioner then] sees the entire world [filled with skeletons], he should be instructed in the great vehicle. If he [only] sees [bones] nearby, he should be instructed in the small vehicle.</p>
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This rough correspondence continues for the entire third sutra of the *Chan Essentials*. As mentioned above the *Five Gates* contains no trace of the Panthaka narrative. And though we can discern it only vaguely from the first passage alone, the occasional verbatim correspondence, including certain unusual locutions (“with the mind” 以意), continues throughout, suggesting a direct relationship between these sections as Chinese texts. Finally while this initial passage from the *Five Gates* contains no explicit reference to it, the master-disciple dialog format seen in earlier sections of the *Five Gates*¹⁰³ returns explicitly in the ensuing sections, where the words that each party must speak are clearly given:

<i>Chan Essentials</i> (3.10–3.11 and 3.15–3.16)	<i>Five Gates</i> (T.619:15.327c27–328a1)
<p>復教更觀白骨。若見餘事，慎勿隨逐，但令此心，了了分明。見白骨人，如白雪山。若見餘物，起心滅除，當作是念：如來世</p>	<p>觀白骨。 若見餘物當語 [前]{行}¹⁰⁵人：此亦好耳，置是事，但觀白骨 [前當]{當前}¹⁰⁶。</p>

¹⁰³ See chapter one.

<p>尊，教我觀骨，云何乃有餘想境界。我今應當一心觀骨。</p> <p>[You, Panthaka] must be instructed to again contemplate the white bones. If however you see other things, under no circumstances should you follow after them [with your mind]. Merely make the mind clear, so that you see the white skeleton, like a snow-covered mountain.</p> <p>If you do see other things, rouse your mind and eliminate them, thinking as follows: “The Buddha has instructed me to contemplate the bones. Why do there appear these visions [produced by] the imagination of other [things]? I must now single-mindedly contemplate the bones.”</p> <p>[<i>narrative sequence</i>]¹⁰⁴</p> <p>然後自觀己身，見諸白骨，白如珂雪。時諸骨人還來入身，悉見白骨流光散滅。見此事已，行者自然心意和悅，恬靜無為。出定之時，頂上溫暖... 續復自見。身體溫暖，悅豫快樂，顏貌熙怡，恒少睡眠，身無苦患... 得此觀者，名和暖法。</p> <p>Afterward, [a practitioner] should contemplate his body and see the white bones,</p>	<p>[The practitioner should] contemplate the white bones.</p> <p>If he sees other things, [the master] should say to the practitioner: “This too is good.¹⁰⁷ But for now, put this aside and only contemplate the white bones. Then you will make progress.”</p> <p>若久觀白骨，云：我身中覺煖，教令續觀。 見煖覺已，安隱和悅者，此是煖法。</p> <p>If [the practitioner] contemplates the white bones for a long time and says:</p>
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104At this point Panthaka uses the prescribed method and becomes an arhat. The Buddha then continues his instructions, now addressing Ānanda, and the correspondence with the *Five Gates* resumes.

106I am unable to make sense of 前當, and I have emended to 當前. We might also interpret 當前 as “right before you.” My reading of 前 as a verb is in light of the previous passage (not included above): “[The practitioner] must see the white bones, for only then will he progress” (要見白骨乃前; 327c26). Here too, however, the precise meaning is debatable, and 白骨乃前 might be a clumsy attempt to translate “the white bones right before you.”

105An emendation seems necessary here, and the term *xing ren* 行人, “practitioner,” appears frequently in the remainder of this section. Another, more complicated possibility might be to read 前 as an error for 師, and further take 人 as an error for 言, yielding: 若見餘物，當語師。言：此亦好耳, which we could understand as “If [the practitioner] sees other things, he should tell this to the master. [The master] says: ‘This is also good.’” A similar sequence of 白師 followed by 師言, in which the disciple reports to the master and the master gives further instruction, is found in several other passages in the *Five Gates* (T.619:15.326a1, a10, a17, a26, a28, b9, b22, c3, 328b20). Of these only the last occurs in the section with parallels in the *Chan Essentials*. Moreover all involve the verb 白, not 語 as we would have to assume here.

107This almost colloquial sounding expression is similar to the words uttered by the master elsewhere.

<p>white like <i>ke</i>-jade or snow. Then, the skeletons reenter his body, and the glowing light of the white bones entirely disappears.</p> <p>Having seen this, the practitioner suddenly feels joyous and serene. When he emerges from trance the top of his head feels warm . . . Continuing his contemplation, his body becomes warm, he feels joyful and happy, his countenance appears serene, he needs but little sleep, and his body is free of all pain or trouble. . . . When this contemplation has been obtained it is called the stage of “heat.”</p>	<p>“I feel heat within my body,” then instruct him to continue contemplating.</p> <p>When [the practitioner] feels peaceful and happy following the appearance of a feeling of warmth, this is the stage of “heat.”¹⁰⁸</p>
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Once again the *Chan Essentials* is vastly more developed than the *Five Gates*, but both texts share the same general sequence, the name of the stage the practitioner reaches, and a few short but interesting phrases. Here, moreover, we clearly see in the *Five Gates* the master-disciple dialog found elsewhere in the text, including the words that the master must say to the student, and the visions or other experiences that the disciple reports, phrased here as first-person utterances in the form “I see” (我見). While the word “master” (師) itself does not appear in the above passages,¹⁰⁹ it does occur later within this section,¹¹⁰ suggesting that it is implied here as well.

How are these two texts related? On the one hand the *Five Gates* might be a summary of the *Chan Essentials*, a distillation of the long instructions to their essential elements.¹¹¹ This interpretation encounters a problem, however, because the master-disciple dialog format occurs throughout the “format A” sections, including those that have no parallels in the *Chan Essentials*. Thus if the *Five Gates* were summarizing the *Chan Essentials*, we would have to explain why it does so using the same, unusual format shared by portions of the text that have no relation to the *Chan Essentials* at all. We might, of course, imagine ways to account for this. Perhaps all the “format A” sections are summaries of different meditation texts (most of which are lost), adapted, for reasons unknown, to a similar master-disciple dialog format.

However a closer look at the parallel passages reveals that the *Chan Essentials* has grown out of a text that shared the same master-disciple dialog format as the *Five Gates*. Though the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* was not necessarily written directly on the basis of the *Five Gates* itself, it does seem to have been written on the basis of a *Chinese* text that shared the same

108Here “heat” corresponds to *uṣmagata*, first of the four “aids to penetration” (*nirvedha-bhāgīya-kuśala-mūla*; see above p.88). Remarkably, here this stage is indicated by actually feeling “heat” within the body, a notion that does not, as far as I know, ever come up in the discussion of these attainments in scholastic sources. This idea is, however, entirely in keeping with the way that the *Chan Essentials* and *Five Gates* attempt to correlate attainment with concrete experiences, either visions of specific things or, as here, particular bodily sensations.

109Unless we assume my tentative emendation above (p.103n105).

110T.619:15.328b20

111This is Yamabe’s conclusion (1999b, 92).

format as the *Five Gates*. This is revealed most clearly in the following sequence of passages:

<p><i>Chan Essentials</i> (3.26–3.28)</p> <p>復當更教令自觀身，還聚成一如乾草束，見身堅強。既見堅強，復當服酥，飲食調適。然後觀身，還似空囊，有火從內燒此身盡。燒身盡已，入定之時，恒見火光 . . . 火燒盡已，自然得知身中無我。</p> <p>He must next be instructed to again contemplate his body and cause it to bunch together like a bundle of straw. He thus sees his body to be firm and strong. Having seen it to be firm and strong, he must next take butter [as medicine,] and eat and drink sufficiently. After this, when he contemplates his body, it again resembles an empty sack. A fire arises inside and burns it up entirely. After the body has been completely consumed, when he enters trance he constantly sees the light of this fire When the fire has entirely burned up [his body], he suddenly knows that there is no self within the body.</p>	<p><i>Five Gates</i> (T.619: 15.328a10-12)</p> <p>次教觀身如草束，或如空葦囊。若言：我見自身如乾草束，或如空葦囊，有火燒盡，乃無有我。</p> <p>Next instruct [the practitioner] to contemplate his body as like a bundle of straw, or like a burlap sack. If he says: “I see my body as like a bundle of straw, or as like an empty burlap sack. A fire burns it all up, and then there is no self,”</p>
<p><i>Chan Essentials</i> (3.30)</p> <p>更觀此火。從何處起？觀此火時，自觀己身，悉無有我。既[無有]{見無}¹¹²我，火自然滅。</p> <p>He must again contemplate this fire. From where does it arise? When contemplating this fire, he contemplates that his own body is entirely without self, and seeing that there is no self, the fire spontaneously goes out.</p>	<p><i>Five Gates</i> (328a13–14)</p> <p>教令更觀：汝意，起時從何處起，滅時從何處滅？觀之！</p> <p>[then] instruct [the practitioner] to contemplate further [saying to him]: “What do you think,¹¹³ from what place does [the fire] arise? When it passes away, from where does it pass away? Contemplate this.”</p>
<p><i>Chan Essentials</i> (3.32)</p> <p>佛告阿難：我見火滅時，先從鼻滅。然後</p>	<p><i>Five Gates</i> (328a14–16)</p> <p>觀者要言：我見[卒]{火}覺起時從意起，滅</p>

¹¹²Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

¹¹³I take 汝意 here as a shortened form of more typical expressions such as 汝意云何. Interpreting 汝意 as the subject of 起, “your mind,” does not seem possible, as in the next line the practitioner responds that “when it arises it arises from [my] mind” 起時從意起.

身體一時俱滅。身內心火，八十八結，亦俱得滅，身中清涼，調和得所。深自覺悟，了了分明，決定無我。出定入定，恒知身中無有吾我。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: I see that when the fire goes out it goes out beginning from the tip of the nose. Then the rest of the body all goes out all at once. Internally, the heart-fire and the eighty-eight defilements are also all extinguished, and [the practitioner's] body feels cool and fresh, balanced and at ease. He deeply realizes and clearly sees that there definitely is no self. Whether or not he is in trance he always knows that within the body there is no self.

時鼻頭滅，鼻頭滅時，身中和靜，不覺有我，了了分明。

The meditator must say: “I see the perception of fire¹¹⁴ arising from my mind, and passing away [starting from] the nose. When [the fire on] the nose is extinguished, the body is internally harmonized and peaceful, and it is perfectly clear that there is no self.”

Here the practitioner sees his own body consumed by fire and perceives it to be lacking a self. The order in the more detailed *Chan Essentials* is the same, with numerous exact parallels in phrasing. As before, the *Five Gates* is framed as a dialog, and we find first-person speech for both the master, who gives the instructions, and the student, who reports what he has seen or felt.

The problem occurs in section 3.32 of the *Chan Essentials*. In 3.31, which I have omitted, there was a short dialog between the Buddha and Ānanda. When the Buddha's instructions recommence in 3.32, they begin with the words “the Buddha said to Ānanda,” the usual phrase in the *Chan Essentials* marking a return to the main thread of the meditation instructions. However the Buddha resumes his instructions by saying “I see” (我見). This is very peculiar, as the ensuing passage nominally describes what the practitioner will or should experience. However in the *Five Gates*, where these exact words also appear, there is no problem at all, for there it is a matter of the practitioner reporting what he has seen to the maser. Indeed the expression “I see” (我見) is used in this exact situation seventy-five times throughout the *Five Gates*. In the *Chan Essentials* this phrasing is patently out of place, and there are no other similar examples.

Although if pressed we might find a way of explaining why the Buddha here uses this language,¹¹⁵ in light of the parallels with the *Five Gates* the only possible historical explanation is that this section of the *Chan Essentials* was composed on the basis of a Chinese text similar in

114The reading 卒 seems faulty. Note that the expression “perception of fire” (火覺), though somewhat odd, fits with the use of *jue* 覺 elsewhere in the *Five Gates*. Indeed we earlier find the nearly identical line (cited above): “having seen the perception of warmth” 見煖覺已 (T.619:15.327c29).

115Since this passage discusses the realization of non-self, one might interpret 我見火 as “the fire of the view of self.” Given the context this cannot have been the meaning in the *Five Gates*. But we might imagine that if the other instances of the expression “I see” (我見) had already dropped out during in the course of recopying, editing, or development, a single remaining instance might easily have been interpreted this way by a reader, and this may account for how this passage was retained in the *Chan Essentials*.

format to the *Five Gates*. To reiterate, I am not claiming that this section of the *Chan Essentials* was necessarily composed directly on the basis of the *Five Gates*, though this may well be true. A number of scenarios are possible. For example the *Five Gates* may have slowly expanded, with the master-disciple format becoming gradually less prominent until it eventually reached a form close to the present text of the *Chan Essentials*, needing only the addition of a narrative.

Dunhuang Stein manuscript 2585 gives us a glimpse of how the rewriting and manipulation of a text such as the *Five Gates* may have eventually resulted in something closer in style to the *Chan Essentials* (minus the narrative). This text contains a very slightly different version of material from both the *Five Gates* and the *Concise Essentials*,¹¹⁶ and it is instructive to see how it modifies the master-disciple interaction of the *Five Gates*. Note in particular the underlined phrases in the *Five Gates* (left) that have been removed in Stein 2585 (right):

<i>Five Gates</i> (T.619)	Stein 2585 (T.2914) ¹¹⁷
<p>即從座起，跪白師言：我房中係念，見佛無異。(325c22)</p> <p>[The practitioner] should then get up from his [meditation] seat, kneel before the master and say: “Concentrating my mind in my [meditation] cell, it is just as if [I were] seeing the Buddha.”</p>	<p>即白師云：係念見佛無異。(1460a14–15)</p> <p>Then [the practitioner should] say to the master: “Concentrating my mind, it is just as if [I were] seeing the Buddha.”</p>
<p>如是已，即往白師。師言：(326a9–10)</p> <p>When [the practitioner has seen the previously described vision] in this way, he should go and tell this to the master. The master then says . . .</p>	<p>如是已，[如]{即?}師云。(1460a29)</p> <p>When [the practitioner has seen the previously described vision] in this way, the master says . . .</p>
<p>師復更教言：汝從今捨前二觀，係心在齊。即受師教，一心觀齊。(326a14)</p> <p>The master must further instruct [the practitioner], saying: “From now on you should abandon the previous two contemplations. Concentrate your mind on your navel.” Having received the master’s instructions, [the practitioner] single-mindedly contemplates his navel.</p>	<p>復令捨前二觀，係心在臍。即一心觀臍。(1460b3)</p> <p>Further have [him?] abandon the previous two contemplations and concentrate his mind on his navel. [He?] then single-mindedly contemplates his navel.</p>

¹¹⁶As discussed in chapter one, the *Five Gates* has several nearly exact parallels in the *Concise Essentials*, but this overlap does not include any of the master-disciple dialog sections. Stein 2585 contains versions of 1) material exclusive to the *Five Gates* (the “format A” sections), 2) material exclusive to the *Concise Essentials*, and 3) material shared by both texts (the “format B” sections of the *Five Gates*). For a table showing the correspondence between these three texts, see Yamabe 1999b, 90.

¹¹⁷Stein 2585 was edited for inclusion in volume 85 of the Taishō, and I use that edition here.

<p>即往白師。師言：汝更視[在]{此?}處。如師所教。觀已，有蓮花。(326a17) [The practitioner] goes and tells the master [what he has seen]. The master says: “Look further at this place [the navel].” <u>[The practitioner] does as the master instructs.</u> Having contemplated it, a lotus flower appears [there].</p>	<p>即再白師。師云：汝更觀在處。乃觀已，有蓮華。(1460b5–6) [The practitioner] goes and tells the master [what he has seen]. The master says: “Look further at this place [the navel].” Having contemplated it, a lotus flower appears [there.]</p>
<p>即以所見白師。師言：大善！汝好用心觀此身。成定相也。師教言：更觀齊中。即如教觀，見頂有五光光焰。見已白師。師言：更觀五光有五瑞相。如教觀已，見有一佛。(326a26–29) [The practitioner] then tells the master <u>what he has seen.</u> The master says: “Good! <u>You have well applied your mind and contemplated this body.</u> [What you have reported is] the sign of having attained concentration.” <u>The master instructs, saying:</u> “Further contemplate within the navel.” <u>[The practitioner] then contemplates as instructed.</u> He sees a five-colored glowing flame appear atop his head. <u>Having seen this, he reports it to the master.</u> <u>The master says: “Further contemplate the five auspicious signs within these five flames.”</u> Having contemplated <u>as instructed,</u> [the practitioner] sees a single buddha appear.</p>	<p>即以白師。師云：大善，成定相也。復令[有]{更}觀臍中即見頂有五瑞相。觀已見有一佛。(1460b14–15) [The practitioner] then tells the master [what he has seen?]. The master says: “Good! This is the sign of having attained concentration.” Again have him further contemplate his navel, and he will see five auspicious signs appear atop his head. Having contemplated this, he will see a single buddha appear.</p>

In these passages Stein 2585 simplifies the *Five Gates* to a certain degree. Unlike the hypothesized development of the *Chan Essentials*, Stein 2585 does not expand or develop the material in any way. But we may note how the process of summarizing or even simply citing the *Five Gates* has noticeably decreased explicit references to the master-disciple dialog. Indeed most, though not all such elements are removed. Such changes account, moreover, for the majority of the difference between the two texts—in longer passages lacking any intervening master-disciple interaction, Stein 2585 reproduces the *Five Gates* nearly exactly.

Stein 2585 thus provides a primitive example of how a text such as the *Five Gates* might have undergone a gradual transformation that slowly eliminated references to the “narrative” features of the *Five Gates*—the master and the disciple, their repetitive back-and-forth interaction, and small details such as mention of the practitioner’s “meditation cell” (房). With such elements eliminated, it would have been relatively easy to re-frame the resulting text as the preaching of a single person (the Buddha) such as we find in the *Chan Essentials*.

Strictly speaking the evidence presented here applies solely to the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, the only portion with parallels in the *Five Gates*. But the *Chan Essentials* has a uniform style, making it at least plausible that the remainder of the text had a similar origin. And we do find a few other passages from other sections of the text that may similarly reveal traces of an effaced master-disciple dialog similar to the *Five Gates*.¹¹⁸ Thus in the fourth sutra:

[The Buddha said:] At this time the practitioner must be instructed as follows: “Though you (汝) see these many buddhas and voice-hearers, you must now contemplate that [the real body of the] World-honored One is the formless body, [which is] great liberation, the fruit of the one beyond study. You must concentrate your mind and as before count the breath.”¹¹⁹

Although there is nothing overtly problematic here, the Buddha’s instructions more normally use constructions such as “the practitioner should” (行者當), or “at this time the practitioner” (爾時行者). But here the Buddha directly presents the language with which the teacher should address the student, and this is perhaps reminiscent of the “format A” sections of the *Five Gates*.

The Textual History of the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*

I have until now deliberately left aside the question of the historical transmission of the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*. Though in many ways it raises more questions than it answers, investigating this will allow us to reach one important conclusion—that the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* were most likely once joined together as a single text. As mentioned above Tsukinowa Kenryū was the first to notice that the *Methods for Curing* and the *Chan Essentials* are closely related. And indeed he even speculated that the material in these two texts may have originally have belonged together. The goal of this section will be to show, from more rigorous grounds, that Tsukinowa’s hypothesis is correct, though not precisely in the manner that he imagined it. Although other scholars have attempted to chart the historical records pertaining to these texts, a number of key points have been overlooked, and attention to these details will show that the history of these two texts is more complicated than has been assumed. I must warn the reader in advance, however, that total clarity or certainty will not be possible. Indeed one result of a more in depth analysis of these matters is a certain muddying of the waters. In particular we will see that most of the historical catalog records pertaining to these two texts are of questionable value, since the same title(s) were used for different texts. Scholars have most often pointed to the titles listed in such catalogs and assumed that these refer to the texts as we have them today, but this does not seem to have been the case. That the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* were originally one text is, I will suggest, the best way to make sense of the data that we have, even if it cannot be demonstrated with complete certainty.

¹¹⁸Apart from the example cited below, see 1.49 and 1.54.

¹¹⁹爾時當教行者而作是言：汝所見者，雖是多佛及諸聲聞，汝今應觀此諸世尊，是無相身，是大解脫，是無學果。應當善攝汝心，如前數息。(4.41)

To help guide the reader I will first outline the principal points of the following discussion. I take as my starting point the conclusions of previous scholars, namely that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* were first attributed to the translators Dharmamitra and Juqu Jingsheng (沮渠京聲) respectively, both active during the Song dynasty in south China. Although as mentioned many have concluded that these texts were not translations per se, there has nevertheless been a general agreement that the attribution of these texts to these translators was fixed by the late fifth century. In other words it has been assumed that beginning from this time we can identify these two texts, in their present form, in bibliographic sources. I will show, however, that this is not the case.

I hasten to add that there is no reason to believe that the *contents* of the texts have changed since the late fifth century. The issue is rather to whom this material was attributed and, most importantly, whether it was initially separated into two texts as it is today. Most likely, I will conclude, this was not the case. Rather it was a single text, with the *Methods for Curing* following directly after the *Chan Essentials*, bearing the title *Secret Chan Methods for Curing Illness* (*Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要祕密治病經; *Secret Chan Cures* hereafter). This text first enters historical records associated with Juqu Jingsheng, said to have made a copy of it while living at a nunnery near the southern capital in the year 454. The history prior to this point is unclear, though in light of the relationship between the *Chan Essentials* and the *Five Gates* (discussed in the previous section) we can surmise that the text was composed, either all at once or gradually, on the basis of Chinese *chan* text(s) similar in style to the *Five Gates*, material likely circulating in south China at this time in connection with the foreign *chan* masters living and teaching there. In the end, then, the point is not that all of this material was first written together as a single text. But knowing that in 454 if not earlier it was already grouped together gives us historical grounds for treating these texts as a unit, and for the purposes of this dissertation this is the most important point.

The Nara manuscript of the *Chan Essentials*

The earliest known copy of a text containing the material now found in the *Chan Essentials* is a 740 CE manuscript from the Shōsoin 正倉院, the Japanese repository of texts and artifacts from the Nara period.¹²⁰ This manuscript was consulted by the editors of the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon when preparing the version of the *Chan Essentials* included therein, and its variant readings were recorded.¹²¹ In contrast to the versions known

¹²⁰Many of these texts can now be consulted through the CD-ROM version of the collection. See *Kunaichō Shōsoin Jimusho shōzō shōgozō kyōka* 宮内庁正倉院事務所蔵聖語藏經卷. Edited by Takasaki Jikdō 高崎直道, Tsukishima Hiroshi 築島裕, and Minagawa Kan'ichi 皆川完一. Tokyo, Hakkō hatsubai Maruzen, 2000-. I wish to thank Funayama Tōru for helping me access this material from the Ōtani University library.

¹²¹From a purely philological point of view the manuscript is also valuable as the earliest complete copy of the text, and one of the only extant versions outside the lineages of the printed canons. Neither the *Chan Essentials* nor the *Methods for Curing* are known from Dunhuang manuscripts, nor are they included in the Fangshan 房山 carvings. The Turfan documents from the Ryūkoku expedition (formerly kept at the Lüshun 旅順 museum, now housed in Beijing) contain a number of very short fragments from the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*. These fragments are on the order of a dozen characters each. Ikeda Masanori 池田将則, who has worked on the compilation of the catalog of these fragments, has suggested to me that they appear to be Tang

from the printed canons, the Nara manuscript of the *Chan Essentials* is in five, rather than three fascicles (卷).¹²² These fascicles, however, apparently do not all originally come from the same version of the text. Indeed the end of the first fascicle overlaps the second fascicle,¹²³ and judging from its length it may have originally come from a four-fascicle version of the text. The correspondence between the Nara manuscript and the printed editions is roughly as follows:

Printed canons: three fascicles:

1 (上)	2 (中)	3 (下)
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Nara manuscript: five fascicles



Not only does the first fascicle of the Nara manuscript overlap the second fascicle, it bears the title *Chan fa mi yao jing* 禪法祕要經, differing slightly from the *Chan mi yao jing* 禪秘要經 on fascicles two through five.¹²⁴ Neither of these titles, moreover, exactly matches the version in the printed canons (*Chan mi yao fa jing* 禪秘要法經). As seen in the diagram above, the Nara manuscript is also missing the second half of the third fascicle of three fascicle version. Despite this unusual arrangement the Nara manuscript was accepted as canonical in Japan, and the same format appears in copies from other Japanese manuscript collections.¹²⁵

Fascicles 2 through 5 of the Nara manuscript are thus shorter than the first fascicle and,

copies, which he suspects were taken to the region from central China. I wish to thank Mr. Ikeda for providing me with this information.

122Modern catalogs of Buddhist texts from the Shōsoin incorrectly record the text as three fascicles (Ishida 1930 numbers 830 and 831; Kenji 2006 repeats this mistake).

123The Taishō footnotes attempt to convey this information but do not entirely succeed. The editors used the symbol 聖 for this text, but in sections where the fascicles overlap, they give a slightly larger font for fascicle one, and a slightly smaller font for fascicle two. This makes it difficult to understand what is going on. Moreover there are some serious errors. Thus footnote 11 on page 249 correctly indicates that the first fascicle of 聖 (large) ends (correct), but footnote 12 indicates that fascicle two of 聖 (large) begins, while in fact this hypothetical second fascicle does not actually exist. Similarly footnote 7 on page 247 indicates the end of fascicle one of 聖 (small). In fact, there is no first fascicle corresponding to the this edition, which begins only with fascicle two.

124This title is also used on first fascicle in the Nanatsudera and Nattorishingū-ji versions (see the next note).

125Of these I have consulted two different four-fascicle versions from Nanatsudera 七寺. These are both identical to the first four fascicles of the Nara manuscript. Based on the mutual occurrence of certain copying errors, it is clear that the Nanatsudera versions were copied from either the Nara manuscript itself or a version extremely similar to it. I wish to thank Professor Ochiai Toshinori 落合俊典 for sending me photocopies of these two texts. A partial five-fascicle version is found at Nattorishingū-ji 名取新宮寺 in a late Heian copy (*Nattori issaikyō*, 184–185). Based on the sheet lengths (23 for the first fascicle, 15 and 16 for the second and third) this too seems to be the same text.

more importantly, are exactly half the length of the fascicles from the three-fascicle version—it would seem that either each fascicle of the three-fascicle version was split to produce the smaller fascicles of the Nara manuscript (with some becoming lost), or shorter fascicles such as those in the Nara manuscript were combined to produce the three-fascicle version. Both versions of the text existed in the eighth century, as shown by the 735 CE carving in cave 59 at Anyue 安岳, Sichuan, which cites a three fascicle version of the text.¹²⁶ There are also Japanese manuscript copies of a three-fascicle version stemming from lineages that predate the printed canons.¹²⁷ Note furthermore that while the *Chan Essentials* is separated internally into four separate sutras, these do not line up with any of the known fascicle divisions.¹²⁸

The origin of the Nara manuscript version

The Nara manuscript of the *Chan Essentials* was thus based on two different texts, one titled *Chan fa mi yao jing* 禪法祕要經, and one titled *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經. How and why these came to be combined is revealed by the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* (*Kaiyuan lu* 開元錄), compiled in 730 CE. The *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era*, written by Zhisheng 智昇, is the single most important Chinese catalog of Buddhist texts because it provided the list of “canonical” (*ru zang* 入藏) works that eventually served as the basis for the printed editions of the canon, and most texts here judged spurious or apocryphal were eventually lost.¹²⁹ Zhisheng seems to have seen two different versions of a text corresponding to the *Chan Essentials*. In the section of his catalog entitled “removed [from the canon] because of redundancy” (刪略繁重), he discusses the five-fascicle version:

The above scripture [the *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 in five fascicles] was supposedly¹³⁰ translated by the Song *tripitaka* master Dharmamitra. [Previous catalogs] further say that it is a different translation of the *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法 translated by *tripitaka* master Kumārajīva during the Yao Qin [dynasty]. I have carefully examined [the five fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經]. It is corrupt, and clearly not the original text [that Dharmamitra translated]. Its first fascicle is the same as the text called *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法 [the *Methods for Curing*], though it is not complete, and includes

126On this inscription, see above note 6.

127Several manuscript copies of the three-fascicle version are extant. I have had access to one of these, from Kongō-ji 金剛寺, and can confirm that it matches the format of the printed editions. Three-fascicle manuscript copies are also housed at Saihō-ji 西方寺, Matsuosha 松尾社, and Ishiyamadera 石山寺 (*Nihon genson hasshu issaikyō mokuroku*, 241), and we may presume they are similarly arranged. Based on variations between them, it is clear that the Kongō-ji copy stems from a lineage that does not derive from the printed canons.

128Such an arrangement is extremely unusual among Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras. Perhaps for this reason early Chinese catalogs classified the *Chan Essentials* (and the *Methods for Curing*, which shares a similar format) as “compilations of the saints” (聖賢所撰), a category indicating compilations made by Indian Buddhists. See for example *Fajing's Catalog* (T.2146:55.144b25). This classification was maintained until the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era*, when the texts were re-classified as sutras.

129Tokuno 1990, 52–53

130The wording suggests that Zhisheng is drawing this information from other catalogs.

only one half [of the *Methods for Curing*]. Beginning with its second fascicle [the five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing*] matches Kumārajīva's *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法 beginning from the middle of its first fascicle. Reaching the end of the third fascicle [of Kumārajīva's] text, here too [the five fascicle *Chan mi yao jing*] is not complete, and is missing ten-odd pages. [The section paralleling Kumārajīva's translation] has been evenly divided into four fascicles, and joined with the first fascicle, [equal in content to the first half of the *Methods for Curing*,] a five-fascicle text has been created. As for Dharmamitra's [original five fascicle] translation, no copy can now be found.¹³¹

Zhisheng's official list of canonical texts contains a *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法 in three fascicles, attributed to Kumārajīva, and based on the number of sheets (84) it is almost certain that this is the three-fascicle *Chan Essentials* found in the printed canons.¹³²

Extrapolating, what Zhisheng calls fascicles 2 through 5 of Dharmamitra's *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 were thus equal to fascicles 2 through 5 of the Nara manuscript, which bear this same title, and are indeed an equal division into four parts of the material stretching from middle of the first to the middle of the third fascicle of the three-fascicle version (what Zhisheng calls Kumārajīva's translation).¹³³ But the first fascicle of Zhisheng's *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 was apparently something different, equal to the first half of the *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法. This title corresponds to the *Methods for Curing*, but unlike the two-fascicle version of the *Methods for Curing* found in the printed canons, in Zhisheng's day the entire text was a single-fascicle. Half of Zhisheng's text thus means the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing*. And indeed each fascicle of the *Methods for Curing* is exactly half the length of each fascicle of the *Chan Essentials*, and thus exactly the length of fascicles 2 through 5 of the Nara manuscript.¹³⁴ Zhisheng's five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 was thus:

- 1 = fascicle 1 of the *Methods for Curing*
 2–5 = fascicles 2–5 of the Nara manuscript of the *Chan Essentials*

However the *first* fascicle of the Nara manuscript is apparently something entirely different, with no connection to anything described by Zhisheng. But we do know that during the early eighth

131 右一經，云是宋代三藏曇摩蜜多譯，云與姚秦三藏鳩摩羅什所譯『禪祕要法』同本異出。今檢尋上下，文極交錯，非是本經。初之一卷乃是『治禪病祕要法』，文仍不盡至半而止。第二卷已去，即是羅什所譯『禪祕要法』，從第一卷過半生起。至第三卷末，文亦不盡，欠十餘紙。均為四卷，通前成五。其曇摩蜜多譯者，時闕其本。(T.2154:55.664c16–23)

132 *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era*, T.2154:55.693a10, listed as 84 sheets (紙). Official copies of Buddhist scriptures during the Tang were written in a fixed format of 17 characters per line, 25 lines per sheet (Fujieda 1999, 178). Extrapolating from this, 84 sheets would be the totality of the extant three-fascicle *Chan Essentials*.

133 Each of the three fascicles of the *Chan Essentials* is roughly 30 Tang-dynasty pages (see previous note) in length. Thus when Zhisheng says that the fifth fascicle of the five-fascicle version is missing “ten-odd pages” (十餘紙), this means roughly half the length of one fascicle from the three-fascicle version, which precisely matches where the fifth fascicle of the Nara manuscript ends.

134 There is little doubt that what Zhisheng called the *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法 is the same as the two-fascicle *Methods for Curing* from the printed canons, and his catalog lists this text as 28 sheets, which would be (see note 132) exactly the total length of the present two fascicles of the *Methods for Curing*.

century the three-fascicle *Chan mi yao fa* 查祕要法 attributed to Kumārajīva (the present day *Chan Essentials*) also existed in a four-fascicle version,¹³⁵ and the length of the first fascicle of the Nara manuscript is compatible with it being the first fascicle of such a text.

We may thus surmise as follows. The five fascicle Nara manuscript was created when a copy of the five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 seen by Zhisheng was corrected. The first fascicle was removed and replaced by the first fascicle of a four-fascicle *Chan Essentials*. This resulted in a text with the content of the three-fascicle *Chan Essentials* as seen in the printed canons, with an overlap between the first and second fascicles and a missing section at the end. It remains unclear whether this arrangement was created in Japan or was brought as such from China. Records from the imperial scriptorium in Nara (*Dai nihon komonjo* 大日本古文書) tentatively suggest the later.¹³⁶

Read together with the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* the Nara manuscript thus provides important information about how the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* were circulating in eighth-century China.¹³⁷ While the present forms of these texts existed as well, one would also have found a five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經, attributed to Dharmamitra, whose first fascicle was the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing*.¹³⁸ In other words the title *Chan mi yao*

135See the chart below on p.121. Particularly relevant is the four-fascicle version of the text attributed to Kumārajīva in the late seventh-century *Catalog of the Great Zhou*.

136The data is as follows (all citations are to DNKMJ, found using Kimoto 1989). We have record of a seemingly complete three-fascicle *Chan fa mi yao jing* 禪法祕要經 in Japan from at least 731 (7:16). At 91 sheets in length, this seems to be the three-fascicle *Chan Essentials* from the printed canons. Meanwhile a five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 is recorded in 737, but with no page length given this could be either the format of the Nara manuscript or Zhisheng's excluded version (7:70). In 739 a four-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 was copied (7:201), but again no length, so this may simply have been, like the Nanatsudera copies, the first four fascicles of the Nara manuscript version. Indeed a record from 730 (10:136, 10:170) mentions a three-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 in 52 sheets, thus the first three fascicles of the Nara manuscript (22 plus 15 plus 15). Since only some records give sheet length, it is difficult to distinguish between a text in the Nara manuscript and Zhisheng's excluded text. Nevertheless there is no mention anywhere of a first fascicle of a *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 in 15 sheets, which is what the first fascicle of Zhisheng excluded text would have been. Nor are there any records of an complete four-fascicle text whose page lengths add up to the hypothetical four-fascicle *Chan Essentials* from which the first fascicle of the Nara manuscript might have come. It thus seems likely that neither Zhisheng's excluded text nor a complete four-fascicle version ever made it to Japan. The only point arguing against this is that the calligraphy of the dedications of merit on the Nara manuscript, written at the end of each fascicle, show that there was a different copyist for fascicle 1 compared with fascicles 2 through 5. This might suggest that fascicle 1 was originally considered a separate text, and hence copied by different scribes, and was only combined with the remaining fascicles later.

137Tsukinowa Kenryū also noted the comments in the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* concerning the five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 (Tsukinowa 1971, 109). He suggested, however, that this must have been an "early draft" of the material that Chinese authors eventually compiled into the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*. Now that we know what Zhisheng's text looked like, we can see that Tsukinowa's hypothesis cannot be correct. Nevertheless he was likely correct to suggest that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* were originally joined as a single text, as I will show below.

138Note that the arrangement found in Zhisheng's five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 is clearly a mistake. Passing directly from the end of the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing* to the beginning of the second fascicle of the Nara manuscript (as would occur when reading Zhisheng's text) any competent reader would notice a problem. The question here thus concerns only the titles of these texts, not their content.

jing 禪祕要經 was ambiguous, referring on the one hand to the *Chan Essentials*, on the other to the *Methods for Curing* (or at least part of it). This fact will prove extremely important when we evaluate the earlier catalogs. Indeed most scholars generally assume that if the title (and perhaps length) of a text in an ancient catalog matches the title of an extant text, their content must have been the same. And though often a reasonable assumption, in the case of the text titled *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 this proves problematic. Using the ancient catalogs to track the textual history of the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* is thus potentially much more complicated than has been assumed.

Catalog records pertaining to the *Chan Essentials*

Because the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* gave official approval only to the three-fascicle *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法 attributed to Kumārajīva, it was this text under this attribution that was included in the printed editions of the canon (as the *Chan Essentials*). Modern scholars have noted, however, that the *Records of the Canon* (early sixth-century), the earliest Chinese catalog of Buddhist texts, suggests that the *Chan Essentials* was first associated not with Kumārajīva but with the famous *chan* master Dharmamitra, who as discussed above was also associated with some of the Contemplation Scriptures. Even those scholars skeptical that the *Chan Essentials* was a translation have agreed that Dharmamitra was the first person associated with this text.¹³⁹

The evidence for Dharmamitra's early association with this text is the catalog section of the *Records of the Canon*, which attributes to him four texts, all supposedly translated during the Yuanjia 元嘉 (424–454) era at the Zhihuan 祇洹 (Jetavāna) temple, the wealthiest and most famous monastery in the capital. The catalog here assigns to Dharmamitra four texts:

- 1) *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要, in 3 fascicles.¹⁴⁰ A note, written in smaller characters, gives a variant title, *Chan fa yao* 禪法要, and says that a five-fascicle version also exists.
- 2) *Wu men chan jing yao yong fa* 五門禪經要用法, one fascicle.¹⁴¹

139See Yamabe 1999b, 106–107 for a summary of scholars' conclusions. Yamabe himself does not think that the text is an actual translation, but he agrees that Dharmamitra was the first person associated with it.

140The translation supposedly took place in Yuanjia 18 (442). This date is problematic, for the catalog in the *Records of the Canon* states that all of Dharmamitra's translations took place at the Zhihuan 祇洹 temple. But Dharmamitra's biography, from a different section of the *Records of the Canon*, says that he died in Yuanjia 19 at the Upper Dinglin 上定林 temple on Mt. Zhong 鍾山, a temple he had helped construct. Though the biography does not specify when Dharmamitra moved to this new location, Dharmamitra's biographies in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* and the *Biographies of Famous Monks* say that he moved first to the Lower Dinglin temple in Yuanjia 10, moving to the Upper Dinglin temple on the same mountain shortly thereafter, where he remained until his death (T.2059:50.343a14–15; X.1523:77.355b8). Thus any translation carried out in Yuanjia 18 should presumably have been at the Upper Dinglin temple, not the Zhihuan temple.

141T.2145:55.12b27–c4. Especially when concerned with single character readings, as I will be here, the Taishō edition of the *Records of the Canon* must be used with caution because the Taishō editors did not have access to the Kunaishō 宮内省 edition (that normally collated as 宮, P). For verifying readings I have thus also consulted Q, J, and K¹ (the first carving of the Korean canon). Through the good offices of Professor Ochiai Toshinori I have also been able to consult a manuscript copy of the *Records of the Canon* text from Nanatsudera, one of the only known versions of this text from a lineage outside of the printed canons.

- 3) *Pu xian guan* 普賢觀, the *Samantabhadra Contemplation*, one fascicle.
- 4) *Xu kong zang guan* 虛空藏觀, the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*, one fascicle.

Most scholars have concluded that the *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要 mentioned here is the *Chan Essentials*. Indeed the length (three fascicles) is the same, and the title, though not identical to the *Chan Essentials* (禪祕要法經), is very similar.

However though this point is often forgotten, the catalog section of the *Records of the Canon* is not actually our earliest source for bibliographic information, as the translators' biographies, found in another section of the *Records of the Canon*, are generally considered to have been completed several decades before the catalog.¹⁴² And Dharmamitra's biography there contradicts the catalog, for it specifically says that he translated three, not four texts (三部經).¹⁴³

- 1) Something called the *Zhu jing chan fa yao* 諸經禪法要
- 2) *Pu xian guan* 普賢觀, the *Samantabhadra Contemplation*
- 3) *Xu kong zang guan* 虛空藏觀, the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*

The two Contemplation Scriptures are the same ones listed in the catalog. But here, in contrast to the catalog, Dharmamitra is assigned only a single *chan* text, and moreover the title of this text does not contain the key word “secret” (祕). What then was this text, number 1) above? Here some difficulties of interpretation arise since this title does not appear in any later sources.¹⁴⁴ I would hypothesize, however, that this is likely the same text that later catalogs, including the catalog from the *Records of the Canon*, call the *Wu men chan jing yao yong fa* 五門禪經要用法 (the *Five Gates*). Indeed these titles seem to have a similar meaning: “The essential methods of *chan* [drawn from] various scriptures” (諸經禪法要), and “The essential methods [drawn from] the *chan* scripture(s) in five gates” (五門禪經要用法).¹⁴⁵

Although there thus remain some lingering uncertainties, at least one thing is clear—the earliest known source associates Dharmamitra with only a single *chan* text, and only later, when the catalog from the *Records of the Canon* was finished in 517, was Dharmamitra connected to

142The biographies were finished before the end of the Qi 齊 dynasty (479–502), several decades before the completion of the catalog section in 517 (Naitō 1958, Palumbo 2003, 197). This can be seen because they use the expression *qi yan* 齊言 (“in the language of Qi”) to explain Indian words in Chinese. Although parts of the catalog section were probably completed during this time, it contains revisions made up until the year 517. I wish to thank Antonello Palumbo for taking the time to discuss with me the issue of the stratification of the *Records of the Canon* and for sharing with me portions of his unpublished research of this subject.

143T.2145:55.105a21–22

144Another possibility, suggested by Kamata Shigeo, would be that *zhu jing* 諸經, “various scriptures,” is not part of the title of the first text, but rather means “the following scriptures” (Kamata 1982, 4:11). If this were true then the remaining characters *chan fa yao* 禪法要 might refer to the *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要 mentioned in the catalog, whose alternate name is indeed given as *Chan fa yao* 禪法要.

145Note that Dharmamitra's biography in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* here writes *chan jing chan fa yao* 禪經禪法要, not *zhu jing chan fa yao* 諸經禪法要 (T.2059:50.343a4–5). We might interpret the title from the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* as “The essential methods of *chan* [drawn from] the *chan* scriptures,” a title even closer to the *Five Gates*.

the *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要, the text that scholars have seen to be the *Chan Essentials*.

Records pertaining to the *Methods for Curing*

Dharmamitra's early association with the text called *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要 is thus less certain than it first appeared. There is, however, another reference in the *Records of the Canon* catalog to a text called *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經.¹⁴⁶ This text, however, is listed as an "excerpt" (抄) of the so-called *Secret Chan Methods for Curing Illness* (*Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要祕密治病經; *Secret Chan Cures* hereafter), a text that has been interpreted by scholars as an older title for the *Methods for Curing*. It is worth pausing for a moment to realize that this is actually the earliest mention of the title *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經, which by the late sixth century was a *chan* text associated with both Kumārajīva and Dharmamitra,¹⁴⁷ and was later the title of the text removed from the canon by Zhisheng (which also, incidentally, apparently contained material from the *Methods for Curing*, as discussed above). In other words from our first records in the early sixth century the title *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 referred *not* to the *Chan Essentials* as we have it today, or at at least not only to that, but also to a text that included material found in the so-called *Secret Chan Cures* (禪要祕密治病經), which again has been equated with the *Methods for Curing* (治禪病祕要法).¹⁴⁸

But are these two texts, whose titles are different but both contain the key character "illness" (*bing* 病), really the same? Scholars have assumed this based on the following facts:

- 1) The *Records of the Canon* catalog records the *Secret Chan Cures* in two fascicles, as a translation of the layman Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲.¹⁴⁹ This is supported by Juqu Jingsheng's biographies.¹⁵⁰ Later catalogs associate Juqu Jingsheng with the differently titled *Methods for Curing*, and make no mention of the *Secret Chan Cures*, suggesting that these are one and the same text.
- 2) The colophon to the *Secret Chan Cures* preserved in the *Records of the Canon*, which mentions Juqu Jingsheng, is the same as the colophon attached to the end of all known copies of the *Methods for Curing*, again suggesting that these are the same text.¹⁵¹
- 3) The *Methods for Curing* has two fascicles, matching *Records of the Canon* entry for the *Secret Chan Cures*.

Although these points are compelling, a closer investigation reveals some difficulties. For example if the *Secret Chan Cures* and the *Methods for Curing* are the same text why do they

146T.2145:55.30c7

147Li dai san bao ji 歷代三寶紀, T.2034:49.78a2 and 92b13.

148As we will see, the title *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法 is attested beginning from the late sixth century.

149T.2145:55.13a11. In the *Records of the Canon* he is called Marquis Juqu of Anyang (沮渠安陽侯). *Fajing's*

Catalog in the late sixth century is the first source to say that his given name was Jingsheng 京聲

(T.2146:55.144b23). For the sake of consistency I will use this name throughout.

150*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.106c2–3; *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.337a11–12.

151T.2145:55.66a24

have such different titles?¹⁵² Furthermore though the *Records of the Canon* says that the *Secret Chan Cures* was two fascicles, thus matching the extant versions of the *Methods for Curing*, between the late sixth and ninth centuries the *Methods for Curing* existed only in a single-fascicle version.¹⁵³ The present, two-fascicle *Methods for Curing*, the format used in the printed canons, appeared only after the ninth century. For over three hundred years there is no record of a two-fascicle *Methods for Curing*, so it is problematic to assume that the two fascicles of the *Secret Chan Cures* listed in the *Records of the Canon* from the early sixth-century were exactly the same as the two fascicles of the present-day *Methods for Curing*.

The strongest argument in favor of the identity of the *Secret Chan Cures* and the *Methods for Curing* is thus the colophon. But what, precisely does this document tell us? As indicated above what the *Records of the Canon* records as the colophon to the *Secret Chan Cures* also appears at the end of the *Methods for Curing* itself. In the *Records of the Canon*, this document is called a “postscript to the translation” (出經後記).¹⁵⁴ Such postscripts typically appear at the end of a text, as this one does in the extant versions of the *Methods for Curing*. It is thus important to realize that the compiler of the *Records of the Canon* almost certainly did not possess this colophon as an independent document, but rather reproduced the colophon as found attached to the text as he had it. Thus when the *Records of the Canon* calls this colophon the *Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing ji* 禪要祕密治病經記, this is not an independent title, but means that this is the “notice” (*ji* 記) attached to the text called *Secret Chan Cures* (*Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要祕密治病經).¹⁵⁵ The colophon itself mentions neither the title of the text, nor its

152Although the titles use similar characters, only the *Methods for Curing* speaks of “curing *chan* sickness” 治禪病, a rather unique idea that is not mentioned at all in the other title.

153In catalogs later than the *Records of the Canon* the *chan* text attributed to Juqu Jingsheng is given the title *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法 (*Methods for Curing*), or a close variant thereof, and said to be *one* fascicle only. Only the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* (730) mentions two fascicles as a possibility. However the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* is also the first source to say that the *Methods for Curing* has the alternate name *Secret Chan Cures*. Catalogs dating from between the *Records of the Canon* and the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* say nothing about the *Methods for Curing* having an alternate name or length. This suggests that the editors of the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era* personally saw neither a text called *Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要祕密治病經 (*Secret Chan Cures*) nor a two-fascicle *Methods for Curing*. Rather they investigated the historical records from previous catalogs and concluded that the *Secret Chan Cures* was the same as the *Methods for Curing*. They then assigned this information—both the old title and the old length—as an alternative name and format for the *Methods for Curing*. That there did not actually exist a two-fascicle *Methods for Curing* prior to the era of the printed canons is confirmed from Japanese manuscript collections, which generally stem from Tang-dynasty lineages, where we find only one-fascicle versions. So too in China even ninth-century sources like the *Glosses on the Canon* (*Yi qie jing yin yi* 一切經音義) know the *Methods for Curing* only as a single-fascicle text. The one-fascicle *Methods for Curing* that circulated between the sixth and ninth centuries was assuredly equal to the entirety of the two-fascicle *Methods for Curing* from the printed canons. This can be seen directly in the Japanese manuscript copies (of which I have personally consulted that from Kongō-ji), and is moreover confirmed by the length of 28 sheets for the one-fascicle *Methods for Curing* given in catalogs beginning from the seventh century. This length of 28 sheets corresponds exactly to the Japanese manuscript copies (which employ standard Tang-dynasty sized pages), and represents the entire two-fascicle *Methods for Curing*.

154T.2145:55.66a24

155That the colophon did not carry a separate title can be seen by the references in other catalogs to something called a *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa ji* 治禪病祕要法記 (*Fajing's Catalog*, T.2146:55.146c12–13). This would appear to be what the *Records of the Canon* lists as the colophon to the *Secret Chan Cures*. But note that here the

length, and speaks only of “this scripture.”

Thus, strictly speaking, that the colophon attached to the *Methods for Curing* is the same as the colophon associated with the *Secret Chan Cures* in the *Records of the Canon* only demonstrates that the final page of the *Secret Chan Cures* was the same as the final page of the *Methods for Curing*. If, for example, the *Secret Chan Cures* contained additional material at the beginning of the text that was at some point removed, this would not have affected the colophon, which would have remained attached to the end and been interpreted by any new readers as referring only to the text to which it was now attached.

This now brings us to the most important point—just as with Dharmamitra, there is a major contradiction between Juqu Jingsheng’s biography in the *Records of the Canon* and the *Records of the Canon* catalog. Like the catalog, the biography associates Juqu Jingsheng with the *Secret Chan Cures*; but it clearly states that this text was *five fascicles*,¹⁵⁶ contradicting the length given in the catalog (two fascicles).

This is a serious problem.¹⁵⁷ Though it was not unusual for the same text to exist in different formats, and fascicles (*juan* 卷) themselves did not have a precisely defined length,¹⁵⁸ compressing five fascicles into two fascicles would require more than doubling their size. Moreover if we assume this for the sake of argument it then becomes impossible for the extant *Methods for Curing* (in two fascicles) to be the *Secret Chan Cures*, because the *Methods for Curing* already has abnormally short fascicles, 14 or 15 standard Tang-dynasty pages (by way of comparison, half the length of each fascicle of three-fascicle *Chan Essentials*). If the *Methods for Curing* were divided into five fascicles, each would be roughly six Tang-dynasty pages, an impossibly short length.

The five-fascicle *Secret Chan Cures* mentioned in Juqu Jingsheng’s biography, the two-fascicle *Secret Chan Cures* in the *Records of the Canon* catalog, and the single fascicle *Methods for Curing* mentioned in Tang-dynasty catalogs (which in the printed versions today has been divided into two fascicles) thus cannot possibly all be the same text. Between the late fifth century, when Juqu Jingsheng’s biography was written, and the late sixth century, when catalogs first record a one-fascicle *Methods for Curing*, the *chan* text associated with Juqu Jingsheng seems to have grown progressively smaller. During this same period of time, moreover, there began to appear other *chan* texts whose titles included the unusual character *mi* 祕, “secret.” One such text was called *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經, and was an excerpt of Juqu Jingsheng’s text. Other texts using this word were attributed to other translators, and by the time of the *Records of the Canon* catalog (517 CE) Dharmamitra, one of the most famous *chan* masters of the fifth century, was also associated with one such text, entitled *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要. By the late sixth century catalogs speak of *two* texts bearing the title *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經, one attributed to Dharmamitra and another attributed to Kumārajīva. Meanwhile Juqu Jingsheng was left with a single-fascicle text now called *Methods for Curing* (*Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法).

title of the colophon reflects the new title of the text.

156The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* gives the same information.

157This point was noted by Tsukinowa, but he did not investigate the implications (Tsukinowa 1971, 104)

158In general they ranged between 20 and 30 “pages” (*zhi* 紙), referring to the individual sheets of paper, of a standard size, that were glued together to form the scroll (Fujieda 1999, 178).

The transmission of the texts

Thus though scholars have imagined that two fixed texts (corresponding to the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*) were transmitted from the late fifth century until the first printing of the canon, the evidence suggests that the process was not this simple. Indeed the gradual shrinking of Juqu Jingsheng’s *Secret Chan Cures* suggests rather that the material now divided between the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* was, originally, the five-fascicle collection associated with Juqu Jingsheng. The plausibility of this scenario is supported by the intertwined history of the transmission of the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*. As discussed above scholars have usually first looked to the *Records of the Canon* catalog and simply equated Dharmamitra’s *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要 and Juqu Jingsheng’s *Secret Chan Cures* with the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* respectively. Any differing information in later catalogs has been taken to be either unreliable or confused.

This, however, assumes that the shape and composition of these two texts has remained constant, and that confusion occurred only among catalogers as they considered to whom to attribute the texts. Yet when we pair the catalog data with the citations preserved in other sources it becomes clear that any attempt to correlate the *Chan Essentials* or *Methods for Curing* with records in the catalogs is problematic. In other words, the confusing later catalog records—which assign a text with the same title (*Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經) to two different translators (Kumārajīva and Dharmamitra)—seem to reflect the actual presence of multiple, differently formatted texts.

Below I list the information contained in the extant catalogs dating from the late sixth through eighth centuries.¹⁵⁹ I will group the texts according to the assigned translator, as this allows us to chart the texts consistently in spite of changes in title. The numbers in parentheses are the fascicle lengths:

Translator → Catalog ¹⁶⁰ ↓	Juqu Jingsheng	Dharmamitra	Kumārajīva
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159I include here only the information from the “canon” (*ru zang* 入藏) sections of these texts. Many “catalogs” of Chinese Buddhist texts are not simply catalogs but histories, and in addition to a list of texts currently available they often include a historical record of the activities of past translators. These historical sections often collate the information from past catalogs, and thus have no value as records of contemporaneously available texts.

160The catalogs listed here are (1) *Fajing’s Catalog* (594 CE). Completed under the direction of Fajing 法經, this catalog is officially called *Catalog of the Canon* (*Zhong jing mu lu* 眾經目錄; T.2146). (2) *Records of Succession* (*Records of Buddhism through the Generations*; *Li dai san bao ji* 歷代三寶紀; T.2034). Completed in 597, this catalog is full of false attributions and other errors, but its record of contemporaneously available texts is not problematic. (3) *Catalog of the Renshou Era* (602 CE). The *Catalog of the Canon* (*Zhong jing mu lu* 眾經目錄; T.2147), compiled by Yancong 彥棕 during the Renshou reign period. (4) *Jingtai’s Catalog*. The third and final *Catalog of the Canon* (*Zhong jing mu lu* 眾經目錄; T.2148), completed around the same time as the *Tang Catalog of Buddhist Scriptures* (below). (5) *Tang Catalog of Buddhist Scriptures* (664 CE). Compiled by Daoxuan 道宣, its full title is *Catalog of Buddhist Scriptures Compiled During the Great Tang Dynasty* (*Da tang nei dian lu* 大唐內典錄; T.2149). (6) *Catalog of the Great Zhou* (695 CE). The *Da zhou kan king zhong jing mu lu* 大周刊定眾經目錄 (T.2153), compiled under the reign of Empress Wu. (7) *Catalog of the Kaiyuan*.

Chapter 2: Chinese Meditation Texts of the Fifth Century (II)

<i>Fajing's Catalog</i>	<i>Zhi chan bing mi yao</i> 治禪病祕要 (1)	<i>Chan mi yao</i> 禪祕要 (3) A note reads: "Also called <i>Chan fa yao</i> 禪法要, and sometimes occurring in 5 fascicles."	<i>Chan mi yao fa</i> 禪祕要法 (3)
<i>Records of Succession</i>	<i>Zhi chan bing mi yao fa jing</i> 治禪病祕要經 (1)	<i>Chan mi yao ing</i> 禪祕要經 (3) ¹⁶¹	
<i>Catalog of the Renshou Era</i>	<i>Zhi chan bing mi yao</i> 治禪病祕要 (1)	<i>Chan mi yao</i> 禪祕要 (4) A note reads: "Also called <i>Chan fa yao</i> 禪法要, and sometimes occurring in 3 fascicles."	<i>Chan mi yao fa</i> 禪祕要法 (3)
<i>Jingtai's Catalog</i>	<i>Zhi chan bing mi yao</i> 治禪病祕要 (1) 28 pages (紙)	<i>Chan mi yao jing</i> 禪祕要經 (5) 71 pages. A note reads: "Also called <i>Chan fa yao</i> 禪法要."	<i>Chan mi yao fa</i> 禪祕要法 (3) 75 pages
<i>Tang Catalog of Buddhist Scripture</i>	<i>Zhi chan bing mi yao</i> 治禪病祕要 (1) 28 pages	<i>Chan mi yao</i> 禪祕要 (5) 71 pages. A note reads: "Also in 3 fascicles. Also called <i>Chan fa yao</i> 禪法要."	<i>Chan mi yao fa</i> 禪祕要法 (3) 75 pages
<i>Catalog of the Great Zhou</i>	<i>Zhi chan bing mi yao</i> 治禪病祕要 (1)	<i>Chan mi yao jing</i> 禪祕要經 (5) A note reads: "Also called <i>Chan fa yao</i> 禪法要. Also in 2 (3?) fascicles."	<i>Chan mi yao jing</i> 禪祕要經 (4) A note reads: "Also called <i>Chan mi yao</i> 禪祕要."
<i>Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era (730)</i>	<i>Zhi chan bing mi yao jing</i> 治禪病祕要經 (1) 28 pages. A note reads: "Also called <i>Zhi chan bing mi yao fa</i> 治禪病祕要法. Also called <i>Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing</i> 禪要祕密治病經. Also in 2 fascicles."	<i>Chan mi yao jing</i> 禪祕要經 (5) (removed from the official canon)	<i>Chan mi yao jing</i> 禪祕要經 (3) 84 pages A note reads: "Also called <i>Chan mi yao fa</i> 禪闕要法. Also in 4 fascicles."

Reading these entries as records of the transmission of these texts between the late sixth and eighth centuries, a few salient points emerge. The text attributed to Juqu Jingsheng, seemingly equal to the extant version of the *Methods for Curing*, had a relatively fixed form. But

¹⁶¹*Era* (730 CE). The *Kaiyuan shi jiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (T.2154) compiled by Zhisheng 智昇.
161The catalog in the *Record of Succession* does not list translators, and only records one text of this title.

the text(s) whose title began with the words *chan mi yao* 禪祕要 had much more variation. Indeed catalogs record two different texts, one attributed to Dharmamitra and one to Kumārajīva, each with slightly different names. The problem, however, is that we do not always know to what these titles refer. For, as we have seen, in later times *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 was the title of both a five fascicle text, whose first fascicle was the same as the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing*, and a three fascicle text, equal to the extant *Chan Essentials*.

If we simply take the extant *Chan Essentials* and attempt to locate it in the catalogs, Dharmamitra's *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要, first mentioned in the *Records of the Canon*, appears the most likely candidate. But this fails to consider that there actually *were* two different texts in circulation. It was not simply a matter of the same text eventually becoming attributed to Kumārajīva. Moreover in the Tang dynasty it was the text attributed to Dharmamitra that was jumbled and confused, incorporating material from the *Methods for Curing* and proceeding to different material in the second fascicle (the text excluded from the canon in the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era*). There is thus no reason at all to think that the *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要 attributed to Dharmamitra in the *Records of the Canon* was the three-fascicle *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法 later associated with Kumārajīva (which eventually became the *Chan Essentials* as we have it today). It is further significant that when two texts titled *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要—Dharmamitra's and Kumārajīva's—appear in the catalog records, the two-fascicle *Secret Chan Cures* disappears forever, replaced by the *Methods for Curing* in one fascicle. In other words it seems likely that whatever change resulted in the *Secret Chan Cures* (originally in five fascicles, then later in two) becoming the single-fascicle *Methods for Curing* also resulted in the creation of two different texts called *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要.

When we examine the citations of the *Methods for Curing* and the *Chan Essentials* preserved in other sources, the waters become even more muddied, and here I ask the reader's indulgence to present information that serves not to clarify, but to undermine any confidence we have in knowing just what text a given medieval catalog was really referring to when it used any of these two titles.¹⁶²

A seventh-century encyclopedia thus cites several passages under the title *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經,¹⁶³ some of which are from the *Chan Essentials*, others from the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing*.¹⁶⁴ This could be explained by the five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 seen by Zhisheng (surviving in part as fascicles 2 through 5 of the Nara manuscript). But this encyclopedia also cites, under the same name, material from the *second* fascicle of the *Methods for Curing*,¹⁶⁵ and the five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 cannot account for this.

Indeed, the text excluded from the canon by Zhisheng is just the tip of the iceberg, as shown by Xuanying's 玄應 seventh-century glossary, the *Pronunciations and Meaning of*

162I will limit my remarks to the most important passages. For all known citations see p.136.

163These citations are discussed by Kawaguchi 2000, 283–287. Many also appear in the *Compendium of Scriptural Essentials* (*Zhu jing yao ji* 眾經要集).

164See 10a, 10b below, p.136.

165See 10c below, p.136.

Chapter 2: Chinese Meditation Texts of the Fifth Century (II)

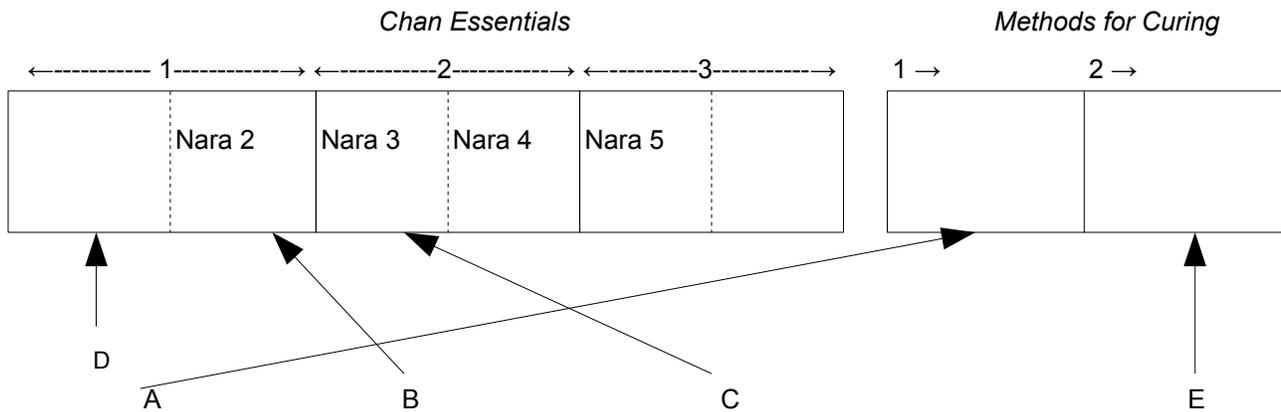
[words in] the Canon (*Yi qie jing yin yi* 一切經音義).¹⁶⁶ All in all Xuanying provides glosses for selected words from *three* fascicles of a *Zhi chan bing mi yao jing* 治禪病秘要經, fascicle two (only) of a *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法, and for a single-fascicle text called *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病秘要法, apparently something different than the similarly titled first text. These glosses and their associated text titles show just how problematic it is to assume that the surviving catalogs reflect the totality of textual transmission on the ground. Thus, for example, seventh-century catalogs only ever list one text called *Zhi chan bing mi yao jing* 治禪病秘要經, always in a single fascicle. Yet Xuanying seems to have had a text bearing this same title in *three* fascicles, not to mention an entirely different text bearing the similar title *Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病秘要法. Xuanying's glossary, moreover, cites individual words from each text, so we are able to align them with extant material:

Xuanying's texts	Present day text in which the words appear
A) <i>Zhi chan bing mi yao jing</i> 治禪病秘要經, fascicle 1	<i>Methods for Curing</i> , fascicle 1
B) <i>ibid.</i> , fascicle 2	<i>Chan Essentials</i> fascicle 1 (but only the second half, thus potentially corresponding to fascicle 2 of the Nara manuscript)
C) <i>ibid.</i> , fascicle 3	<i>Chan Essentials</i> fascicle 2 (but only the first half, thus potentially corresponding to fascicle 3 of the Nara manuscript).
D) <i>Chan mi yao fa</i> 禪祕要法, fascicle 2 (only)	<i>Chan Essentials</i> fascicle 1 (but only the first half, thus potentially corresponding to an otherwise unknown text comprised of the portions of fascicle one of the <i>Chan Essentials</i> not contained in fascicle two of the Nara manuscript).
E) <i>Zhi chan bing mi yao fa</i> 治禪病秘要法	<i>Methods for Curing</i> , fascicle 2.

Since Xuanying glosses only a few words from each text these correspondences are tentative. However several points cannot be denied. First, Xuanying had *two different texts* whose titles began with the words *zhi chan bing* 治禪病. No extant catalog makes any mention of multiple texts with this name. Second, one of these texts had (at least) *three* fascicles, which seem to have been the same as the first three fascicles of the five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 seen by

¹⁶⁶Two medieval texts bearing the title *Pronunciations and Meaning of [words in] the Canon (Yi qie jing yin yi* 一切經音義) have been transmitted. The first is by Xuanying (active mid seventh-century). Two versions of this 25-fascicle text exist, glossing the same words but using different *fan qie* 反切 readings and often different explanations of the meaning. The first the of these is transmitted in the canons of the Kaibao lineage (such as the Jin canon and the Korean canons), and the second is that found in the so-called southern Song canons (P, Q, S, etc). Another text with this same name was compiled by Huilin 慧琳 in the 9th century. The Taishō canon includes only this version, in 100 fascicles. Huilin's version incorporates most of Xuanying's version, and marks entries drawn from it with the words "compiled by Xuanying" (玄應撰). For more details, see Takata 1994.

Zhisheng. Third, Xuanying lists the second fascicle of a *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法 (D above), whose contents align with the first half of the first fascicle of the *Chan Essentials*. Finally the last text, E), seems to correspond to those parts of the *Methods for Curing* not contained in the first fascicle of Zhisheng’s five-fascicle *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經. Putting this information together, we arrive at the following tentative correspondence between Xuanying’s texts and the extant versions of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*:



Although we might suppose that Xuanying’s texts were an aberration, the poorly organized collection of a single library, his versions of this material continued to circulate until the twilight of the manuscript era. Thus Chengguan’s 澄觀 ninth-century commentary to the *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經 cites fascicle one of a *Zhi chan bing mi yao jing* 治禪病祕要經. We might at first expect this to be the *Methods for Curing*. However since he calls it fascicle “number one” (第一), not “upper” (上), we can infer that this text had at least three fascicles. The contents, moreover, correspond to the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing*, precisely what Xuanying calls fascicle number one of a three-fascicle text bearing this same title. Thus Xuanying’s otherwise unattested *Zhi chan bing mi yao jing* 治禪病祕要經 in three fascicles apparently continued to circulate during the seventh, eighth and even ninth centuries.

Most interesting of all is that Chengguan gives the translator of the text: “This scripture was translated at the Zhihuan 祇洹 monastery in Yangzhou in the 18th year of the Yuanjia reign period of the Song dynasty, by the monk Dharmamitra.”¹⁶⁷ This is precisely the same information found in the *Records of the Canon*, and all later catalogs where, however, it is associated with Dharmamitra’s translation of the text variously entitled *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要, *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經, or *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕要法. In other words it would appear that Chengguan had before him a text titled called *Zhi chan bing mi yao jing* 治禪病祕要經 that contained the above information about Dharmamitra on its opening page (such information is often included after the title of a text). Given the way these titles were freely interchanged, it

167 此經是宋元嘉十八年沙門曇摩蜜多於揚州祇洹寺譯 (T.1736:36.334a19–23).

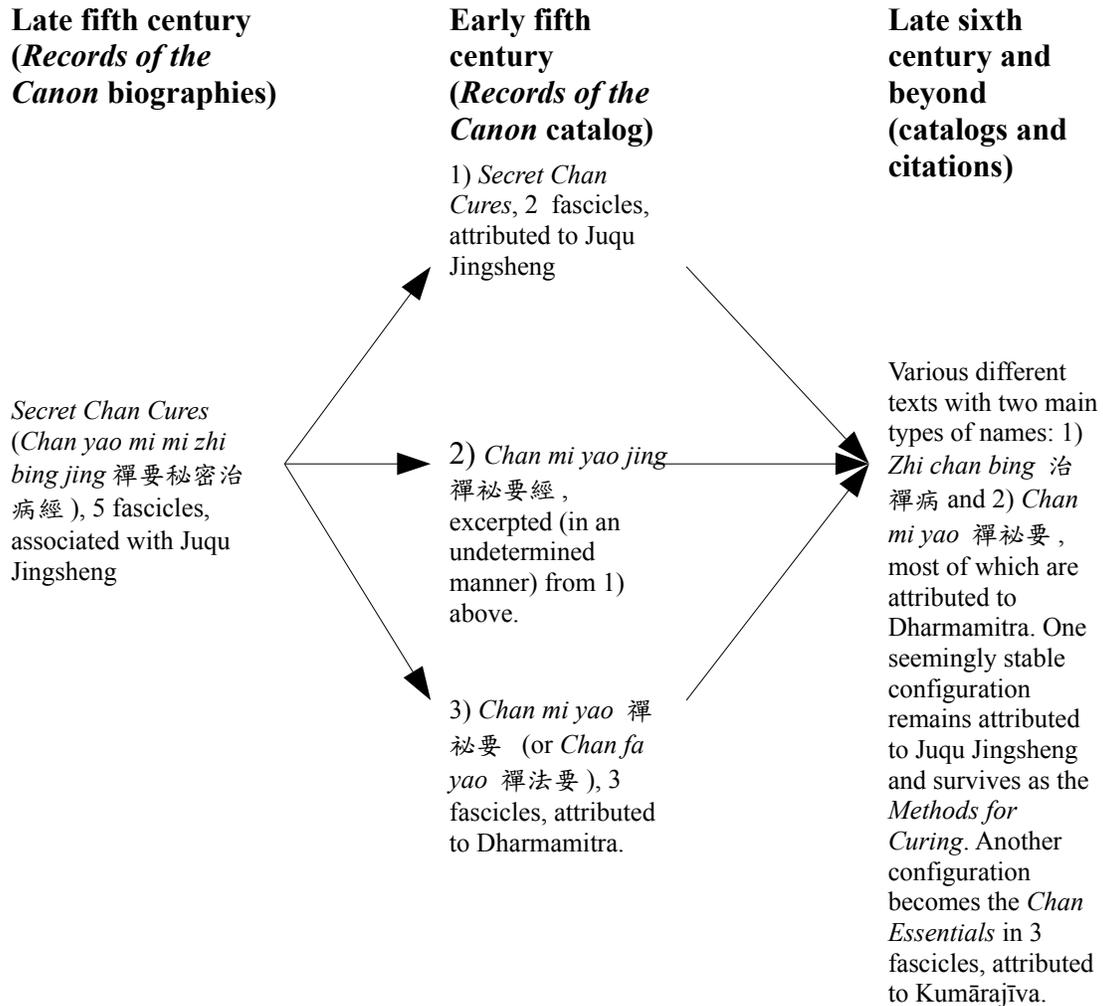
now begins to seem possible that the text attributed in catalogs to Dharmamitra under the name *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要 had *always* been something similar in format to Zhisheng's excluded text, that is to say a text containing material from both the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*.

Textual history: tentative conclusions

At this point the situation may seem hopelessly confused, and to some degree I think this is true. What I want to stress, however, is that this confusion is not just the absence of information—rather, we have too much information, and what our information shows is that the transmission of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* was, for several centuries, confused, and this confusion dates back at least to the *Records of the Canon*, the earliest and thus supposedly most reliable catalog.

As we have seen, material from both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* continued to appear throughout the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries within texts whose titles began both with *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要 and *Zhi chan bing* 治禪病. In other words when we see the titles *Chan Essentials* (*Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經) or *Methods for Curing* (*Zhi chan bing mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法) in a catalog, we have no way of knowing what this refers to.

Only in the biographies from the *Records of the Canon*, our very earliest set of sources, does their appear to be any clarity. There we have *one* text whose title contains the word “secret” (*mi* 祕). This text, the *Secret Chan Cures* (*Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要祕密治病經), was associated with Juqu Jingsheng and was five fascicles in length. Although there is no way to directly verify this, a text of this size is long enough to have included all the material presently found in both the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*. Schematically we can represent the situation as follows:



There is no way of precisely mapping the above, hypothetical evolution. Although we can track certain changes beginning from the seventh century based on information such as page length and citations preserved in other texts, for the first two hundred years of these texts' existence all we have are titles, which as I hope is now clear are of little use. The simplest solution, one that simultaneously accounts for the stylistic similarities and thematic continuity between them, would be that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* originally were a single body of material, that linked to Juqu Jingsheng under the name *Secret Chan Cures*.

Internally, I would suggest that the *Methods for Curing* would have immediately followed the *Chan Essentials*. Indeed there is a certain continuity between the fourth and final sutra of the *Chan Essentials* and the opening of the *Methods for Curing*. The fourth sutra of the *Chan Essentials* presents Agnidatta, who in a past life once “went mad owing to a disturbance in the wind element” (4.19) and killed many people. As a result of this karma in his present life should Agnidatta enter the *samādhi* of the wind element “his head will split into seven pieces

and his heart will rip in half.” Although this sutra clearly represents the culmination of the *Chan Essentials*, the *Methods for Curing* begins with a discussion of illness that can arise during contemplation of the wind element. Indeed the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing* is framed with a story of a group of monks who “while immersed in the contemplation of the wind element entered a state of madness.” (5.2). The *Chan Essentials* thus flows naturally into the beginning of the *Methods for Curing*.

The eventual division of this material into the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* was not, however, entirely arbitrary, and it clearly created two texts that can stand independently. Indeed it is even possible to read the hypothetical original title, *Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要秘密治病經, as the name of not one but two texts: a *Chan yao mi mi* 禪要秘密, “Secret Methods of Meditation,” and a *Zhi bing jing* 治病經, “Scripture for Healing Illness.” These two titles correspond well to the contents of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* respectively.¹⁶⁸

Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲

In the end we thus return to Juqu Jingsheng and the *Secret Chan Cures*, a text that I will now consider to have included both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*. As mentioned above a colophon for this text (or collection of texts) survives. But because scholars have often assumed that the *Methods for Curing* was not a straightforward translation, its colophon, supposed a record of the text’s translation, has not been investigated carefully. However the colophon does not seem to actually claim that Juqu Jingsheng translated the text:

The Marquis Juqu of Anyang, a younger paternal cousin of the king of Hexi [Juqu Mengsun], studied with the Indian monk Buddhasena, a *śrāmana* of the Mahāyāna, at the Vajra forest-hermitage of the Jumadi temple in Khotan. He [Buddhasena] was extraordinarily gifted, unrivaled throughout many lands. He could recite half a million verses [of scripture], and was also knowledgeable concerning methods of *chan*. He had mastered both Buddhist and secular [writings], and there was no text of any kind in which he was not proficient. Thus was he known in the world as a lion among men. Juqu personally received the transmission [of this text] from him, and could recite it from memory without mistake. On the eighth day of the ninth month of the second year of the Xiaojian era (454) of the Song dynasty, he started recording this scripture at the Bamboo Grove monastery, and was finished on the 25th day of that month. The nun Huirui was the sponsor.¹⁶⁹

168 Interestingly the text attributed to Juqu Jingsheng in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* is named *Chan mi yao zhi bing jing* 禪祕要治病經, in contrast to *Chan yao mi mi zhi bing jing* 禪要秘密治病經 from his (earlier) biography in the *Records of the Canon*. And the first three characters in the title from the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (禪祕要) are indeed identical to the title of the text attributed to Dharmamitra in the *Records of the Canon* catalog. In other words the title of Juqu Jingsheng’s text in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* may represent its name just before it was split into two texts, *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 and *Zhi chan bin mi yao fa* 治禪病祕要法, the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* respectively.

169 河西王從弟沮渠安陽侯，於于闐國衢摩帝大寺{金剛阿練若住處}，從天竺比丘大乘沙門佛陀斯那。其人天才特拔，諸國獨步，誦半億偈，兼明禪法，內外綜博，無籍不練。故世人咸曰人中師子。沮渠親面

Working backwards, the “production” (出) of the text was sponsored by Huirui, a nun who, according to the early sixth-century *Biographies of the Nuns* had been responsible for raising the funds for the construction of the Zhuyuan temple, also mentioned in the colophon.¹⁷⁰ But the colophon does not actually say that Juqu Jingsheng translated this text at this time. The verb that describes his activity, *shu chu* 書出, is not entirely transparent, and Juqu Jingsheng’s biographies use slightly different words. The *Records of the Canon*, for example, writes that “the nun Huirui overheard [Juqu Jingsheng] reciting a *chan* scripture and asked that [he] transcribe (*chuan xie* 傳寫) it. He had so thoroughly mastered it that he could write it down without trouble. In seventeen days he produced five fascicles.”¹⁷¹ The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* says merely that Huirui “asked [Juqu Jingsheng] to produce the *chan* scripture” (請出禪經).¹⁷²

While “produce” (*chu* 出) often implies “translate,”¹⁷³ the words in the colophon (*shu chu* 書出) and *Records of the Canon* (*chuan xie* 傳寫) usually do not. Though *shu chu* 書出 is rare,¹⁷⁴ *chuan xie* 傳寫 seems clearly to mean *transcription*, and this term actually had a technical meaning as the member of a translation team who wrote down the orally translated Chinese text.¹⁷⁵ That this is what Juqu Jingsheng did makes sense given the context. Indeed Huirui first overhears Juqu Jingsheng *chanting*, and the logic of the anecdote suggests that what she heard was a Chinese text. That Juqu Jingsheng “had so thoroughly mastered it” that he was

稟受，憶誦無滯，以宋孝建二年九月八日，於竹園精舍書出此經。至其月二十五日訖。尼慧濬為檀越。(T.2145:55.66a25–b2). I here give the version of the colophon as found in the *Records of the Canon*, where there are a number of minor variants. Larger variants are seen in the version of the colophon attached to the *Methods for Curing* itself, which contain the line 金剛阿練若住處 (“at the Vajra forest-hermitage”), which I have included, and lack the final line 尼慧濬為檀越 (“the nun Huirui was the sponsor”).

170T.2063:50.940c19–941a7. According to her biography Huirui died in 464, and was herself famous as a practitioner of meditation: “Without exception she entered all the deep [states of] *chan* and the secret contemplations” (深禪祕觀無不必入), and “her delight in meditation did not diminish with age” (禪味之樂老而不衰). Note that “secret contemplations” (*mi guan* 祕觀) is a very unusual expression, and we may plausibly connect it to our text. The word “secret contemplation” also appears elsewhere in the *Biographies of the Nuns* (T.2063:50.947b10–11), but is entirely unknown outside of this text.

171比丘尼慧濬，聞其諷誦禪經，請令傳寫。安陽通習積久，臨筆無滯，旬有七日出為五卷。(T.2145:55.106c10–13).

172T.2059:50.337a18–20. This biography also does not mention Huirui having first overheard the text.

173On the meaning of *chu* 出 in Buddhist catalogs, see Chen 2005. Note, however, that while the word often refers to a translation, this is not its *sense* (see for example *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era*, T.2154:55.676b28–c4, which clearly states that *chu* 出 can sometimes denote a composition rather than a translation).

174It is not listed in HYDCD. *Morohashi* gives “begin to write” (かきはじめ), but with no examples (5:5609).

175Sengruì, for example, writes: “Then I met the master Kumārajīva, and acted as *transcriber* for him. [He] pointed out the ultimate purport, and [the revelations afforded] were as if peeling back heavy mist and soaring high, like ascending Mt. Kunlun and gazing down [on the earth].” 既遇究摩羅法師，為之傳寫。指其大歸，真若披重霄而高蹈，登崑崙而俯眇矣。(Records of the Canon, T.2145:55.57c14–16). In a preface he further writes: “Then along with Daoheng I, incompetent that I am, took on the job of *transcriber*. I wrote down [Kumārajīva’s] words and noted his interpretations (?), so as to delight the worthies of future generations.” 于時予與道恒謬當傳寫之任，輒復疏其言，記其事，以貽後來之賢。(Records of the Canon, T.2145:55.58a11–12). Outside the context of a translation team the word appears to mean “make a copy of a text” (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.333c8–10).

able to “put pen to paper without trouble” similarly suggests fluidly writing down a memorized text, not the work of translation.

But perhaps most importantly, neither the colophon nor the biographies mention any of the usual elements associated with the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. While there were many different formats for the translation process, even when the Indian (or Central Asian) master was himself skilled in Chinese (such as Kumārajīva), the translation always took place *orally*, and this oral translation was then transcribed. If *shu chu* 書出 means “translate,” then the colophon would be implying that Juqu Jingsheng sat down and by himself wrote out the translation of a text. This would be the only known example from medieval China of a text translated in this manner. At least when the process of a translation is described, an invariable element of the account is the names and roles of the other people who participated.

My point is thus not that the colophon is inauthentic—rather, that it was never intended to describe a translation.¹⁷⁶ It is true that the catalog in the *Records of the Canon* says that Juqu Jingsheng “translated” (譯) his texts,¹⁷⁷ including this one, and of course the compiler of the *Records of the Canon* saw this same colophon. But Juqu Jingsheng’s biography from the *Records of the Canon* also seems to implicitly accept that what occurred at the Zhuyuan monastery was not a translation, for it explains that the text had *already been translated earlier*. After giving some background details on his life, the biography, like the colophon, says that Juqu Jingsheng traveled to Khotan and studied with Buddhasena. But the biography includes the following, which has no parallel in the colophon:

[Juqu Jingsheng] received [from Buddhasena] the *Secret Chan Cures*, and basing himself on the written Indic¹⁷⁸ text he learned to perfectly recite it.¹⁷⁹ He then returned east, and while in Gaochang commandry [Turfan] he obtained copies of the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* and the *Maitreya Contemplation*, each in a single fascicle. Returning to Hexi [the Northern Liang kingdom] he then translated the *Chan yao* 禪要 into Chinese.¹⁸⁰

If we assume that *chan yao* 禪要, “*chan* essentials,” refers to the text later overheard by Huirui, then by saying that Juqu Jingsheng translated it in Turfan the biography implies that at the Zhuyuan monastery he simply transcribed or copied it.¹⁸¹ The biography thus seems to have recognized that the colophon does not clearly describe a translation, and has perhaps therefore attempted to provide the text with a more satisfactory history.¹⁸² The reference here to a Indic

176We must recall, moreover, that the spontaneous recitation of new Buddhist scriptures *in Chinese* was not unheard of. The nun Sengfa 僧法 (fl. 550–600), for example, was known to spontaneously recite new Buddhist scriptures received from various spirits (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.40b6–17). Even clerical authors accepted some of these texts as genuine revelations (for other cases, see Campy 1993).

177T.2145:55.13a13–14

178On *hu* 胡 (versus *fan* 梵) see Boucher 2000. For the sake of simplicity, I will translate simply as “Indic.”

179Cf. Mair 1993, 7, who seems to have misread 誦 as 譯.

180從受禪要祕密治病經，因其胡本口誦通利，既而東歸。於高昌郡，求得觀世音彌勒二觀經各一卷。及還河西，即譯出禪要，轉為漢文。(T.2145:55.106c2–5). *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.337a11–14, is almost identical.

181Sakaino Kōyū came to a similar conclusion (1935, 871–872).

182The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* also seems to recognize the problem. While the colophon indicates that Juqu

manuscript,¹⁸³ not mentioned at all in the colophon, seems to be a further effort to make the origins of the text as authentic as possible.¹⁸⁴

By the “principle of embarrassment”¹⁸⁵ the colophon is thus probably an authentic record of the *copying* of the text at the Zhuyuan monastery, for had the intention been to provide a fake record of the text’s translation the colophon surely would have been written differently. Leaving aside for the moment the question of what happened before this time, the colophon thus presents a reasonably clear picture, one that I suggest we accept—Juqu Jingsheng had memorized a Chinese *chan* text, in five fascicles, and sponsored by the nun Huirui he copied it out at the Zhuyuan.

The remaining elements of the story are less clear, though details of the places and characters do match other sources. The colophon and biographies thus say that Juqu Jingsheng learned his *chan* text from the “Indian Mahāyāna monk” Buddhasena at the Jumadi 衢摩帝 (*Gomatī / Gūmattirā)¹⁸⁶ temple in Khotan.¹⁸⁷ A temple by this name in Khotan is indeed

Jingsheng “transcribed” (書出) the text, and the *Records of Canon* that he “copied it” (傳寫), the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* merely says “produced” (出), which seems to come closer to implying a translation.

183As Tanya Storch has observed the catalog section of the *Records for Curing* frequently mentions a “manuscript” (*ben* 本) in cases where the colophons indicate an orally recited text (Storch 1993, 1995). She suggests that *ben* thus does not always mean a physical manuscript. I would argue, rather, that this actually is a real contradiction between the biographies and the catalog, one indicating the concern of the catalog section for grounding the authenticity of translations in written Indic texts even when earlier records do not mention them.

184Also worthy of note is the reference in the version of the colophon attached to the text itself to the “Vajra forest-hermitage” (金剛阿練若住處) as the compound where Buddhasena resided. This may, perhaps, be read in light of a famous passage from Faxian’s translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, also found in the Pāli (DN, 2.127) and Sanskrit (Waldschmidt 1986, 238–244) versions, containing guidelines for when a scripture may be accepted. The reciter must claim to have heard it either 1) directly from the Buddha, 2) from a whole community of learned monks (*bhikṣusaṃghaḥ . . . sasthaviṛaḥ sapramokṣaḥ*), 3) from a group of “many” learned monks (*sambahulā bhikṣavaḥ . . . sūtradharā vinayadharā māṭṛkādharāḥ*), or finally 4) from a single such monk. Faxian’s translation, however, demands slightly more. The person presenting the teaching for consideration must state that he heard it “personally from a learned monk of such-and-such a temple, of such-such a forest-hermitage” (我親從 某僧伽藍、某阿練若住處，有一上座比丘)，and that he “properly understood its meaning and learned to recite it flawlessly” (善解其義，受持讀誦，極自通利; T.7:1.196a1–10). The Pāli and Sanskrit versions, in contrast, here specify merely “in such-and-such a place” (*amuṣminn āvase*).

The colophon to Juqu Jingsheng’s text conforms remarkably well to these criteria—it gives the name of the temple where the Buddhasena resided, praises him as learned, and says that Juqu Jingsheng learned to recite the text perfectly. And finally, in the version of the colophon attached to the text, states the name of a specific “forest-hermitage” (阿練若住處), seemingly intended as a sub-temple of the Gomatī 衢摩帝 temple. Faxian’s translation of *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* is presumably supposed to be read “in such-and-such a temple *or* in such-and-such a forest hermitage” (某僧伽藍某阿練若住處). In other words *seng jia lan* 僧伽藍 and *lian ruo zhu chu* 阿練若住處 are mutually exclusive alternatives. It seems possible that the colophon, in adding the name of the “forest hermitage,” was inspired by the above passage from Faxian’s translation, but read the text to mean “in such-and-such a temple *and* in such-and-such a forest hermitage.”

185Nattier 2003, 65

186Gomatī is the reconstructed Sanskrit name, believed to correspond to the Khotanese *Gūmattirā-stūpa*, attested in an early Khotanese manuscript (Emmerick 1967, 95).

187For a survey of Buddhism in Khotan, see Skjærvø 1999; Kumamoto 1999. The Chinese records of Khotan are discussed most recently by Max Deeg (2005, 86–95). Apart from the records of Chinese pilgrims, the main source for Khotanese history is a much later Tibetan history (Emmerick 1967). The most complete collection and study of primary source material on Khotan, textual and archeological, is Zhang and Rong 2008.

mentioned in Faxian's diary of his travels through central Asia.¹⁸⁸ Faxian's account similarly describes this temple as a "Mahāyāna" temple, and as the largest monastery in Khotan, richly supported by the king. There are also, moreover, other fifth-century records of Chinese monks traveling to Khotan, obtaining texts, and eventually translating them into Chinese.¹⁸⁹ Although dating from somewhat later Chinese Buddhist texts have even been discovered in the ruins of Khotan itself,¹⁹⁰ and the travel records of later pilgrims suggest that there were Chinese temples in the city.¹⁹¹ Although it requires stretching our imagination, it is not outside the realm of possibility that Juqu Jingsheng could have obtained a *Chinese* text in Khotan.¹⁹²

On the other hand that these details line up so well with information known from Chinese sources such as Faxian's diary is also a reason to be suspicious. Consider, for example, the name of the Indian monk, Buddhasena.¹⁹³ In south China during the first half of the fifth century Buddhasena was well known as the teacher of Buddhahadra, who as discussed in chapter one was the first "*chan* master" to teach in China. Buddhasena was, moreover, associated with the important *chan* text that Buddhahadra had translated in south China some years before (the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*). Thus in the year 454, when Juqu Jingsheng copied out his text, the name "Buddhasena" would have been known among Chinese Buddhists as an important and renowned Indian *chan* master who had himself compiled or composed important meditation manuals. No more prestigious a lineage for a new *chan* text can be imagined, and this should perhaps arouse our suspicions. There is furthermore the matter of Buddhasena's presence in Khotan. In the other fifth-century records that mention him Buddhasena is a *chan* master from "greater Gandhāra" (Jibin 罽賓), not Khotan. Of course perhaps this was not the same Buddhasena. Or perhaps Buddhahadra's teacher Buddhasena moved to Khotan later in his life.¹⁹⁴ But it is also possible that many Chinese were not entirely clear about where these regions were, such that "Khotan" appeared to be a reasonably city in which to find an Indian monk from "greater Gandhāra" (Jibin 罽賓).

188T.2085:51.857b8–9

189The most famous example is the *Scripture of the Wise and Foolish* (*Xian yu jing* 賢愚經), supposedly obtained in Khotan by Chinese monks who later translated it into Chinese. It is, moreover, interesting to note certain broad parallels between the story of this text and the story of Juqu Jingsheng. The *Records of the Canon* contains a postface for the *Scripture of the Wise and Foolish*, written by Sengyou, indicating that the Chinese monks overheard the *Scripture of the Wise and Foolish* in Khotan and then wrote it down while in that city, without specifying how it was translated. But, in the catalog of the *Records of the Canon* it is said that the monks, having returned east to Kocho near Chinese territory, then further obtained an "Indian language manuscript" (*hu ben* 胡本) from which they made their translation (Mair 1993, 25–26).

190Kumamoto 1999, 154

191Kuwayama 1992, 47; 193

192Colophons from a Chinese *dhārāṇī* from among the Dunhuang manuscripts claims that the text was translated into Chinese in Khotan (Makita and Fukui 1984, 131–151). Victor Mair has pointed out a colophon to a supposedly fourth-century translation, the *Shi fei shi jing* 時非時經, preserved in the *Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era*, indicating that the text was "recorded [in Chinese] in the city of Khotan (鈇瑱?)" (T.2154:55.617a18–19). If this text is actually from the fourth century, and if 鈇瑱 does indeed refer to Khotan as Mair suspects, this would be evidence for the production of Chinese Buddhist texts in Khotan at a very early date.

193This name is transcribed as either 佛馱斯 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.337a9), 佛馱斯那 (*Records of Succession*, T.2034:49.84c15), or 佛陀斯那 (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.66a26; 106b29).

194On the Chinese records pertaining to Buddhasena, see Lin 1949, 341–351.

In final analysis the story of Juqu Jingsheng's discipleship in Khotan is difficult to evaluate, and a number of unanswerable questions remain. Juqu Jingsheng himself is an obscure figure—described as a member of the imperial family of the Northern Liang kingdom, he is not mentioned in any of the official histories. Whatever his true pedigree, he seems to have arrived in south China sometime after 439, when the Northern Wei invaded Guzang 姑臧 from where the Juqu family 沮渠 had controlled the Gansu corridor.¹⁹⁵ Upon the subsequent destruction of the Northern Liang kingdom most members of the Juqu clan fled west, eventually establishing the Gaochang 高昌 kingdom in Turfan (ancient Gaochang), which would endure until 460. Given the close relationship between the Juqu clan and the Song court in the south, we can expect that many refugees also fled south, and the man known as Juqu, “Marquis of Anyang” (安陽侯) was perhaps among them.

Conclusions

Given the evidence at our disposal it is thus reasonable to conclude that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, joined together as a single collection, were written down in the 450s in south China by the mysterious Juqu Jingsheng. Although the history of this material prior to this time remains uncertain, the “format A” sections of the *Five Gates* provide an example of the kinds of Chinese meditation texts that were expanded and joined with simple narratives in order to create these texts. Although there is no way to trace this process precisely, it seems best to view the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* as the codification of teachings on *chan* that were developing in south China during the first half of the fifth century. And while we cannot necessarily link this material to particular individuals, foreign *chan* masters such as Dharmamitra and their Chinese followers seem at least to have been the kinds of groups among whom this material was circulating.

Although many previous scholars have suggested that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, as well as the Contemplation Scriptures to which they are closely related, were not direct translations of Indian Buddhist texts, the evidence for this has always been indirect. But as we have seen the *Five Gates* provides an example of a direct Chinese textual antecedent for one of the four sutras in the *Chan Essentials*. This gives us a picture of how at least this part of this text was composed that is far more detailed than anything scholars have demonstrated in the case of the Contemplations Scriptures, and I want to close this chapter by considering how this discovery might help us reevaluate the various theories of the origins of these texts.

Because the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is a foundational text for several schools of Japanese Buddhism, the discovery of its possibly apocryphal status resulted in a vast Japanese scholarly output seeking to determine its precise origins and nature.¹⁹⁶ Though some Japanese

¹⁹⁵For a summary of the basic history of this period, see Yu 2006, 255–259.

¹⁹⁶For a summary of literature, see Fujita 1970, 116–136; 2007, 163–232 and Sueki 1986; 1992, 22–38 and 117–147. In addition to the foundational work of Mochizuki, Kasugai and Tsukinowa mentioned above, a very partial list of important studies includes Yamada 1976, Pas 1977, Yamada 1984, xi–xl, Silk 1997, and Tagawa 1999.

Buddhologists continued to hold that it was composed in India,¹⁹⁷ it was soon generally accepted that this text, and the other Contemplation Scriptures as well, at the very least underwent substantial revision in China. Most, however, also rejected Tsukinowa's conclusion that the texts were complete Chinese forgeries, and have tried to find a middle ground. Thus, for example, some have proposed that Kālayāśas, "translator" of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* according to the Chinese bibliographic tradition, may have orally transmitted a basic core of practices current in Central Asia, which were then translated into Chinese to form, after substantial editing, the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* as we have it today.¹⁹⁸ In this view the text more or less existed outside of China, though perhaps not in a written form, and its "Chinese" expressions and borrowings from previously translated text are explained as the result of heavy editing after the translation of the core text. Others have argued on philological grounds that individual parts of the text were translated separately,¹⁹⁹ and that the complete text never existed as such outside of China.

Related but equally important questions concern where the final compilation and editing took place. The translators associated with the Contemplation Scriptures are all connected in their biographies to Turfan (Gaochang 高昌), a major Buddhist center along the Silk Roads and the furthest westward reach of significant Chinese cultural impact.²⁰⁰ One early source pertaining to the *Maitreya Contemplation* and the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* even says that these texts were brought to south China from Turfan where "they had been translated long ago."²⁰¹ This has led many scholars to posit Turfan as the origin of the texts themselves.²⁰² Others scholars, however, have pointed out that whatever the source of their individual components the texts as we have them today must be seen as products of south China.²⁰³

Archeological evidence has more recently added a new voice to these debates. Yamabe Nobuyoshi has thus advanced a considerably nuanced version of the Turfan hypothesis on the basis of paintings from the Toyok caves near modern Turfan.²⁰⁴ Art historians had noted the connection between paintings in Toyok caves 20 and 42 and the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*,²⁰⁵ but Yamabe has emphasized that many of these are even more closely related to the *Chan Essentials*, the *Methods for Curing*, and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*. None of the paintings, however, seems directly based on any extant text, and both the order of the scenes and the Chinese inscriptions, in which the contents are described, differ at least slightly from the texts as we have them today. Yamabe thus concludes that in Turfan these practices existed in an unsystematic form, finding different expression in the texts on the one hand and the cave paintings on the other. This fluidity, he argues, suggests that Turfan is likely the region where these practices first developed.²⁰⁶

197Hirakawa 1984, but see also Hayshima 1964. Hirakawa's argument has not been generally accepted (Namikawa 1999), some still support an Indian or Gandhāran origin of the text (Takahashi 1993; Ōminami 1995).

198Fujita 1970, 116–136; 2007, 163–232.

199Yamada 1976

200Hitch 2009. By the sixth century almost all of Turfan's residents were Chinese (Hansen 2005, 285–286).

201*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.13a14–15

202Fujita 1990, 163

203Tagawa 1999

204Yamabe 1999b

205Miyaji 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Lai 2002

206However Yamabe's final conclusion seems in doubt because he cannot demonstrate that it is more likely than the

What unites these various theories is their attempt to find some core within the Contemplation Scriptures that is authentically Indian, or at least non-Chinese, despite the low probability that they were direct translations. Yamabe thus concludes that the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (and also the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*) is a “hybrid apocrypha,” a “highly cross-cultural product”²⁰⁷ differing from ordinary Chinese apocryphal sutras because its “core motifs” came from Indian traditions even if the “concrete expressions” of those motifs came from Chinese authors.²⁰⁸ Yamabe supports this idea by trying to show that these texts contain elements derived from Indian Buddhist traditions that, in fifth-century China, were not otherwise available in previously translated texts. Accordingly the author(s), while drawing in part from previously translated Chinese Buddhist texts or other Chinese ideas, also “had direct access to . . . [Indian Buddhist] texts not translated into Chinese.”²⁰⁹ In the case of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, the *Yogalehrbuch*, itself never translated into Chinese, provides a key example of this. Other scholars have drawn similar conclusions about the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*. Sueki Fumihiko thus observes that its frame story, though otherwise unknown as such, contains elements from stories about King Ajātaśatru that in Indian sources appear only in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, not translated into Chinese until the seventh century.²¹⁰ Sueki thus concludes that the compiler(s) of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* must have had direct access to Indian traditions not otherwise available in China.

Arguments such as this are not problematic as such—indeed these texts definitely contain elements of unquestionably Indian origin. However *elements* of Indian origin are also found in ordinary Chinese Buddhist apocryphal texts. They are even found in patently non-Buddhist Chinese texts such as the Lingbao 靈寶 scriptures,²¹¹ which as scholars of Daoism point out are not thereby merely Indian wine in Chinese bottles, for more often than not they “borrow” Buddhist ideas only to nuance them, change their meaning dramatically, or even critique them.²¹²

What then might it mean to say, as Yamabe does, that the “core motifs” of these texts are Indian despite having been compiled or even composed in China? Here the parallels between the

reverse, namely that the Toyok paintings are based on traditions imported from somewhere else. In such a case, he argues, we would expect the paintings and the texts to match more closely since the texts, already established as authoritative, would have been difficult to contravene, but not so if the traditions were local to the area and hence more fluid (Yamabe 1999b, 497). As I see it this is the major weak link in Yamabe’s argument. Even granting his assumption about the authoritative nature of imported scriptures (which is not necessarily clear), a more basic problem remains. For suppose that these meditation practices developed in south China, but were then transmitted later to Turfan. If the texts themselves were only written down in south China *after* they had spread without the texts (or without the texts as we have them), we could still fully account for the evidence.

207Yamabe 1999b, 499

208ibid., 257

209Yamabe 1999b, 374

210Sueki 1992, 65–66. See also Silk 1997, who shows that even some of the elements of this story that Sueki considered to have derived from Central Asian sources (in particular a reference to grape wine), do in fact have parallels in Indian sources (though in this case from Jain, not Buddhist story literature). If anything, however, this strengthens Sueki’s contention that the authors were working from Indian traditions not available in China.

211Zürcher 1980

212The originality of the Lingbao scriptures despite their debt to Buddhist texts has been pointed out repeatedly by Stephen Bokenkamp (2004; 2006). Most recently Bokenkamp has treated this problem through the concept of rebirth, supposedly a key Buddhist influence on Daoism, but better understood, Bokenkamp argues, as a site where Daoists articulated their disagreements with Buddhism (Bokenkamp 2007).

Five Gates and the *Chan Essentials* offer us new and important information, and shows us the *minimum* level of textual evolution lying behind this part of the *Chan Essentials* in China, or at least in Chinese. And this evolution was substantial. We might of course say that the *Five Gates* constitutes the “core motifs” of the *Chan Essentials*—such as, for example, the emphasis on unusual or symbolic “verificatory visions.” But rather than “core motifs” we might better characterize such things as building blocks, and any analysis must take into account the meaning and function of these building blocks within the context of the *Chan Essentials*.²¹³ What we would like to know, in other words, is not merely where its elements came from, but what those elements were assembled in order to say, and how this compares to what those elements are used to say elsewhere (such as, for example, in earlier Indian meditation texts).²¹⁴

If texts such as the *Chan Essentials* or the Contemplation Scriptures had turned out to be merely slightly edited versions of originally complete and self-contained Indic texts, or even the assemblage of several complete but originally independent pieces, then it would be unclear to what extent any particular element of the overall message reflects the interests of the Chinese compilers or authors. But if the development from the *Five Gates* to the *Chan Essentials* is any guide these texts underwent a substantial evolution *as Chinese texts*, such that their broad themes and interests can be read as the concerns (though not necessarily the exclusive concerns) of Chinese Buddhism and Chinese Buddhists even though they do not overtly incorporate non-Buddhist Chinese thought to the same extent as do traditionally defined apocryphal sutras.

Moreover it might be possible to uncover some information about the distinctive approaches to meditation that may have developed in China as texts such as the *Five Gates* were used and propagated, since we now have at least one example of how this material evolved. That of all the Contemplation Scriptures and related texts we have a parallel only to a short section of the *Chan Essentials* makes any direct comparison of this kind difficult for want of data. Indeed it remains uncertain to what extent we can generalize from the case of the *Chan Essentials*. Still, now we at least have one concrete example, whereas previous discussions of what kinds of sources were used to write the Contemplation Scriptures (particularly the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*) were entirely speculative, or limited to noting that particular phrases or words were drawn from other, known texts. Certainly in the case of the *Chan Essentials*, at the least, we can expect that such a comparison will not be entirely in vain. In chapter four I will explore one such point where a change does seem to have occurred, namely as concerns the connection between the visions obtained through meditation and the practice of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔).

213This has implications for Yamabe’s use of the Toyok paintings for establishing Turfan as the site where these texts originated. Indeed the *Five Gates* contains the same style of unusual “symbolic” imagery (as the content of “verificatory visions”) as the *Chan Essentials*, and it is precisely such imagery that Yamabe points to in the Toyok paintings, which typically depict a practitioner of meditation contemplating or having a vision of a single unusual scene or object. But given what we have seen, even when the paintings appear connected to texts such as the *Chan Essentials* or *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, this may reflect the existence in Turfan only of material comparable to the *Five Gates*, little more a list of visions that meditators were supposed to experience.

214By way of comparison even if we found Indian Buddhist meditation techniques mentioned in the writings of a modern American Buddhist we would not be inclined to say that the “core motifs” of this writing are Indian—rather we would look beyond the source of the individual elements and consider the overall context. What goals are attributed such meditation practices? To whom are such practices made available? Here we would certainly find very different answers to such questions implicit in the writings of the modern American Buddhist than in whatever traditional sources the particular meditation practices were drawn from.

Indeed repentance, mentioned prominently in the *Chan Essentials* as something that must accompany *chan* meditation at all stages, is discussed in the *Five Gates* solely as a preparatory practice, just as it is in traditional Indian meditation texts. In other words the evolution from the *Five Gates* to the *Chan Essentials* seems to reflect, among other things, the development of new styles of *chan* meditation in which repentance began to assume a more important role. I will address this question in chapter four. First, however, we need to look a bit more closely at how the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* discuss “verificatory visions,” and it is to this that I now turn in chapter three.

Appendix: citations and direct references to the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* in texts written between 500 and 900 CE.

Below I list all citations or references to the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* that I have been able to locate in texts written or compiled prior to the rise of the printed canons in the tenth century. I have excluded from this list a number of references found in post-Daoxuan *vinaya* commentaries, both Chinese and Japanese, which all seem to be based on number 6) below.

- 1) A loose citation of the *Chan Essentials* (a paraphrase of section 4.72) under the name “a *chan* scripture” 禪經, found on the Dunhuang manuscript seen by Tsukamoto Zenryū.²¹⁵
- 2) Zhiyi’s 智顓 *Explanations of the Sequential Path* (*Zhi chan bo luo mi ci di fa men* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門) cites the opening lines of the *Methods for Curing*, under the title *Zhi chan bing mi fa* 治禪病祕法.²¹⁶ Zhiyi’s *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mo he zhi guan* 摩訶止觀) also refers to this same passage under the topic “healing through imagination” (假想為治). However Zhiyi here only says “Like the method given in the Āgamas for using melted butter to cure exhaustion.”²¹⁷ The *Methods for Curing* indeed mentions a “melted butter” method, and Zhanran’s 湛然 eighth-century commentary to this passage summarizes most of the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing*, including many direct citations (T.1912:46.400a3–b4).
- 3) Zhiyi’s *Explanations of the Sequential Path* also cites the eight verses from section 5.61 of the *Methods for Curing* as from “a *chan* scripture” (禪經).²¹⁸ The same verses appear in his *Lesser Calming and Contemplation* (the so-called *Xiao zhi guan* 小止觀).²¹⁹
- 4) The *Great Calming and Contemplation* also mentions the appearance of a vision or a

215Tsukamoto 1974–1975, 3:290–304. See above page 80 note 10.

216T46:1916.506a19–24

217如阿含中用煖蘇治勞損法 (T.1911:46.109a22–23)

218T.1916:46.488a3–10

219T.1915:46.464a6–13; Sekiguchi 1961, 137–138.

dream of eighty-eight dead snakes (or a single snake with eighty-eight heads) as a sign of the imminent attainment of the first fruit: “According to the Āgamas, when about to attain the first fruit, [there appears] before [the practitioner a vision of] a dead eighty-eight headed snake.”²²⁰ Zhiyi’s contemporary Jizang 吉藏 (549–623) mentions this same idea: “Therefore one about to obtain the first fruit sees the dust of the evil paths scatter, and the eighty-eight headed snake dies.”²²¹ Guanding’s 灌頂 (561–632) commentary to the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* also refers to this idea, though the vision is said to occur in a dream.²²² These passages all refer to the twenty-sixth contemplation of the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* (section 3.56), at the conclusion of which the practitioner becomes a *śrotāpanna* (see above p.91). Elsewhere (such as number 2 above) Zhiyi refers to material from the *Methods for Curing* as part of the “Āgamas,” specifically the *Samyuktāgama* (*Za a han* 雜阿含), so it is not unexpected that he would refer to the *Chan Essentials* under this name as well.

- 5) Chapter nine of the *Great Calming and Contemplation* alludes to Mahākauṣṭhīlananda, protagonist of the first sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, as proof that the contemplation of impurity (*bu jing guan* 不淨觀) is an “undefiled” (*wu lou* 無漏) form of *chan*.²²³ Zhanran’s commentary to this passage then directly cites passage 1.4, and gives a summary of sections 1.6–1.19, under the name *Chan fa mi yao jing* 禪法祕要經.²²⁴
- 6) Under the name *Zhi chan bing jing* 治禪病經 Daoxuan’s 道宣 (596–667) principal *vinaya* commentary refers twice the “Method for healing violations of the precepts” (治犯戒法), sections 5.64–5.75 of the *Methods for Curing*.²²⁵
- 7) Fazhao’s 法照 (fl. late 8th century) *Jing tu wu hui nian fo song jing guan xing yi* 淨土五會念佛誦經觀行儀, a ritual manual for the contemplation of the buddha and the Pureland, cites several passages from the *Chan Essentials* under the name *Chan mi yao* 禪祕要.²²⁶ These begin with section 2.1, and continue selectively through section 2.34.
- 8) Excerpts from each of the three fascicles of the *Chan Essentials* are carved under the name *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經 in cave 59 at Anyue 安岳, Sichuan, dated to 735 CE. The passages are drawn from throughout the text, though they have clearly been chosen so as to constitute a coherent whole.²²⁷
- 9) The *Record of the Dharma-jewel Through the Generations* (*Li dai fa bao ji* 曆代法寶記),

220阿含云：將證初果，八十八頭蛇於其前死。(T.1911:46.111c27–28)

221故立初果人，見惡道塵散，八十八頭蛇死。(Jin gang bo re shu 金剛般若疏, T.1699:33.110a9–10)

222“A sutra says that a *śrotāpanna* will dream of the death of an eighty-eight headed snake.” 有經言：須陀洹夢八十八頭蛇死。(Da pan nie pan jing shu 大般涅槃經疏, T.1767:38.208c10–11)

223T.1911:46.117c15–18

224T.1912:46.412a2–12

225Si fen li shao fan bu que xing shi chao 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.97a5–7; 107c1–3

226This text is known only from Dunhuang manuscript Pelliot 2066 (T.2827:85.1255a4–27). On Fazhao and his works, see Tsukamoto 1974–1975, 4:383–404.

227In the edition of the text in appendix three I have underlined those sections that appear in the inscription, which I have been able to consult thanks to a photograph graciously provided by Professor Lothar Ledderose and his Stone Sutras project (www.stonesutras.org). I wish to thank Professor Funayama Tōru 船山徹 for alerting me to the existence of this inscription.

- an eighth-century Chan history written in Sichuan, summarizes the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing* (sections 5.1–5.75) under the name *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經.²²⁸
- 10) A number of citations of both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are preserved in the seventh-century encyclopedias *Forest of Pearls of the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fa yuan zhun lin* 法苑珠林, T.2122; F below) and the *Compendium of Scriptural Essentials* (*Zhong jing yao ji* 眾經要集, T.2123; Z below):
- a) F (793b14–794a6) and Z (186b16–187a8) cite sections 5.46–5.56 of the *Methods for Curing* under the title *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經.
 - b) F (853a14–29) and Z (135b20–c5) cite sections 4.73 and 4.75 of the *Chan Essentials* under the name *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經.²²⁹
 - c) The chapter on “obstacles to meditation” (定障) from F (904c19–905a9) cites excerpts from the first and second sutra of the *Methods for Curing* (5.6, proceeding directly to 5.122) under the name *Chan mi yao jing* 禪祕要經.
 - d) F (981b6) attributes the statement “one should not eat the five pungent foods” (不應食五辛) to the *Za a han jing* 雜阿含經, and while no such statement can be found in that text, the *Methods for Curing* contains a nearly identical sentence (不食五辛) as part of the directions for invoking the god Uttaraga (5.89). Given that the *Methods for Curing* is frequently cited as part of the *Za a han jing* 雜阿含經 (see above number 2 and 4), it seems likely that this is the ultimate source.
- 11) A long passage from the *Methods for Curing* (5.46–5.56) is cited in Zhizhou’s 智周 (668–723) commentary to the *Fan wang jing* 梵網經 (*Brahma Net Scripture*), the *Fan wang jing pu sa jie ben shu* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏.²³⁰ This same passage is cited in the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (10a above).
- 12) Chengguan 澄觀 twice cites the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing* (as *Zhi chan bing jing* 治禪病經) in his early ninth-century commentaries to the *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經.²³¹

228T.2075:51.183a13–16. This passage is translated and discussed above on page 77.

229It is interesting to note that these passages also appear in the Anyue inscription (which further includes 4.74).
230X.687:38.452a8–c3

231The first, a brief passage from section 5.11, is found in his *Da fang guang fo hua yan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏 (T.1735:35.666a9–12). The second is found in his further sub-commentary, the *Da fang guang fo hua yan jing sui shu yan yi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔 (T.1736:36.334a25), giving a more or less complete citation of sections 5.4 through 5.12 (some passages are omitted).

3. Vision and Visualization

Introduction

In the first two chapters of this dissertation I explored some of the contexts within which the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* can be situated. Though their precise origin remains murky, these texts likely came into existence in south China no later than 454 CE, in the final years of the Song dynasty. As discussed in chapter one, in the fifth century China experienced a sudden increase in the visibility of “*chan* masters” (*chan shi* 禪師). No longer mysterious hermits known only from legends, or at least no longer only this, in this period “*chan* masters” both foreign and domestic became some of the most important figures in the Chinese Buddhist clergy, and were installed in the major temples of the Song empire by their powerful patrons. And despite a longstanding scholarly tendency to portray the Buddhism of fifth and sixth century south China as devoted solely to philosophical speculation, it was in this region that *chan* and *chan* masters seem to have been most important.

This is the environment in which the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* first appeared and circulated, and as the two principal fifth-century Chinese compositions explicitly addressing the topic of *chan* they are our most important sources for learning how Chinese Buddhists of this era understood the nature, meaning, and execution of these practices. In this chapter I will thus begin more systematic analysis of these texts. What do they tell us about the fifth-century Chinese understanding of *chan*? Apart from conveying generic sanctity or power, what was *chan* practice held to accomplish, and what kinds of things would fifth-century Chinese Buddhists have expected those practicing this discipline (not to mention claiming mastery of it) to have attained? I do not seek to answer questions about the sociology of *chan* practice—indeed we have no way of determining what, in practice, *chan* masters did or how meditation was conducted “on the ground.” But given that many people at this time were claiming to be or held up as masters of *chan*, we can read sources such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* as presenting ideals about *chan* that were widely shared, at least among a certain class of the Buddhist clergy and perhaps certain educated lay followers as well.

What then is *chan* practice like according to these texts? Stated most plainly it is a series of increasingly sophisticated visions. As discussed in chapter two these texts place little emphasis on the development of particular psychological factors or the understanding of Buddhist principles and truths, description of which occupies most of the space in traditional accounts of Buddhist meditation. Rather these texts focus their attention on the concrete scenes and objects that practitioners of *chan* encounter.

Stylistically, this results in the recasting of traditional Buddhist meditation practices in a

distinctly “visual” key. In the fourth sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, for example, the practitioner is directed to contemplate the fire element (火大) within his body. This meditation practice is well known from both early Buddhist scriptures and other meditation texts of the fourth and fifth centuries (including those discussed in chapter one). In this practice traditionally one aims to realize that the body is comprised of only the primary material elements, and hence is not the locus of a self or an object worthy of attachment. As presented in early Buddhist scriptures, one thus contemplates the fire element as those parts of the body that are “fire, firey, and clung-to, that is, that by which one is warmed, aged, and is consumed, and that by which what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets completely digested.” One then “sees” (*√paś*) each of these elements with the understanding that “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not myself.”¹

In this early version of the practice one thus “sees” the fire element in a manner of speaking, but the emphasis here is analytic classification of the fire within the body followed by “seeing” it as not one’s self.² In the *Chan Essentials*, however, what one sees when one sees the fire element is rather different:

Among the leaves of his flowering heart-tree there is a faint fire, like the gleam of gold. It emerges from the tip of his heart and fills his body. It then exits through his pores, gradually expanding . . . the fire then becomes white, brighter than a pearl and whiter than even crystal or a snow-covered mountain. Interspersed with red light, it forms various patterns . . . it gradually expands until it fills the entire cosmos up to the summit of the triple world and down to the adamantine extremity.³

Rather than discursive classification, we find here a rich, “visual” description of fire itself within and then outside of the meditator’s body. When contemplating the water element:

He sees his body as a pond of green water [as pure as] an uncontaminated mountain spring. He sees seven flowers, the color of pure adamantine. They radiate a golden light, within which is an adamantine man holding a sharp sword who beheads the six dragons. He then sees fire emerge from the mouths of the dragons, which burns throughout [the practitioner’s] body, drying up all the water and then going out. When the fire and water have both disappeared, he sees his own body become gradually whiter until it is [as white as] adamantine.⁴

Here the meditator not only sees water, but also various other images that have no immediately obvious connection to the subject of the meditation. The vast majority of the *Chan Essentials* is

1 *Dhātuvibhanga-sutta* (MN, 3.241). Translation by Nāṇamoli and Bodhi (1995, 1090), with slight modifications.

2 Later texts subject the fire element to increasingly detailed classifications (ŚrBh, 2:74–76; SUS 2.6.2–4).

3 心華樹端，諸華葉間，有微細火，猶如金光。從心端出，遍滿身內。從毛孔出，漸漸廣大 . . . 火色變白，如真珠光，更復鮮白，頗梨雪山，不得為比。紅光照錯，以成文章 . . . 漸漸廣大，遍滿三千大千世界，上至三界頂，下至金剛際。(4.49). Though differing in its details the paradigm here for the contemplation of the elements is similar to the *Yogalehrbuch* (Schlingloff 1964, 85–95; see also Bretfeld 2003, 172–175).

4 見身如池，其水綠色。如此綠水，似山頂泉，從頂而出，從頂而入。見有七華，純金剛色，放金色光。其金色光中，有金剛人。手執利劍，斬前六龍。復見眾火，從龍口出。遍身火然，眾水枯竭，火即滅盡。水火滅盡已，自見己身，漸漸大白，猶如金剛。(3.40–3.41)

dedicated to descriptions such as these, and reading them one comes away with the impression that *chan* practice is above all an elaborate visionary journey.

From a historical point of view the prominence here of *seeing*, and visuality more generally, is not entirely unexpected. Indeed during the early centuries of the common era Buddhist texts of all stripes begin to present “seeing” as the most profound form of interaction with the Buddha and his teachings,⁵ seeming thereby to replace or at least supplement the trope of “hearing” that is so prominent in earlier texts. Concretely this often meant seeing a physical manifestation of the Buddha in all his bodily splendor, a goal often associated with the nascent Mahāyāna traditions but also evident in non-Mahāyāna texts from this period. Indeed these developments were not limited to Buddhism, but were rather part of what Stephan Beyer describes as a “wave of visionary theism” spreading throughout India at this time.⁶

This increasing importance of the visual touches on questions of changes in literary conventions, the growing importance of image worship, and the rise of literacy, to name but a few relevant domains.⁷ Scholars have noted that meditation practices also underwent something of a “visual turn.” In Buddhism the most discussed example of this is *buddhānusmṛti*, the “recollection of the Buddha,” described in early sources as bringing to mind the qualities of the Buddha through a list of his epithets, but which eventually begins to involve “recollecting” the Buddha’s *physical* form through the so-called thirty-two marks of a great man. Scholars have generally understood that this change reflects (or brought about) the growing importance of a new form of meditation, “visualization” of the Buddha’s physical form.⁸ This kind of meditation has also been seen as playing a role outside the context of *buddhānusmṛti*, and it has been suggested that the rich descriptive language of Mahāyāna sutras and even certain post-canonical Pāli texts might have written, in part, as prescriptions for “visualization.”⁹

Given then that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are explicitly framed as meditation texts, it at first seems reasonable to interpret their visually rich accounts of what meditators “see” as instructions for, or at least descriptions of, “visualization.” Indeed if meditation texts as a genre provide instructions for training the mind, they presumably present visual imagery as a template for its mental recreation, its “visualization.” Though for reasons that will become apparent I continue to use scare quotes, that “visualization” refers to a distinct form of Buddhist meditation is not controversial,¹⁰ and among scholars of religion in general this concept is strongly associated with Buddhism and other Asian religions,¹¹ though it is used with

5 McMahan 2002; Rotman 2009; Kinnard 1999; Gifford 2011.

6 Beyer 1977. For a more recent account of these trends, see White 2009, 83–121.

7 Rotman 2009, 189–190.

8 On the development of “visual” *buddhānusmṛti* see Harrison 1978, 1992; Kinnard 2004. This development was not limited to Buddhism, and in the nascent theistic Hindu traditions we find similar ideas. The *Bhāgavata-purāna* thus describes “recollection” (*√smṛ*) of the god Viṣṇu as follows: “Recall (*smaranti*) him [Viṣṇu] as four-armed, and holding the lotus, the disk, the conch and the mace. His face is smiling, his wide eyes are like lotuses, and his clothing is as yellow as the filaments of the *kadamba* flower” (White 2009, 101).

9 Paul Harrison has thus suggested that a text like the *Sukhāvaiṭṭyūha*, with its “visual” and repetitive descriptions of the dazzling landscape of paradise might make more sense if we interpret it not merely as a description of the Pure-land, but as a template for its mental recreation, its “visualization” (Harrison 2003). More recently Rupert Gethin has drawn attention to late Pāli texts that he believes might be understood similarly (Gethin 2006).

10 Though see Sharf 2001.

11 Thus the entry for “visualization” in the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Religion* refers the reader to “Buddhism,” “Daoism,” and “Meditation” (Jones 2005).

increasing frequency by scholars of other contemplative traditions as well.¹²

Yet as I will show in this chapter the word “visualize” does not adequately describe what the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* think meditators will do. Reaching this conclusion will obviously depend on uncovering the precise implications this English word usually carries. But as a preliminary observation we may note that the rich visual imagery in these texts is not limited to describing what meditators *should* see. To take but one example:

[The practitioner] then sees the goddess Vimalatī . . . exposing her vagina, tall and foreboding like a blood-smeared mountain, with its many, awful, sword-tree-like hairs. Within it grows one particular tree that is like a forest of blade-mountains. From [the vagina] come forth innumerable demons with donkey-ears, bull-heads, lion-mouths, horse-feet, wolf-tails, and *kumbhāṇḍa*-demon-penises.¹³

This is but a small part of the horrible things that some people will see when meditating on the earth element, driving them insane such that special remedies are needed. This, at least, cannot have been intended as a template for “visualization.” Indeed what is described here is not a meditator “visualizing” but being attacked by forces beyond his control while meditating on *something else*. And, I will argue, even when the meditator sees auspicious things how he comes to see those things is similar. The lush scenes that occupy so much space in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are not what meditators should intentionally bring to mind but “verificatory visions,” new visions whose content goes beyond the consciously intended object of meditation and which serve to verify that attainment of some kind has been reached.

As we will see when we examine its history in English (in particular in the context of Buddhism) the problem lies in the inherent connection between “visualization” and *agency*. The visions in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* in contrast are presented as being “passively” received, not “actively” generated. It has frequently been noted that modern English by default pathologizes mental passivity, and terms implying it (“hallucination,” “dream,” “imagination”) often have negative connotations.¹⁴ How then to do we talk about accounts of such experiences in a context where these valuations do not hold? One common strategy has been the language of “altered states of consciousness,” and indeed the word “visualize” derives directly from the early discussions of such matters in the late 19th century.¹⁵ Yet as Michele Stephen observes this tends to obscure the way that such experiences are described and

12 See for example Newman 2005, discussing Christian contemplative practices. Note however that Newman does not use the word “visualize” to translate a specific concept. Thus on some occasions she translates the Latin *ymaginatio* [sic] as “visualization” (ibid, 35), and it is not clear why she does not render this as “imagination” as she does elsewhere. On another occasion she translates *visus phantasiae* as “visualized image” (ibid, 37), and it is again not clear why this is not simply a “seen image.”

13 復見 . . . 毘牟樓至 . . . 現其女根，巖嶠可畏，如血塗山。其諸惡毛，狀如劍樹。中生一樹，如刀山林。百千無量驢耳、牛頭、師子口、馬脚、狼尾、鳩槃荼身根，如是諸鬼等，從中而出。(5.100)

14 Though see Tanabe 1992 for an attempt in a Buddhist context to use terms such as “fantasy” and “imagination” in a positive sense. For a recent attempt to rehabilitate these ideas see Obeyesekere 2012, who attempts to formulate an understanding of the goals of Buddhist meditation that are in some ways similar to what I lay out in this chapter.

15 Scholars have often described Buddhist meditation from an etic point of view as a practical method for inducing altered states of consciousness (Griffiths 1993, 34–35).

Chapter 3: Vision and Visualization

presented in their original context, where what he calls their “self-alien” aspect is often highlighted rather than effaced.¹⁶ The language of altered states of consciousness, he suggests, implies “a single, continuous self experiencing varying modes of consciousness, and hides the fact that some agency other than the conscious self produces the visionary narrative.”¹⁷

In this chapter I will thus argue that the concept of “visualization” proves inadequate for the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* owing to connotations it necessarily carries concerning agency. Indeed the notion of “visualization” as invoked by scholars of Buddhism was invented only in the late nineteenth century, by the British scientist Francis Galton. Galton was attempting to argue that the “visions” that some of his contemporaries took as evidence for the existence of paranormal phenomena were, in fact, internally generated mental projections. “Visualization” as the internal generation of so-called eidetic “mental imagery” was then appropriated by certain new Anglo-American religious movements, most notably Theosophy, to describe the conscious cultivation of clairvoyant powers, something they contrasted with the “passive,” and hence pathological, trance-induced visions of spirit mediums. It was from this polemical context that “visualization” was borrowed to translate Buddhist terminology, firmly characterizing such practices as “active” and hence non-pathological by Victorian standards.

This distinction between passive and active, between “vision” and “visualization,” indeed seems to be a fundamental fault-line in the modern Western understanding of Buddhist meditation. Indeed it may even constitute “meditation” itself as the willful, controlled generation of altered states of consciousness in contrast to “devotional” practices seeking contact with an external agent. The drawing of such contrasts goes back at least to Freidrich Heiler’s *Die Buddhistische Versenkung*, one of the first comprehensive studies of Buddhist meditation in a Western language,¹⁸ which contrasted the Buddha as master of “meditation” (*versenkung*) with Jesus as master of “prayer” (*gebet*). Ninian Smart later drew from this in formulating his categories of the *mystical* and the *numinous*,¹⁹ contrasting Otto’s notion of an encounter with an “other” of greater power than the subject (the numinous) with “mystical” states experienced by the practitioner as personal accomplishments, of which Buddhist meditation was the chief example. Although there has been criticism of Smart’s interpretation of Buddhist meditation as exclusively “mystical” in this sense,²⁰ scholars still commonly contrast the “visions” of traditions such as Christianity with Buddhist emphasis, at least at the level of normative ideals, on “visualization.”²¹

Whether or not this distinction might be useful in the study of other traditions of Buddhist meditation is a question I will leave to those more qualified than I to judge. But in the fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts that I focus on here, at least, the notion of “visualization” proves to be of little use. What I have called “verificatory visions,” experience of which is the goal of meditation practice, do not conform to the notion of “visualization” as the step-by-step,

16 Stephen 1989, 47–48

17 Ibid. Although Stephen here seems to be attempting to actually explain the origin of the experiences he is describing, his point holds even for my own less ambitious task of translating into English texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* and conveying their understanding of the nature of meditation and meditative experiences.

18 Heiler 1922

19 Smart 1958

20 Gimello 1978

21 Strong 2004, 34

self-conscious generation of mental images. These visions are rather *unanticipated*, and indeed it is precisely their unpremeditated nature that makes them capable of bearing the meanings that they do (what those meanings are will be the subject of chapter four).

Visualization: from Galton to Eliade

As a description of Buddhist meditation “visualization” has been used in several contexts, which for heuristic purposes I will group into three. First are the possibly pan-Buddhist forms of meditation practice that, while having no formal name, share a common structure—a meditator begins by gazing at a physical object in the world until it can be “seen,” in some sense, even when the eyes are closed.²² The best known examples of this are the *kasīṇa* meditations, whose full elaboration is found only in the commentaries of the Theravāda tradition, and the corpse contemplations, for which we have a greater range of ancient sources.²³ Although these practices have often been interpreted as forms of “visualization” practice,²⁴ the tradition does not classify them as a distinct group. Indeed in the *Visuddhimagga*, to take a convenient example, the sequence and structure involving the development of the “grasped sign” (*uggaha-nimitta*) and so forth (outlined in chapter one) is exactly the same, and uses the same technical vocabulary, for all basic forms of meditation regardless of whether the object is a visible one.

A second area where scholars typically discuss visualization is Tantric Buddhism, in both its South- and East-Asian forms.²⁵ Interestingly, however, the first European scholars to seriously examine Tantric texts did not use this word. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, for example, interpreted

22 The precise language used to describe this moment varies (for the Pāli version see chapter one). Although as far as I am aware there is no trace of it in the earliest Buddhist texts, this procedure eventually appears in the writings of a diverse range of Buddhist groups.

23 The *kasīṇa* meditations appear in Sanskrit sources as the *kṛtsnāyatana* (AKBh, 457.13–16), but as far as I am aware the procedures for developing these on the basis of a physical prop are found only in Pāli commentaries. The use of external objects in the case of the “contemplation of foulness” (*aśubha-bhāvanā*) is found in a wider range of sources. Note that while the *aśubha-bhāvanā* appears in a basic form in early sūtras, the canonical presentations differ from later commentaries. The *locus classicus* is the stock passage on the stages of the decaying corpse found most notably in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-suttas*. These examples, however, do not necessarily mention an actual corpse: “As though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter, a monk compares his own body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’” *seyyathā pi passeyya sarīraṃ sīvathikāya chaḍḍitaṃ ekāhamataṃ vā dvīhamataṃ vā tīhamataṃ vā uddhumātakam vinīlakam vipubbakajātaṃ, so imam eva kāyaṃ upasaṃharati: Ayam pi kho kāyo evaṃdhammo evaṃbhāvī etaṃ anatīto ti* (MN, 1.58; Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, 148 with slight modifications). As Bodhi notes (*ibid.*, 1192n150), the wording here suggests that one does not necessarily need a corpse to perform this practice. The *Sutta-nipāta* tells stories of monks and nuns who accidentally stumble across decaying corpses then prompting reflection of this sort (Norman 1969, 42). But the earliest example I know clearly describing something analogous to what we see in the latter commentaries is a story in the *Madyamāgama* (*Zhong a han jing* 中阿含經, T.26:1.646c18–647a13). Interestingly the Pāli parallel to the this text, the *Vijaya-sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta* (Sn, 33–34), does not mention this procedure.

24 Smart 1958, 96; Chenet 1987, 49–50.

25 Indeed “visualization” is often said to be a defining element of Tantric Buddhism (Strong 2002, 193; see also Copp 2011).

Tantric *sādhana* rituals as based on “imagination” (*imager*), not “visualization,”²⁶ now the standard way of explaining what is supposed to happen in these rites.²⁷ But why this word is chosen, or how if at all “visualization” is thought to differ from “imagination,” is rarely specified. It is thus useful to return, momentarily, to an era when this vocabulary was relatively new among scholars, for there we occasionally find more explanation. Mircea Eliade thus describes Tantric *sādhana* in the following manner:

The complete operation [of a *sādhana*] includes several stages, the first of which is to “visualize” a divine image, to construct it mentally or, more precisely, to project it on a sort of inner screen through an act of creative imagination.²⁸ There is no question here of the anarchy and inconsistency of what, on the level of profane experience, is called “imagination”; no question of abandoning oneself to a pure spontaneity and passively receiving the content of what, in the language of Western psychology, we should term the individual or collective unconscious; it is a question of awakening one’s inner forces, yet at the same time maintaining perfect lucidity and self-control.²⁹

For Eliade, then, “visualization” as the controlled display of inner forces differs fundamentally from chaotic, spontaneous, and perhaps above all, passive “imagination.” We will return to this explanation later in this chapter, as the contrast Eliade draws here reveal much about why and how this word came to be used among scholars of Buddhism.

The third area where scholars frequently discuss Buddhist “visualization” practices, and the one most directly relevant for our study of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, is the Contemplation Scriptures, often seen as the most sophisticated examples of the new “visual” form of *buddhānusmṛti* that developed in the first centuries of the common era (see above p141). Indeed scholars have sometimes called these texts the “Visualization Sutras,” a designation coined by art historian Alexander Soper.³⁰ Based primarily on his analysis of the *Immeasurable*

26 La Vallée Poussin 1913, 153. Similarly in 1924 Benoytosh Bhattacharyya’s English translation of a *sādhana* ritual text used only the terms “meditate upon” or “conceive as” for the verbs now often translated as “visualize,” and translated the word *sādhana* itself as “procedure for worship” (Bhattacharyya 1924, 169–175).

27 Indeed *sādhana* are sometimes explained as “methods for visualizing,” and the verbs that Bhattacharyya and La Vallée Poussin (see previous note) translated as “meditate upon,” “imagine,” or “conceive as” (causative forms of $\sqrt{bhū}$ or $vi-\sqrt{bhū}$, or simplex forms of $\sqrt{paś}$) are frequently rendered in this context as “visualize” (e.g. Gómez 1995; see also Kloppenborg and Poelmeyer 1987).

28 Eliade’s original phrase “imagination créatrice” (1954, 212), may have been inspired by Henri Corbin’s well known use of this term. However the first work by Corbin in which it appears, *L’Imagination créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn ‘Arabī*, was published only in 1955, one year later than Eliade’s *Le Yoga: Immortalité et liberté*, so it is possible that Corbin actually drew from Eliade. Corbin cites Eliade on several occasions, though he does not explicitly attribute to him the expression “imagination créatrice.”

29 Eliade 1969, 207

30 Soper 1959. Though not surprising given its history (as we will see below), “visualize” was not used at all in the earliest English translation of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* in 1894 by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, who consistently translated *guan* 觀 as “meditate” or “meditate upon” (he was presuming a Sanskrit of *dhyāna*), and *xiang* 想, the other verb here often translated as “visualize,” as “perception” when a noun, and “form a perception” when a verb or in the phrase 作 . . . 想 (Takakusu 1894). Between Takakusu’s translation and Soper’s studies there was another English translation published in Hong Kong in 1939 by Bhikku Assaji (惟幻) as *The Sutra of visualizing the Buddha of immeasurable length of life* (Hong Kong: International Buddhist

Life Contemplation, Soper argued that the key word *guan* 觀, (which I translate throughout this dissertation as “contemplate”) should be understood to mean “visualize”:

. . . I prefer to render [*guan*] as “visualize” . . . *guan* means a systematic building-up of visual images, each as complete and precise as possible, in a sequence from the simple toward the complex. In following this step-by-step advance the practitioner was certainly aided by his memories of Buddhist art. The [*guan*] *sūtras* more than once recommend the man-made icon or statue as a natural first step toward realizing the beauty and glory of divinity. If these mental pictures were correctly formed, on the basis of iconographic rules, they were already approximations of the truth; as so to cross the frontier from reason to ecstasy brought no absolute change, but rather an immense widening of the field of vision, and *seeing* instead of mere visualizing.³¹

For Soper, these texts thus urge practitioners to use “visualization” to meet their chosen deity in the here-and-now, something previously considered possible only in the Pure-land after death.³²

Propaganda Association, 1939), which I have not been able to consult directly, but clearly the word “visualize” was here used. Scholars now sometimes refer to the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* as “The Visualization Sutra” (Payne 1996, 249; Yamabe 2002), and “visualize” as a translation of *guan* 觀 in the context of Chinese Buddhist meditation texts is widespread (Sponberg 1988). And even when translators choose to render the word *guan* 觀 as “contemplate” (Birnbau 1979, 115–148), they often accept “visualization” as a valid description of the practices advocated in the text (ibid, 36). Some scholars have pointed out that the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* does not seem to use the word *guan* 觀 to refer to visualization itself, but to the careful “inspection” of an already visualized mental image (Pas 1995, 175–176). The actual creation of the mental image is denoted, according to Pas, by *xiang* 想, which he translates as either “imagine” or “visualize.” Even Soper, when translating the titles of other Contemplation Scriptures, admits that “visualize” does not always seem appropriate for *guan* 觀, and he sometimes prefers “meditation” (Soper 1959, 216; cf. Sponberg 1988, 106). The most recent study and translation of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is Ducor and Loveday 2011, which I have not been able to consult.

31 Soper 1959, 144, emphasis in original.

32 Soper writes that for these texts “the supreme religious experience is to *see* [the chosen deity], face to face—and not in Paradise, but here and now” (Soper 1959, 223, emphasis in original). Note that this interpretation runs contrary to at least some of the traditional interpretations of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* in East Asia. The Japanese Pure-land schools in particular hold that the point of text is to *replace* complex visionary meditation with a simpler practice of reciting the Buddha’s name, and modern Japanese scholars usually suggest that the text places more emphasis on seeing the Buddha upon rebirth in the pure-land than in the present life (Fujita 1984; 2007, 404–406). Fujita notes, for example, that the conclusion to the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* mentions the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* (般舟三昧) as a fruit that will be obtained upon rebirth in the pure-land. In as much as this is the traditional *samādhi* whereby a practitioner is able to see the buddhas of other world-systems while still alive, Fujita suggests that making this a fruit obtained *after* rebirth is a tacit subordination of the meditative seeing of the Buddha in life, something he views as stemming from the tradition of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, to seeing him after rebirth, which Fujita connects to the tradition stemming from shorter and longer Pure Land sutras. In general modern Japanese scholars who have tried to unravel its history almost universally agree that the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* represents the combination of an “earlier” system emphasizing meditation, and a “later” system emphasizing the universally salvific power of Amitābha. The influence of Japanese sectarian polemics on this issue cannot be ignored, and indeed in the Shinshu tradition in particular any talk of personal effort towards salvation (such as meditation practice) was and remains taboo. Reading the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* as a new “other-power” practice of simple intonation of the Buddha’s name appended to the end of an earlier set of meditative practices thus allows one to

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This basic interpretation has been followed by many Western scholars, and Richard Payne, to take but one example, speaks of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* as espousing a “soteriology of visualization” in which “seeing the Pure Land [through visualization serves] . . . as a means of being reborn there.”³³ Soper’s observations about the connections between “visualization” practices and Buddhist artwork has also inspired a steady stream of further analysis, and many art historians have concluded that the statuary and paintings found in the fifth- and sixth-century Buddhist cave temples of Central Asia and China must have served, at least in part, as aids for these “visualization” practices,³⁴ what Soper defines here as the “systematic building-up of visual images” so precise and complete that crossing over into “ecstasy” would bring “no absolute change.”

Despite widespread use of the word “visualization” in the above three contexts, it is not always clear what this word refers to, either in the source material or in English. Indeed as Rupert Gettin points out in the case of Indian Buddhism, the word “visualize”:

does not have a clear Sanskrit equivalent. In the proto-Mahāyāna and early Mahāyāna texts . . . the idea of visualization is largely inferred from contexts where “recollection of the Buddha” (*buddhānusmṛti*) is presented by reference to the appearance of the Buddha or buddhas, and by accounts of practitioners mentally “seeing” (simplex forms of the verbal roots *paś* and *drś* are used) the Buddha or buddhas. In the later esoteric Buddhism of the *vajrayāna* the notion of “visualization” appears to be commonly conveyed by use of that most universal of words for “meditation,” the causative (*vi*)*bhāvayati*, having as its object, for example, “an image of the Buddha” (*buddha-bimba*). While other words and expressions are also used to convey the general idea of visualization, what seems clear is that there is no specialized word or expression in Buddhist Sanskrit texts for “visualization.”³⁵

“Visualization” is thus not the direct translation of a single word, but an interpretation of what a number of distinct terms, translated loosely in other contexts as “meditate on,” mean when they take objects with mainly visual qualities.³⁶ As an example of how this happens in practice,

interpret the historical development of the text as an encapsulation of Shinshu doctrines.

33 Payne 1996, 250

34 Liu [1978] 1996, He 1982, Abe 1990, Ning 2007. Though linking specific cultic sites to specific meditation practices is often questionable (see Sharf 2004 and Yamabe 2010), it is reasonable to suppose that Buddhist artwork did occasionally serve as an aid to meditation. Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* contain instructions for using statues or other images in this manner, employing the same procedure found in other sources for the *kaśīna* or corpse contemplations (Yamabe 1999, 11–17). Indeed nearly all fifth-century Chinese meditation texts apply these more traditional techniques to statues and paintings of buddhas. When and where this might have first occurred is not clear. They are notably absent in the early Mahāyāna discussions of the “visualization” of the Buddha’s form (Harrison 1978). Indeed only in fifth-century Chinese meditation texts do we find this novel application of the techniques seen in the *kaśīna* and the corpse meditations to Buddhist icons. Of these text Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* is the earliest, and also that which stands the best chance of reflecting Indian practices (note that we do Indian Buddhist texts recommending paintings or statues as props for the corpse contemplation in place of actual dead bodies; see Greene 2013).

35 Gettin 2006, 96

36 Scholars analyzing East Asian Tantric sources have reached similar conclusions (Sharf 2001; Copp 2011, 142).

consider Elizabeth English's description of Tantric *sādhana* practice:

This most important meditative tool [in performing a *sādhana*] is the technique of visualization meditation . . . Texts state that he should “see” (*paśyēt, avalokayēt, īkṣeta*) the object of meditation ‘very clearly’ (*vipaśātaram*) and unwaveringly; he should ‘contemplate’ (*vi-cintayēt*), ‘imagine’ (*vi-bhāvayēt*), ‘meditate upon’ (*dhyāyāt*), or ‘be convinced of’ (*adhimuñcet*) it.”³⁷

Although she is here terminologically precise, in her subsequent translation of the *Vajravārādhī-sādhana* English simply translates all of the above verbs as “visualize.” Note, moreover, that this is not simply a convenient shorthand, for she clearly states that “visualization meditation” is a specific technique of meditation to which all of these terms point, though this is never actually argued explicitly. We can further see here some of the reasons why translators and scholars have felt the need to subsume these various verbs, with meanings such as “be convinced of” (*adhi+√muc*), under the rubric of “visualization,” which seems to point to a definite, identifiable technique in a way that “be convinced of” does not. Intuitively, “being convinced of” does not seem to be a mental state with a precise phenomenology. Told to “be convinced of” something, we might then ask *how*, and note how “visualize it” is a possible answer to such a question.

In short scholars seem to use the word “visualize” partly out of habit, and partly with the sense that its meaning is transparent. Yet “to visualize” in the sense intended by scholars of Buddhism, and perhaps Daoism as well,³⁸ turns out to have a particular genealogy. As we will

37 English 2002, 29

38 The question of “visualization” in Daoism goes beyond the scope of this study, but it is notable as another area where this word has become standard among scholars (Puett 2010, Kroll 1996, Kohn 2008, Schipper 1995). As the translation of a technical term, it most often renders *cun* 存 (“to make present,” or even “materialize”; see Schafer 1978, 38). Yet as in the Buddhist case “visualization” was a late addition to the translator’s toolbox. Maspero was thus content to translate *cun* 存 as “méditer sur,” or, for the noun *cun* 存, “méditation extatique” (Maspero 1971, 401, 550). Isabelle Robinet seems to have been the first to refer to Daoist “visualization” practices, freely using it to describe any and all meditative practices that involve visual imagery (Robinet 1993). Typical of more recent understanding is Liva Kohn’s entry for *cun* 存 in the *Encyclopedia of Taoism* (Kohn 2008). In Daoist texts, she explains, this word is “used in its causative mode . . . the meditator, by an act of conscious concentration and focused intention, causes certain energies to be present in certain parts of the body or makes specific deities or scriptures appear before his or her mental eye.” She acknowledges, however, that the basic meaning of the verb is “be actually present.” What she does not explain is how we go from *actually* making present to making present to the mind’s eye. Although this issue deserves further study, we may note provisionally that it is impossible to consistently translate *cun* 存 as “visualize.” Consider, for example, the *Cun shen lian qi ming* 存神鍊氣銘 (probably late Tang; see *The Taoist Canon*, 375), whose title is translated elsewhere by Kohn as “Inscription on the Visualization (存) of Spirit and Refinement of Pneuma” (Kohn 1987, 119–123). We would thus expect this text to describe the “visualization” of the spirits or gods of the body, something that modern scholars take as one of the fundamental Daoist meditation practices (Pregadio 2006). But this translation of *cun* 存 cannot be maintained consistently throughout this text. The first passage thus reads: 夫身為神氣之窟宅，身氣若存，身康力健，身氣若散，身乃謝焉。若欲存身，先安神氣 (YJQQ, 33/2:748), which can only mean: “The body is the abode of the spirit and the pneuma. If the body’s pneuma is preserved (存), the body will be healthy and its power will be strong. If the body’s pneuma disperses, the body will wither. If you wish to preserve (存) the body, you must first stabilize its spirits and pneuma.” Here *cun* 存 must mean “maintain the existence of.” It is clearly the *goal* of the practice, the preservation of life. In

now see, that it seems the appropriate idea in the context of Buddhist meditation—indeed that it seems to refer to a specific kind of mental exercise at all—is the legacy of a new meaning given to this word in the late 19th century by Francis Galton. That “to visualize” acquired this meaning so recently, and as we will see in such a specific intellectual context, has gone unnoticed by scholars who use this word to describe Asian meditation practices.

That “visualization” has a complicated history can be seen even from the definitions in modern dictionaries. *Webster’s* (third edition), for example, gives two rather different meanings: “1) the act or power of forming mentally visual images of objects not present to the eye . . . 2) the act or process of putting into or interpreting in visual terms or in visible form.”³⁹ The second meaning thus does not refer to an internal process—it is *making visible* to someone else or at least in a public way. Moreover it is not the replication of something previously seen, but a visual “interpretation” (in the artistic sense).⁴⁰

Though the order suggests that the second meaning derives from the first, this is not the case. Indeed the first edition of *Webster’s* (1846) gives only: “Visualize: to make visual,”⁴¹ corresponding to the second definition above. This is also the meaning in the *Oxford English Dictionary’s* earliest example sentence, from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria* (1817), where it is a matter of imagery in a poem.⁴² It is possible that Coleridge actually coined this word, as it does not appear in 18th-century dictionaries,⁴³ and the *Biographia Literaria* is infamous for its many neologisms.⁴⁴

The *Oxford English Dictionary*, like *Webster’s*, gives two main definitions, and again the first one is: “To form a mental vision, image, or picture of (something not visible or present to

fact Kohn herself translates this opening passage similarly, rendering *cun* 存 not as “visualize” but “preserve” (Kohn 1987, 119). But a few lines later she translates 存神丹田 as “visualize the spirit in the cinnabar field” (ibid, 120, emphasis mine). Just as with “be convinced of” (*adhi+√muc*) discussed above, the translation “visualize” introduces an answer, in the form of an apparently specific mental exercise, to a question that the text itself does not explicitly address, namely *how* we are to “preserve” the spirit (by visualizing it).

39 *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Merriam, 1961), 2558.

40 This is the meaning when an author writes that “the aim of the Buddhist artist was to visualize the ideals of his creed, to illustrate by pictorial parables all the beautiful sentiments of the Buddhist religion” (Brown 1918, 7). Here “to visualize” means to use art to express non-visual things, “sentiments,” in visual terms. In more recent usage, at least when discussing Buddhism, “visualization” now more commonly describes the mental feat that allows artists to successfully reproduce complex paintings (Harrington and Zajonc 2006, 99).

41 Noah Webster, ed., *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Merriam, 1846), 1115.

42 “It was the intention of the writers to mark the seasons by this allegory of visualized puns,” cited by the *Oxford English Dictionary* from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia literaria; or, Biographical sketches of my literary life and opinions* (London, 1817). The editors, however, place this example under the definition “to form a mental vision, image, or picture” not under the definition “to render visible,” where we find citations pertaining to artwork or photography. This seems wrong. In Coleridge’s example “visualized” refers to the work of a poet who describes the “Dog-star” using a “visual” description of an actual dog. “Visualized puns” thus here refers to literary images that give “visual” attributes to non-visual things (the dog-ness of the “dog-star”). The point is not that one reproduces an already given visual object, but that one *interprets* an abstract idea in concrete, visual terms. Here and throughout I refer to the entry for “visualize” in the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/224009>).

43 Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*. 3rd edition (Dublin: W.G. Jones, 1768).

44 James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, ed., *Biographia Literaria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), cxxxiv.

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the sight, or of an abstraction); to make visible to the mind or imagination.” The earliest example for this is from 1863.⁴⁵ But even here the meaning is different from *Webster’s* notion of seeing something “not present to the eye.” Indeed the 1863 example is a passage by scientist John Tyndall concerning how one might “visualize atoms.” What Tyndall means here is expressed more clearly elsewhere, when he describes “visualization” as an essential skill for the scientific investigation of “subsensible” phenomena, in this case the nature of light:

To realize this subsensible world, if I may use the term, the mind must possess a certain pictorial power. It has to visualize the invisible. It must be able to form definite images of the things which that subsensible world contains; and to say that, if such or such a state of things exist in that world, then the phenomena which appear in ours must of necessity grow out of this state of things. If the picture be correct, the phenomena are accounted for; a physical theory has been enunciated which unites and explains them all. This conception of physical theory implies, as you perceive, the exercise of the imagination. Do not be afraid of this word, which seems to render so many respectable people, both in the ranks of science and out of them, uncomfortable.⁴⁶

Tyndall goes on to reassure his audience that “visualization” differs from ordinary “imagination” in that it is not severed from the world of fact, but is rather the envisioning of real, though “subsensible” things. We should note here Tyndall’s implied contrast between the ordinary meaning of imagination as a flight of fancy and “visualization” as the accurate picturing of real things, for as we saw above Eliade’s explanation of Tantric *sādhana* practice contrasted “imagination” with “visualization” in similar terms.

Though the editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary* classify Tyndall’s use of “visualize” under the definition “form a mental vision,” it is perhaps better thought of as an extension of the earlier meaning, “to render visible.” For though it is clearly an internal mental process, for Tyndall the point is neither that “visualization” involves recalling in vivid detail objects no longer present to the eye, nor that it is phenomenologically similar to vision (there is no mention here of Eliade’s “inner screen”). Rather the idea is that something beyond the range of human sense is *schematically* represented so as to convey the essential information about its structure, and hence its behavior under the laws of Newtonian physics where, in the end, everything is just a matter of geometry.

But “to visualize” soon acquired yet another meaning, one hinted at by the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “in recent use, sometimes in connexion with special branches of psychology or psychical research.” The intended meaning here is seen in an American dictionary from 1889 that defines “to visualize” as: “to call up a mental image or picture in visual terms with a distinctness approaching actual vision.”⁴⁷ Here, I would suggest, is the meaning that scholars of Buddhism invoke, either explicitly or implicitly. The example sentences from the 1889 dictionary are instructive, as they are all drawn from Francis Galton’s *Inquiries into Human*

45 Coleridge’s 1817 example is, wrongly I believe, also placed under this definition (see note 42).

46 John Tyndall, *Lectures on Light* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873), 34.

47 William Dwight Whitney and others, eds., *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia* (New York: The Century Co., 1889–1906), 6772.

Faculty and Its Development (1883).⁴⁸ Indeed it would seem that Galton coined this usage in the late 1870s.⁴⁹ For reasons I will address below Galton's development of this idea was extremely influential. His definition had entered dictionaries by 1883,⁵⁰ and by the 1890s "visualization" was a common word in the nascent field of psychology. In his *Principles of Psychology* (1890), to take merely one prominent example, William James gave an extensive analysis of the human capacity for "visualization" based entirely on Galton's studies.⁵¹

In introducing his research Galton says he had set out to obtain "accurate answers concerning this faculty of visualizing⁵² to which novelists and poets continually allude."⁵³ He asked his subjects, contacted by mail, to "think of some definite object—suppose it is your breakfast table as you sat down to it this morning—and consider carefully the picture that rises before your mind's eye."⁵⁴ He then inquired about the visual qualities of the image, such as its illumination, definition, and coloring. "Visualizing," as Galton would call it, was thus most basically a recollection of a previously experienced visual perception. It is important to note, moreover, that Galton did not ask about the *content* of the person's memory. He did not ask his subjects whether or not they could accurately remember what had been on their breakfast table. Rather his questions concerned the manner in which a person's memory was represented. I find it interesting, and in retrospect not surprising, that in order to ask such questions Galton drew, intentionally or not, from the language of photography ("definition"), and indeed Galton himself was a pioneer in advanced photographic techniques.⁵⁵

Galton was surprised by the responses. He found, for example, that "men of science" tended to protest that questions about the "illumination" or "coloring" of mental images were meaningless.⁵⁶ In contrast women and young boys habitually claimed to see mental imagery with

48 Galton 1883. Galton had begun publishing this work a few years earlier (Galton 1880; 1881), based on data collected in 1879. For a detailed chronology of Galton's work during these years based on his letters and published and unpublished materials, see Pearson 1924, 2:233–248.

49 The word was not borrowed from continental psychology, and the French and German are both later and derived from the English. French dictionaries record the earliest use of the verb "visualiser," explicitly taken from the English, in a psychology textbook from 1887. See Paul Imbs, ed., *Trésor de la langue française; dictionnaire de la langue du XIXe et du XXe siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1971–1995), 16:1209. German contains a number of words corresponding to "visualize" in a less technical sense (such *sich vorstellen*), but in the context of psychology and Buddhist meditation the normal word is *visualisieren*, taken from the English, and hence presumably derived from Galton.

50 John Ogilvie, *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Blackie and Son, 1883), 573, with Galton as the source.

51 James 1890, 2:51–56

52 For the sake of consistency I here regularize the spelling and change "visualise" to "visualize" in all citations.

53 Galton 1880, 302

54 *ibid.*, 301

55 Pearson 1924, 2:282–333. In the late 1870s Galton developed a technique called "composite portraiture," in which different photographs of the same person were combined to form a composite image that Galton believed would reveal the essential features of a given individual. He also created composite images of multiple generations of a single family in an attempt to discern the transmission of key hereditary traits.

56 A sample of the objections is worth citing: "These questions presuppose assent to some sort of proposition regarding the 'mind's eye' and the 'images' which it sees . . . This points to some initial fallacy . . . It is only by a figure of speech that I can describe my recollection of a scene as a 'mental image' which I can 'see' with my 'mind's eye' . . . I do not see it . . . any more than a man sees the thousand lines of Sophocles which under due pressure he is made to repeat" (Galton 1880, 302, ellipses in original).

vivid colors. Galton dubbed this the “faculty of visualizing,” and the notion that some people possess such a faculty spread rapidly through the scientific community and even general public.⁵⁷ However judging by the responses of “men of science,” many in Galton’s day seem to have doubted the existence of such a faculty at all, or at least appear to have found Galton’s questions ill-formed. Indeed debates about the nature or existence of mental imagery in Galton’s sense have continued among psychologists, neuroscientists, and philosophers, after a brief interruption during the heyday of behaviorism.⁵⁸

Galton explains the reasons for his interest in the visual or even photographic qualities of imagination as follows:

Anecdotes find their way into print, from time to time, of persons whose visual memory is so clear and sharp as to present mental pictures that may be scrutinized with nearly as much ease and prolonged attention as if they were real objects . . . It seemed to me that [investigating this] might illustrate the essential differences between the mental operations of different men, *that they might give some clue to the origin of visions . . .*⁵⁹

Galton was thus interested in how mental faculties differed across individuals. But he was also, perhaps even primarily, motivated by the question of *visions*, or as many would have had it, “hallucinations,” a major topic of inquiry among 19th century intellectuals.⁶⁰

Galton first made an explicit connection between “visualization” and visions in a lecture given on May 13th 1881 entitled “The Visions of Sane Persons.”⁶¹ Indeed so-called apparitions seen by otherwise stable, sane individuals, something often referred to at the time as “hallucinations of the sane,” posed a certain problem for the scientific community. Though most agreed that the things they reported to see were not real, since such people were not otherwise dysfunctional it was difficult to dismiss their reports as mere fabrication or delusion.⁶² In the second half of the 19th century this problem had become acute because of the growing interest in the theory and practice of “trance” or “magnetic” states. “Trance,” the English translation of *extasis* in the King James’s bible (and one of the earliest, though eventually rejected translations

57 A number of interesting neologisms date from this time such as “visualizer” and “visualist,” both of which turn up in dictionaries from the early 20th century. For “visualist,” defined as “one whose memory retains visual images better than other kinds,” see William A. Craigie and James R. Hulbert 1944, *A Dictionary of American English* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938–1944), 2422, with citations from 1885 and 1902. For “visualizer,” see Whitney, *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia*, 6772.

58 Among neuro- and cognitive scientists the most recent book-length volleys are Kosslyn, Thompson and Ganis 2006 and Pylyshyn 2003 for the pro- and anti-imagery positions respectively (see also Pylyshyn 2002, which includes responses from many of the prominent researchers in the field). Kosslyn has been one of the most forceful advocates of the existence of mental imagery, which he calls “depictive representations.” As one might expect, what counts as evidence one way or another in this debate is itself a subject of dispute.

59 Galton 1883, 83, emphasis mine.

60 See for example Boismont 1845, Griesinger 1862.

61 Pearson 1924, 2:243–244

62 Such cases are discussed by early authors such as Brierre de Boismont and Griesinger (see note 60), and were a frequent topic of speculation throughout the second half of the 19th century. See for example Parish 1897, who carried out a research project titled “International Census of Waking Hallucinations in the Sane.”

of *dhyāna*)⁶³ originally referred to states of divine revelation for Christians. But in the late 18th and early 19th centuries a number of groups began using the newly popular techniques of Friedrich Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) to regularly induce such “states,” as they came to be called. This raised the possibility of, and indeed made it imperative to, account for these “states” scientifically.⁶⁴ As Ann Taves explains:

The postulation of special mental states, initially designated as “magnetic” and later as “trance” or “dissociative” states, played a central role in psychological theorizing about religion during the course of the nineteenth century. The newly discovered “clairvoyant somnambule,” the exemplar of this state, provided a humanly induced analogue to religious visionaries . . . the “clairvoyant somnambule” provided a means of demonstrating the natural induction of involuntary *sensory* phenomena.⁶⁵

“Clairvoyant somnambules,” placed into trance by their handlers, would report seeing and conversing with the dead, traveling to distant locations, or seeing the contents of sealed rooms. They had no memory of these events upon waking from trance, and had no other pathological symptoms. Beginning from the 1850s analogous practices were deployed by the Spiritualists, who used trance “mediums” to communicate with the spirits of the dead.

For proponents of Spiritualism clairvoyance as the ability to “see” without the use of the eyes provided scientific proof for the existence of the soul. In the words of one apologist, “it is not the external eye—that sees. It is the soul using the eye as an instrument . . . prove once that sight can exist without the use of light, sensation, or any physical organ of vision, and you prove an abnormal, supersensual, spiritual faculty;—a proof which puts an end to the theory of materialism.”⁶⁶ Those whom we might now call psychologists, on the other hand, tried to formulate theories to account for such phenomena in other terms.⁶⁷ The most basic approach was to define trance as a disease of the brain, such that the reports of mediums could be dismissed as unreliable. For those doctors and neurologists who analyzed trance in this way that mediums lacked personal agency, at least while in trance and under the control of their handlers, was

63 See below p.166 notes 119 and 120.

64 The notion that magnetic forces exert subtle but powerful influence on human beings has a long history in European thought. The idea that some people can, through force of will, guide their own magnetic emanations and thereby influence others is usually traced to Van Helmont (1577–1644), and this is the concept of “animal magnetism” later taken up by Mesmer (Boring 1929, 116). Mesmer’s innovation was the “ritual” procedure that allowed him to consistently and repeatedly induce trance states in his subjects.

65 Taves 1999, 126, emphasis in original.

66 Epes Sargent, *The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism* (Boston: Colby and Rich, 1881), 133–134. Note how for Sargent even the mere *experience* of “seeing,” independent of the reality of what is seen, proves the existence of the soul. As he goes on to remark, only the existence of a soul can account for how “the simple impression of sight can be individualized, and presented distinct and separate from all other impressions” (ibid.)

67 As Ann Taves argues: “[The] central experiential claim [of the Spiritualists]—that animal magnetism opened a psychologically grounded and empirically verifiable doorway between the human world and a world of the spirits—faced challenges from a variety of directions during the 1870s and 1880s. Anglo-American neurologists, intent on establishing themselves as a recognized subspecialty within the medical profession, attacked Spiritualism in a largely successful bid to secure a secularized understanding of trance as a foundation for their own neurological science” (Taves 1999, 207).

generally taken as a key piece of evidence for the pathological nature of this condition.⁶⁸

Galton, however, does not seem to have positioned his “visualizing faculty” as an explanation of trance visions—it was, rather, an attempt to explain the visions reported and clearly remembered by ordinary people. Thus Galton suggested that his data proved “the continuity between all the forms of visualization, beginning with an almost total absence of it, and ending with complete hallucination.”⁶⁹ In other words “visions” or “hallucinations,” which Galton demonstrated (again through questionnaires) were common even among ordinary, sane individuals, were nothing more than well-developed *visualizations*.⁷⁰ The ability of the brain to internally generate vivid, visual perception was thus a natural “faculty,” and only for the ignorant or irrational were such experiences proof of the existence of ghosts, souls, or other paranormal phenomena.⁷¹ In this respect Galton directly echoed Edward Tylor, who had earlier proposed that primitive religion arose when people began to believe in the reality of spontaneous visions, which like Galton Tylor considered to be a pan-human phenomenon.⁷² As we consider its applicability in the context of Buddhist meditation, it is thus important to remember that Galton’s “visualization” was initially a second-order term that *explained* visions. He interpreted first-person claims to have “seen” things as, in reality, “visualization.”⁷³

There is, however, another aspect of Galton’s “visualization” that merits attention. In addition to being potentially vision-like in its vividness, Galton presented “visualization” as capable of development, and he notes people who were able to improve the vividness of their mental imagery through practice.⁷⁴ And though he does not address this point directly, this too is

68 Thus trance, argued neurologist George Beard, could be explained without any reference to “passing beyond the use of external sense.” It was simply “a functional disease of the nervous system, in which the cerebral activity is concentrated in some limited region of the brain, with suspension of the activity of the rest of the brain, and consequent loss of volition.” See George M. Beard, *The Scientific Basis of Delusions: A New Theory of Trance and Its Bearings on Human Testimony* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1877), 5, emphasis mine.

69 Galton 1881, 524. I here discuss only Galton’s theories because he was the first to use the word “visualize,” but he was not the first to develop such ideas, and indeed as early as the 14th century we find attempts to account for the visions experienced by otherwise healthy people in naturalistic terms (Fogleman 2009). Wilhelm Griesinger, to take another prominent 19th-century scientist, attempted to explain the hallucinations of sane people through the theory of “eccentric projection.” According to Griesinger in normal perception stimulus from the outside the organism activates the sensory organs in a certain manner (such as an image on the retina), and these then travel to the cortex. In “eccentric projection” the internal sensory organ itself is stimulated without the corresponding external object, leading to a “real” perception even in the absence of an object. According to Griesinger all normal imagination involves some degree of “eccentric projection,” with full hallucination being the complete stimulation of the sensory organ by the imagination (Griesinger 1862, 30; see also Parish 1897, 115–116).

70 He admits, however, that “there are some who visualize well, and who are also seers of visions, who declare that the vision is not a vivid visualization, but altogether a different phenomenon” (1883, 164). Galton was nonetheless confident that despite different “channels” through which the processes might occur, enough similarities existed to consider both to be “induced” (as opposed to “direct”) sense impression.

71 Galton 1883, 174

72 Tylor 1958, 2:62. Ann Taves has pointed out that Tylor was probably influenced, in an inverted way, by the earlier claims of Spiritualists that techniques of spirit communication were the empirical foundation of all religions (Taves 1999, 198–200).

73 We should also note Galton’s discussion of “enthusiasm,” here in the sense of divine revelation (1883, 294–298). Not entirely rejecting the possibility of genuine spiritual encounters, Galton uses his experiments with the “visualizing faculty” to argue that the apparent objectivity of revelations is not a guarantee of their truthfulness.

74 Pearson 1924, 2:241. However Galton considered the ability to be permanently limited for some people. His general theory was that education tended to diminish it. Those whose ability to visualize had been suppressed

not unconnected to Galton's goal of explaining why spontaneous visions were not necessarily pathological. Indeed to the extent that "visualization" was grounded in a mental faculty nominally under one's personal control, it could be made to conform to the basic Victorian understanding that the chief characteristic of insanity was lack of personal agency.⁷⁵ Galton thus shifted the locus of the potential pathology from the mere experience of the vision to the subsequent evaluation of that experience—what was pathological was thus not visualization, but mistaking what one visualized for something "out there."

Although Galton would surely have disproved, "Visualization" as a natural mental faculty subject to development provided fertile ground for a number of groups who were seeking not to discredit the reality of visions and apparitions, but to provide scientifically verifiable techniques for accessing them. Most important of these groups was Theosophy, whose influence on early popular Western understanding of Buddhism is well known.⁷⁶

The basic problematic of early Theosophy was to retain the powers attributed to trance mediums while overcoming the most common criticism of them, their lack of personal control and agency. This was accomplished by rejecting the mesmerized medium in favor of the "adept," who was not placed into trance by someone else but consciously cultivated his own powers. Theosophists were not the first to move in this direction. One of the earliest such voices in America was Paschal Beverly Randolph, himself a former trance medium. After rejecting trance, in the 1860s he developed a technique he called "waking clairvoyance," "conscious trance," or "Psycho-vision."⁷⁷ He differentiated this from Spiritualist mediumship as follows:

[For a medium] what one sees, feels, hears, is positive proof to him or her. All spiritual communications come second-handed [sic], but the clairvoyant sees *directly* and reaches knowledge by the first intention . . . If a person is lucid (clairvoyant), he or she has a secret personal positive power, and need not consult any other authority whatever . . . "Mediumship" is automacy; a medium is a machine played on and worked by others, when it really exists; but the clairvoyant sees, knows, understands, learns and grows in

through education could thus sometimes recover it, but one with no such powers at all could not acquire them.

75 Taves 1999, 123

76 Prothero 1996.

77 Randolph offered his readers practical techniques for cultivating this power. The following, from Randolph's *The Mysteries of Eulis* (thought to date to 1870, but based on similar material from the 1860s), gives techniques for developing of what Randolph calls "Volantia": "VOLANTIA—the quiet, steady, calm, non-turbulent, non-muscular exertion of the human will. To increase which, and render practically *and* magnetically serviceable, *practice* is necessary, not a fitful, now and again kind, but regular, that is daily: observe these rules—and follow them. Place against the wall a black card, round, with a white center, or a white one with a black center, and gaze on it steadily, one minute, willing at the same time to increase you powers of ATTENTION, CONCENTRATION, and ABSTRACTION. Then slowly turn your face to the blank wall and the optical effect will be an apparition, and the card,—colors reversed,—will slowly pass across your tine of vision. Usually but one or two will thus flit by, but there should be at least from four to seven. The card may be of any other colors, and the phantoms will be their exact opposite or complementary hue. These exercises are intended to develop the above named three powers, and their ultimate end and purpose is to finally enable you to fix your mind on any one, alive or dead, and will *their* phantom, and in the latter case, *themselves*, to appear" (Deveney 1997, 328, emphasis and capitalization in original manuscript).

personal magnetic and mental power day by day.⁷⁸

This understanding of trance differed radically from that promoted in Spiritualist circles. As his recent biographer writes, Randolph's new understanding was "the first shot in the battle that was to transform spiritualism into occultism . . . for Randolph, clairvoyance not only was an exceedingly sublime state of vision, but it was also a conscious phenomenon, rather than a result of trance, and it was a condition that was available, if not to everyone, at least to most."⁷⁹

Randolph had a profound influence on early Theosophy, which rejected Spiritualism on similar principles.⁸⁰ Henry Steel Olcott formulated a comparable criticism of Spiritualist trance shortly after his initial contact with Madame Blavatsky in the mid-1870s, leading eventually to what Stephen Prothero describes as the "paradigm shift from Spiritualism to what would be called theosophy." The focal point of this shift was the difference between *passive* (and mostly female) mediums in a state of uncontrolled trance, and *active*, male "adepts" whose abilities were cultivated.⁸¹ This shift can also be understood as an attempt to appeal to what Ann Taves has called the "respectable Protestant" understanding of human agency, according to which Spiritualist trance, with its passive mediums, was pathological by definition.⁸² In Taves' analysis a chief innovation of Theosophy and the other new movements of the 1870s and 1880s was that they "continued to rely upon the concepts of clairvoyance and suggestion by cultivating them as conscious states and divorcing them from the liabilities that had come to be associated with somnambulism and trance."⁸³ Theosophy thus preserved the power of trance to communicate beyond the bounds of normal perception, but adapted it to fit new ideals of agency and control.

It would seem that Galton's notion of "visualization" offered early Theosophists a scientific-sounding way of talking about the development of clairvoyant powers through controlled, willful cultivation.⁸⁴ Although the earliest relevant examples I have found are not from the Theosophists but the famous Society for Psychical Research in London (founded in 1882),⁸⁵ by the early 1890s Theosophists were claiming "visualization" as the scientific basis for

78 Deveney 1997, 74

79 Deveney 1997, 74–75. It is also worth noting that one of the ways Randolph explains this contrast is as the difference between hearing and seeing, as in the above passage. He seems to have emphasized this on several occasions. As he writes elsewhere: "The difference, therefore, between positive seership and mediumship in any form is . . . that between *hearing* a description of Paris and *seeing* Paris one's self; that is to say it is the difference between act and experience, and the merest hearsay" (Deveney 1997, 73, emphasis in original).

80 Deveney 1997, 253–266

81 Prothero 1993, 204. These arguments, as Prothero notes, "incorporated broader cultural assumptions regarding the dangerous passivity of women and the willful activity of men" (ibid., 204). Such ideas were not entirely novel, and Spiritualist mediums had been criticized for their passivity since the 1850s. Taves observes further that such critiques were frequently authored by male mediums criticizing their female counterparts, and the equation between control and manliness is often explicit (Taves 1999, 219).

82 In Taves' words this understanding held "not only that a highly developed personal sense of human agency was good but that this sense could be lost or impaired," and losing this sense was considered to be "one of the chief characteristics of mental illness" (Taves 1999, 123).

83 Ibid., 127

84 On "scientism" as an authorizing strategy in Theosophy see Hammer 2001, 201–329.

85 The Society for Psychical Research mediated between researchers who assumed that non-material phenomena did not exist or were irrelevant, and the Spiritualists and Theosophists who were their subject of research (Kripal 2010, 48–58). The Society tried, in a systematic way, to apply the language, theories, and experimental practices of modern materialist understandings to explain non-material phenomena. Among members of the Society by

clairvoyance.⁸⁶ All manner of occult phenomena were eventually explained by the power of the mind to “visualize.”⁸⁷ Spirit writing, for example, was understood as the precipitation of “astral matter” in the form of ink, following the outline of the letters that the adept “visualized” with perfect clarity in the correct location.⁸⁸

For my present purposes what is most significant about the Theosophists is that they appear to have been the first to use the word “visualization” to describe Asian meditation practices, and by 1898 they were learning techniques from Indian gurus described in Theosophist publications as “visualizations,” such as the practice of “visualizing” the face of one’s guru from a portrait.⁸⁹ Although a more thorough study will be needed to determine the precise role of such practices in Theosophy at this time, as mentioned above 19th-century scholars studying the Buddhist practices now generally called “visualizations” did not use this word.⁹⁰ This suggests that its eventual use in the translation of Buddhist texts came under the influence of Theosophy. Indeed in an explicitly Buddhist context the earliest example I have found is from the 1927 translation of the so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead* by Kazi Dawa Samdup and former Theosophist W.Y. Evans-Wentz (1878–1965).⁹¹ Interestingly it is also in Evans-Wentz’s writings, in the context of a more in-depth treatment of what he called Tibetan Buddhist “visualization” practices (*sādhana* rituals), that we find, to my knowledge, the earliest explicit characterization of the *kaṣiṇa* exercises from the Pāli tradition as “visualizations.”⁹² Tellingly, Childers’ 1872 Pāli dictionary had, in contrast, explained the *kaṣiṇa* meditations not as visualizations but as exercises that induce “mesmeric trance.”⁹³

Regardless of the precise path whereby “visualization” became a standard description of certain Buddhist meditation practices, the above historical sketch allows us to see more clearly the implications of this word by revealing the polemic contexts in which it was first deployed.

1886 “to visualize” was being used as a non-problematic way of referring to the manner in which visions of apparitions and ghosts took form before the eyes (Gurney, Meyers and Podomore 1886, 1:256). Similarly it was by “visualizing” that a psychic could *successfully* read a playing card from the back (ibid, 1:32). Here too, however, “visualize” was a second-order term. What Gurney and his colleagues labeled as “visualizations” were reported by the subjects as “visions” or simply things that they had “seen.”

86 Thus Annie Besant, Blavatsky’s heir, was in 1892 able to write that “all persons who ‘visualize’ much are to some extent clairvoyant.” See Annie Besant, “Reincarnation,” *Lucifer: A Theosophical Magazine* 10 (1892), 148. The scare quotes around the word suggest that Besant expected her readers to see this as technical term. Other examples make this clear. Thus in an 1897 lecture Besant said: “Some of you can visualize, *as it is called technically* . . . that is, by an effort of thought you can really see your friend’s face.” See Annie Besant, “Clairvoyance and Mental Healing,” reprinted in *The American Theosophist* 15.7 (1914), 556, emphasis mine.

87 Annie Besant, *A Word on Man, his Nature, and his Powers* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1893), 11–12.

88 *A Primer of Theosophy* (Chicago: The Rajpu Press, 1909), 33–34

89 H. Seakav, “Fragmentary Thoughts no. III,” *The Theosophist* 19 (1898), 663

90 See above note 26.

91 Evans-Wentz 1927. Evans-Wentz did not read Tibetan, and the translation was carried out by Kazi Dawa Samdup (1868–1922), an English teacher at the Maharaja’s Boy’s School in Gangtok (in Sikkhim). As noted by Donald Lopez in his forward to the recent reprint of this book (2000), though the basic translation was Samdup’s Evans-Wentz claimed to have been his “living English dictionary,” and that accordingly Evans-Wentz was responsible for much of the specific terminology (including, no doubt, the word “visualize”).

92 Evans-Wentz 1934, 41

93 Childers 1872, 191

For Galton, the key notions were interiority and a particular kind of photograph-like vividness. For the Theosophists, the word helped explain clairvoyance and other powers as cultivated capacities rather than the fruits of passive “trance.” And indeed “to visualize” as used in description of Buddhist meditation practice appears to be a synthesis of precisely these ideas. Thus in Eliade’s definition (p.145) visualization is an internal mental process whose object is not literally in the world, is phenomenologically a kind of seeing (“projected” on an “inner screen”), and is an ordered, willful processes expressing and employing the practitioner’s powers of mental control, explicitly contrasted with the spontaneous or passive “imagination.” Though less developed, these same ideas are also present in Soper’s description of visualization as the gradual building-up of mental images leading to a vision.

This notion of visualization is, I would thus suggest, carefully opposed to a cluster of related concepts, such as “seeing,” “imagining,” and “hallucinating.” Visualization is similar to “seeing” in its phenomenology, yet it differs fundamentally in that its object is not actually present “out there.” In this respect it is similar to a “hallucination.” But unlike a hallucination visualization is not pathological—it is a controlled, willful, “active” state, with none of the late-Victorian stigma associated with the “passive” trance of spirit mediums. At the beginning of this section I noted that scholars of Buddhism apply the word “visualization” rather loosely, neither precisely defined nor aligned with a single Buddhist technical term. However I would suggest that “visualization” actually does have a precise meaning, circumscribed by three qualities: photographic vividness, interiority, and a sense of personal agency. Only by insisting on these attributes is “visualization” distinct in meaning from terms such as “seeing,” “imagining,” and “hallucinating.”

The question then is whether or not traditional accounts of the Buddhist meditation practices commonly described as “visualization” imply something similar to this. In the case of the *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and other fifth-century Chinese meditation texts, I will suggest that they do not.

Inner and Outer

Of the three attributes of “visualization” discussed above the easiest to analyze is its interiority. Indeed Galton developed the notion of visualization precisely to explain the apparent perception of external objects, such as ghosts, in terms that would not require positing their real existence.⁹⁴ We may, of course, decide that certain forms of Buddhist meditation, in fact, involve “visualization” in Galton’s sense. But even leaving aside the difficulties in specifying what “in fact” might mean for a topic such as this, such a conclusion would in any case be of a logically different order of analysis than accurately describing just what it is that Buddhist meditators

94 Galton did not explain how this might work neuro-anatomically, though as mentioned above (note 69) previous researchers had posited various theories, such as Griesinger’s “eccentric projection,” to account for the neural mechanism of vivid hallucinations. We may also note that in 1884 Frederic Meyers proposed such a theory to account for “apparitions” (basically identical to Griesinger’s) and he called “visualization” the process whereby the optic nerve is stimulated internally so as to perfectly mimic actual perception. See Frederic Meyers et al., “A Theory of Apparitions,” *Proceedings for the Society of Psychological Research* 2 (1884), 157–186.

claim to be doing (or, in the present case, what Buddhist meditation texts claim will happen to Buddhist meditators). “Visualize” will be an appropriate word in the translation of such texts or reports only if the first-order perspective is that the objects perceived are not “out there.”

In the case of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, however, it would be difficult to make this claim, and what the meditator “sees” is often described as something that at least potentially impinges on the world. This is actually not entirely unexpected. Indeed *dhyāna* has always been understood to lead naturally to magical powers, many of which involve the mind of the meditator directly influencing the physical world. Though scholarly presentations of Buddhist meditation of course acknowledge this, there is a tendency to treat such matters separately from the question of how we translate or understand meditation terminology. In some cases this indeed might make sense. There is, for example, no obvious reason why the terminology we use to translate the practical instructions for breath-meditation would be affected by beliefs about the magic powers this practice produces. But in the case of “visualization” things are more complicated because what is “visualized” by the meditator is often the same physical reality that he manipulates.⁹⁵

Though the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* do not directly address the cultivation of such powers, what the meditator “sees” during meditation does occasionally become visible to other people, notably in the meditations on the fire and water elements in the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* (3.65; 3.71). Though one passage here actually says that what the meditator sees will *not* be visible to others (3.78),⁹⁶ given the context the point cannot be that here and only here these visions exist within the meditator’s mind. Rather the meditator comes into contact with a number of extraordinary things, some of which only he is able to see, some of which others perceive as well, but none of which are private mental events.

This understanding of the fire and water *samādhis* in particular was widespread in fifth- and sixth-century China. According to his biography early in his career the monk Facong 法聰 (d. 547–550) was living in a hermitage on Parasol Mountain (傘蓋山) near Xiangyang 襄陽⁹⁷ when the prince of Jin’an (晉安王) came to pay respects:

[The prince] had heard of [Facong’s] reputation, and so came to see him. As he approached [Facong’s] hermitage he urged his horse forward, but for no apparent reason it turned back. Ashamed, the prince left. That night he had a bad dream. Later, he again tried to go, but the horse turned back as before. The prince then ritually purified himself, and only then, fully reverent and devout, was he able to approach. When he first arrived near the temple all he saw was a valley filled with raging flames. As he watched for a while [the flames] suddenly transformed into water. He stood again for a while looking up in awe, and the water vanished and the halls [of the temple] appeared. He [later] inquired about this matter and learned that [Facong] had at that time been immersed in

95 The classic example of this is the *kaṣiṇa* meditations—“visualizing” a certain color, the meditator is able to create objects of that color (Ñānamoli 1976, 171). See also *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.352a29–b4.

96 “[The light of his heart] gradually becomes brighter, and he sees his body to be like bright crystal mirror, and his heart to be like a magic moon-jewel. [It is so bright] that he wonders if others can see it, but in truth they are not able to see these things.” 見身猶如頗梨明鏡，見心亦如明月神珠。慮他人見，他人其實不見此事。(3.78)

97 Near Xiangfan 襄樊, in northwest Hubei 湖北 province.

the water and fire trances.⁹⁸

Two things are of note in this story. First, the content of Facong's meditation becomes visible to the prince. Though these are not "real" fire and water—they do not burn the temple down—they are visible objectively. Indeed Facong's ability to meditate such that his visions become visible to others is a sign of his power as a *chan* master. Second, the prince's seeing of these things is also contingent on his own level of purification. In other words what Facong sees during this meditation may well be invisible to ordinary people, but not to those sufficiently pure.

In the story the prince renders himself worthy through a ritual purification (*jie zhai* 潔齋). More commonly, seeing such things indicated one's own meditative attainment, as in the tale of the young girl Xinxiang 信相, who received divine revelations and wrote them down as sutras. Buddhist masters were summoned, and they determined that the writings were in accord with the scriptures. But one master tested Xinxiang in a different manner:

There was also a strange *chan* master of unclear background who in the Jinghui temple entered the fire-radiance *samādhi* and then summoned the girl [Xinxiang]. When she arrived at [the door] she did not enter, saying "There is a mass of fire." The *chan* master said: "Why don't you put it out with water?" She then performed the water contemplation, extinguished the fire, and entered. The *chan* master [was in this way able to] verify that she had indeed mastered various meditations.⁹⁹

To have mastered *chan* was thus apparently a potential proof of one's authenticity as a spirit medium, which is itself an interesting point. But concerning our more immediate questions, the logic of the story here suggests that the "mass of fire" Xinxiang perceived was not visible to everyone. Indeed her ability to see this fire, generated by the *chan* master's meditation, was apparently part (though not all) of the proof of her own attainment. As we will see below, in doctrinal texts too we find the understanding that objects "visualized" during meditation would be visible to anyone who had attained the same state.

Returning to the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, we also find a few discussions of the ontology of the visions themselves. Since these are not doctrinal texts such questions are not addressed directly, but we can glean something of the understanding they presuppose from certain passages where the meditator sees inauspicious or frightening visions, a subject to which we will return in more detail later in this chapter. In the second section of the first sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, for example, the meditator first comes to see "scattered bones" (縱橫亂骨)

98 承風來問。將至禪室，馬騎將從，無故却退，王慚而返。夜感惡夢，後更再往，馬退如故。王乃潔齋，躬盡虔敬，方得進見。初至寺側，但覩一谷，猛火洞燃。良久竚望，忽變為水。經停傾仰，水滅堂現。以事相詢，乃知爾時入水火定也。(Further Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2060:50.555c4–9). According to the compiler Daoxuan 道宣 this story was drawn from Facong's funeral epitaph (碑記). The tale also appears, in a slightly different form, in the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (T.2122:53.893b2–c5) and the *Biographies of Divine Monks* (*Shen seng zhuan* 神僧轉, T.2064:50.974c25–975b7).

99 有異禪師，不知何來，於淨慧寺入火光三昧，召彼女來。及至不入，云：是火聚。禪師曰：何不以水滅之。女即作水觀，滅火而入。禪師驗知深入諸定。(Further Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2060:50.600c15–19). The story appears within the biography of Xinxiang's brother, the monk Huikuan 惠寬.

filling the entire universe, representing his further progress in the contemplation of impurity. But then the bones erupt into a vast conflagration that threatens the practitioner himself:

He then sees that out beyond all the bones a great fire arises in all directions, its flames continuing one after the other, burning the scattered bones. [The practitioner] sees fire appear between the bones of all the skeletons. As for the appearance of these fires, some are like blazing, flowing water running between bones. Some are like great mountains closing in on [the practitioner] from all sides.¹⁰⁰

The appearance of this fire proves problematic, and “[the practitioner] will feel extremely afraid. When he emerges from meditation his body will be hot and sweaty . . . when the practitioner next enters trance he will be unable to emerge on his own. He will only be able to emerge [from trance] when someone snaps their fingers.”¹⁰¹ To counteract this, the practitioner must contemplate the emptiness of the threatening fire:

He must then think: “This fire arises from the four great elements. My body itself is empty, and the four great elements [that comprise it] have no master. This raging fire arises from emptiness adventitiously. My body the bodies of others are all also empty. This fire is produced by false imagination. What could it burn? Both my body and the fire are impermanent.”¹⁰²

Thus though the fire is produced by “false imagination” (妄想), this is not why it is empty—rather it is empty for the same reason the meditator’s *body* is empty, for like the body it arises from the four material elements.

Deconstruction of the evil visions in this way occurs throughout the text.¹⁰³ Thus in a subsequent passage, as he continues the contemplation of impurity the meditator eventually becomes so disgusted with his body that he considers suicide.¹⁰⁴ As a result of this negative thought, an evil vision appears:

[The meditator] then sees a giant *yakṣa*-demon, as big as a mountain, its hair wild and disheveled like a forest of brambles. Its sixty eyes [shine] like lightning. Its forty mouths each have two fangs like flaming pillars that point upwards, and tongues like sword-trees that reach to its knees. It attacks the practitioner with an iron club that is like a blade-mountain. [The practitioner sees] many other things like this. When he sees these things he becomes terrified and his body and mind begin to tremble. . . . [The practitioner] must be instructed as follows: “Do not be afraid. This *yakṣa* demon is a vision [produced by] the poison of your evil mind. It arises from the six elements, and is formed of the six

100見諸骨外，周布四面，有大火起，焰焰相次，燒諸亂骨。見諸骨人，節節火起。如是火相，或有眾火，猶如流水，明炎熾盛，流諸骨間。或有眾火，猶如大山，從四面來。(1.35)

101極大驚怖。出定之時，身體蒸熱 . . . 不能自起，要[當]{人}彈指，然後得起。(1.36)

102復當作念。如此火者，從四大有。我身空寂，四大無主。此大猛火，橫從空起。我身他身，悉皆亦空。如此火者，從妄想生，為何所燒。我身及火，二皆無常。(1.37)

103In addition to the passage discussed below, see also 1.58 and 1.80.

104This is a well known side-effect of *aśubha* practice.

elements. You must now carefully contemplate these six elements. The six elements are earth, water, fire, wind, consciousness and space. In this manner you must carefully consider each [element]. Is your body [the same as] the earth element? The water element? The wind element? The consciousness element? The space element? . . . The six elements have no master, and the body too is without a self. Why then do you now fear this *yakṣa*? Just as your imagination itself (心想) arrives but does not arrive from somewhere and departs without going anywhere, so too this *yakṣa* that you have seen through your imagination. Even if this *yakṣa* comes forward and strikes, you should simply accept it joyfully and carefully contemplate that there is no self. For in regards to what is lacking in self there can be no fear or terror. You must simply have this right understanding as you sit in meditation, contemplating impurity and this *yakṣa*.¹⁰⁵

As with the threatening fire above, although the evil *yakṣa*-demon is a “vision [produced by] the poison of [the meditator’s] evil mind” (惡心猛毒境界), unlike what we would find in a *Yogācāra-vijñānavāda* style argument it is not deconstructed simply as a false conception, but as composed of all six elements. The analogy between the sudden appearance of the *yakṣa* and the sudden appearance of the act of imagination itself, which “arrives but does not arrive from somewhere and departs without going anywhere,”¹⁰⁶ thus emphasizes only that the object is produced by and hence controllable through the mind of the practitioner, not that it is ontologically part of the mind.

The claim that these fantastic visions are visions of material things may at first appear somewhat odd. However that “visualized” objects are *material* (as opposed to mental) entities was an accepted understanding in some forms of Indian Buddhism. The *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* attributes this view to the *yogācāras*:

A *rūpa* that is the object of *samādhi* is produced for the meditator by the force of his *samādhi*. It is invisible because it is not an object of the eye-organ. It is without resistance because it does not obstruct space.¹⁰⁷

This theory is also discussed in the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, and has been interpreted by some

105 見大夜叉，身如大山，頭髮蓬亂，如棘刺林。有六十眼，猶如電光。有四十口，口有二牙，皆悉上出，猶如火幢。舌似劍樹，吐至于膝。手捉鐵棒，棒似刀山，如欲打人。如是眾多，其數非一。見此事時，極大驚怖，身心皆動 . . . 復當更教。汝莫驚怖。如此夜叉，是汝惡心猛毒境界。從六大起，六大所成。汝今應當諦觀六大。此六大者，地、水、火、風、識、空。如此一一，汝當諦推，汝身為是地耶。為是水耶。為是火耶。為是風耶。為是識耶。為是空耶 . . . 六大無主，身亦無我。汝今云何畏於夜叉。如汝心想，來無所從，去無所至。想見夜叉，亦復如是。但安意坐，設使夜叉來打汝者，歡喜忍受，諦觀無我。無我法中，無驚怖想。但當正心，結加趺坐，諦觀不淨及與夜叉。(1.53–1.54)

106 The wording here is reminiscent of a key passage from the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (Harrison 1990, 42), that would prove important in the development of mature *Yogācāra-vijñānavāda* idealism (Schmithausen 1973, 246). However the *Chan Essentials* seems to correspond here not to later *Yogācāra* idealism, but to what Schmithausen identifies as the portions of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* that continue to presuppose the “realistic ontology” of traditional Buddhism (ibid., 238–239).

107 *dhyāyinām samādhivīśayo rūpaṃ samādhiprabhāvād utpadyate | cakṣurindriyāviṣayatvāt anidarśanam | deśānāvāratvād apratiḥgam iti* (AKBh, 197.5–6). Based on Silk 2000, 288, with some modifications.

scholars as a precursor to the full-fledged idealism of later Yogācāra sources.¹⁰⁸ Saṅghabhadra's *Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra-śāstra* gives an even more detailed account of these ideas as the views of the “forest-dwellers” (*ārayṇaka*):

All the forest-dwellers say: The blue and other [colors seen] while in *samādhi* are visible matter. It cannot be said that they definitely have different characteristics and are of a different kind than [the visible matter that] the eye consciousness previously encountered, for they appear with perfect clarity while in meditation. They are matter [which serves as] the object of that [mind immersed in] *samādhi*. They are matter produced by the primary elements and produced by *samādhi*. They are pure and clear, and like the ether they lack resistance.¹⁰⁹

Thus the object “visualized” by the meditator is a kind of *rūpa*, and is thus material, or at least is *not* mental. Admittedly it is a special kind of *rūpa*, lacking the usual features of resistance (*pratigha*) and (according to some) visibility to the eye.¹¹⁰ Though the meditator's mind produces it or perhaps simply stirs it into shape, and thus does have a special relationship to it, this *rūpa* is not different in nature from those objects previously perceived by the eye consciousness.

This understanding was, it must be noted, disputed by other Buddhist schools, and both Saṅghabhadra's *Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra-śāstra* and the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* introduce this theory specifically to refute the position of the Sautrantikas, who, in contrast to the Vaibhāṣikas, maintained that some objects of perception are entirely non-existent.¹¹¹ The Sautrantikas give a number of examples of this, including classic cases of illusion such as a “wheel” of fire. Among these examples are the objects of meditation practices such as the *kṛtsnāyatana* (the *kaṣiṇa* of the Pāli tradition), that are technically considered products of *adhimukti-manaskāra*, “contemplation [based on] resolve” in contrast to *tattva-manaskāra*, “contemplation [based on something] real.” It is these that Saṅghabhadra refers to above when he discusses the “blue and other [colors seen] while in *samādhi*.”

It might thus be suggested that the “material” nature of such “visualized” objects is little more than a scholastic conceit. Indeed the Vaibhāṣikas also argue against the Sautrantika position that patently illusory objects (such as the fire-wheel) are non-existent objects of consciousness. Even so, however, it is not possible to take the distinction between *adhimukti-manaskāra* and *tattva-manaskāra* as the distinction between “visualization” and “perception.” For while the *kaṣiṇa* meditations are included in the former, within the later are included things like “seeing” the internal organs of the body. Indeed the internal organs really do exist, therefore

108Schmithausen 1973, 239

109住空閑者咸作是言：定中青等，是有見色，不可說言此色定是眼識曾受異類色相，於此定中分明現故。此定境色，是定所生大種所造，清潔分明，無所障礙，如空界色。(T.1562:29.346b7–11). Here “ether” translates 空界色, probably *ākāśa-dhātu-rūpa*, “matter belonging to the sphere of space.”

110The *Yogācārabhūmi* considers this *rūpa* to be a kind of “derived matter” (*upādāyarūpa*; Schmithausen 1973, 239), and this same idea is found in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* (T.618:15.318c7–13). The category of “derived matter” is also said to be that out of which the sensory organs themselves are made, also held to be a very subtle form of nearly intangible matter. Kumārajīva, in contrast, in his letters to Huiyuan, seems to call the matter out of which “visualized” objects are made *avijñapti-rūpa* (無教色; see Kimura 1960, 24, T.1856:45.130a14–15, following the reading of the *Eikantō* 永觀堂 edition).

111Cox 1988; Dhammajoti 2007, 46–48

seeing them, even with the mind rather than the eye, is not considered *adhimukti-manaskāra*.¹¹² Thus among these pre-Yogācāra schools of Indian Buddhism everyone seems to have agreed that through meditation one could come to have *perceptions* of real objects in the world, even those to which one did not have visual sensory access (such as the internal organs).

To return now to China, although none of the above Indian texts were available during the fifth century, similar ideas were known and discussed. Such discussions come up most frequently as concerns the visibility or not of the objects of other people's meditation, something discussed explicitly in the *Chan Essentials*, and evidently common enough knowledge to filter into the miracle tales associated with Chinese meditation masters (as seen above in the stories of Facong and Xinxiang).

A key passage through which this issue was discussed occurs in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (contained in the Chinese translations of the *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經), where *śrāvakas*, unable to see the doings of advanced bodhisattvas, are likened to the ordinary people who do not see anything unusual when a mediating monk obtains the *krtsnāyatana* while those who have themselves reached this state can detect it.¹¹³ The context of the comparison, as well as the other analogies and examples, make the point here clear —attaining these meditations is learning to perceive a subtle realm that all those with the same abilities can see. This line of argument was apparently quite common, and this passage from the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* is cited in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* to explain why the *śrāvakas* were unable to use the “divine eye” to see the Buddha preaching the Mahāyāna sutras to the bodhisattvas or gods.¹¹⁴ In his letters to Huiyuan of Mt. Lu Kumārajīva himself used this passage to explain that the bodies of advanced bodhisattvas, like the bodies of the gods, and like the things seen by meditators while in *samādhi*, are too “subtle” (微) to be seen by people who are not of that same level.¹¹⁵

112Dhammajoti 2009, 22–23, citing Saṅghabhadra.

113The copy of this text available in fifth-century China is Buddhahadra's translation (T.278:9.680b22–25). The Sanskrit makes clear the intention that all those who have attained these same *samādhis* will be able to see these things at that moment: “[those things] are not seen, except by those who have [also] reached the attainment of the that *samādhi* or *samāpatti*.” *na paśyēt anyatra tatsamādhisamāpattivihārāprāptebhyaḥ* (Vaidya 1960); the initial monk is introduced in the singular making it clear that here it pertains to others besides the mediating monk himself. Although this final line is not present in Buddhahadra's translation, the later Chinese versions of the *Hua yan jing* include it (T.279:10.324a7; T.293:10.667c6). Regardless, given the other examples even in Buddhahadra's translation the intention is clearly the same. For example the case is likened to one who, in a dark room, places a special medicine in his eyes that allows him to see in the dark, while others present see nothing (T.278:9.680b26–28). What this person sees is thus what exists objectively, and anyone who has taken the same medicine will see it just as well.

114T.1509:25.308b11–15

115“‘The bodies [of bodhisattvas] are extremely subtle and for this reason they are said [in the sutra you cite to be] ‘non-existent.’ They are like the bodies of the gods of sphere of desire or the sphere of form who cannot be seen by humans unless they reveal themselves. Further it is like the magical powers of human beings who have obtained *dhyāna*, which cannot be seen by other people. Also it is like the “unmanifest” matter produced through *dhyāna* meditation, which though it always follows the person cannot be seen, for though it does exist it is subtle and thus does not show itself. The physical body of a bodhisattva is even subtler than these examples, and is not something that ordinary beings or those of the two vehicles can see . . . it is like when a person enters the water and fire *samādhis*—without asking them [about it], though you might be right next to them, you will not see anything.” 身亦微細，微細故，說言無。如欲界天身，若不令人見，則不見也。色界諸天，於欲界天亦爾。又如欲界人得色界禪定，有大神通，而餘人不見，以微細故。又如禪定生無教色，雖常隨人，而不

The *Chan Essentials* thus subscribes to what at the time was a commonly held understanding of the nature of the special objects generated by the mind during *samādhi*. As a final illustration of the difficulties that a word like “visualization” creates when used in such a context, I want to consider a somewhat different, but I hope illustrative example, namely some remarks made by the Dalai Lama about “visualization” practice and mental imagery at a conference (held at MIT) intended to generate dialog between Buddhists, neuroscientists, and psychologists. In the discussion following two papers on the topic of “imagery and visualization” the Dalai Lama made a comment that was translated into English by his interpreter as follows:

It is important to bear in mind the various contexts in which we use the term imagery . . . [in meditation practice] through constant training and familiarity with the image that you conceptualize, you can reach a very high level of clarity, such that the content of that thought is referred to as a form, almost like a visible form. Unlike ordinary material objects that are characterized by shape and color and so on, the content of that thought is not a material object, but it is nevertheless referred to as a mental object that has a form. It is considered a constructed form . . . one can further develop one’s meditative capacity to a very high level, where that form will take on a qualitatively different nature. For example, if the object of the meditation is a fire, the generated form can burn and one can use it like real fire.¹¹⁶

Unsurprisingly, this comment did not elicit much response from the other panelists. But in light of our discussion we can now see that the Dalai Lama is here invoking theories similar to (and perhaps even directly derived from) those in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* and other sources. Accordingly the word translated here as “form” is almost certainly (the Tibetan equivalent of) *rūpa*. Note, however, how the English translation of the interpreter is potentially misleading—“a mental object that has a form” was no doubt interpreted by those present to mean something *in* the brain/mind, not an object *of* the mind.¹¹⁷ For the benefit of those less familiar with Buddhism one of the panelists, Alan Wallace, explained the Dalai Lama’s comments as referring to “use of the kasinas in the Pali tradition. By taking the conceptual quintessence of an element such as fire . . . and generating it meditatively, you can actually project it into the sensory world.”¹¹⁸

Invoking the *kaṣiṇa* (*kṛtsnāyatana*) exercises here is entirely apposite, for as we have seen above this is the example typically brought forth when discussing the status of “visualized” meditation objects. But in order to explain how a “mental object” could eventually appear in the world, Wallace must discuss “projecting” what has been “generated meditatively” into the “sensory world.” Here we find ourselves in a confused place somewhere between first-order description and second-order explanations. From the emic perspective “projecting” is not necessary—the “visualized” object is “out there” from the start, and as my “visualization” of

可見，雖有而微，微故不現。菩薩四大五根，復微於此，凡夫二乘，所不能見 . . . 又如人入水火三昧，若不聞者，雖共一處，都無所見。(Kimura 1960, 24; T.1856:45.130a11–28).

116Harrington and Zajonc 2006, 95

117“Mental object” being taken in English more naturally as a *karmadhārya*, an object that is mental, rather than a *tatpuruṣa*, the object of the mind.

118Harrington and Zajonc 2006, 95

them becomes more advanced they naturally become materially efficacious because they are already material entities. On the other hand a second-order explanation of what is “really” going on during such meditation practices might well involve the concept of “visualization,” internally generated visual perceptions. What Wallace ends up giving us, however, is something different—a second order explanation of the *actual* production of fire by a meditator.

Seeing and Contemplation in the *Five Gates*

I have suggested above that the concept of “visualization” carries with it three principal implications—interiority, photographic lucidity, and a sense of personal agency and control. Having discussed the first of these, I want to now examine the remaining two, which are indeed arguably the most important. For it is here that we begin to touch upon the essential features of Buddhist meditation as it is usually understood—namely, that it is a consciously undertaken process leading to objective, authoritative experiences. The notion of active personal agency in particular was, as we have seen, an essential part of how the Theosophists differentiated their techniques of mental training from the “passive” trance of Spiritualist mediums, to which end they invoked “visualization” as a scientific basis for the cultivation of clairvoyance through one’s own powers of will and volition.

Indeed more generally it seems that a favorable view of Buddhist meditation among late Victorians was contingent on divorcing it from any hint of “passivity.” And new vocabulary was needed for this, as in the first half of the 19th century Buddhist meditation had often been described precisely in such terms. Thus we find, for example, “trance” as one of several definitions of *jhāna* (*dhyāna*) in Robert Childers’ 1872 *A Dictionary of the Pāli Language*.¹¹⁹ Yet fifty years later the *Pāli-English Dictionary* (1921) warns its readers that *jhāna* implies “no suggestion of trance, but rather of an enhanced vitality.”¹²⁰ Here we see a keen sensitivity to the question of whether or not Buddhist meditation is a passive, and hence pathological state, or an active, and hence positive form of psychological cultivation. By the 1920s, it would seem, the later view was coming into fashion. Indeed this understanding was actively promoted by Buddhist enthusiasts in the West, and perhaps more importantly by figures such as D.T. Suzuki, who in his *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (1933) would write that “ecstasy [i.e. trance] is a bad word [for *samādhi*] because it suggests passivity, not active concentration.”¹²¹

I thus now want to turn to the fifth-century Chinese meditation texts that are the focus of this dissertation and ask not just *what* meditators were held to “see” in the course of *chan* practice but *how* these visions were thought to be generated. Stated simply the question is whether we should consider the events described in these texts as “visualizations” or “visions.” The contrast between these two terms is straightforward—the former refers to something

119Childers 1872, 169

120Davids and Stede 1921, 286

121Suzuki 1933, 84. This line is actually cited by Ninian Smart as evidence that concepts such as “grace” are appropriate only in what he called *numinous* states, not the *mystical* states of which Buddhist meditation was his chief example (Smart 1958, 98n4).

produced through the conscious, active intention of the subject, while the later is, to use Stephen's terminology, "self-alien," experienced as an encounter with forces and objects beyond one's self and outside of one's immediate control.

Indeed even in ordinary usage we make this distinction between the words—gods grant *visions*, not visualizations. From a slightly different perspective it makes sense to say that one obtained a vision after fasting, praying, chanting, or touching a relic, and a vision is potentially the endpoint of any number of practices. But *visualization* is both a technique of practice and the result of that practice—the only thing that can produce a visualization is the practice of visualization itself (though of course other, preparatory practices might be deemed necessary). To express this idea I will say that visualization as a technique of mental training is understood as "phenomenologically continuous" with its final result. The model lurking here goes back to the 19th-century theories discussed above, where intense imagination was thought to produce a continuous gradation of "eccentric projection" within the eye itself, eventually reaching a state phenomenologically and neurologically equivalent to visual perception.¹²² This same idea is also present in Soper's discussion of "visualization" in the context of the Contemplation Scriptures where, he says, to "cross the frontier from reason to ecstasy brought no absolute change."

In the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, however, the process whereby the meditator comes to "see" the specified things is generally not like this. To help us better analyze these two texts, I will first examine the format A sections of the *Five Gates*, which as we have discussed were precursors to at least part of the *Chan Essentials*. The master-disciple interaction that frames the meditations in the *Five Gates* also proves helpful in uncovering the nuances of the various technical terms by providing a narrative context that, though minimal, reveals not just what the meditator sees but how he was thought to arrive at that seeing.

As discussed in chapter one the format A sections of the *Five Gates* are written as a back-and-forth interaction between a master and a disciple. The master gives instructions, usually that the disciple should "contemplate" (*guan* 觀) or "bring to mind" (*nian* 念) a given topic or thing, and the disciple reports his resulting experiences, usually descriptions of what he has "seen" (*jian* 見) after following the master's instructions. When we consider the meditation instructions in terms of this interaction, one key point emerges—there is no necessary correlation between the instructions given to the practitioner and the results he obtains. This is most evident when what the meditator sees is used as part of divination:

The master should say: "Go to your seat. Concentrate your mind on your forehead, and single-mindedly bring to mind the buddha (念佛)."

When the practitioner does this, buddha-images appear on his forehead, from one up to uncountable numbers. If the buddhas seen by the practitioner emerge from his forehead, go a short distance away from him and then return, the instructing teacher

¹²²That this is the model at work can be seen in the different ways we are likely to interpret the two questions "how skilled are you at" in regards to visions versus visualization. Someone claiming "moderate" skill at having visions would I think, be taken as someone who, through whatever practices, luck, karma, etc., obtains visions on some, but not all of the occasions when he sets out to do so. Someone claiming "moderate" skill at visualization, in contrast, would likely be taken as one, roughly, someone able to achieve a moderate, but not complete level of, to borrow Griesinger's term, "eccentric projection."

Chapter 3: Vision and Visualization

should know that this person is someone who seeks [the path of] the *śrāvaka*. If [the buddhas] go somewhat far [from the body] and then return, he is someone who seeks [the path of] the *pratyekabuddha*. If [the buddhas] go very far away and then return, he is a person of the Great Vehicle.¹²³

The practitioner is thus instructed only to “bring to mind the Buddha” (*nian fo* 念佛). As a result of this practice he sees various things, and the details are used to divine his future path. The context makes it clear that this is not something he simply chooses, but something revealed by the appearance of the vision. The scene described here thus cannot be something that the practitioner is supposed to *visualize*. Note that this is true even if we were to interpret “bring to mind the Buddha” (*nian fo* 念佛) as “visualize the Buddha,” for what reveals the practitioner’s path is not simply the appearance of images of the buddhas, but precisely how they appear and what they then do. I also want to make a preliminary remark about vocabulary—in this passage the instructions from the master use the words *guan* 觀 (“contemplate”) and *nian* 念 (“bring to mind”), while the practitioner’s report uses the word *jian* 見 (“see”). As we will see this contrast is repeated throughout the text.

Similar instructions for divining the practitioner’s proper *yāna* appear elsewhere in the format A sections of the *Five Gates*.¹²⁴ Such methods are also used in other contexts:

The gate of impurity. When a willing practitioner comes to the master, before giving him any teachings the master should instruct him to sit in his meditation cell for seven days. One who has affinity [for the contemplation of impurity] will feel (覺), within his body and his navel a tingling sensation. He will see (見) his own body clearly, and on his left toenail there will appear a white drop of water, like a pearl. Then practitioner should get up from his seat and tell the master what he has felt.¹²⁵

The master should thus teach the contemplation of impurity only to someone who has “affinity” (有緣) for this particular practice,¹²⁶ something demonstrated by the occurrence of the visions in question.¹²⁷ Here the distinction between the instructions given by the master and what the

123師言：汝還本坐。係念額上一心念佛。爾時額上有佛像現，從一至十乃至無量。若行人所見多佛，從額上出者，若去身不遠而還者，教師當知此是求聲聞人。若小遠而還者，求辟支佛人。若遠而還者，是大乘人。(T.618:15.325c17–326a2). I also discussed this passage in chapter one.

124T.619:15.327c17–25

125不淨門，行者善心來詣師所，未受法時，師教先使房中七日端坐。若有緣者，覺身及齊有暈動相，自見己身明了，左足大指爪上有白露如珠。行者從座起，以所覺白師。(T.619:15.326b19–22).

126Presumably this is because the left toe is where the contemplation of impurity normally begins (see below p.176). It is interesting to note that the *Five Gates* here mentions not simply the toe, but the “toenail” 指爪, and in the *Yogalehrbuch* too this is where the contemplation of the body begins (Schlingloff 1964, 86).

127That choosing a meditation method would require some kind of divination is not unexpected, and as we saw in chapter one many if not most contemporaneous meditation manuals say that the initial method of practice should be selected, “divined” as it were, by considering the practitioner’s particular disposition, determined by consulting a list of “signs” (*nimitta*, 相), including how the practitioner walks, how he maintains his personal possessions, and the nature of his habitual thoughts (Ñāṇamoli 1976, 101–109). The connection between a given disposition and the signs indicating it is often obscure, such that their interpretation resembles a kind of

practitioner eventually “feels” (*jue* 覺) and “sees” (*jian* 見) is absolute—indeed the master simply instructs the practitioner to sit in his cell for seven days. The entire point is that what the practitioner eventually experiences are unprompted, spontaneous “visions” that reveal his underlying disposition.

The *Five Gates* thus clearly differentiates the instructions of the master from the practitioner’s reported experiences, through the structure of the interactions but also lexically—thus, for example, the word *guan* 觀, “contemplate,” only ever occurs in the master’s instructions, while *jian* 見, “to see,” only occurs in the practitioner’s reports. Such a contrast is not unexpected, and indeed normal Chinese grammar usually distinguishes verbs denoting attempts at sensory perception from those indicating successful perception (the distinction between “looking,” *kan* 看, and “seeing,” *jian* 見 or *kanjian* 看見, is the example of this known to all first-year students of modern Mandarin).¹²⁸ The word *guan* 觀 is, in this typology, firmly on the side of *looking* not seeing.¹²⁹ The *Five Gates* also uses *shi* 視, normally distinguished from *jian* 見 in a similar manner,¹³⁰ in the same meaning as *guan* 觀.¹³¹

But the main contrast throughout the *Five Gates* is between *guan* 觀 and *jian* 見, which I will translate as “contemplate” and “see” respectively.¹³² The *Five Gates* uses these terms strictly. The practitioner is never instructed to “see” something, and he never reports his experiences using the word “contemplate.”¹³³ The grammatical contrast between these verbs

divination. For example in Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* the list of personality traits indicating suitability for the contemplation of impurity (because of excess in the defilement of lust) mentions that “his body runs warm, his sweat has a foul odor, his skin is delicate, his hair is fine, he has many wrinkles [on his skin], and much white [in his hair].” 身溫汗臭薄膚細髮多皺多白。(T.614:15.271a21). The list of signs here for determining the various dispositions is quite lengthy, occupying two entire Taishō registers (T.15:271.a6–c1).
128On this distinction in classical texts, see Geaney 2002, 41.

129Wang Li 王力 gives four basic meanings to *guan* 觀: 1) To look at carefully, to “look at with a purpose” (有目的看). From this there derives meaning such as “appreciate” 欣賞; 2) as a noun, “a view” (景觀), in other words the object of (1), something one might look at purposefully; 3) “to show” (給人看), that is to say (1) as a causative verb; 4) a view or opinion relative to something, a “perspective” (GHYZD, 1251). The *Shuo wen* 說文 gives Wang Li’s first meaning, “inspect” (諦視). As Wang Li notes *guan* 觀 is similar in meaning to *lan* 覽 (“glance at”) and *wang* 望 (“gaze at something far away”). In the context of Buddhist meditation it is meaning (1) which is most important, though (4) is also relevant.

130Indeed the *Shuo wen* 說文 glosses *guan* 觀 as “look carefully” (諦視). See previous note.

131“When he contemplates the Buddha he must fully exert himself to contemplate the Buddha’s signs and features and discern them clearly. Having carefully [discerned] them he should close his eyes and bring [them] to mind. If he is then not able to discern them clearly he should again open his eyes and look (視) [at the statue], giving full attention and making it clear. Then he should return to his seat, straighten his body, focus his mind, and concentrate his thoughts before him, [so that it is] just as clearly distinct as if he were facing a real [image of the] Buddha.” 若觀佛時，當至心觀佛相好，了了分明。諦了已，然後閉目，憶念在心。若不明者，還開目視，極心明了，然後還坐，正身正意，繫念在前。如對真佛，明了無異。(T.619:15.325c18–21). Here the meditator *contemplates* 觀 a statue or other icon, meaning that he looks at it intently and fixes its attributes in his mind. The verb *shi* 視 is used analogously. Other passages in the *Five Gates* use the word *shi* 視 similarly (T.619:15.326a15; a17; 332b1–2).

132Note that *miru*, “to see,” was used as the Japanese reading of both 觀 and 見 (Yokota 1999, 158), suggesting that the grammatical distinction here was not always clear in Japan. Indeed *miru* easily carries both meanings.

133Though on a few occasions the practitioner mentions that he first “contemplated” something: “[The master]

shows up in other ways as well. Thus in the *Five Gates* and other fifth-century meditation texts one may “carefully contemplate” (諦觀), but it is apparently impossible to “carefully see” (諦見), or at least this expression never appears while the former is ubiquitous. Similar as a noun we find that a “contemplation”(觀) can be “completed”(成), but not so a “vision”(見), which is, seemingly, already a completed action.

Other terms follow a similar pattern, most importantly *nian* 念, “to bring to mind,” which like *guan* 觀 appears exclusively in the master’s instructions and is contrasted with *jian* 見.¹³⁴

[The master] must instruct [the practitioner] to contemplate (觀) his own body clearly. Then he must contemplate (觀) the Buddha. [The practitioner] may say: “As before I see (見) it, and my mind feels joy.” Then [the master] instructs [the practitioner] to apply his mind and contemplate the Buddha [further], bringing to mind (念) the desire to make offerings. [The practitioner] may say: “I see a flowering tree suddenly sprout forth bearing flowers of many colors. There suddenly appears a man who takes these beautiful flowers and gives them to me, and I scatter them above the Buddha as an offering.”¹³⁵

Here the practitioner contemplates the Buddha and then “brings to mind” a certain wish. The realization of this wish is then “seen.” As with the case above when the practitioner was instructed merely to “contemplate the Buddha” but then had a detailed visions of buddhas streaming forth from this head, here too the master merely instructs the practitioner to “bring to mind” this wish, and the details of what is then “seen” are not part of the instructions.

The distinction in the *Five Gates* between *guan* 觀 and *jian* 見 is observed in other fifth-century Chinese meditation texts as well. Thus Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*, in the section on the contemplation of the Buddha, first uses *guan* 觀 to denote the act of looking at a statue.¹³⁶ When the features of the image become clear in his mind the meditator returns to his seat and continues to “contemplate” (*guan* 觀) them.¹³⁷ Practicing in this way for a long time, however, he eventually, and quite suddenly, “sees” (見) the statue exactly as it appeared in real life.¹³⁸ As in the *Five Gates*, “contemplate” (*guan* 觀) thus presupposes an object already accessible to the person, while “to see” (*jian* 見) refers to the sudden appearance of something new, in this case the refined form of the image that, structurally, parallels the “counterpart sign” in Pāli texts.¹³⁹

should instruct [the practitioner] to carefully contemplate [his body]. He may reply: ‘Having contemplated it for a short while I suddenly saw my skin catch fire.’” 教諦觀之。若言觀須臾之間見皮火起。(T.619:15.328a20–21). If anything such passages make the distinction between the words even more clear.

134For similar passages see T.619:15.325c22–23; 326c3; 327a1–3; 327c11–12; 328a8–10. Note that *xiang* 想, “imagine,” does not appear in the *Five Gates*, in contrast to the *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and *Contemplation Scriptures* more generally where it is one of the most important verbs.

135教自觀身，令身明淨。還教觀佛。若言：我如前見已，心生歡喜。教至心觀佛，念欲供養。若言：我見自然有花樹踊出，上生種種雜色花，自然有人取此好花與我，供養散諸佛上。(T.619:15.329b12–16)

136T.614:15.276a10

137T.614:15.276a11–12

138T.614:15.276a21–22

139We should recall here that *xian* 現, “appear,” is often interchangeable with *jian* 見, and the graph 見 itself is often read as *xian*. Note further that the *Meditation Scripture* also contrasts *nian* 念 with *jian* 見 in a similar

Although previous scholars have noted that *guan* 觀 and *jian* 見 are used differently in Chinese Buddhist texts of this period, the usual explanation, especially in the context of meditations on the Buddha, is that they should be distinguished as “visualize” and “see” respectively.¹⁴⁰ This was, it will be recalled, the reading proposed by Soper, who interpreted *guan* 觀 as “to visualize,” a “gradual building-up of visual images” leading smoothly and continuously to “seeing” the Buddha, an event that in his words “brought no absolute change” from the process of visualization itself.

Nevertheless in the *Five Gates*, at least, it is impossible to understand the “process” implied by *guan* 觀 as one of visualization in this sense, because what the practitioner eventually sees is usually *not* what he initially contemplates. The extreme case of this was seen above (p.168)—with no instruction at all the meditator has a vision indicating his affinity for a certain practice. More usually, however, the master does tell the practitioner to “contemplate” something, either a part of his own body or perhaps simply “the Buddha” (觀佛). Based on these simple instructions the practitioner reports elaborate visions. He is then often instructed to contemplate a particular detail from these scenes (now assumed to be accessible), and this leads to further visions:

[The master] should instruct him and make him contemplate the Buddha. With a joyful mind he should carefully contemplate the sole of the [Buddha’s] foot. If [the practitioner] says “I see that from beneath the Buddha’s foot light emerges reaching to the limits of the earth,” [the master should] instruct him to contemplate by following along with this light. If [the practitioner] says “I see limitless suffering beings all brought to relief as they are covered with the light,” this is the sixteenth thing. [Then the master] should instruct him to contemplate his own body and make it even brighter and more pure. [Then the master] should instruct him to contemplate within the navel of the Buddha. If he says “I see light emerge from the Buddha’s navel reaching to the edges of the world. All the buddhas [of the universe] stand atop this light,” this is the seventeenth thing. [The master then] should

manner, just as does the *Five Gates*. Thus, following the above sequence, the practitioner seeks a further vision of the actual body of the Buddha (as opposed to of a statue) by meditating on the thirty-two marks, which he “brings to mind” (*nian* 念). This then leads to suddenly “seeing” (見) the Buddha’s body (T.614:15.277a2–5).

¹⁴⁰It has been noted, first of all, that in *translated* Chinese Buddhist *jian* 見 and *guan* 觀 were often used to translate the same expression, typically verbal forms of $\sqrt{\text{paś}}$, “to see” (Öminami 1975, 235–236). Thus, in one example, Kumārajīva translates *tathāgato draṣṭavyaḥ* (“the Tathāgata is to be seen as . . .”) as both 見如來 and 觀如來, with no apparent difference in meaning. Yet, Öminami goes on to argue, the Contemplation Scriptures do distinguish these expressions, with *guan fo* 觀佛 as a meditative technique and *jian fo* 見佛 as the actual seeing of the Buddha. According to Öminami what differentiates the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* from the other Contemplation Scriptures is that it allows for *jian fo* 見佛 without first practicing *guan fo* 觀佛. Thus while the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* shows the pattern 觀佛 → 念佛三昧 → 見佛, the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* replaces the “self-power” practice of *guan fo* 觀佛 with the “other power” practice of chanting the Buddha’s name (*cheng ming* 稱名), yielding the sequence 稱名 → 念佛三昧 → 見佛 (Öminami 1975, 237). Similar points are discussed by Myōjin Hiroshi (1993a, 1993b). For an even more thorough examination of the terms *guan fo* 觀佛 and *jian fo* 見佛 in Chinese Buddhist texts, see Yamabe 1999, 158–184. On the use of *guan* 觀 in the Contemplation Scriptures, see also Yokota 1999.

instruct him to contemplate along the light. If he says “I see innumerable people appear within the light, all experiencing joy,” this is the eighteenth thing.¹⁴¹

The master here thus instructs the practitioner to “contemplate” various parts of the Buddha’s body, but what the practitioner comes to see as a result is not prefigured by the master’s instructions. The master does not tell the practitioner to visualize that, for example, “from beneath the Buddha’s foot light emerges.” This is rather a *vision* that, following the logic of the text, emerges of its own accord and is not anticipated.

Even when the master instructs the practitioner to bring to mind a novel scene, what the practitioner eventually sees, and hence what determines success, goes beyond the initial instructions. To take an interesting example:

[The master] should then say: “Try to recall (憶念) having sex with your former lover.” When the practitioner has contemplated (觀) [this], [he] says: “I have imagined this person and have [succeeded in] seeing (見) her, but she transforms into impure pus and blood, terrible to behold.”¹⁴²

Here what the practitioner sees is actually the opposite of what the master directed. Told to imagine a lustful encounter he sees only impurity. The point is thus not that the practitioner is able to consciously “visualize” the hoped for scene, but that this is what arises for him even when he tries to bring to mind something else. Although precisely what accomplishment this attests to is not made clear, the logic follows what I have discussed under the rubric of “verificatory visions”—this is not what the practitioner intentionally brings to mind, but a new object that reveals something otherwise hidden about the mind of the person to whom it appears, and thereby verifies the meditative accomplishment in question.

In short the basic procedure for meditation practice envisioned by the *Five Gates* is clear—the disciple concentrates his mind intently on a single thing (觀) until he obtains a vision (見) that is vastly under-determined relative to the initial instructions. While “contemplation” (觀) is thus indeed a process that leads to “vision” (見), we cannot call this process “visualization,” as there is a pointed absence of what I have called “phenomenological continuity” between the technique and the result.

Before proceeding to apply what we have learned from the *Five Gates* to the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing*, I will close this section by noting that the basic contrast I have drawn between “contemplating” and “seeing” is also evident in the Central Asian

141教[發]{令}觀佛，喜心諦觀足下。若言：我見佛足下光出，至於大地，無有邊際。教乘此光觀。若言：我見苦痛眾生，無量無邊，光所照處，悉皆安樂，是十六事。教觀自身，令復轉明淨。教觀一佛齊中。若言：我見佛齊中光出，遍至四方，極遠之處，一切諸佛，悉上光住，是十七事。教尋光觀。若言：我見無量人於光中現，悉受決樂，是十八事。(T.619:15.329b28–c7). I here read 發 as 令, which is the pattern elsewhere in the text. I assume that this is an error based on the form 发, common in medieval manuscripts.

142當語：汝本時所愛人試憶念與作世事。彼觀已，言：我憶念人，見之，但變作膿血不淨，甚可惡見。(T.619:15.328a6–10). Given the context—the transformation of the vision of the former lover into impurity—I think it is reasonable to interpret “doing worldly things” 作世事 as a sexual encounter.

manuscript known as the *Yogalehrbuch*. As discussed briefly in chapter one Yamabe Nobuyoshi has shown that the *Yogalehrbuch*, itself never translated into Chinese, shares with texts such as the *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and *Five Gates* an emphasis on unusual visions. But it also seems to share an understanding of how these visions appear during the course of meditation.

Schlingloff originally interpreted the *Yogalehrbuch* as a manual for a kind of “meditation” (*yoga*) based on “calling forth visionary images” (*visionäre Bilder hervorrufen*), and indeed the *Yogalehrbuch* contains descriptions of many such “visionary images.” However Schlingloff also noted that the *Yogalehrbuch* itself does not describe how these images are produced, and he concluded that the manual was intended for meditators already skilled in such techniques.¹⁴³ However as Sven Bretfeld has more recently observed the *Yogalehrbuch* does not actually say that the images in question will be consciously or actively produced by the meditator.¹⁴⁴ As best as can be judged from the more complete sections of this very fragmentary text, as in the *Five Gates* the meditator of the *Yogalehrbuch* focuses his mind on particular parts of his body until various images (*nimitta*) “arise” (*utpadyate*) of their own accord. Bretfeld thus concludes that “visualization” (*visualisieren*) is not the best way of describing what goes on here.¹⁴⁵

Bretfeld’s observations suggest that while the distinction in the *Five Gates* between *guan* 觀 and *jian* 見 may, on the one hand, simply reflect the normal Chinese usage of these words, the contrast between the consciously undertaken focusing of the mind (on the body, or on image of the Buddha) and the subsequent appearance of elaborate visions may have been a fairly widespread understanding. And although a more detailed comparison between these texts is a desideratum, I would further suggest that the basic model here is, in essence, similar to the procedure seen in Pāli commentaries such as the *Visuddhimagga*, where the arising of the “counterpart sign” (also a kind of *nimitta*) plays a prominent role in verifying the initial attainment of *dhyāna* or *dhyāna*-like states.

Visions in the *Chan Essentials*

Compared with the *Five Gates*, the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are more difficult to analyze. Not only do these texts employ a greater range of technical terminology, making the identification of differences in meaning or nuance more difficult, they also lack the frame of the master-disciple dialog of the *Five Gates*, which as we have seen provides just enough of a context to help us identify key differences in the meaning of certain terms. Yet as shown in chapter two the *Chan Essentials* (and given its historical connections, possibly the *Methods for Curing* as well) was composed on the basis of a master-disciple dialog similar or even identical to the *Five Gates*. Our analysis of key terms such as *guan* 觀 and *jian* 見 in that text should thus prove useful when considering what we may now interpret as a more evolved

143Schlingloff 1964, 30

144Bretfeld 2003

145Bretfeld 2003, 174

version of the same underlying system.

As discussed in chapter two, the *Chan Essentials* shows two levels of organization. Thus while the text is divided into four separate sutras, each nominally presenting a method of meditation suitable for individuals with specific temperaments, we also find a numbered sequence that extends across the sutras and creates a single, ordered path. Despite the multiplicity of systems one basic technique is fundamental to all of the practices—the “white bone contemplation” (*bai gu guan* 白骨觀), a term that in fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts denotes a particular form of the contemplation of impurity.

Early Buddhist texts present the practices eventually grouped under the rubric of the “contemplation of impurity” (*aśubha-bhāvanā*; 不淨觀) as part of the meditation sequence known as “mindfulness of the body” (*kāyagatānasmṛti*). The *locus classicus* for these practices, the various versions of the *smṛtyupasthāna* sutras, includes various ways of analyzing the human body that a meditator applies to both his own body and the bodies of others. Based on the classification used in the traditions that would become influential in China, two of these contemplations together form the so-called contemplation of impurity—the contemplation of the living human body as comprised of thirty-two or thirty-six “impurities” (*aśuci*), and a meditation on the decay of a corpse.¹⁴⁶ These two ways of meditating on bodily impurity were often called the “internal” and “external” methods,¹⁴⁷ distinguished based on the initial object. Thus in the “external” meditation one begins by contemplating an “external” dead body (or a painting or other surrogate),¹⁴⁸ eventually applying the “image” (*nimitta*) of this corpse to oneself. This takes place through the faculty of *adhimokṣa*, a difficult to translate concept that as discussed above is probably best understood as “imagination,” and is used in contrast to the mental perception of things that while not present to the bodily senses do in fact exist.¹⁴⁹ In the Sarvāstivādin and Vaibhāṣika presentations of *aśubha* practice *adhimokṣa* becomes the key concept,¹⁵⁰ as the goal becomes not merely the mental perception of the corpse that one initially viewed (not an act of *adhimokṣa* because this object actually exists) but of some other object seen “as” this corpse, such as one’s own body or the bodies of others.

Emphasis on *adhimokṣa* eventually obviated any need for a real corpse at all, producing something that the later Vaibhāṣika author Saṅghabhadra called the “internal contemplation of

146I here follow the standard systematization in Sarvāstivādin and Vaibhāṣika sources. The Theravādin understanding as found in the *Visuddhimagga* is slightly different, and treats the contemplation of the impurities within the body under the rubric of “bodily mindfulness” (*kāyagatasati*), while the corpse contemplation is placed elsewhere under the rubric of “the foul” (*aśubha*; see Ñāṇamoli 1976, 173–190 and 235–259). For a detailed study of the *aśubha* meditations in Sarvāstivāda/Vaibhāṣika sources, see Dhammajoti 2009. I have also elsewhere discussed many of these same sources (Greene 2006, 66–92). For a study of the *aśubha* meditations as depicted in Indian Buddhist narrative literature, see Wilson 1996.

147This distinction is standard in the Chinese meditation manuals translated from Indian sources in the fifth century. It can also be seen in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, which classifies the objects of the impurity contemplation into “internal” (*adhyātma*) and “external” (*bahirdha*), aligning these with the body-part and corpse contemplations respectively (ŚrBh, 2:59–61).

148On paintings and surrogate corpses used in the *aśubha-bhāvanā*, see Greene 2013.

149In its most general meaning *adhimokṣa* is usually understood to mean something like “conviction.” Ruegg 1992, 46, for example translates it as “convinced adhesion.”

150One version of the *Vibhāṣā* thus defines the *aśubha-bhāvanā* as *adhimukti-manaskāra* conjoined with non-greed (*A pi tan mo da pi po sha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, T.1545:27.208a8–9).

the corpse” (觀內屍).¹⁵¹ It is this practice that in fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts is explained as the “white bone contemplation.” This “white bone contemplation” (I here use the Chinese name since the Indic equivalent, if any, is unknown) was eventually understood as the typical form of the *aśubha-bhāvanā*.¹⁵² It is thus the only one mentioned in the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*, a source that provides the only extant Indic-language description of what is involved:

The meditator who wishes to develop [the meditation on] foulness first fixes his mind on some part of his own body, such as his big toe or his forehead, or wherever else is pleasing to him. Then, purifying the bones by progressively imagining (*adhimokṣa*) the rotting away of the flesh, he sees only¹⁵³ the skeleton. In order to extend his imagination, he next imagines a second skeleton in exactly the same way until by progressively taking in the monastery, park, and countryside, he imagines the earth encircled by the ocean as full of skeletons. Then, in order to gather in his mind, he gathers in [his vision] until he imagines just his own skeleton.¹⁵⁴

In other words rather than first observe a corpse in the world the meditator simply applies his power of *adhimokṣa*, here translated as “imagination,” directly to his own body, imagining the flesh rotting away until the skeleton is revealed. From this single skeleton he expands until he sees the entire world filled with skeletons.

As I have discussed elsewhere there are a number of reasons why this form of the *aśubha-bhāvanā* may eventually have been favored.¹⁵⁵ In any event beginning with one’s “imagination” without the aid of a real corpse seems to have been understood as the more difficult practice, and hence indicative of greater power. Saṅghabhadra, for example, says that only those with sharp faculties can begin this way.¹⁵⁶ A similar understanding is actually found in a different context in Pāli sources, where it is said that those who have attained *dhyāna* on the basis of the earth *kaṣiṇa* in past lives can, in the present, attain it by looking at any instance of earth (such as a field of dirt), and do not need to rely on the fabricated square or circle of earth recommended for most people.¹⁵⁷

151 *Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra-śāstra*, T.1562:29.671a20–21.

152 Precisely when or how this happened is not clear. In all known versions of the *Vibhāṣā*, for example, the standard procedure is finding an actual corpse, and this is also what we find in the *Śrāvaka-bhūmi* (for details, see Greene 2006).

153 Here I take *sakala* not as “entire” but “entirely,” meaning that he does not see any of the flesh. However the meaning “entire” may also be relevant, in as much as the meditator does eventually see the entire skeleton, not just the bones at the spot where he began.

154 *aśubhām bhāvayitukāma ādīto yogācārah / svāṅgāvayave cittaṃ nibadhnāti pādāṅguṣṭhe lalāṭe yatra [c] {v} āśyābhiratiḥ / sa tatra māṃsa-kleda-p[ī]{ā} tādhimokṣa-krameṇāsthiviśodhayan sakalām asthi-saṃkalām paśyati / tathaiva ca punar dviṭyām adhimucyate yāvad vihārārāma-kṣetra-krameṇa samudra-paryantām pṛthivīm asthisamkalām pūrṇām adhimucyate ’dhimokṣābhivardhanārtham / punaś ca saṃkṣipan yāvad ekām eva svām asthisamkalām adhimucyate citta-saṃkṣepārtham* (AKBh, 338.5–10). Translation is by Gethin 2006, 98, with modifications. I have followed the emendations in the Sanskrit suggested by Jonathan Silk, on the basis of the Tibetan and Chinese (Silk 2000, 289), most important of which is replacing *pīta* with *pāta*.

155 It explains, for example, how there could exist masters of this practice even in the absence of readily accessible corpses. For more details, see Greene 2013.

156 T.1562:29.671a20–21. In contrast those with “dull faculties” (鈍根) must use an actual corpse.

157 Ñānamoli 1976, 122

The practices in the *Chan Essentials* all seem to begin on the basis of the white bone contemplation, and historically this text was the most comprehensive description of these practices in the Chinese Buddhist canon.¹⁵⁸ Indeed the *Chan Essentials* frankly presents itself as primarily an exposition of this practice. The first “stage” given in the first sutra is thus said to be the first level of the “white bone contemplation” (1.31), and at the conclusion of the fourth sutra one of the names assigned to the entire text is the “method of the white bone contemplation” (白骨觀門; 4.67). Indeed though the text eventually presents a great many different practices, in most cases we find a brief reference at the beginning of each section saying that first the meditator must contemplate his skeleton “as before,” suggesting that all the practices start this way.¹⁵⁹ The full presentation of the white bone contemplation thus occurs only in the first sutra, and it begins as follows:

The Buddha said to Kauṣṭhīlananda: “Hear my words and do not forget them. From today forward you must cultivate the practice of meditation as follows . . . First, fix your thoughts on the tip of your left big toe. Carefully contemplate one half of the toe bone, and imagine a swelling. Carefully contemplate [the half bone] until this is very clear. Then, imagine a burst-open swelling. When you see the half bone [beneath the now burst-open swelling], make it extremely white and pure, as if glowing with white light. Having seen these things [associated with the half bone], next contemplate the entire toe bone, making the flesh strip away until you see the toe bone, making it extremely bright and clear, as if glowing with white light.”¹⁶⁰

The meditator then continues to “contemplate” (觀) by “imagining” (想) the flesh stripping away from each successive segment of bone until he “sees” (見) the white bones beneath. The meditator proceeds up the leg, to the ribs and chest, and finally to the arms (1.10–11). At this point, however, the exercise moves in a different direction and the meditator enters the interior of the body through the head, contemplating the internal organs and, especially, the worms that live within:

Having seen half your body as a skeleton, next contemplate the skin on the head. Having seen the skin on the head, next contemplate the inner layer of skin. Having contemplated the inner layer of skin, next contemplate the [brain] membranes. Having contemplated the [brain] membranes, next contemplate the brain. Having contemplated

158The earliest surviving Chinese text that discusses the white bone contemplation is Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* where it occurs as a kind of addendum following a more “traditional” explanation of the contemplation of the impure body parts and the different kinds of corpses (T.614:15.272a). A similar account occurs in the chapter on *dhyāna* in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* where, however, it is not a method for contemplating *aśubha* per se but rather for a “pure” contemplation (technically the third of the eight *vimokṣa*) that counteracts the excessive revulsion generated during normal *aśubha* practice (T.1509:25.215b18–22). Neither the bodhisattva section of the *Meditation Scripture* nor the *Explanations of Meditation* discusses the white bone contemplation.

159See for example section 3.5.

160 佛告迦絺羅難陀：汝受我語，慎莫忘失。汝從今日，修沙門法。沙門法者 . . . 先當繫念著左脚大指上，諦觀指半節，作泡起想，諦觀極使明了。然後作泡潰想。見指半節，極令白淨，如有白光。見此事已，次觀一節。令肉劈去，見指一節，極令明了，如有白光。(1.9)

the brain, next contemplate the channels [attached to the brain]. Having contemplated the channels, next contemplate the throat. Having contemplated the throat, next contemplate the lung-point.¹⁶¹

Having contemplated the lung-point, you will see the heart, lungs, liver, large intestine, small intestine, spleen, kidneys, the receptacle of undigested food, and the receptacle of digested food. Within the receptacle of undigested food there are forty kinds of worms, and for each kind there are eighty million smaller worms. Each worm is born, nurtured, and raised within the channels [of the body]. About three million of them clasp the receptacle of undigested food with their mouths. Each worm has forty nine heads, and their heads and tails are as thin as the tip of a needle. . . . Each of these worms has seven eyes, which shoot fire, and they also have seven ears. Exhaling fire and wiggling their bodies, they heat the receptacle of undigested food. When the receptacle of undigested food is hot, the worms leave and go back into the channels.¹⁶²

The meditator then imagines himself vomiting up his internal organs leaving only the skeleton. In the second numbered contemplation the meditator repeats this process, beginning from the forehead rather than the toe (1.22). What follows continues to roughly parallel the procedure in Vaibhāṣika sources. Having seen his own body as a skeleton the meditator next “imagines” (想) one in front of him, and he creates an increasing number of such skeletons until they eventually fill the world (1.24–26). He next imagines his body not as a complete skeleton, but as a broken, crumbling skeleton, and then further imagines such skeletons filling the universe (1.33). He then imagines his body as a “dark and oozing [corpse] like fatty meat when it has been scorched by the rays of the sun” (1.41), and again sees corpses like this filling the universe.¹⁶³

This version of the white bone contemplation, similar to that found in Vaibhāṣika sources (though far more detailed than any extant Indian source), is thus fundamental to the *Chan Essentials*. And this practice certainly does seem to involve the progressive, controlled, and consciously undertaken “imagination” (*xiang* 想; seemingly used as is *adhimokṣa*),¹⁶⁴ of

161The term *fei yu* 肺膈, found also in early Chinese medical sources, can be translated as the “vital point [associated with] the lungs.” It is not clear whether it is here used as a translation of an unknown Indic term or should be taken as evidence that the author was drawing from Chinese anatomical theories. For more details, see the notes to the translation of this passage in appendix three.

162見半身白骨已，次觀頭皮。見頭皮已，次觀薄皮，觀薄皮已，次觀膜。觀膜已，次觀腦。觀腦已，次觀[肪]{脈}。觀[肪]{脈}已，次觀咽喉。觀咽喉已，次觀肺膈。觀肺膈已，見心、肺、肝、大腸、小腸、脾、腎、生藏、熟藏。四十戶蟲，在生藏中，戶領八十億小蟲。一一蟲從諸脈生乎乳產生，凡有三億，口含生藏。一一蟲有四十九頭，其頭尾細猶如針鋒。此諸蟲等，二十戶是火蟲，從火精生。二十戶是風蟲，從風氣起。是諸蟲等，出入諸脈，遊戲自在。火蟲動風，風蟲動火，更相呼吸，以熟生藏，上下往復，凡有七反。此諸蟲等，各有七眼，眼皆出火，復有七[身]{耳}。吸火動身，以熟生藏。生藏熟已，各復還走，入諸脈中。(1.11–12)

163We seem to have here some attempt to present a series of different kinds of corpses. However the descriptions here do not match the traditional lists of nine or ten kinds of corpses.

164I do not mean to imply that *xiang* 想 is a translation of *adhimokṣa* (or *adhimokṣa-manaskāra*), since as discussed in chapter two the *Chan Essentials* is likely not the direct translation of an Indic text. But the word is used analogously to *adhimokṣa* as it appears in sources such as the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*. Indeed it seems likely that the prevalence of *xiang* 想 in this and other similar texts has something to do with the importance of

different kinds of corpses. Nevertheless what eventually emerges as the central concern of the text is not this process per se, but rather the *visions* that it will apparently produce, and it is on the basis of these visions that success is judged and progress confirmed.

To see how this process works let us walk step-by-step through the sequence that occurs at the end of the first numbered section of the *Chan Essentials*, what is eventually declared to be the first stage in the contemplation of impurity. Having first imagined the flesh rotting away from the exterior of his body, the meditator then evacuates the interior of his body:

- (1) Further, contemplate (觀) your small intestine, liver, lungs, spleen, and kidneys. Make (令) them all liquify and flow into the large intestine and then out your throat and onto the ground. When this meditation (想) is complete . . .¹⁶⁵

The meditator thus first contemplates (觀) his internal organs and “makes” (令) them flow out onto the ground. In short he imagines vomiting up his internal organs. The words used here—*guan* 觀 followed by *ling* 令—occur in a similar pattern and with similar meaning throughout the text.¹⁶⁶ Thus in slight contrast with the *Five Gates*, where the object of *guan* 觀 is almost always simply that object upon which the practitioner focuses his mind, in the *Chan Essentials* *guan* 觀 is used as part of a more elaborate process of active imagination, though the direct object of *guan* 觀 is still the object or scene as it already exists (in this case, the internal organs), while the imaginative transformation of that object follows the word *ling* 令.¹⁶⁷ This entire process of focusing the mind on an object and then imagining it to transform in some way is then called an “act of imagination” (想), translated here loosely as “a meditation.”¹⁶⁸

While as compared with the *Five Gates* there are some differences in the usage of key

this term in fourth- and fifth-century Chinese discourse on the mind and imagination (Tian 2005). It is indeed interesting to note that in contrast to its pervasive use in texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and the Contemplation Scriptures the word *xiang* 想 is hardly used at all in the early fifth-century translations of Indian meditation texts (such as Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* or Buddhahadra’s *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*). Indeed the *Five Gates*, which as discussed in chapter two may have served as the basis for parts of the *Chan Essentials*, does not use this word at all.

165又觀小腸、肝、肺、脾、腎，皆令流注入大腸中，從咽喉出，墮於前地。此想成已 . . . (1.14)

166This occurs beginning from the initial practice, in which one must “contemplate the entire toe bone, making the flesh strip away.” (觀一節令肉劈去; 1.9). We occasionally find *shi* 使 or *zuo* 作 in place of *ling* 令. While *shi* 使 is used as is *ling* 令, *zuo* 作 in contrast seems to indicate the final state of the object, such as “contemplate [your] body and turn it into a skeleton.” (自觀身作一白骨人; 1.32).

167Although this terminology is not used explicitly in the *Chan Essentials* it is worth here recalling the distinction discussed above between *adhimukti-manaskāra* and *tattva-manaskāra* (see p.163), which is based not on the availability of the object to the senses but on its actual existence. The *Chan Essentials* regularly uses *guan* 觀 when referring to the contemplation of parts of the meditator’s own body (including his internal organs, or his skeleton), but when on the basis of this he then further comes to see multiple skeletons or corpses, the verb switches to *xiang* 想. In other words *guan* 觀 refers to contemplating or viewing something that really does exist, while *xiang* 想 denotes the imaginative production of something new.

168When used as a noun in this particular context I have translated *xiang* 想 as “meditation” rather than the clumsy “act of imagination.” The noun “imagination” by itself does not seem appropriate as this word usually implies the faculty of imagination as opposed to a specific act of imagination.

terms like *guan* 觀, what is not different is that as a result of “contemplating” or “imagining” the practitioner eventually “sees” (見) something, and as in the *Five Gates* what is seen is not limited to what was initially imagined. Following immediately after passage (1) above:

(2) When this meditation (想) is complete, you will see (即見) on the ground [a heap of] shit and piss, and various tapeworms crawling all over each other. Pus and blood flow from their impurity-filled mouths . . . [and] you will suddenly see yourself as snow-white [skeleton], all the joints connected.

(3) If [on the other hand] you see a yellow or black [skeleton], you must repent your transgressions further. Having repented your transgressions you will see the skin [which still remained] on your bones fall off, forming a pile on the ground, which will grow gradually larger [until as big as a] monks bowl . . . it again gradually expands until [as big as] a large mountain. Various worms chew at this heap, pus and blood flowing [from their mouths]. Innumerable worms squirm about within the pus. You will further see this mountain of skin gradually decay until only a small amount remains and the worms vie with each other to eat it.

(4) Four *yakṣa*-demons¹⁶⁹ suddenly (忽然) spring out of the ground, their eyes flaming, their tongues like poisonous snakes. [Each] has six heads, and each head is different—one like a mountain, [the rest] like the heads of a cat, a tiger, a wolf, a dog, and a rat. Further [each of the demon’s] two hands are like those of an ape. The tips of each of their ten fingers are poisonous snakes with four heads, one which sprays water, one which sprays dirt, one which sprays rocks and one which sprays fire. The left legs [of the four *yakṣa*-demons] resemble those of *kumbhāṇḍa*-demons, and their right legs those of *piśācā*-demons. The horrid appearance [of these demons] is truly frightful. These four *yakṣas* then stand in a line before the practitioner, each bearing on its back the nine kinds of corpses.

(5) The Buddha said to Kauṣṭhīlananda: This is the first verificatory vision (境界) of the meditation on impurity.¹⁷⁰

Because this sequence in many ways captures the essential features of the remainder of the *Chan Essentials* I want to take the time to explain it carefully. First, having previously imagined

169Although in Indian mythology *yakṣas* are not always evil or demonic, in the present text they are indistinguishable from various other evil spirits. I have added the word “demon” after each of these terms so as to convey the meaning easily while still retaining the flavor of the transcriptions of these specific names as they appear in the Chinese.

170此想成已，即見前地，屎尿臭處，及諸虻蟲更相纏縛。諸蟲口中，流出膿血，不淨盈滿。此想成已，自見己身，如白雪人，節節相拄。若見黃黑，當更悔過。既悔過已，自見己身骨上生皮。皮悉褫落，聚在前地，漸漸長大，如鉢多羅 . . . 又漸增長，猶如大山。而有諸蟲，啖食此山；流出膿血。有無數蟲，遊走膿裏。復見皮山，漸漸爛壞，唯有少在，諸蟲競食。有四夜叉，忽從地出，眼中出火，舌如毒蛇，而有六頭，頭各異相。一者如山，二者如貓，三者如虎，四者如狼，五者如狗，六者如鼠。又其兩手，猶如猿猴。其十指端，一一皆有四頭毒蛇。一者雨水，二者雨土，三者雨石，四者雨火。又其左脚似鳩槃荼鬼。右脚似於毘舍闍鬼，現醜惡形，甚可怖畏。時四夜叉，一一荷負九種死屍，隨次行列，住行者前。佛告迦絺羅難陀：是名不淨想最初境界。佛告阿難：汝持是語，慎莫忘失，為未來眾生敷演廣說此甘露法三乘聖種。(1.14–17)

vomiting up his internal organs, the meditator sees the result of this process, which is rather more complex than what was initially imagined. We might, of course, be inclined to simply read the words “you will see” (即見) here as “you should see,” and thus as the continuation of the instructions given in section (1). Nevertheless given, as we have seen, the sharp contrast in usage and meaning between *guan* 觀 and *jian* 見 in the *Five Gates* this seems somewhat unlikely. At the very least this cannot be the literal meaning of the text. Instead, it thus seems, section (1) describes what the meditator should try to do, namely imagine vomiting up his internal organs, while section (2) describes what he will see when he has properly done this.

From only this initial passage the distinction I am trying to draw here may seem trivial. Indeed we might also simply understand that the reader is supposed to infer from the sequence of events that the initial instruction to contemplate vomiting up his internal organs includes the instruction to imagine or visualize the further details that, in the text, are described only in the next sentence. But the contrast between “contemplating” and “seeing” becomes more important in the ensuing passages. Thus at the end of (2) we are told that not only will the meditator see the results of his imaginative self-evisceration, he will also see his body as a snow-white skeleton. Yet, as indicated in (3), it might turn out that he sees not a white skeleton but a yellow or black skeleton, here seeming to indicate a skeleton not yet fully “purified” of the skin and flesh. In this case the meditator must perform rituals of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔).

The incorporation of repentance rituals into a text nominally focused on *chan* practice is of considerable interest and importance, and I will explore this more fully in the next chapter. But for the moment I am interested mainly in what this tells us about the nature of the “seeing” described here. The crucial point, I would suggest, is that progress is not determined by how well the practitioner “visualizes,” at least not as meant by Galton when he asked his subjects about the “focus” and “illumination” of their photograph-like mental images (see above p.151). What counts, rather, is *what* the practitioner sees at the conclusion. In other words whatever exactly the initial process of “contemplation” or “imagination” consists of, the key question comes at the end—did the meditator see a white skeleton, or a yellow skeleton?

This point is made even more explicit in section (4). Here, having completed the previous sequence in whatever manner (that is either with or without the need for repentance), a new vision, one described in great detail, “suddenly” (忽然) arises. There can be no question here that this is a *vision*, not something that the practitioner was instructed to consciously bring to mind. The meaning of this vision is then revealed in section (5)—this is the *jing jie* 境界, the “verificatory vision” that attests to the attainment of the first stage of the contemplation of impurity. What ultimately counts as success—how it can be known that you have completed the first stage of the contemplation of impurity—is obtaining this vision, and in terms of its content there is here an almost total absence of what I have called “phenomenological continuity” between the vision itself and the techniques or practices that produce it.

The basic format seen above is repeated throughout the *Chan Essentials*. In the tenth contemplation, the meditator follows the standard procedure for the white bone contemplation, first imagining his own body as a “white skeleton whose bones are each detached such that only their tips are touching” (白骨人節節各解唯角相拄), and then imagining the entire world filled with such skeletons. But then:

When he has obtained this contemplation he will spontaneously (自然) see (見), out beyond all the skeletons, something that appears like a great ocean, calm and pure. His mind being clear and sharp, in all directions he sees various kinds of multicolored lights. Having seen these things his mind becomes spontaneously peaceful and happy. His body and mind become pure, free of distress, and full of happy thoughts.¹⁷¹

This, the Buddha then declares, is the successful attainment of the tenth contemplation. Once again success is verified not merely through the accurate or precise picturing of whatever it is that the practitioner is supposed to imagine, contemplate, or otherwise focus his mind upon. Rather success will be known by the spontaneous vision of something else entirely. Here, moreover, the meditator also experiences bodily and mental pleasure. We should compare this passage to that examined in chapter one from Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture*, where it is asked how one will know when *dhyāna* is obtained:

If the mind remains fixed for a long time [on the bones] then it will begin to accord with the factors of *dhyāna*. When one obtains *dhyāna*, there are three signs. [First,] the body will feel happy, relaxed, and at ease. [Second,] from the white bones [that the meditator has been contemplating] light will stream forth, as if they were made of white *ke*-jade. [Third,] the mind becomes calm and still.¹⁷²

As discussed in chapter one, the *Meditation Scripture* here presents three loci where “signs” (相) appear indicating the attainment of *dhyāna*: 1) the meditator's body, 2) the meditator's mind, and 3) the object of the meditator's mind. These three were apparently a standard categorization, and in the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* they are formalized as a list.¹⁷³

The passage above from the *Chan Essentials* refers to these same three areas, at least implicitly. The “great ocean” and the “multicolored lights” should thus be understood as the objects whose appearance indicates that the given level of attainment has been reached. They are, in other words, “verificatory visions”—not what the meditator is supposed to bring to mind, imagine, or visualize, but visions that will arise naturally and serve, in conjunction with feelings of bodily and mental ease, to verify his attainment.

Given the prominence of the white bone contemplation in the *Chan Essentials* it is interesting to note that some Vaibhāṣika sources also allude to verificatory visions in the context of this practice. Although there is no mention of this, as far as I can determine, in any of the *Vibhāṣā* or the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* (which as we saw above presupposes a version of the white bone contemplation similar to that in the *Chan Essentials*), in his *Abhidharma-*

171得此觀時，當自然見諸骨人外，猶如大海，恬靜澄清。其心明利，見種種雜色光，圍繞四邊。見此事已，心意自然安隱快樂，身心清淨無憂喜想。(1.71)

172若心久住，是應禪法。若得禪定，即有三相：身體和悅，柔軟輕便；白骨流光，猶如白珂；心得靜住。(T.614:15.272a20–23).

173T.618:15.322a22–b2, given as the “body” (依; **āśraya*), “object” (緣; **ālambana*), and “mind” (念; **citta*). As I suggested in chapter one, those “signs” that involve the appearance of new objects of mind are analogous to the so-called counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) discussed in the Pāli commentaries.

nyāyānusāra-śāstra Saṅghabhadra makes the following comments about *aśubha* practice in the midst of a discussion of this topic in all other ways similar to the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*:

Thus know that reaching this [final stage], the contemplation of impurity is complete, for what was supposed to be done has now been entirely accomplished. [However] the forest-dwellers say that when [performing] this contemplation at this moment [when the practice is complete] there will appear (有) a sign of completion (究竟相), namely a “pure sign” that will suddenly (歎爾) appear before the practitioner.¹⁷⁴

Although no further details are given this would appear to refer to something similar to the pure white light that in Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* serves as the verificatory vision associated with the white bone contemplation.

Returning to the *Chan Essentials*, a different kind of verificatory vision appears in the eleventh contemplation (1.73–1.77). Here the meditator begins, as before, by imagining his skeleton, this time as one in which the individual bones have separated “three finger widths” (三指許) apart. He then imagines sunlight in the spaces between the bones. But then:

When he has attained this contemplation he suddenly sees a sixteen-foot buddha¹⁷⁵ within the light of the sun [between his bones]. Its halo measures six feet horizontally and six feet vertically. Its body is golden, radiating white light all over, brilliant and majestic. Its thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks are each distinctly apparent. Each major and minor mark is clearly visible, exactly as if the Buddha were still present in the world.¹⁷⁶

Once again we find the expression “when he attains this contemplation” (得此觀時), and once again this is followed by the practitioner “suddenly seeing” (自然見) something entirely different than the initial subject of his meditation. The conclusion to this section also says that

174應知，至此不淨觀成，諸所應為皆究竟故。住空閑者作如是言：此觀爾時有究竟相，謂有淨相，歎爾現前。(T.1562:29.672a3–6).

175Throughout medieval Chinese Buddhist texts one encounters reference to images (chiefly statues) of the Buddha said to be “sixteen-foot” (丈六). Although referring in part to the size of the image, the main point of this seems to be that the Buddha is depicted in his celestial, rather than human form. Thus the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* says that Sengquan 僧詮 (fl. early fifth century) “while in the country of Huanglong had crafted a sixteen-foot golden image, and then after traveling to Wu further had crafted a golden image [of the buddha in] his human form” (詮先於黃龍國造丈六金像，入吳又造人中金像; T.2059:50.369c14–15). Though the distinction between the celestial Buddha (what in later Buddhism would be called the *Sambhogakāya*) and the Buddha-as-man also corresponds to a distinction in size, equally important is that an image of the “sixteen-foot buddha” is one on which the special marks of the Buddha are visible (as opposed to the Buddha when he appears as an ordinary human being). During the fifth century the Buddha’s “sixteen-foot body” as his celestial, god-like form was also distinguished from the unchanging “dharma-body” (法身), and in fifth-century doctrinal treatises from both north and south China this is how the term “sixteen-foot body” is primarily used (Funayama 1995, 98). All of this is merely to say that when the *Chan Essentials* speaks of seeing a “sixteen-foot buddha,” the point is to emphasize iconography, not size.

176得此觀時，當自然於日光中，見一丈六佛，圓光一尋左右，上下亦各一尋，軀體金色，舉身光明，炎赤端嚴。三十二相，八十種好，皆悉炳然。一一相好，分明得見，如佛在世，等無有異。(1.74)

when the practitioner has “attained this contemplation” (得此觀) it is to be “known as the completion of the contemplation of the radiant light of the white bones, [contemplation] number eleven.”¹⁷⁷ In other words what confirms the success of “contemplating” the radiant light of the white bones is *not* seeing the radiant light of the white bones, but having a sudden vision of a buddha.

On the one hand since the vision of the buddha within the lights apparently appears spontaneously, it would be difficult to say that the practitioner here had “visualized” it. But on the other hand even the initial process in which the practitioner “imagines” his skeleton, certainly presented as a consciously undertaken, controlled process, now does not seem so much like a process of “visualization” because the ability of the practitioner to lucidly see these things is not what ultimately certifies his achievement. Rather the practitioner knows he has achieved success when he suddenly “sees” (見) *something else*.

As the *Chan Essentials* progresses the description of these visions occupies an increasingly large percentage of the text, and by the twelfth contemplation they reach epic proportions:

When this meditation is complete the practitioner will suddenly sees a poisonous dragon within his heart. The dragon has six heads, and it wraps itself around his heart seven times. Two of its heads breathe out water, two breathe out fire, and two breathe out rock, while wind blows from its ears. From the pores of its body there emerge ninety-nine poisonous snakes. Each snake {has four heads}, two going up and two going down. The water spewed forth by the poisonous dragon (?) emerges from the [practitioner’s] feet and flows into the white water. [The water] continues gradually in this manner until [the practitioner] sees a full *yojana* of water. Having filled one *yojana*, next two *yojanas* are filled. Having filled two *yojanas*, it continues like this until all of Jambudvīpa is filled. When all of Jambudvīpa has been filled the poisonous dragon emerges from [the practitioner’s] navel and ascends gradually until it enters his eyes. It then emerges from his eyes and perches atop the crown of his head.

Then within the waters there appears a great tree whose canopy spreads in all

177得此觀者，名第十一白骨流光觀竟。(1.77). A very similar sequence, in which the white bone contemplation leads to the appearance of lights within which appears an image of the buddha, is found in the twelfth fascicle of Dharmakṣema’s translation of the (Mahāyāna) *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, where it is presented as the method for performing the *smṛtyupasthāna* (四念處) meditations (T.374:12.433c26–434a26). It is noteworthy, however, that the origins of this portion of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* are less than fully clear. The first 11 fascicles of Dharmakṣema’s translation are the same Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* first translated by Faxian and Buddhahadra (T.376). And indeed Dharmakṣema’s version originally contained only these sections as well, but according to the story he eventually returned to Central Asia and found the remaining sections. In the Chinese context this event was significant because the famous doctrine that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature (一切眾生皆有佛性), so important in later Chinese Buddhism, is found only in this second section, while the first part of the text claimed that a certain class of beings known as *icchantikas* would never become buddhas. It is further notable that while there exists a Tibetan translation of the text from the Sanskrit, this corresponds only to the first 11 fascicles. Similarly the numerous, though individually short Sanskrit fragments of the text that have been found in Central Asia all stem from the initial portion only (Matsuda 1988, 12–15; Habata 2007, xxvi–xli). How this is to be interpreted is not clear, but it suggests the possibility that the later portions of the text—within which we find the account of the white bone contemplation similar to the *Chan Essentials*—may derive not from India proper but from Central Asia.

directions. Without leaving the practitioner's body the poisonous dragon touches the tree with its tongue. On the tip of its tongue there appear eight hundred demons. Some of these demons have mountains atop their heads, snakes for hands and legs like dogs. There are other demons with the heads of dragons, each of their pores a flame-shooting eye, hundreds of thousands of which cover their bodies. Their teeth are like sword-mountains and they roll upon the floor. There are various other demons, each with ninety-nine heads and ninety-nine hands. Their heads are extremely ugly, like [the heads of] dogs, jackals, racoons, cats, foxes and rats. Around the necks of each of these demons hangs a monkey. These evil demons play within the waters, some climbing up the tree and jumping off it. There are [also] *yakṣa*-demons, their heads aflame.

The monkeys try to extinguish these flames with the water, but they are unable to control it, and indeed rather make it grow. The raging fire approaches the crystal pillar within the waters and suddenly flares up, burning the crystal pillar [which then appears] as if molten gold. The flames spread, wrapping around [the practitioner's] body ten times and then rising up above him like a golden canopy, like nets spread out across the top of the tree, forming three layers in all.

Suddenly on the ground there appears an evil demon of the four elements, with hundreds of thousands of ears out of which pour water and fire. From the pores of its body small particles of earth rain forth, and it vomits forth a wind that fills the universe. There also appear eighty-four thousand *rākṣasa*-demons, lightening shooting from their pores, each with fangs one *yojana* long. All these creatures romp and play within the water. From the mountains of fire there emerge tigers, wolves, lions, leopards, and [various other] beasts, and they too play within the water.

When [the practitioner] sees these things each of the skeletons, which [all together] fill the entire universe, raises its right hand. Then the *rākṣasas* stab the skeletons with iron pitchforks and collect them into a pile. Then skeletons of nine different colors come one after the other before the practitioner [and the same scene is repeated (?)].

The many hundreds of thousands of such verificatory visions [that the practitioner might see at this point] cannot all be explained.¹⁷⁸

None of this remarkable scene is said to be something that the practitioner should try to visualize, imagine, or otherwise bring to mind. This is, rather, what the *Chan Essentials* patently admits is but a partial description of the visions that successful practitioners will experience.

In this passage, moreover, the visions begin to take on a more obviously symbolic significance, and we see here the opening scenes of what I will call the “narrative of the tree,” which continues for the remainder of the first sutra. Although the exact significance of any particular element is difficult to divine, roughly speaking the tree seems to correspond to the practitioner's defilements or his existence within *samsāra*. As his meditation progresses the practitioner eventually has visions of a team of black elephants that attempt to uproot this tree,¹⁷⁹

1781.86–1.89; for the Chinese text see appendix three.

179In the *Vibhāṣā* we find the defilements compared to a tree, and the path to liberation compared to uprooting this tree (*A pi tan pi po sha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論, T.1546:28.184a4). Various forms of vegetation imagery—seeds, roots, fruits—are commonly used in Buddhist texts to denote the continuation of *samsāra* under the influence of

though they are contested in this task by the various evil beings that cling to the tree and inhabit it, as seen in the above passage. The drama continues for the remainder of the first sutra until in the vision attesting to the attainment of arhatship the tree is finally destroyed by a team of “adamantine beings” (金剛人).¹⁸⁰ But while the content of these visions does seem to have had a symbolic connection to the progress along the path that meditation was thought to produce, the visions themselves are not prefigured in the techniques of meditation themselves.

The profound phenomenological discontinuity between the techniques of meditation practice and the visions they were thought to produce is seen even more clearly when we consider certain abstract or discursive meditations. Indeed in such cases success is judged on the basis of concrete visions even when the initial meditation practice involves no “visual” elements at all. This occurs, for example, when the meditator is instructed to meditate upon standard Buddhist doctrinal principles such as impermanence or non-self:

[The practitioner] should then consider (思惟): “In this present body of mine, is the hair the self? The bones? The nails? The teeth? [Any of the five *skandhas* of] form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations, or consciousness? Carefully contemplating, is the self [any of the twelve-links of dependent origination, namely] ignorance, volitional formations, consciousness, name-and-form, the six sense-doors, contact, feeling, attachment, grasping, becoming, birth, or old age and death?

“Is the corpse the self? But [the corpse] is eaten by worms, so how could it be the self? Nor can the living person be the self, since [in life] thoughts continue without cease, and in this life no mental state endures permanently. Perhaps the head is the self? But there are eight separate bones in the head, and within the brain there live various worms. When we look within the head there is no self there at all. Perhaps the eye is the self? But within the eye there is nothing substantial. Formed of water and earth, it depends on fire for its perspicacity and wind for its movement. When it separates from the body it is eaten by crows and hawks and nibbled on by worms and maggots. Thus carefully contemplating the eye, it too is without a central power. . . . Everything is like an

karma and the defilements (Collins 1982, 218–224), though we also find more positive uses of this imagery, such as the “fruits,” *phala*, of the path. Note that though a cosmic tree figures in some of the visions from the *Yogalehrbuch* (Schlingloff 1964, 79), it appears to be an auspicious sign, its branches filled with “buddhas preaching the Dharma” (*tasmim vṛkṣe . . . buddhā drśyaṃte dharmam deśayaṃta*; *ibid*).

¹⁸⁰See section 1.174:

[The practitioner] then sees the roots of the great tree, which extend all the way down to the adamant horizon. The adamant beings then hack at the roots with their swords, severing the roots. When the roots have been severed, the various dragons and snakes all spew forth fire and climb up the tree. Then, there further appear numerous *rākṣasas* who gather in clumps atop the tree. The adamant beings take their adamant clubs and strike the branches of the tree until they break, though they must strike eighty-four thousand times before the branches finally break. Fire then shoots out from the tips of the clubs incinerating the tree. Only the heartwood remains, like an immovable adamant spike reaching from the summit of the triple-world down to the adamant horizon.

The significance of the “heartwood” (樹心) that remains after the tree has been destroyed is unclear, but it can reasonably be interpreted as the physical body of the practitioner that remains active until death. Though a physical basis remains, both the roots (the defilements) and the branches, seeds, and fruits (karmic activity) have been entirely destroyed.

illusion, so where could there be a self? Amongst illusory *dharmas*, what could be the self's possession?"

When [the practitioner] considers in this way he suddenly sees the bones of his body to be bright, pure, and lovely, with all kinds of rarely seen things appearing within them. He further sees his own body as like beryl, completely transparent. Just as a person looking up at the sky while carrying a beryl parasol can see everything [in the sky] clearly, at this time because the practitioner has contemplated emptiness and learned the teaching of non-self with respect to both the inside and outside of his body¹⁸¹ he sees his two legs as like tubes of beryl, and [through them]¹⁸² sees in the downward direction all kinds of marvelous things. When this meditation is complete, the ground before the practitioner [becomes] bright, pure, and lovely, like beryl, exceedingly transparent.¹⁸³

Here the meditator follows a set of eminently traditional formulas, analyzing his person and contemplating that given its constructed nature there can be no unitary, permanent self. But as elsewhere in the *Chan Essentials* success in this meditation is confirmed by the appearance of a vision, in this case of the meditator's own body suddenly transformed into transparent beryl.

In a variety of similar ways throughout the *Chan Essentials* visions appear autonomously in the wake of meditation on or contemplation of other things. We find, for example, that visions appear after the practitioner makes certain "vows" (願).¹⁸⁴ Thus in the third sutra, the meditator quiets his thoughts and then vows: "May I not be reborn again! May I not undergo any future existence! May I take no pleasure in the world!"¹⁸⁵ In response:

He sees the ground before him to be like beryl. He sees golden water beneath the beryl ground. He sees his own body as equally [beryl like the] ground, and the same color as the water. The water is warm, and within it grows a tree, like a tree of the seven treasures. Its branches and leaves give cooling shade, and on the tree are four fruits that

181 This seems to refer to the contemplation of non-self above.

182 The idea seems to be that the practitioner is seated, such that when his legs become transparent he is able to see the area beneath his body.

183 當自思惟。如我今者，髮是我耶，骨是我耶，爪是我耶，齒是我耶，色是我耶，受是我耶，想是我耶，{行是我耶}，識是我耶。一一諦觀。無明是我耶，行是我耶，識是我耶，名色是我耶，六入是我耶，觸是我耶，受是我耶，愛是我耶，取是我耶，有是我耶，生是我耶，老死是我耶。若死是我者，諸蟲啖食，散滅壞時，我是何處。若生是我者，念念不住，於此生中，無常住想，當知此生亦非是我。若頭是我，頭骨八段，[解解]{節節}各異，腦中生蟲。觀此頭中，而實無我。若眼是我。眼中無實，地與水合，假火為明，假風動轉，散滅壞時，烏鵲等鳥，皆來食之，癩蛆諸蟲，所共啖食。諦觀此眼，{亦復無主}。若心是我。風力所轉，無暫停時。亦有六龍，[舉]{居}此心中，有無量毒。心為根本，推此諸毒，及與心性，皆從空有，妄想名我。如是諸法，地水火風，色香味觸，及十二緣，一一諦推，何處有我。觀身無我，云何有我[所]我所者，為青色是我，黃色是我，赤色是我，白色是我，黑色是我。此五色者，從可愛有，隨縛著生，欲水所染，從老死河生，從思愛賊起，從癡惑見。如此眾色，實非是我，惑著眾生，橫言是我，虛見眾生，復稱我所。一切如幻，何處有我。於幻法中，豈有所。作是思惟時，自見身骨，明淨可愛，一切世間，所希見事，皆於中現。復見己身，如毘琉璃人，內外俱空，如人戴琉璃幢，仰看空中，一切皆見。爾時行者，於自身內及與身外，以觀空故，學無我法，自見己身，兩足如琉璃筒，亦見下方，一切世間所希見事。此想成時，行者前地明淨可愛，如毘琉璃，極為映徹。(1.145–1.150).

184 In addition to the passage discussed here, see also 2.28 and 3.34 for similar cases.

185 當發誓願，願後[世]{不}生，不受後有，不樂世間。(3.49)

chime forth sermons on suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. When [the practitioner] hears these sounds he suddenly sees himself sink into the water and move towards the tree.¹⁸⁶

Thus having vowed to escape rebirth the practitioner receives a vision of a tree with four fruits, evidently referring to the four “fruits” (*phala*) of attainment. In the subsequent passages the acquisition of these attainments is verified by further visions in which the practitioner grabs hold of and then eventually eats the fruits. Although the motive forces at work here are not spelled out, the point seems to be analogous to the verificatory visions in the case of lesser meditative attainment—the vision testifies to the strength of the practitioner’s vow. We may even say that according to the logic of the text making this vow is itself a kind of meditative technique, success in which is indicated by the appearance of the specified vision.

Indeed the word *xiang* 想, “imagine,” more normally used to indicate the imagination of various concrete things, is itself often used in this manner. Thus in section 2.28 the practitioner must “arouse the following wish: May the World-honored One preach for me the Dharma” (更起想念：唯願世尊，為我說法), and for those with sufficient purity the Buddha will indeed then appear and give teachings. The meaning of “to imagine” (*xiang* 想), in this context, thus seems to be far better captured by English words such as “to long for” or even “to desire,” terms that evoke a very different phenomenology than “to visualize,” which seems to lack any affective connotation at all.

But perhaps the clearest illustration of the relationship between the visions and the techniques that provoke them are the many cases when the practitioner must deal with negative or inauspicious visions. Indeed some visions serve as what we might call “negative verificatory visions”—they reveal not success but the presence of obstructions, and are accompanied not by happiness and bodily bliss, but the opposite:

[The meditator must] carefully contemplate in the downward direction, where there is [now] no obstruction.¹⁸⁷ Various winds arise in the wind-circle below,¹⁸⁸ and they head towards the various *yakṣas* who inhale them. When they have inhaled these winds from the pores of their bodies emerge *kumbhāṇḍa* monsters. Each *kumbhāṇḍa* monster vomits forth mountains of fire that fill the entire universe. Within these mountains [of fire] there suddenly appear innumerable nymphs playing music and singing. They come before the practitioner where they are devoured by a horde of fighting *rākṣasas*. When the practitioner has seen this he becomes extremely alarmed and afraid, such that he is unable to control himself. When he emerges from trance he is perpetually afflicted by

186 尋見前地猶如琉璃。見琉璃下，有金色水。自見己身，與地正等，與水色同。其水溫暖，水中生樹，如七寶樹。枝葉蓊鬱，上有四菓，菓聲如鈴，演說苦、空、無常、無我。聞此聲已，自見己身，沒於水中往趣樹所。(3.50)

187 The idea seems to be that the ground has now opened up giving the practitioner an unimpeded view into the bowels of the earth.

188 On the “wind-circle” (*vāyumaṇḍala*) as a cosmological term indicating the lowest point of material universe, see chapter two p46n201.

pain in his chest and his skull feels as if it were about to burst.¹⁸⁹

These visions are patently undesirable, and to eliminate them the practitioner must undertake various counteractive measures usually referred to as “inverse contemplations” (*yi guan* 易觀) or “inverse meditations” (*yi xiang* 易想), whose success is revealed by a change or transformation in the vision.¹⁹⁰ The first example of this occurs near the beginning of the text, where self-loathing induced by the contemplation of impurity threatens to drive the practitioner to suicide.¹⁹¹

When the meditation on impurity is completed, so that he does not attempt to end his life he should be taught an “inverse contemplation.” The method for the inverse contemplation is to imagine white light radiating from the gaps between the bones [of his skeleton], blazing brightly, like [the gleam of] snow-covered mountains. When he has seen this the *yakṣas* suck up the pile of impurities before him.¹⁹²

To correct his excessive self-loathing the practitioner thus imagines white light radiating from his skeleton. What the practitioner does *not* do is visualize or imagine the *yakṣa* eating up the impurities. Rather this is a new vision that appears as confirmation that self-loathing has in fact been eliminated (the logic seems clear: the pile of impurities was the vision that had initially appeared upon the successful completion of the contemplation of impurity, and its elimination thus shows that the state of mind generated then has been successfully “inverted”).

Other examples of “inverse contemplation” occur elsewhere and are, interestingly, particularly correlated with the meditations on the four elements. Thus when contemplating the wind element:

When this contemplation [of the wind element] is complete the wind transforms into fire. Each of the poisonous snakes [of the fire element] breathes out great mountains of fire. Towering above, they are very frightening. Dwelling within the mountains of fire are various *yakṣa*-demons who roam about inhaling the fire and spewing wind from their pores. . . . [The practitioner then] sees the various *yakṣa*-demons within the mountains of fire, inhaling the mountains of burning flames, spewing wind from their pores. They rush about frantically throughout Jambudvīpa. They further grab hold of burning pitchforks with which they threaten the practitioner.

189應當諦觀，乃至下方，無有障闕。下方風輪中，有諸風起，向諸夜叉，皆吸此風。吸此風已，身諸毛孔，生鳩槃荼。一一鳩槃荼，吐諸山火，滿大千世界。是諸山間，忽然復有無量妙女，鼓樂絃歌，至行者前。羅剎復來，爭取食之。行者見已，極大驚怖，不自勝持。出定之時，恒患心痛，頂骨欲破。(1.93)

190An “inverse contemplation” (易觀), either as a noun or a verb-object phrase, is mentioned at 1.23, 1.43, 1.48, 1.84, 1.97, and 3.61–3.62, and we find “inverse meditation” (易想) at 1.50. For more details on the possible origin of this term see the notes to section 1.23 in appendix three.

191That this meditation practice could produce dangerous self-loathing is noted in many sources, the most famous being the story, found in all extant vinaya, of a group of monks practicing the *aśubha-bhāvanā* who commit suicide (Wiltshire 1983; Dhammajoti 2009, 6–7).

192不淨想成時，慎莫棄身。當教易觀。易觀法者，想諸節間白光流出，其明熾盛，猶如雪山。見此事已，前不淨聚，夜叉吸去。(1.23)

Chapter 3: Vision and Visualization

When he sees these things, he becomes frightened and [must] seek out a method for the inverse contemplation. The method for the inverse contemplation is as follows. He first contemplates an image of the Buddha. Within each tip of flame he then imagines a sixteen-foot buddha-image.

When this meditation is complete the flames of the fire gradually diminish and transform into lotus flowers. The mountains of fire [become] like heaps of transparent gold. The *rākṣasa*-demons [become] like white-jade men. There [remains] only the wind element, blowing gently back and forth against the lotus flowers. Innumerable transformation-buddhas¹⁹³ stand in the air like adamantine mountains shining forth a great light. The winds then settle and all is still.¹⁹⁴

The basic sequence here is the same as in the previous example. Having contemplated the wind-element a sudden transformation occurs that frightens the practitioner and necessitates an “inverse contemplation.” For this he imagines an image of the Buddha within the flames of his vision. But again the goal of the practice is not simply the successful visualization of this image, but rather the evocation of the ensuing vision, which serves to verify that the previously experienced problem has been fully transformed.

Indeed in many cases the “inverse contemplation” is a relatively straightforward, discursive meditation. In a passage beginning in section 1.56 the practitioner first comes to see his entire body filled with worms, and eventually a single worm consumes all the others (1.57). But when the practitioner sees the single surviving worm, its large red eyes “like hot iron balls,” he becomes afraid, and this necessitates the contemplation of non-self:

He must contemplate his body [as follows]: “These worms within my body at first did not exist but now do exist. Having now come into existence, they will return to non-existence. These impure things are produced by the imagination of my mind. They arrive without arriving from somewhere and depart without going anywhere. They are not me, nor are they someone else. My body is formed through the coming together of the six elements. When these six elements disperse this body will be no more. So too the many worms before me arrive without arriving from somewhere and depart without going anywhere. What substance then is there to this worm-heap body of mine? These worms have no master and I too am without self.”

When [the practitioner] considers in this way the eyes of the worm become gradually smaller. When he has seen this, to an even greater extent than before his body and mind become happy and at ease, calm and joyous.¹⁹⁵

193On “transformation-buddhas” (*hua fo* 化佛), see the notes to section 1.155 of the translation in appendix three.

194此觀成時，風變為火，一一毒蛇，吐諸火山。其山高峻，甚可怖畏。有諸夜叉，住火山中，動身吸火，毛孔出風...見諸夜叉，在火山中，吸火[負]{焰}山，毛孔出風，周悼馳走，遍閻浮提。復[驚夜]{擎火}叉，以逼行者。見此事時，心大驚怖，求易觀法。易觀法者，先觀佛像。於諸火光端，各{各}作一丈六佛像想。此想成時，火漸漸歇，變成蓮華，眾多火山，如真金聚，內外映徹。諸夜叉鬼，似白玉人。唯有風大，迴旋宛轉，吹諸蓮華。無數化佛，住立空中，放大光明，如金剛山。是時諸風，靜然不動。(1.82-1.84)

195當自觀身。我此諸蟲，本無今有，已有還無。如此不淨，從心想生，來無所從，去無所至，亦非是我，亦非是他。如此身者，六大和合因緣成之，六大散滅，身亦無常。向者諸蟲，來無所從，去無所至，我

Thus having become terrified in the wake of the vision of the giant worm the practitioner contemplates that it is empty and devoid of self. This contemplation is entirely discursive, and the meditator does not try to eliminate the vision of the worm by “visualizing” something else. Rather once he has fully contemplated emptiness the vision changes by itself. Indeed it seems possible to say that it is precisely the change in the vision, here a shrinking of the worm’s eyes, that demonstrates and confirms that the contemplation of emptiness has been successful.

Countering evil visions by contemplating emptiness does not merely serve to eliminate hindrances, but also seems to lead the practitioner forward towards his goal, and this progress is similarly revealed through new visions. Such, for example, is the situation in the fourteenth contemplation, the first point at which the practitioner obtains specific soteriological fruits.¹⁹⁶ The practitioner begins by contemplating his body as a skeleton, making each bone as pure as a mirror (1.99–1.100). A vision then manifests within the mirror-like bones:

He must contemplate his body, transforming it into a skeleton, each bone white, pure, and radiant, like a crystal mirror. Skeletons filling Jambudvīpa¹⁹⁷ and all the verificatory visions associated with the contemplation of the four elements appear within one of the bones.¹⁹⁸

The visions in question are then described in detail. First, countless skeletons of all varieties appear, filling the universe (1.101). But the meditator is then attacked by various demons:

The practitioner feels frightened and sees various *yakṣa*-demons coming to eat him. At this time he will see fire appear on each of the bones of the skeletons. The flames following one after the other fill the entire universe. He further sees jets of water like crystal pillars emerge from the crowns of skeletons’ skulls. He further sees the fires on the skulls transform into mountains of rock. Then, wind emerges from the ears of the dragons, blowing the fire and shaking the mountains. The mountains then spin unimpeded in the air like potters’ wheels. When he has seen these things he becomes extremely frightened, and because of his fear ten million demons, each different in appearance, carrying boulders and belching fire, appear and draw near to him.¹⁹⁹

身蟲聚，當有何寶。蟲亦無主，我亦無我。作是思惟時，所見蟲眼，當漸漸小。見此事已，身心和悅，恬然安樂，倍勝於前。(1.58–1.59)

196 There is a problem in the numbering system here and there are actually three different sections numbered as the fourteenth contemplation. In any event the contemplation in question ends by saying that the meditator will, as a result of this practice, become an *anāgamin* and be reborn in Tuṣita heaven (1.111). Note further that the attainment of the fruits here is not mentioned in the official titles for the numbered contemplations, and in the numbering system the fruits are not obtained until later, beginning in the third sutra.

197 Literally “all the skeletons of Jambudvīpa.” This seems to refer to what appears in section 1.101.

198 此想成時，當自觀身，作一骨人。節節之中，白淨明顯，如頗梨鏡。閻浮提中一切骨人，及四大觀所有境界，皆於一節中現。(1.100)

199 行者驚怖，見諸夜叉，欲來噉己。爾時復當見諸骨人，節節火起，焰焰相次，遍滿娑婆世界。復見骨人頂上，涌出諸水，如頗梨幢。復見骨人頭上一切眾火，化為石山。是時諸龍，耳出諸風，吹火動山。是時諸山，旋住空中，如窯家輪，而無 [分] {障} 閻。見此事已，極大驚怖。以驚怖故，有一億鬼，擔山

In order to counter these evil visions a new contemplation is needed:

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Monks who see these things and who dwell peacefully with correct mindfulness cultivating heedfulness should be taught the contemplation of the emptiness and absence of self of all *dharmas* . . . he should contemplate [as follows]: “This body of mine was created through the joining together of the impurities of mother and father, is bound together by tendons and painted over with blood, is [filled with] the thirty-six dirty, oozing, impure things, is dependent on past actions and arises from ignorance. Contemplating my body, no part of it is worthy of attachment, for it is a rotting, decaying thing.”

When he considers in this way all the skeletons press near. He must then extend his right hand and tap the skeletons with his finger, thinking as follows: “This skeleton comes from empty, false imagination, and appears only because of incorrect discrimination. My own body is also thus. It arises from the four elements and dwells within the village of the six sense gates. [The body being empty], how much more so these bones, which have been produced by groundless [imagination]!”²⁰⁰

Although the logic of the progression here is not explained, we may hazard a few guesses. During the initial meditation in this section the practitioner had followed the standard white bone contemplation. And while this led to a certain measure of success, it also seems to have created a problem, exemplified by the frightening and indeed threatening visions that then appeared. The solution is to contemplate “the emptiness and absence of self of all *dharmas*.” Using a number of traditional rubrics (such as the thirty-six body parts, dependent origination, and the four elements) the meditator then contemplates that he himself is both empty and lacking in a self. The objects of his contemplation—the imaginatively generated external skeletons—are then also analyzed, and are declared empty because they originated through (but not “in”) the meditator’s imagination. Then, in response to these reflections:

When he thinks in this way the white skeletons shatter into dust forming a pile on the ground like a snow-covered mountain. As for the other skeletons of various colors, they are suddenly eaten up by a giant snake-like creature. On top of the mound of white snow there is a white-jade person, his body straight and imposing, thirty six *yojanas* tall, with a neck as red as fire and white light glowing in his eyes. Then the various white waters and crystal pillars all suddenly enter into the crown of the white-jade man’s head. The many dragons, demons, vipers, snakes, monkeys, lions, and cats all run in fright. Fearing the great fire, they scurry up and down the tree. The ninety-nine snakes [that had emerged from the] pores of [the dragon in the practitioner’s heart]²⁰¹ all gather atop the tree. The

吐火，形狀各異，來至其所。(1.102)

200 佛告阿難，若有比丘，正念安住，修不放逸，見此事時，當教諸法空無我觀 . . . 應當自觀：我身者，依因父母不淨和合，筋纏血塗，三十六物，污露不淨。屬諸業緣，從無明起。今觀此身，無一可愛，如朽敗物。作是思惟時，諸骨人皆來逼己。當伸右手，以指彈諸骨人，而作是念：如此骨人，從虛妄想強分別現，我身亦爾，從四大生，六入村落，所共居止。何況諸骨，從虛妄出。(1.103–1.104)

201 This presumably refers to the ninety-nine snakes mentioned in section 1.86.

Chapter 3: Vision and Visualization

poisonous dragon then twists and turns, coiling itself around the tree. [The practitioner] further sees the black elephant standing at the base of the tree.²⁰²

Once again this vision is presented as a relatively spontaneous occurrence, not something the practitioner should “visualize” or otherwise will into being, though there is a conceptual connection between the initial discursive contemplation and the vision, for having pondered the emptiness of the skeletons they obligingly shatter into dust or are consumed by a giant snake. The vision then continues into a further development of the “narrative of the tree.” In order to make further progress along the path the practitioner must again contemplate emptiness:

He must avoid excessive talking, remain in a solitary secluded place, and consider the emptiness of all *dharmas* [as follows]: “All *dharmas* are empty, and within the emptiness of *dharmas* there is neither earth nor water nor wind nor fire. Material form²⁰³ is a delusion, it arises from illusory *dharmas*. Sensation is conditioned by causes, arising from various [past] actions.²⁰⁴ Perception is a delusion, a non-permanent *dharma*. Consciousness cannot be seen. It is something conditioned by [past] action, born from the seeds of craving. In such a manner should I contemplate this body. The earth element appears from emptiness. But a manifestation [from] emptiness is itself empty. How then could I imagine the earth element to be something solid? Analyzing in this manner, what then is earth?”

When he performs this meditation he sees the mountain of white bones shatter yet further, becoming like tiny specks of dust. There remains only [the practitioner’s own] skeleton amidst the dust, glowing with white light, [its bones] linked together. Within the white light there further appear various lights of the four [other] colors. From within these lights there further arise raging flames that burn the *yakṣas*. As the fire closes in on the *yakṣas* they flee towards the top of the tree, but before they can reach it they are trampled by the black elephant. The *yakṣas* then shoot flames which scorch the black elephant’s legs. With a voice like a lion’s roar the black elephant trumpets loudly, proclaiming [the teachings of] suffering, emptiness, impermanence and non-self, and also that the body is something subject to decay, soon to be extinguished.²⁰⁵

202 作是念時，諸白骨人，碎散如塵，積聚在地，如白雪山。眾多雜色骨人，有一大虺，忽然吞食。於白雪山上，有一白玉人，身體端嚴，高三十六由旬，頸赤如火，眼有白光。時諸白水并頗梨幢，悉皆自然入白玉人頂。龍、鬼、蛇、虺、獼猴、師子、狸猫、之屬，悉皆驚走。畏大火故，尋樹上下。身諸毛孔九十九蛇，悉在樹上。爾時毒龍，宛轉繞樹。復見黑象在樹下立。(1.105)

203 Here seems to follow the five *skandha*, though *samskāra* (usually *xing* 行), is missing. Presumably this is a lacuna in the text, though we cannot rule out the possibility that there is some meaning behind this omission.

204 This would seem to conform to the usual understanding that karmic retribution takes the form of pleasant or unpleasant *vedanā* (sensation).

205 不樂多語，在空閑處，思諸法空：諸法空中，無地無水，亦無風火，色是顛倒，從幻法生，受是因緣，從諸業生，想為顛倒，是不住法，識為不見，屬諸業緣，生貪愛種。如是種種，諦觀此身。地大者，從空見有，空見亦空，云何{想地}為堅 [想地]。如是推析，何者是地。作是觀已，名觀外地。一一諦觀，地大無主。作是想時，見白骨山，復更碎壞，猶如微塵，唯骨人在，於微塵間，有諸白光，共相連持。於白光間，復生種種四色光明。於光明間，復起猛火，燒諸夜叉。時諸夜叉，為火所逼，悉走上樹。未至樹上，黑象踏躐，夜叉出火燒黑象脚。黑象是時，作聲鳴吼，如師子吼音，演說[若]{苦}空無常無我，亦說此身是敗壞法，不久當滅。(1.106–107)

Here the meditator thus progresses to a deeper level of the contemplation of emptiness, for now the categories used in the previous section to deconstruct the meditator's self—the five *skandha* and the earth element itself (the basic constituent of the bones)—are themselves contemplated as empty. Indeed, all *dharmas* are said to be empty, such that “there is no earth, water, fire or wind” (無地無水，亦無風火), and these statements seem intended to negate the standard (or perhaps specifically Vaibhāṣika) analysis in which each constituent element of the universe (*dharma*) has its own defining characteristic (*svabhāva*), such as “solidity” for the earth element.

The incorporation of this kind of analysis into a set of meditation practices that unambiguously takes arhatship as their highest goal is worth noting. Although insistence on the absence of self in *dharmas* (as opposed to the mere absence of self in persons or other compounded phenomena) is often taken as a defining characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and indeed this was the typical explanation in East Asian doctrinal exegesis, as modern scholars have pointed out this understanding was more widespread and traces of it can be found in the canonical texts of at least some supposedly “Hīnayāna” Indian Buddhist schools.²⁰⁶ Directly relevant in the present context are passages in the *Vibhāṣā* that refer to the “stages of the contemplation [methods] of the *yogācāras*” (瑜伽師修觀位) for proof that it is possible to come to a realization of the “non-self of all *dharmas*” (一切法非我).²⁰⁷

Of course as discussed in chapter one the connection between the *yogācāras* mentioned in Vaibhāṣika sources and fifth-century Chinese meditation texts is far from clear. Nor is it necessarily obvious that this passage from the *Vibhāṣā* refers to anything similar to what we see in the *Chan Essentials*. What is important for my present purposes is merely that this contemplation of the non-self of all *dharmas* is integrated organically into the meditator's progress in the *Chan Essentials*, continuing and deepening the contemplation of non-self begun using more traditional means. This continues in later sections with contemplation of the emptiness of the remaining three elements (fire, water and wind), in both their external and internal manifestations (1.114–1.128). It is this progressive contemplation of emptiness and non-self that effectuates progress through the meditative path, progress that is verified “objectively” through increasingly complex and elaborate visions.

Conclusions

In the first chapter of this dissertation I introduced the concept of “verificatory visions”—relatively spontaneous visions that arise as confirmation that a practitioner of meditation has achieved a certain stage or level of practice. We saw that these visions play an important role in many if not most Indian Buddhist meditation texts from the late fourth and early fifth centuries. The argument of this chapter has been that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* too need to be understood in light of this idea. Indeed like the *Five Gates*, which as discussed in chapter two contains a primitive version of at least some of this same material, the *Chan Essentials* and

206Harrison 1982, 225–227

207A pi tan mo da pi po sha lun 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, T.1545:27.45a23

Methods for Curing devote most of their attention to this subject.

I have further suggested that these “verificatory visions” are very different from “visualizations,” at least to the extent that “visualization” is a controlled, “active” process contrasted with a vaguely defined “passivity”; as Eliade put it the “awakening of one’s inner forces . . . [while] at the same time maintaining perfect lucidity and self-control,” something most emphatically not “abandoning oneself to a pure spontaneity and passively receiving the content of . . . the individual or collective unconscious.”

In the end, however, it would probably be best to break free from the limitations of this dichotomy, which may ultimately tell us more about 19th-century polemics on religious experience than it does about the ways that Buddhists traditionally understood meditation practice. Indeed any clear-cut distinction between “active” and “passive” in this sense becomes rather problematic in light of basic karma theory, according to which even apparently random occurrences are the result of one’s own, willful acts in a past life. It is thus important to realize that I am *not* suggesting that what I have termed “verificatory visions” were, in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* or elsewhere, thought to be entirely unconnected to the practitioner’s own efforts. Indeed they were, precisely, the verification of those efforts.

Yet these visions, experience of which seems to have been understood as the crucial test of one’s achievements in meditation, do seem to have been understood as phenomenologically *discontinuous* in some way from the practices that produced them. Although in the texts we have examined there is some evidence for something like “visualization” as the internal replication of an initially external percept, notably in the procedure whereby one begins by gazing at a statue of the buddha, a corpse, or a patch of earth (*kasīna*), in all these examples achieving this kind of “visualization” is not the goal of the practices at all, but rather the starting point, a skill that was apparently considered rather mundane. What the practitioner hopes to achieve is not simply a “visualization” of some previously seen object, but a vision of something new and different, a vision that arises not by willing it into existence or gradually building it up piece by piece, but by calming the mind through focus on some other object until reaching a mirror-like state from which new and marvelous things were thought to pour forth. Put in simpler terms those practicing meditation were apparently not expected to know what it was that they were eventually hoping to see. Indeed the spontaneity (in this sense) of the visions appears to have been crucial to their validity.

All of this can, I have suggested, be inferred from the contents of *Chan Essentials* and related texts themselves by looking closely at how the appearance of the visions is portrayed, and this is what I have tried to do above. But there is also evidence that this is how the texts were in fact read by Chinese Buddhists. The earliest surviving Chinese commentaries that discuss the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are the writings of the late sixth-century master Zhiyi 智顓, whose expositions on *chan* practice were not only of decisive importance for the later East Asian Buddhist tradition, but also serve as our most important window onto sixth-century Chinese interpretations of *chan*. In chapter four I will discuss certain general features of Zhiyi’s understanding in connection with the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*. For now, by way of conclusion to this chapter which has focused primarily on the distinction between “verificatory visions” and “visualization,” I will merely mention one instance in which Zhiyi explicitly discusses how the visions found in these texts are to be understood.

Zhiyi addresses this within his exposition of what he calls “repentance on the basis of the

contemplation of signs” (觀相懺悔),²⁰⁸ referring as an example of this kind of repentance to a section from the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing* where a method is provided for “curing” those who have violated the precepts. I will defer the discussion of the full procedure here until chapter five, while the questions that this raises concerning the relationship between meditation and repentance will be treated in chapter four.

For the moment we need only note that the relevant section from the *Methods for Curing* includes meditation practices similar in form and content to those found throughout both the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing*:

You must now contemplate your body as like a golden vase filled with four poisonous snakes, two of which go upwards and two of which go downwards, each spewing poison and very frightful. Next contemplate one dragon with six heads who encircles the vase and spews poison that drips into the mouths of the snakes. A great tree [that covers] the four directions emerges from from the golden vase and fills the three worlds. The black elephant approaches and tries to uproot the tree. On all four sides fire springs forth.²⁰⁹

The imagery here is very much the same as what is found in the *Chan Essentials*, and we even see mention of what I have called the “narrative of the tree.” Zhiyi explains how such meditation practices were supposed to be carried out as follows, mentioning them merely as the “contemplation of the poisonous snakes”.²¹⁰

Concerning “repentance on the basis of the contemplation of signs,” the practitioner relies on the repentance methods given in the various scriptures. He intently focuses his mind, and when his mind is still, he will see various signs . . . many examples of this method of repentance based on the contemplation of signs are found in the ritual practices contained in various Mahāyāna [scriptures] as well in the *Vaipulya Dhāraṇī* [scripture]. Among the Three Baskets [of the Āgama scriptures], the *Samyuktāgama* also speaks of such methods, saying that one must perform the contemplation of signs concerning hell, the poisonous snakes, and the white tuft of hair [the *ūrṇa*]. It says that only when these are successful will one’s sins be eliminated. Because [this practice] is carried out while in trance, repentance on the basis of the contemplation of signs is frequently explained in the context of methods for the cultivation of trance.²¹¹

208 This is included in his *Explanation of the Sequential Method of Cultivation of the Perfection of Dhyāna* (*Shi chan bo luo mi ci di fa men* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門; T.1916). For a summary of this section, see Kuo 1994, 62–64; Shengkai 2004, 94–99.

209 汝今自觀汝身，猶如金瓶盛四毒蛇，二上二下，吐毒可畏。復觀一龍六頭繞瓶，龍亦吐毒，滴蛇口中。四方大樹，從金瓶出，遍三界。黑象復來，欲拔此樹，四面火起。(5.69)

210 For another translation of this passage, see Stevenson 1999, 469–470.

211 觀相懺悔者，行人依諸經中懺悔方法。專心用意，於靜心中，見種種諸相 . . . 諸大乘方等陀羅尼行法中，多有此觀相懺法。三藏，及雜阿含中亦說觀相懺悔方法，謂作地獄、毒蛇、白毫等觀相。成就即說罪滅。此悉就定心中作故，觀相懺悔多依修定法說。(T.1916:46.485c18–26). I am not completely certain how we should understand the line 依修定法說. This would seem to mean either that canonical or other descriptions of this practice occur in texts that also discuss *chan* practice, or more generally that methods of trance are necessary for those who wish to cultivate this form of repentance. I have tried to combine both of these meanings, as does Stevenson who translates as “repentance involving discernment of the signs is usually taught in conjunction with

What Zhiyi here calls the *Samyuktāgama* refers to the *Methods for Curing*,²¹² though in light of our analysis in chapter two it seems possible that Zhiyi also included the *Chan Essentials* in this category. In any event the meditation methods Zhiyi mentions here are presently found in the *Methods for Curing* within the ritual for healing violations of the precepts.²¹³

Zhiyi then explains that the “signs” (相) in question can appear in a variety of contexts, including as dreams, as visions obtained while performing rituals, or as visions obtained during meditation (in chapter four I will explore more closely the overlap between these categories). Then an interlocutor asks about the possibility of *false* signs caused by demons:

Question: Mara [the demon king] can also cause such signs to appear. How can one distinguish [between signs of attainment and those caused by Mara]?

Answer: Indeed, it is quite difficult to distinguish true [signs] from false ones, and one must thus not take [any signs] to be definitely true until they have been recognized by a master. Such matters must be decided in person, and cannot be judged on the basis of textual descriptions. For this reason when a practitioner is first carrying out such repentance practices he must have access to a skilled teacher who can distinguish the true from the false. When one sees the signs, *even when one witnesses them appear out of the blue* it is still hard to know if they are true or false. Those who read textual descriptions and then exert their minds in pursuit [of these signs] frequently fall prey to Mara.

Question: In that case is it appropriate to call it “repentance on the basis of contemplating the signs?” Answer: “Contemplating the signs” means merely that one strives assiduously in practice, and that when success is obtained the signs will appear. Judging based on them it will be known whether one’s sins have been eliminated or not. It does not mean that while practicing one should hold images in the mind (心存相事) and grasp them. If you practice like this you will be plagued by many demonic forces.²¹⁴

We thus see that according to Zhiyi the import of these “signs” is that they appear without premeditation. While actually experiencing such visions was of paramount importance, this experience was valued for the information that its occurrence communicated about the practitioner’s attainment, in this case meaning his successful purification. This explains why any

methods for cultivating meditative concentration” (Stevenson 1999, 469).

212It is clear from other passages that Zhiyi considered the *Methods for Curing* part of the *Samyuktāgama*, the *Za a han jing* 雜阿含經 (see chapter two), and indeed the extant versions of the *Methods for Curing* explicitly claim this by referring to the *Za a han jing* 雜阿含經 in a brief note inserted between the title and the body of the text. Presumably the copy that Zhiyi read was similar.

213Although above I cited only that portion of the *Methods for Curing* that Zhiyi calls the “contemplation of poisonous snakes,” the remainder of the ritual also includes a meditation on hell, and on the Buddha’s “white tuft of hair” 白毫, thus leaving no doubt about which section Zhiyi means.

214問曰：魔羅亦能作此等相，云何可別？答曰：實爾，邪正難別，不可定取。若相現時，良師乃識。事須面決，非可文載。是故行者初懺悔時，必須近善知識別邪正之人。復次夫見相者，忽然而觀，尚邪正難知。若逐文作心求之，多著魔也。問曰：若爾者，不應名觀相懺悔。答曰：言觀相者，但用心行道，功成相現，取此判之，便知罪滅不滅，非謂行道之時，心存相事而生取著。若如此用心，必定多來魔事。(T.1916:46.486a4–13)

attempt to willfully direct the mind towards the generation of such images is suspect.

Particularly noteworthy here is Zhiyi's description of how texts that describe these visions might be used—not as manuals for practice, but as arbiters of true visions. In other words Zhiyi imagines that, having had a vision, one might consult a text to see what it meant. This basic procedure is endorsed, even though it is specified that ultimately only a skilled master can differentiate between true and false. The danger, Zhiyi suggests, is that reading such texts will tempt a practitioner to take their descriptions of sought-for visions as prescriptions for practice, something that will be especially disastrous. “Visualization,” the conscious generation of specified mental images, is thus precisely what Zhiyi is urging his readers *not* to do.

Another way of saying this would be that texts such as the *Chan Essentials* were thought to contain not only instructions for meditation practice itself, but descriptions of its results. In this sense then framing these texts as “meditation manuals” might occasionally obscure as much as it illuminates. Perhaps better that we think of them, at least in part, as something more akin to handbooks for interpreting visions. It is worth noting that in such a case the skill possessed by the master, such as the master with whom Zhiyi recommends one consult about the meaning of any and all visions, is explicitly taken as comparable (but superior) to the information found in *chan* texts. This is something that we should consider in light of the importance in fifth- and sixth-century China of “*chan* scriptures” as key texts knowledge of which was necessary for *chan* masters (as discussed in chapter one). In other words the *chan* master's role may have sometimes been just as much about using knowledge of *chan* texts to interpret the meditative experiences of others as it was about personally reaching all of the attainments specified in those texts.

And though we cannot confidently reconstruct how any of these texts were used in the fifth and sixth centuries, the ethnographic present provides some potentially illuminating points of comparison. By way of conclusion to this chapter I will discuss one example of this, which concerns not the *Chan Essentials* or *Methods for Curing* but the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, which has remained important in many traditions of East Asian Buddhism. And though as discussed in chapter two there are reasons for thinking that this text was initially aimed at a slightly different audience than the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, among modern scholars they have all been seen as representative of a particular style of meditation practice popular in fifth-century China.

Accordingly the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is, as discussed above, generally interpreted as a set of instructions for “visualization” practice. Its technical vocabulary is almost identical to that in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, and the practitioner is instructed to “contemplate” (觀) or “imagine” (想) various features of Amitābha's pure-land. The text begins with the “contemplation” of an extremely simple object (the sun), progressively adding more details in a sequence of thirteen “contemplations” (觀). And as discussed above (p.146) this graduated structure is what prompted Alexander Soper to explain *guan* 觀 here as meaning “visualization,” the “systematic building-up of visual images, each as complete and precise as possible, in a sequence from the simple toward the complex.”²¹⁵

Yet in practice this is not the only way that the text has been read. Charles B. Jones, for example, has described his own interesting experience at the conclusion of a day-long retreat at a

215Soper 1959, 144

temple in Taiwan, in 1994. The retreat, in Jones' presentation, centered on the chanting of Amitābha's name, in both group sessions of oral invocation and silent periods of meditation.²¹⁶ As a personal note to his descriptive account of the retreat Jones adds that while riding home after the retreat in a taxi in Taipei he "suddenly had a vision" of the pure-land, complete with trees, ponds, the chirping of birds, and the rising sun.²¹⁷ This was, he reports, entirely unexpected and not the sort of thing that he had been prone to experiencing beforehand.

Jones went back to the temple and discussed this vision with temple residents. The leader of the retreat enthusiastically interpreted the experience as, in a general way, confirming the efficacy of Jones' practice during the retreat. But a different interpretation was given by a nun, who having heard Jones's description of the vision declared that he had experienced the first five contemplations of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*. She then urged him to keep up his practice so that he might attain the remainder as well. Jones then comments on this as follows:

First, there are some discrepancies between my vision and the description of Pure Land cultivation and content in the *Contemplation Sūtra* [the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*]. I clearly saw the rising sun, not the setting sun. Also, the vision came to me spontaneously, whereas the sūtra indicates that it is something one should deliberately cultivate . . . Identifying the vision with a certain step in a graduated program of visualization allowed [the nun] to interpret it as the Pure Land despite the lack of many details, notably the Buddha and his helpers.²¹⁸

Jones thus follows the usual interpretation and reads the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* as a "graduated program of visualization," such that the cultivation of such a vision in accordance with the text would be rather different than what he experienced in the taxi. But the nun evidently felt comfortable using the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* not as a manual for "visualization" (though she may well have also felt that the text could be used that way), but as a handbook to be consulted in the interpretation of spontaneous (or at least *sudden* and unpremeditated) visions. The text of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* itself, it should further be noted, was not used in the retreat in any way, and there does not seem to have been any implication that Jones himself had studied or read this text before.

In short this nun used the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, at least on this occasion, in a manner quite similar to what Zhiyi describes in the case of the *Methods for Curing*. In both cases what we might have been tempted to read as techniques of visualization practice have been interpreted as descriptions of possible attainments used to interpret the meaning and importance of sudden visions. This is not to say that in using the texts in this manner there was not felt to be a connection between the visions and the practice leading to them. Indeed had Jones not participated in the retreat his informants might have given a rather different interpretation. Clearly the vision he obtained was held to have been caused by his own hard work and practice. But between the work of practice and the resulting vision there was not felt to be any necessary phenomenological continuity of the kind that the English word "visualize" necessarily implies.

216Jones 2004

217*ibid.*, 276

218*ibid.*, 277

Chapter 4: Visions of Karma

Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that in fifth-century China success in *chan* practice was thought to be judged on the basis of visions, and that texts such as the *Five Gates*, *Chan Essentials*, and *Methods for Curing* served, in part, as repositories for descriptions of these visions. As I have suggested these visions should be thought of as “verificatory” because their significance was thought to lie in verifying something about the person to whom they appeared (the practitioner). Just what then did these visions verify? If, as I suggested in the introduction, Buddhist meditative experiences are to be understood as communicative events (and not merely sources of knowledge or “direct” experience), then what exactly did they communicate? Such questions begin to address a fundamental issue that is, I believe, not often asked—why did Buddhists practice meditation?

As a tentative first step towards answering these questions I begin this chapter with three stories of fifth-century Chinese monks. As hagiographies and miracle tales with a far broader intended audience than technical treatises such as the *Chan Essentials* or *Methods for Curing* these tales provide a very different vantage point from which to consider such questions. Nevertheless the understanding of *chan* presented in these stories turns out to have much in common with that found in more specialized sources.

The first story concerns Puheng 普恒 (401–479), remembered in the early sixth century as a skilled practitioner of *chan*:

[Puheng] lived alone in his cell and did not establish a community of followers. He cultivated purity and endeavored at *chan*, becoming adept at entering, exiting, and abiding [in *samādhi*]¹ . . . he claimed to be able to enter the fire-radiance *samādhi*, such that light streamed from his brow down to the adamantine extremity [at the bottom of the universe]. Within the light he would see various images, making clear the fruits of his karma [from] past lives.²

This story characterizes Puheng’s *chan* practice primarily in terms of the visions he obtained while in trance. But we also see here some hint as to what kind of information these visions conveyed—through them Puheng was able to understand something about his karma from past

1 The expression 善入出住, referring to mastery of *samādhi* or other kinds of meditation, appears to be a reference to a passage from Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Lotus Sutra* (T.262:9.41c17–18).

2 獨處一房，不立眷屬。習靖業禪，善入出住 . . . 自說入火光三昧，光從眉直下至金剛際。於光中見諸色像，先身業報頗亦明了。(Biographies of Eminent Monks, T.2059:50.399b19–22).

lives.

Our second tale features the monk Daojin 道進³ from the Northern Liang 北涼 kingdom. Daojin was a disciple of the early fifth-century Indian translator Dharmakṣema. After Dharmakṣema's death, Daojin followed the Liang court west to Gaochang 高昌 (modern Turfan) when it retreated during the Wei 魏 invasion of 439, and he was remembered later in south China as having established one of the first transmissions of the bodhisattva precepts.⁴ The following episode, recorded in Dharmakṣema's biography, discusses how Daojin first received the bodhisattva precepts under Dharmakṣema's tutelage:

[Daojin] wanted to receive the bodhisattva precepts from Dharmakṣema. Dharmakṣema said: "First repent your transgressions!" [Daojin] then repented assiduously for seven days and seven nights, but on the eighth day when he went to receive [the precepts] Dharmakṣema suddenly became angry. Daojin thought, "This must be because my karmic obstructions have not yet been eliminated." He then exerted himself strenuously for three years, alternating *chan* practice with rituals of repentance. Eventually while in trance Daojin saw Śākyamuni Buddha together with various great beings bestow upon him the precepts, and that night ten other people living there all had dreams of exactly what Daojin saw. He then went to Dharmakṣema to tell him, but as soon as he arrived within ten paces of him Dharmakṣema stood up suddenly and exclaimed, "Excellent! You have already been granted the precepts! I will now serve as your witness." Then, in the presence of a buddha-image, [Dharmakṣema] explained the precepts one by one.⁵

Although this story is important for a number of reasons,⁶ I want to highlight merely one point—that strenuous, long-term *chan* practice is here presented as something that, in conjunction with "repentance" (懺), might be necessary in order to purify a person of their "karmic obstructions" (業障) before receiving the (bodhisattva) precepts.

A slightly different connection between *chan* practice and rituals for receiving precepts is seen in a story involving Zhiyan 智嚴 who, as discussed briefly in chapter one, studied

3 Also known as Fajin 法進.

4 Funayama 1995, 14–21; Yamabe 2005, 19–24.

5 欲從識受菩薩戒。識云：且悔過。乃竭誠七日七夜，至第八日詣識求受，識忽大怒。進更思惟：但是我業障未消耳。乃勦力三年，且禪且懺，進即於定中見釋迦文佛與諸大士授己戒法。其夕同止十餘人，皆感夢如進所見。進欲詣識說之，未及至數十步，識驚起唱言：善哉善哉，已感戒矣，吾當更為汝作證。次第於佛像前為說戒相。(T.2059:50.336c19–27). For other translations of this passage see Shih 1968, 104; Yoshikawa and Funayama 2009–2010, 1:226–227; Yamabe 2005, 19–20.

6 This story has been much discussed in conjunction with the history of bodhisattva precept rituals, in particular the ritual for self-ordination found in key texts such as the *Brāhma Net Scripture* (*Fan wang jing* 梵網經). As seen here, Fajin does not actually receive the precepts from Dharmakṣema but rather directly from the Buddha, with Dharmakṣema merely serving as a witness (證). The manuals for receiving the bodhisattva precepts that began to circulate in south China during the Song dynasty contain provisions for those who wish to receive the bodhisattva precepts in this manner, and in such cases a master or preceptor is not necessary. For a discussion of these issues, see Funayama 1995. For a discussion of the importance of visions in such rituals, and on the possible connection between such rites and the Contemplation Scriptures, see Yamabe 2005.

meditation in Gandhāra in the late fourth century.⁷ Zhiyan eventually worked as a translator in the southern capital during the early years of the Song dynasty, but he apparently traveled back to India at the end of his life. The reasons for this are given in his biography as follows:

Long ago before becoming a monk Zhiyan had received the five precepts [of a layman], but he had not maintained them perfectly. Later he became a monk and received the full ordination, but he always harbored concerns that he had perhaps not actually obtained [the monastic] precepts, and was on this account perpetually in fear. Though he practiced *chan* contemplation for many years, he was not able to become clear about this matter. Eventually [Zhiyan] sailed back across the seas to India, where he inquired about this with various worthies. He met an arhat to whom he explained his situation, but the arhat was unable to judge whether or not [Zhiyan did in fact have the precepts]. So on [Zhiyan's] behalf [the arhat] entered trance and traveled to the Tuṣita heaven where he asked Maitreya, who declared that Zhiyan indeed had obtained the precepts. Zhiyan was overjoyed.⁸

While this episode has been more frequently discussed among Western scholars for what it says about the connection between *chan* practice and Maitreya worship,⁹ I am more interested here in the larger story—Zhiyan is concerned that he does not actually “have” (得) the precepts despite having undergone the ritual for ordination,¹⁰ and he first tries to resolve these doubts by practicing *chan*.

These stories, though by no means a complete picture of how *chan* was portrayed in fifth-century hagiographies and miracle tales, do reveal a number of interrelated concerns about what *chan* practice was like, what happened in it, and, perhaps most importantly, why people were thought to practice it.

For Puheng, visions are the primary indicator of successful *chan* practice, and the descriptions of his attainments would fit well within the *Chan Essentials* and related texts. But in addition to merely describing the content of these visions the story here mentions something about their meaning—through these visions Puheng learned about his “karmic recompense” (業報) from past lives. That the visions obtained through *chan* would reveal such matters is implicit in the second story as well, where Daojin verifies the elimination of his “karmic obstructions”

7 See p.48.

8 嚴昔未出家時，嘗受五戒，有所虧犯。後入道，受具足，常疑不得戒，每以為懼。積年禪觀而不能自了。遂更汎海，重到天竺，諮諸明達。值羅漢比丘，具以事問羅漢，不敢判決。乃為嚴入定，往兜率宮，諮彌勒，彌勒答云得戒。嚴大喜。(T.2059:50.339c5–12)

9 Demiéville 1954, 378

10 As Funayama Tōru has pointed out with reference to this story, the rapid influx in the early fifth century of new methods of ordination and multiple *prātimokṣa* codes seems to have produced acute anxiety about the validity of ordinations and whether or not the precepts (eventually interpreted as the “precept-essence” *jie ti* 戒體) had or had not been obtained (Funayama 1998, 272–273). This anxiety continued to reoccur throughout Chinese history. Just as Zhiyan in the above story, the Ming dynasty reformer Ouyi Zhixu was plagued by doubts about the validity of his ordination, and he invented a dice-based board game that allowed him to divine his karma and thereby determine that he did in fact “have” the precepts (Yü 1998, 944).

(業障), presented as a necessary precondition for receiving the bodhisattva precepts, by means of a vision obtained after three years of strenuous *chan* practice. A slightly different idea is seen in the final story. Here Zhiyan is concerned that his monastic ordination may be invalid because of having failed to properly purify his transgressions of the *upāsaka* (lay) precepts before ordination as a monk. To resolve this uncertainty Zhiyan practiced *chan* for many years. And though ultimately he seeks out a higher authority, the story presupposes that this question is one that *chan* practice was thought capable of answering.

These stories thus present the practice of *chan* as something that would help determine a practitioner's "karmic purity," an expression I use here to denote the kind of purity procured through confession and repentance of past transgressions of the precepts, what the Chinese called *chan hui* 懺悔. That the visions obtained through *chan* will convey information about "karmic purity" turns out to be a fundamental assumption not only of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, but of many if not most currents of fifth- and sixth-century Chinese Buddhism. Indeed as I will discuss in the first section of this chapter this understanding is foundational for the theories propounded by Zhiyi 智顓 (538–597), whose writings contain the most extensive discussion of *chan* of any medieval Chinese Buddhist author. Although scholars have often looked elsewhere for the sources of Zhiyi's approach to meditation, considered in terms of the information that basic meditative experiences were thought to communicate Zhiyi's formulations are in many ways the systematization and organization of a paradigm whose earliest surviving examples are the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*.

In technical meditation texts the connection between "karmic purity" and *chan* is based on the understanding that when those with "karmic obstructions" (*ye zhang* 業障) practice meditation they will experience inauspicious visions instead of the proper "verificatory visions." That *chan* could and indeed would provoke such visions had a number of important consequences. Thus, for example, it turns out that medieval Chinese sources in general describe the visions obtained through *chan* much as they do the visions obtained through other means, such as dreams or death-bed visions to name but a few relevant examples.

But most fundamentally that *chan* produced visions signifying karmic purity meant that the fruits of meditation practice were interpreted in relation to rituals of repentance. As I discussed in some detail in the introduction to this dissertation basic Buddhist doctrine does posit an inseparable connection between meditation (as either *dhyāna* or *bhāvanā*) and ritual practices of taking the precepts and atoning for their transgression. Nevertheless in normative discussions of the path to liberation this relationship is invariably taken to mean that meditation depends on the purity of one's *śīla* and that the telos of pure *śīla* is the "higher" practice of meditation. In fifth-century China, however, this relationship was in a certain sense inverted. Precisely because successful meditation, obtaining the correct "verificatory visions," depends on the purity of one's *śīla* the visions received through meditation were capable of revealing when one was still impure. In a manner of speaking meditation was thus understood as a kind of *divination* that would reveal otherwise hidden information about the results obtained through previous ritual practice or the need for further such rituals in the present.

Basic Meditative Experience According to Zhiyi

Although chronologically Zhiyi falls at the end of the time period covered in this dissertation, I will begin, rather than conclude with his writings on *chan* because they are far more systematized than anything found earlier. Having first grasped the basic features of his system we will then be in a better position to appreciate the elements in earlier material such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* that were most important and influential among later Chinese authors. The breadth of Zhiyi's writings on meditation is such that I cannot hope to analyze them comprehensively. I will therefore limit my comments here to Zhiyi's earliest composition, the *Explanation of the Sequential Path of Dhyāna Pāramitā* (*Shi chan bo luo mi ci di fa men* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門, *Explanation of the Sequential Path* hereafter).

Following the lead of the later Tiantai tradition modern scholars have often considered the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* to be Zhiyi's least significant work, little more than a "self-study project undertaken after departing from [his teacher] Huisi's side"¹¹ that does not yet reflect his mature vision. This understanding is even reflected in traditional hagiographies, which portray Zhiyi's final awakening as occurring seven years after the composition of this text.¹² Seen thus as little more than a scholastic exercise at best foreshadowing his later masterworks, it is not surprising that those interested in Zhiyi's understanding of meditation practice have often turned elsewhere, either to the *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mo he zhi guan* 摩訶止觀), generally considered Zhiyi's magnum opus of meditation theory, or for those seeking to determine the practical details of religious cultivation in the early Tiantai community, the ritual manuals for the "four forms of *samādhi*" (*si zhong san mei* 四種三昧).¹³

But if we are interested not so much in Zhiyi's personal genius, whatever exactly that may have been, but in the more general understanding of *chan* current in sixth-century China, the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* is an extremely important text, not least because it is the only surviving work dedicated to *chan* from this period.¹⁴ Indeed if our goal is to grasp the broad contours of the Chinese understanding of *chan* during this period, then precisely what has made this text less than fully interesting for scholars of later Tiantai—namely its lack of mature Tiantai doctrines—is a virtue, for it suggests that we can read the text as reflecting more than a specifically Tiantai understanding.¹⁵

11 McRae 1992, 346

12 Shinohara 1992, 121

13 Stevenson 1986; 1987

14 Like most Tiantai texts the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* was lost in China at the end of the Tang but was preserved in Japan, from where it was reintroduced in the late tenth century (Brose 2008). We know, however, that many similar works on *chan* were authored during the sixth century, but none of these have survived. The famous *chan* master Sengchou 僧稠 (480–560), for example, is said to have written a *Methods for Calming and Contemplation* (*Zhi guan fa* 止觀法) in two fascicles (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2060:50.554c11), and Zhiyi's teacher Huisi 慧思 wrote an *Essential Methods for the Sequential Practice of Chan* (*Ci di chan yao* 次第禪要; *ibid.*, T.2060:50.564a16–17), one of the inspirations for Zhiyi's *Explanation of the Sequential Path*.

15 This point has been recognized by Japanese scholars (Fukushima 1965a), though as I will show the extent to which many of these ideas can be traced to early fifth-century texts such as the *Chan Essentials* has not been appreciated.

Those few scholars who have examined the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* in detail have focused on its classification and systematization of the different (and at times varying) presentations of *chan* found in the Chinese translations of important Indian texts such as the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*.¹⁶ My own approach in the following section will be slightly different, and I will focus on how Zhiyi understood the nature and meaning of the experiences thought to occur during the course of basic meditation practice.

The *Explanation of the Sequential Path* is divided into seven parts. The first five sections, however, are little more than an introduction. The heart of the text is the sixth and seventh sections, “preliminary expedients” (前方便) and “cultivation and verification” (修證), which together occupy roughly 90% of the text.¹⁷ “Preliminary expedients” presents basic meditation practice and its results,¹⁸ and is further divided into “external” (外) and “internal” (內) methods. The “external” expedients here are what we might properly call preparatory practices. In later Tiantai treatises these are classified as the “twenty-five expedients” (二十五方便), and they include matters such as the proper posture for meditation and the need to refrain from excessive food and sleep. These are, in other words, the basic practical guidelines for seated meditation practice, and Zhiyi’s discussion of them here is the earliest surviving detailed presentation of this kind of instruction in Chinese Buddhism.

My focus, however, will lie not on these matters, but on what Zhiyi calls the “internal” expedients, for it is here that we come to the heart of basic *chan* practice.¹⁹ Zhiyi divides this section into five parts: 1) “the practice of calming” (止門), 2) “verifying [the presence of] roots of good and evil” (驗善惡根性), 3) “methods for pacifying the mind” (安心法), 4) “healing sickness” (治病患), and 5) “becoming aware of demonic interference” (覺魔事).

Of these five sections (1) and (2) provide the outline for how the introductory levels of meditation are obtained (or, as we will see, not attained). First, there are three basic ways to carry out “calming” (止), which when successful will lead to the first stage of trance (*chan* 禪).²⁰

16 See for example Andō 1957; McRae 1992, 343–345. Compared with Zhiyi’s later works the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* remains understudied. Concerning its textual history, the basic reference remains Satō 1961, 103–127. Other studies by Japanese scholars, which have tended to focus on the relationship between the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* and Zhiyi’s later works, include Tada 1976, Asada 1978, Nitta 1981, 26–110, Aoki 1989, and Ōno 1994, 111–128. The sole major study in English is Wang 2001. Ōno Hideto 大野崇人 is at present preparing a fully annotated modern Japanese translation of the text (the first of its kind), portions of which have been slowly appearing in Japanese journals over the past several years.

17 Zhiyi’s later summary of the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, the short manual often referred to as the *Lesser Calming and Contemplation* (*Xiao zhi guan* 小止觀), amounts to a summary of these two sections alone, which are reorganized and divided into ten new sections (Sekiguchi 1961, 40–42).

18 Helpful in my study of this section of the text has been Fukushima 1965b.

19 The *Lesser Calming and Contemplation* focuses most of its attention on these sections (Nitta 1981, 335–341). Indeed the development of Zhiyi’s presentation of meditation from the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* to the *Great Calming and Contemplation* can be analyzed as a gradual reorganization of this material (Andō 1968, 272–279).

20 In his later meditation treatises Zhiyi also includes methods for “contemplation,” *guan* 觀 (*vipāśyana*), in his description of the possible initial practices of meditation. Scholars have made much of this development, often interpreting it as a gradual transition in Zhiyi’s thought from an emphasis on *chan* 禪 as concentration meditation alone to his later emphasis on the joint application of *śamatha* and *vipāśyana* (*zhi guan* 止觀). See

First of these is “calming by way of fixing [the mind] to the object” (繫緣止). Here one fixes the mind to a part of the body such as the nose or navel and returns the mind to this point whenever it wanders. Second is “calming by way of suppressing the arising of thoughts” (制心止). In this approach rather than fixing one’s thoughts to a single point one simply prevents thoughts from arising at all. The third method is “calming by embodying ultimate truth” (體真止). Here one simply realizes the emptiness of all phenomena, and in the absence of false conceptualization about reality the mind naturally becomes calm.

According to Zhiyi these three methods can be used together in several possible configurations.²¹ Whatever approach one takes, when the mind is successfully calmed there next occurs what Zhiyi calls “verifying [the presence of] roots of good and evil” (驗善惡根性). Stated simply this means that the meditator will have a sudden experience of an either good or bad nature:

When a practitioner has properly practiced calming, thus quelling all his distracted thoughts, his mind will become still and pure. As a result of the stillness of his mind good roots (善根) from previous lives will spontaneously sprout forth. In the absence of good roots, evil roots will sprout forth. Thus a scripture says: First shake [the defilements] by means of concentration, then uproot them by means of wisdom.²² Thus is the practice of calming the first step. [When calm has been obtained] there will necessarily be a manifestation of either good or evil [roots]. It is necessary to carefully distinguish these because the practitioner must recognize them [when they appear] so that in taking hold of [the good ones] and casting away [the evil ones] he will be in conformity with the true path.²³

Zhiyi then proceeds to explain the different good and evil roots and the different experiences they produce. He begins with good roots, divided again into “outer” and “inner.” So-called “outer” roots are those generated by five kinds of good actions performed in previous lives:

for example Sekiguchi 1969, 123–142, who reads this as Zhiyi’s reaction to contemporaneous trends, perhaps including the nascent Chan school, that emphasized concentration (*zhi* 止, in other words *chan* 禪) alone as the only essential meditation method.

- 21 Four possibilities are given: 1) “depth” (淺深): in this approach, the three kinds of calming are deployed as a sequence from shallow to deep; 2) “mutually overcoming defects” (對治相破): here, each kind of calming is used to cure the defects of one of the others, such that one alternates between them; 3) “following one’s inclinations” (隨樂欲): some people naturally favor one of the methods more than the others and may thus follow it exclusively; 4) “following what is appropriate” (隨機宜): it may be that for a given person one method simply works better than the others and should thus be undertaken to the exclusion of the others.
- 22 This is a citation from the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (T.374:12.548b8). Note that this understanding of the relationship between calming (*śamatha*) and insight (*vipāśyana*) is somewhat different than the more normal understanding that calming temporarily suppress the defilements and insight severs them permanently. For Zhiyi, it would seem, calming serves not to temporarily suppress the defilements but actually to make their presence more noticeable in some way.
- 23 行人既能善修止門，息諸亂想，則其心澄靜。以心靜故，宿世善根自然開發。若無善者，則發諸惡法。故經云：先以定動，後以智拔。止為初門。善惡二事之中，必有其一。行者應當明識其相，取捨之間，不乖正道，故須分別。(T.1916:46.494a6–12)

charity (布施), keeping the precepts (持戒), obeying parents and elders (孝順父母師長), revering and making offerings to the Buddhist community (信敬三寶精勤供養), and reading or studying scriptures (讀誦聽學). The good roots such actions generate are “outer” because even though they are good deeds they are performed with a “non-concentrated mind” (散心). Such actions thus have no meditative component, and this contrasts with what Zhiyi will classify as “inner” good deeds, namely the cultivation of *chan* in previous lives.

Manifestation of both “outer” and “inner” good roots involves the sudden appearance of visions or unusual mental states that have a connection to the activity from previous lives that created the root in question. “Outer” roots, for example, manifest in the following ways:

[First], it may be that the practitioner, sitting in tranquility, suddenly sees things such as various kinds of clothing, bedding, food and drinks, precious treasures, fields and gardens, ponds and lakes, or carriages and chariots. Or else as a result of his mental tranquility he is suddenly able to let go of his greed and practice charity, with no remaining stinginess. Such [occurrences] are the manifestation of signs of the two kinds of good roots, “habit” (習) and “retribution” (報), associated with acts of charity in either a past life or in the present life.

Second, it may be that the practitioner, while dwelling in calm, suddenly sees various things such as his own body looking beautiful and lovely, or else wearing clean, pure clothing that conforms with the dharma,²⁴ or else as freshly purified through bathing, or else as obtaining beautiful and pure objects. Or else it may be that because of his calm mind restraint and patience arise in him, [or else he] suddenly understands the precise nature of minor and grave transgressions,²⁵ and fearful of committing even a minor transgression becomes yielding and humble. These are manifestations of signs of the two kinds of good roots, “habit” and “retribution,” associated with [maintenance of] the precepts in a past life or in the present life . . .

When the practitioner sees these various beautiful signs and produces these good mental states, this is not [yet] trance (禪). All such occurrences are phenomena produced in the present because of the power of a calm mind [on the basis of] virtuous actions cultivated with a non-concentrated mind, either in a past life or in the present life. When one sees various forms and appearances (相貌), this is a manifestation caused by [good] “retribution” (報). When various good mental states appear, this is the sprouting of good [roots] caused by “habit” (習).²⁶

24 Translation tentative. The point is perhaps that the practitioner sees himself dressed in proper monastic garb.

25 Literally “knows the light and recognizes the heavy.” The point would seem to be that the meditator has a sudden insight into what deeds constitute transgressions.

26 行者若坐中靜定，忽見種種衣服、臥具、飲食、珍寶、田園、池沼、車乘，如是等事。或復因心靜故，自能捨離慳貪心，行惠施，無所吝惜。當知此是過去今生布施習、報二種善根發相。二，行者若於止靜定之中，忽見自身相好端嚴，身所著衣清淨如法，洗浴清潔，得好淨物，見如是等事。或復因心靜故，發戒忍心，自然知輕識重，乃至小罪心生怖畏，忍辱謙卑。當知此是過去今生戒忍習、報二種善根發相也 . . . 行者見如是種種好相，及發諸善心者，此非禪定。多是過去今生於散心中，修諸功德，今以心靜力故，得發其事。見諸相貌，悉屬報因相，現善心開發，皆是習因善發也。(T.1916:46.494b17-c14)

To explain how the results of past actions manifest when the mind becomes calm Zhiyi introduces a distinction between “retribution” (*bao* 報) and “habit” (*xi* 習).²⁷ In the *Great Calming and Contemplation* Zhiyi explains these two modes of causality as follows:

The present arising of defilements is called the ‘habitual cause’ (習因). When these defilements [lead to] action, this is the ‘retributive cause’ (報因). When in the next life [similar] defilements arise again, this is the ‘habitual fruit’ (習果). The pain and suffering [experienced as a result of the past action] is the “retributive fruit” (報果).²⁸

Although this precise terminology is not drawn from any known source,²⁹ the problematic Zhiyi here addresses can be seen as the contrast between *karma* and *kleśa*. Evil actions (*karma*), which are preceded and inspired by unwholesome mental formations (*kleśa*), lead to future “retribution” as the *objective* circumstances that one encounters in the world. Meanwhile running on a parallel track is the serial continuity of the mind, and evil mental formations themselves, independent of the actions (*karma*) they may or may not inspire, reinforce similar tendencies in the future.

The manifestation of good or evil roots when the mind enters preliminary calm is explained using this same theory, with the difference that both good and evil actions are considered. These experiences are thus of two types. On the one hand the practitioner may suddenly experience subjective mental states that resemble those cultivated in the past, what Zhiyi calls “habit.” Having in the past practiced charity, and hence cultivated good states of mind possessed of generosity, in the present he suddenly experiences the arising of these same mental states. On the other hand he might experience what Zhiyi classifies as “retribution.” This, in essence, is a vision, the sudden appearance of *objects* of the mind.³⁰

Continuing now with Zhiyi’s presentation, functioning similarly to “outer” good roots are “inner” good roots, namely past practice of *chan*, and these are classified by way of the different methods that the practitioner may have used in his previous life (or at a previous time in the present life) to obtain trance (*dhyāna*). These follow the rubric of the so-called “five gates of *chan*” (五門禪): 1) breath meditation (阿那波那), 2) the contemplation of impurity (不淨觀), 3)

27 For a concise analysis of the meaning of these terms, see Stevenson 1987, 709n45. Stevenson suggests the translations “karmic influences of the habitually cultivated sort” (習因) and “karmic influences of the retributive sort” (報因). On these terms in Zhiyi’s writings see also Fukushima 1974, 280; Muranaka 2004.

28 今生煩惱起名習因。成業即報因。後生起煩惱名習果。苦痛名報果。(T.1911:46.112a29–b2).

29 Fukushima 1974, 280. As a possible source for these ideas Fukushima points to what in Sanskrit Abhidharma sources (and their Chinese translations) are known as the *niṣyanda-phala*, the effect that “flows out” from its cause and hence resembles it, and the *vipāka-phala*, the effect that is a “maturation” of its cause in the manner of a fruit appearing from a seed.

30 Note how the implied semiotics here are very different in these two cases. Manifestations due to “habit” signify the past root *iconically*—they are similar in kind and nature to that which gave rise to them. “Retribution,” on the other hand, is *symbolic*—such a vision of a pure monk’s robe that indicates pure maintenance of the precepts. Zhiyi recognized that these two kinds of experience require different interpretive strategies, and as he says in the *Great Calming and Contemplation*, “When [manifestations of] good or evil based on ‘habit’ appear they are easy to recognize. But when the signs [that are] good or evil retribution appear they are difficult to recognize” (T.1911:46.113b18).

the cultivation love (慈心), 4) the contemplation of dependent origination (因緣觀), and 5) the recollection of the Buddha (念佛). Each of these five is further subdivided into three, yielding a total of fifteen forms of *chan*. The details of this classification are complex, but the basic idea is the same in each case. For example the good root associated with past practice of “following the breath” (隨息), second of the three kinds of breath meditation, manifests as follows:

His mind immersed in [either of the two preliminary states of concentration], sense-sphere concentration or preliminary concentration,³¹ [the meditator] suddenly feels his breath—going in and going out, long or short, up until [he feels his breath going in and out] through the pores of his entire body. Then, with his mind’s eye, he suddenly sees within his body the thirty-six [impure things] as clearly as if he were to open up a granary and discern [the different seeds within] such as rice, millet, flax, and beans. He then feels a sudden delight, and experiences the joy of tranquility.³²

Other “inner” roots of good manifest in a similar manner with correspondingly different content. That associated with past practice of the contemplation of the nine stages of the decaying corpse (九想), first of the three kinds of contemplation of impurity, manifests as follows:

His mind immersed in the sense-sphere concentration or preliminary concentration, [the meditator] suddenly sees bloated corpses of men or women. He is then suddenly startled into understanding. He laments his past infatuations, and loathing all desirable sense objects forever refrains from approaching them. Or else he sees the appearance of the various [other kinds of corpses] such as the blue corpse, the bloody corpse, the pus-filled corpse, the chewed and hacked corpse, the dismembered corpse, the skeleton of white bones, or the scattered [bones]. Such is the manifestation of the root of good associated with the contemplation of the nine stages of the decaying corpse.³³

Meanwhile the root of good associated with past practice of the “white bone contemplation” (*bai gu guan* 白骨觀) will appear as follows:³⁴

31 Zhiyi classifies the state of preliminary calm (止) using two terms drawn from two different Indian exegetical traditions. “Sense-sphere concentration” (*yu jie ding* 欲界定) refers to a *dhyāna*-like state that is still technically within *kāma-dhātu* (rather than *rūpa-dhātu* to which *dhyāna* normally belongs). In China, the existence of this state was endorsed by the **Satyasiddhiśāstra* (*Cheng shi lun* 成實論; see for example T.1646:32.367c27–29), as well as the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.272a26). What I have here translated as “preliminary concentration” (*wei dao ding* 未到定; sometimes given as *wei dao di jing* 未到地定, or in post-Xuanzang translations, *wei zhi ding* 未至定) is what Sarvāstivādin sources know as the *anāgāmya-samādhi*. Although the names used are different, both of these concepts are functionally similar to what Pāli sources call “access concentration” (*upacāra-samādhi*). In all cases these refer to a state of concentration more advanced than ordinary consciousness but not yet the attainment of *dhyāna*.

32 於欲界未到靜定心中。忽然覺息出入長短。及遍身毛孔虛疎。即以心明見於身內三十六物。猶如開倉見穀粟麻荳等。心大驚喜。寂靜安快。(T.1916:46.495a20–24)

33 於欲界未到靜定心中，忽然見他男女死屍臃脹。爾時其心驚悟，自傷往昔昏迷，厭患所愛五欲，永不親近。或見青瘀、血塗、膿爛、噉殘、狼藉、白骨、散壞等相。此為九想善根發相。(T.1916:46.495b3–7)

34 Technically Zhiyi classifies this as the eight “liberations” (*bei she* 背捨), what Indic sources call the *vimokṣa*

His mind immersed in sense-sphere concentration or preliminary concentration, [the meditator] suddenly sees his own body as an impure, bloated, or dismembered [corpse]. Or else he sees his own body as a skeleton, from head to toe each bone connected to the next, the entire skeleton radiating bright light. His mind concentrated, he loathes all sense objects and no longer grasps his own self or that of others.³⁵

Like those associated with ordinary wholesome actions, “inner” good roots thus manifest when through the practice of calming (止) the practitioner reaches a preliminary level of tranquility. These roots are connected to the practitioner’s past attainment of trance (in one of fifteen possible ways). Indeed Zhiyi describes the manifestation of these good roots as, in essence, the spontaneous occurrence of experiences that when actually cultivating trance are topics or objects of conscious development. Thus the meditator might “suddenly” (忽然) experience a vision of the thirty-six impure elements of the body, of the nine kinds of corpses, or of his own body dissolving into a glowing skeleton. The very objects towards which the meditator consciously directs his mind when actually cultivating trance here manifest suddenly and unexpectedly, as “verification” (*yan* 驗) of the presence of the roots in question.³⁶

Although the details are more complex than this brief sketch can convey, this is Zhiyi’s basic understanding of the initial process of meditation, at least when it is successful (what happens when it is not successful will be discussed below). Zhiyi eventually gives several different possibilities for how one might next proceed. The simplest, however, involves taking the manifestation of good roots associated with a given method of trance as indicating the most suitable approach for further practice.³⁷ Thus one who experiences a sudden vision of the nine kinds of corpses has successfully used this method in a past life, so that beginning with it in the present will more readily result in progress.

Already we are thus able to discern a number of important parallels between Zhiyi’s approach to basic *chan* practice and texts such as the *Five Gates*, *Chan Essentials*, and *Methods for Curing*. For these texts and for Zhiyi the cultivation of *chan* leads to visions and other experiences that are profoundly *discontinuous* from the practices that produce them, and which, accordingly, are able to “verify” (*yan* 驗) or otherwise reveal hidden information about the practitioner. The distinction between *techniques* of meditation and the elaborate experiences that result is explained by Zhiyi as the contrast between basic mental concentration, “calming” (止), and the “verification” of good or evil roots that results. Notably in Zhiyi’s account these “verificatory visions” are not limited, as they are in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, to the appearance of patently symbolic images largely different than the normal objects of

(also translated into Chinese as *jie tuo* 解脫), but the content here is the same as what earlier sources called the “white bone contemplation.”

35 於欲界未到靜定心中，忽見內身不淨臃脹狼藉。或見自身白骨，從頭至足，節節相拄，乃至骨人光明顯耀。定心安隱，厭患五欲，不著我人。(T.1916:46.495b7–12)

36 The appearance of these visions, however, is understood to be more fleeting than they would be during actual trance. Indeed if such visions do not pass away quickly, they are most likely the result of demonic interference, not the practitioner’s past roots of good (T.1916:46.495a1–5).

37 T.1916:46.505a8–15

meditation. Thus Zhiyi here explains that in the initial stages of meditation even those objects that texts such as the *Chan Essentials* direct practitioners to “contemplate” or “imagine”—such as the internal organs of the body, or one’s own body as a skeleton—are first seen not by consciously directing the mind towards them (“visualization”), but as spontaneous visions that arise simply through the calming of the mind.

Indeed Zhiyi points to a broader distinction between trance-like states that arise spontaneously owing to the manifestation of roots from past lives and those that are deliberately cultivated by the practitioner. In a later section of the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* concerning “the non-fixity of the arising of *chan*” (發禪不定) Zhiyi explains this as the difference between states of trance that are similar to the practices that produce them, and those produced by practices of a different character:

Question: If one cultivates a “phenomenal” (事) practice of calming, one should produce only “phenomenal” (事) states of trance. How then is it possible to produce, [on the basis of phenomenal calming,] the various trances and *samādhis* that do not share this property, that is to say that are “principle” (理) or neither phenomenal nor principle?

Answer: There are two ways that trance can arise. First, cultivated and obtained through presently employed techniques (方便). Second, as the manifestation of roots of good from past lives. Phenomenal trance produced through phenomenal cultivation are for the most part cultivated and obtained [by presently employed techniques]. When principle or neither principle nor phenomenal trances and *samādhis* are produced on the basis of phenomenal cultivation practices *these are all cases of the manifestation of roots of good pertaining to the practice of trance in previous lives*. According to the usual way of reckoning, “cultivation” has two meanings: “cultivation that is obtaining,” and “cultivation that is activation.” Cultivation that is obtaining refers to [cultivating and obtaining] something that has never before been attained, while cultivation that is activation refers to [the manifestation] of something that had already been attained. The present matter is of a kind with this.³⁸

The immediate context here is Zhiyi’s attempt to classify the different kinds of trance using the *shi / li* (事理) paradigm (“phenomenal” and “principle”). Most importantly Zhiyi explains how it is possible for states of trance that involve insight into emptiness (“principle”) to arise on the basis of practices in which discernment of emptiness is not present (“phenomenal”). But this also seems to serve more generally to explain how a given state of trance can be in some significant way discontinuous from the practice that produces it.

As a general formulation of this Zhiyi introduces the distinction between “techniques” (方便) of cultivation and the manifestation of roots of good from past lives. It is the later category, what Zhiyi calls “cultivation that is activation” (行修) in contrast to “cultivation that is

38 問曰：若修事止，但應發事中禪定。今何得發理及非事理等諸禪三昧不共法耶。答曰：發禪有二種。一者，現前方便修得。二者，發宿世善根。若事修還發事禪者，多是修得。若事修而發理發非事非理等諸禪三昧者，悉是發宿世禪定善根也。如數人辨，有二種修義。一得修，二行修。得修名本所未得，行修名本已曾得，今此類然。(T.1916:46.499a15–23)

obtaining” (得修), that is able to give rise to states of trance very different in character from the practices that induce them. It is notable, I would suggest that basic, “phenomenal” calming (止) is the prime example of a practice that, if the proper roots from the past are present, might give rise to trance states of a more complex character.

The results of “cultivation that is activation” can be thought of as spontaneous in that their primary cause is not the meditator’s current effort but rather his karma (both “habitual” and “retributive”) from past lives. Zhiyi explains this technically by noting that roots from past lives are, in this case, the “primary cause” (*yin* 因) for the arising of trance, while the present practice of calming serves as the “supporting condition” (*yuan* 緣). Past-life attainment of trance is then likened to the seed, while present practice of calming is like the water that moistens it.³⁹ When roots of good from past lives manifest, they do so suddenly and without any apparent effort, as we have seen in the descriptions of the specific cases above. This is contrasted with the active cultivation of previously unattained things:

There are some practitioners, having in past lives cultivated and obtained the contemplation of impurity [up to the stage in which] the skeleton radiates white light, who in this life through the practice of calming give rise to the [initial stages of the] contemplation of impurity but have not yet produced the [final stage which is the] glowing white bones. In this situation it is said that [the manifestation of roots of good from past lives] is not complete. When [these roots] fully manifest [such that one sees the glowing white bones] then it is “complete.”

When the power of past practice [of trance] is used up, a practitioner will not make further progress through the cultivation of calming. [Instead] if he focuses his mind and contemplates the white bones, purifying the skeleton and cultivating without cease, then he will awaken, and following in accord with what he contemplates verificatory visions (境界) will gradually arise until he has fully completed the “contemplation” (觀), “purification” (練), “perfuming” (熏), and “cultivation” (修) [levels of trance associated with]⁴⁰ the eight liberations. This [sequence of progress] is something attained through diligent cultivation and practice in the present life, and has no connection with the manifestation of [roots of] good associated with practice in past lives.⁴¹

39 T.1916:46.500a22–25

40 “Contemplation” (觀), “purification” (練), “perfuming” (熏), and “cultivation” (修) refer to four stages whereby a given level of ordinary, worldly (世間) trance reaches its full development in “transcendent” (出世間) trance (Nitta 1981, 68–77). In Zhiyi’s writings the “contemplation of impurity” (不淨觀) is the first level of “transcendent” (出世間) trance, but the transition from “worldly” to “transcendent” occurs only at the level of the “glowing white bones” (白骨流光), third of the eight “liberations” (*vimokṣa*, 背捨). Between the initial stage of the first liberation, in which one simply sees one’s body as a skeleton, and the third stage in which the “transcendent” (出世間) level is reached, one must pass through the four practices of “contemplation” (觀), “purification” (練), “perfuming” (熏), and “cultivation” (修). In short it would appear that in this passage Zhiyi is describing a case where a person had, in a previous life, obtained the initial, “worldly” level of the contemplation of impurity but had not yet reached the “transcendent” level.

41 自有行人，宿世已經修，得不淨白骨流光，今於止中但發得不淨，未得白骨流光。此名不盡。若具足發者，名之為盡。若過去所習，勢分已盡，雖復修止，則不增進。若更專心諦觀白骨，練於骨人，研修不已，即覺，隨心所觀，境界漸漸開發，成八背捨觀、練、熏、修，悉皆具足。此即是今世善巧精勤修習

Thus while it does require effort of a certain kind to provoke the manifestation of levels of trance obtained in previous lives, namely the cultivation of calm (止), it does not require focusing the mind on the specific objects in question (such as the white bones). Rather the act of calming simply serves as the moisture, causing seeds accumulated in past lives to sprout of their own accord in the form of the appropriate visions. But when one has reached the limit of one's seeds a new approach is needed. Mere calming will no longer be sufficient and one must deliberately direct the mind towards the objects used in the higher levels of trance.

Before thinking more generally about Zhiyi's understanding of what kinds of experiences occur during basic meditation practice we must first look at what happens for those bereft of good roots. Those in this situation will not simply fail to experience anything significant. Indeed in this case the initial practice of calming still serves, using Zhiyi's imagery, as moisture for the sprouting of seeds. What sprouts, however, are "evil roots":

For some practitioners who practice meditation, owing to the gravity of their defilements (煩惱) and sins (罪垢), though they calm their minds and abide in tranquility none of the inner or outer roots of good described above will manifest. Rather they will experience only the arising of defilements (煩惱).⁴²

The obstructions that Zhiyi describes under the rubric "evil roots" are thus *not* those that prevent the practitioner from calming his or her mind, and the comparatively gross hindrances that impede even basic mental concentration are treated elsewhere (in the same section covering preliminaries to meditation such as posture and dietary regulation). What Zhiyi calls "evil roots" are, rather, deeper problems triggered by *successful* calming of the mind.

Good roots, it will be recalled were divided into "inner" (pertaining to meditation) and "outer" (not connected with meditation). Evil roots, in contrast, are classified only according to their opposition to the fifteen kinds of *chan*, which as discussed above is a refinement of the so-called "five gates of *chan*" (五門禪), namely breath-meditation, the contemplation of impurity, the cultivation of love, the contemplation of dependent origination, and recollection of the Buddha. These five methods serve as antidotes to the five "evil states" (惡法) of distracted thinking, lust, hatred, confusion, and finally "obstructions of evil karma" (惡業障), a five-fold list of hindrances to *chan* that seems to ultimately derive from Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture*.⁴³ By dividing each of these five hindrances into three, Zhiyi arrives at fifteen evil roots aligned with the fifteen kinds of *chan*.

It will be recalled that Zhiyi separated the manifestation of good roots into two components—"habit" (習) and "retribution" (報), "habit" being the appearance of positive mental qualities such as joy and concentration, and "retribution" being visions of various kinds, that is to say the manifestation of objects of consciousness as opposed to the quality of

之所成就，非關過去習因善發。(T.1916:46.500b7–15)

42 明惡根性發者。自有行人修禪定時，煩惱罪垢深重，雖復止心靜住，如上所說內外善法，都不發一事。唯覺煩惱起發。(T.1916:46.501b4–7)

43 Fujihira 1986; Andō 1988

consciousness itself. Zhiyi's analysis in the case of evil roots is somewhat different, and the contrast between "habit" and "retribution" is now used to categorize different classes of evil roots rather than the different components of a single root.

Thus the first four evil roots—distracted thinking, lust, hatred, and confusion—are considered to be "habit," while the fifth evil root, "obstructions of evil karma" (惡業障), is considered "retribution."⁴⁴ This division shows particularly clearly how Zhiyi uses the categories of "habit" and "retribution" in a way that formally captures the usual distinction between *kleśa* and *karma*, between the continuity of similar unwholesome mental tendencies in one lifetime or across lifetimes, and the generation of obstructive "objective" circumstances as karmic fruition (*vipāka*). What is remarkable, if somewhat unexpected, is that Zhiyi considers both of these to be equally problematic, even for a person already engaging in the practice of meditation.

The novelty of Zhiyi's understanding of such matters can be seen in his use of the canonical classification known as the three "obstructions" (*āvaraṇa*)—the obstruction of the defilements (*kleśāvaraṇa*; *fan nao zhang* 煩惱障), the obstruction of retribution (*vipākāvaraṇa*, *bao zhang* 報障), and the obstruction of [evil] karma (*karmāvaraṇa*, *ye zhang* 業障)—which Zhiyi deploys as another way of organizing the five kinds of evil roots. Zhiyi thus aligns the "obstruction of the defilements" with the manifestation of the evil roots of lust, hatred and confusion (the second, third, and fourth categories respectively), the "obstruction of retribution" with the evil root of distracted thinking (the first category), and the "obstruction of karmic obstructions" with the final category, the evil roots of "evil karma" (惡業):

We may now classify these five evil things [the five evil roots of distracted thinking, lust, hatred, confusion, and karmic obstructions] as the "three obstructions."

The first refers to the three poisons [of lust, hatred, and confusion], which constitute the obstruction of the defilements. These are forms of "habit" (習). In the case of equal balancing [of the three poisons] there is the condition of [agitated] thought.⁴⁵ This is a matter of having an unrefined mental disposition [by birth], and as such constitutes the obstruction of retribution.⁴⁶

[Finally] the three kinds of karmic obstructions [comprising the fifth category of evil roots] constitute the obstruction of karma. How can one know [that such manifestations are obstructions of karma]? If one has committed evil deeds in the past, then in the future one will experience unpleasant retribution. [But in the mean time] this evil [retribution that has not yet been experienced] is supported [in its existence] by that [past] deed. If a practitioner, before having experienced the retribution, cultivates good, then this good will be opposed by that evil [deed], and the [past evil] deed will then arise

44 T.1916:46.501a19–22

45 The defilement of "distracted thought" is elsewhere explained as resulting from an equal balance of the three root defilements of lust, hatred, and confusion.

46 Here "mental disposition" is literally "the four *skandha*" (四陰). Presumably this refers to the four non-material *skandha*. On the other hand this might also mean the *skandha* other than *samskāra-skandha*, for the *samskāra* might be thought of as, precisely, volitional impulses such as lust, hatred, and confusion. Regardless, the point would seem to be that the evil root of "distracted thinking" (覺觀) is somehow a matter of one's inborn disposition, and as such can be considered "retribution" (*vipāka*), in contrast to the "defilements" (*kleśa*) which are closer to the present exercise of will and intention.

bearing with it [some measure of] evil. This will then appear and obstruct the good [that the practitioner is currently cultivating]. For this reason this is a karmic obstruction.

These three obstructions obstruct all practitioners by preventing the arising of trance and wisdom, and for this reason they are called obstructions.⁴⁷

To appreciate the novelty of Zhiyi's understanding of the "three obstructions" we need only compare it with the way that this idea was normally used in the Indian Buddhist literature then available in China. Of particular note is Zhiyi's explanation of "karmic obstructions" (*ye zhang* 業障). In Indian Buddhist doctrinal texts the *karmāvaraṇa* is universally defined as the five heinous "sins of immediate retribution" (*ānantarya*), those transgressions that necessarily lead to hell in the next life. Such transgressions are held to be "obstructions" because, in as much as they determine one's next rebirth, they make further progress along the path in the present life impossible. Formally this means they block the practitioner's ability to obtain *dhyāna*, stream-entry, or anything else that would exert a determining influence on one's next rebirth.

For Zhiyi, however, "karmic obstructions" had a different or at least broader meaning.⁴⁸ Rather than a class of particularly evil transgressions, for Zhiyi they are the obstructions, that block trance, potentially caused by any and all "evil deeds" (惡). Crucially, the influence of these "karmic obstructions" is conceived of as something above and beyond the mere presence in the practitioner of the evil mental impulses such as lust, hatred and confusion (the "obstruction of the defilements"). It is also something other than one's innate physical or mental disposition (the "obstruction of retribution"). Nor, for that matter, does Zhiyi mean the *actual* ripening of the fruits of past evil actions in objective circumstances that might hinder one's ability to practice (such as illness or misfortune). "Karmic obstructions" refers rather to past evil karma, after it has been committed but before it has ripened in its fruit, which while in this state is somehow able to rise up and counteract a practitioner's attempts to cultivate trance.

How then do these "karmic obstructions" manifest during meditation practice? We should firstly note that Zhiyi considered karmic obstructions the most pernicious kind of "evil root," and he devotes most of his attention to it, while the other evil roots—those associated with lust, hatred, confusion, and distracted thinking—merit only a cursory discussion. This is no doubt because the manifestation of such things is self evident; when one experiences the arising of lust then this is the evil root associated with lust. Karmic obstructions, on the other hand, manifest in

47 今約此五不善法即合為三障。前三毒，即為習因煩惱障。等分之中覺觀亂法，即是麤四陰，故名為報障。三種障道，即為業障。何以知之？由過去造惡，未來應受惡報，即以業持此惡。若行者於未受報中間而修善者，善與惡乖，業即扶惡而起，來障於善，故知即是業障。如是三障，障一切行人禪定智慧不得開發，故名為障。(T.1916:46.502b2-9)

48 Modern dictionaries of East Asian Buddhism generally give only the canonical meaning of this word (*Mochizuki*, 1057; *Fo guang ci dian*, 5503). Sometimes we find the more general definition of any hindrance caused by evil karma (BGDJT, 407), but Zhiyi's more specialized usage of the term seems to have slipped through the cracks. Indeed the uniqueness of Zhiyi's treatment of the three *āvaraṇa* has generally not been appreciated, and many scholars have assumed that when Zhiyi mentions these three he is referring to the canonical categories. Thus, for example, the obstacle of retribution (*bao zhang* 報障) is taken as referring to inherent obstacles such as one's physical constitution, proclivity to illness and so forth (Stevenson 1986, 64). Although Zhiyi may well have intended these three obstacles to refer to the more usual categories as well, it is clear that in his system they also had a more specific meaning as a classification of the different kinds of problematic encounters that occur in meditation.

a far more diverse palette.⁴⁹

In keeping with his larger fifteen-fold classification Zhiyi divides the manifestation of karmic obstructions into three categories:

There are three ways that obstructions of evil karma arise. First is the obstruction of sunken torpor. In this case, a practitioner cultivates concentration, but when he tries to apply his mind he finds that he becomes dull and lethargic, forgetful and muddled, lacking in any power of discernment, and this obstructs the arising of trance . . .

Second is the obstruction of evil thinking. In this case a practitioner cultivates concentration, and though he is not dull and lethargic various evil thoughts arise, such as a desire to commit the ten evil actions, the four grave or five heinous [sins], or to abandon the precepts and return to lay life. [Such thoughts] continue without cease and obstruct the arising of trance . . .

Third is the obstruction of oppressive visions (境界逼迫). In this case a practitioner cultivates concentration, and though he does not experience either of the above two problems he feels a sudden bodily pain, as if something were oppressing him. Externally, he sees visions (境) such as [his own body] without a head, hands, feet or eyes, or else he sees torn [monks] robes, or else [he sees himself] sinking into the earth, or else his body burned by fire, or else he sees himself falling from a high cliff, [or else he sees] two mountains blocking [his path?], or *rākṣasa*-demons, tigers, and wolves.⁵⁰

The final category, “oppressive visions” is perhaps the most interesting, and only here do we find a clear parallel to the visions that appear as “retribution” (報) in the case of good roots. However rather than visions of pleasant scenes or of the objects of meditation cultivated in past lives, in this case the practitioner experiences frightening visions. And like those in the case of “outer” good roots these visions clearly have *symbolic* meaning, such as a torn monk’s robe seeming to indicate violation of the precepts, or a vision of sinking into the earth, perhaps indicating karma leading to rebirth in a lower realm.⁵¹ Although Zhiyi does not here explain the precise meaning of these visions apart from noting that they are “karmic obstructions,” in the *Great Calming and Contemplation* he discusses similar visions as “signs” (相) indicating violation of the precepts in past lives, and this is presumably the meaning here as well.⁵²

49 Once again we may fruitfully employ the contrast between iconic and symbolic communication. The presence of the evil root of “hatred” is communicated iconically through the arising of hatred. But karmic obstructions are symbolic, and only through a more complicated interpretation of the meaning of the vision can one know precisely what information it reveals.

50 惡業障道發相亦有三種 . . . 一沈昏闇蔽障者。行者於修定，欲用心之時，即便沈昏闇睡，無記瞪瞠，無所別知，障諸禪定不得開發 . . . 二惡念思惟障者。若行者欲修定時，雖不沈昏闇睡，而惡念心生，或念欲作十惡、四重、五逆，毀禁還俗等事，無時暫停，因是障諸禪定，不得開發 . . . 三境界逼迫障者。若行人於修定之時，雖無上事，而身或時卒痛，覺有逼迫之事。見諸外境，或見無頭、手、足，無眼、目等，或見衣裳破壞，或復陷入於地，或復火來燒身，或見高崖而復墮落，二山隔障，羅剎虎狼。
(T.1916:46.502a15–28)

51 The image of sinking into the earth recalls the story of Devadatta, who as retribution for his transgression of the *ānantarya* sins was swallowed up by the earth.

52 T.1911:46.113a

Although the above summary cannot do justice to the entirety of the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* it does, I would suggest, cover the essential elements of the initial stages of meditation practice as Zhiyi understood them. Although Zhiyi is aware of many different techniques for obtaining *dhyāna* (*chan* 禪), or “trance” as I have been translating it, he presents all meditation practice as beginning with the comparatively straightforward exercise of mental calming (止), which when successful leads to the spontaneous manifestation of good or evil visions. These visions are, Zhiyi says, the sudden sprouting, under the supporting influence of mental tranquility, of seeds laid down in past lives either through the practice of trance itself or through evil actions.

Within this system I would like to highlight three points. First, in the case of “inner” good roots the spontaneous manifestations are nearly identical to trance itself. Thus objects normally presented in meditation texts as things a practitioner should consciously imagine—such as the nine kinds of corpses—are here described as first appearing in the form of spontaneous visions. The unpremeditated nature of these visions is crucial. The entire point is that the practitioner does not know what good roots he has, but rather divines this information on the basis of what naturally arises to his calmed mind.

Second, for some people the same initial state of mental calm will produce an entirely different set of experiences, the manifestation of evil roots. Although I did not discuss them above Zhiyi also describes two other kinds of inauspicious experience that can take place at this moment—states of illness (*bing* 病), and the interference of demons (*mo* 魔). Demonic interference is especially pernicious because demons can cause visions nearly identical to the activation of good roots, and Zhiyi explains at length how these are to be differentiated, though in the end he suggests that only a skilled master can confidently discern the difference. In short the initial stages of meditation practice place the practitioner in an acutely sensitive state where he can expect to suddenly experience any number of different visions. Though he may, at such a moment, find himself suddenly transported into trance with a vision of, for example, a corpse, he may also have inauspicious or even dangerous encounters.

Third, and this is what I will explore in more detail in the remainder of this chapter, Zhiyi posits two complementary forces behind the production of these initial meditative experiences. The first, “habit” (*xi* 習), is responsible for the arising of subjective mental feelings and sensations such as happiness, tranquility, or agitation. The second, “retribution” (*bao* 報), produces visions (境). And though perhaps not limited entirely to these it is this later category in particular that is associated with the arising of “karmic obstructions” (業障), evil or otherwise inauspicious visions that manifest when the mind is calm.

In this chapter I will be particularly interested in Zhiyi’s notion that the sudden visions obtained through preliminary mental calming reveal, in some manner or another, the practitioner’s karma (here understood in the specific sense of what Zhiyi calls “retribution,” *bao* 報, something distinct from the proliferation and reproduction of evil or good “habits” of mind on the basis of past manifestations of those same habits). Indeed previous scholars have noted that Zhiyi’s emphasis on these “signs of karma” (*ye xiang* 業相), not just in the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* but in many of his other works, is prefigured neither in the surviving

writings of his teacher Huisi 慧思, nor in what are usually considered the main scriptural sources for his understanding of *chan* such as the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* or Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture*.⁵³

Accordingly many scholars have postulated that Zhiyi's interest in such matters must be understood in light of sixth-century Chinese Buddhist ritual practice, notably that associated with the so-called “*fang deng* masters” (方等師), a loose class of ritual masters specializing in repentance rites based on the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* (*Da fang deng tuo luo ni jing* 大方等陀羅尼經).⁵⁴ This text indeed stresses the importance of obtaining, in the course of one's ritual practice, “signs” (相) attesting to one's karmic purity or lack thereof.

Zhiyi's debt to these ritual traditions can hardly be doubted given that one of his “four forms of *samādhi*” rituals was based on the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*.⁵⁵ Nevertheless it has generally been supposed, especially by Japanese scholars, that Zhiyi did make a unique contribution to these traditions by incorporating seated meditation (*zuo chan* 坐禪) and various “meditative” exercises such as the contemplation of emptiness.⁵⁶ The argument, in short, is that Zhiyi inherited a broader tradition of ritual repentance aimed at “worldly” benefits effectuated through the elimination of sins, which he then reformulated into his *samādhi* rituals that, by including meditation, could be soteriologically effective in a properly Buddhist way.

The extent to which such developments can be attributed uniquely to Zhiyi is a complex question, a complete answer to which would involve examining, among other things, the entire history of Buddhist ritual practice, something that I am obviously in no position to do in the present context. Certainly it is true, as Dan Stevenson has noted, that for at least a hundred years prior to Zhiyi's time Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns who specialized in *chan* were also frequently remembered for their devotion to repentance rituals such as those based on the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*.⁵⁷ And though this suggests that *chan* and repentance were always connected, such that in practice Buddhists did not ignore one at the expense of the other, it remains true that Zhiyi's writings contain a seemingly unprecedented elaboration of the

53 Concerning the influence of the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* on Zhiyi's *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, see Andō 1957, 22–23. The *Treatise on Great Wisdom* is indeed cited by Zhiyi more than any other work (Asada 1978, 25). There is also some evidence that Zhiyi's teacher Huisi 慧思 and Huisi's teacher Huiwen 慧文 both relied on the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* for their understanding of *chan* (Andō 1968, 14–16). The *Meditation Scripture* also seems to have been influential (Andō 1988), and Zhiyi follows its formulation of the “five gates of *chan*” (五門禪) that includes *buddhānusmṛti* (*nian fo* 念佛), a version of this list not found in any of the known Indian versions.

54 Fukushima 1974

55 Shioiri 1959. On Zhiyi's debts to the broader ritual traditions of fifth- and sixth-century China, see also Stevenson 1987, which remains the best English introduction to early Tiantai ritual and meditative practice.

56 See for example Kobayashi 1993, 340, who observes that earlier Chinese repentance rituals, including those in texts such as the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, do not include this component. A similar point is made by Shioiri Ryōdō 塩入良道 (1959), who here and in many later publications argued that Zhiyi's innovation was his understanding that repentance rituals could lead directly to soteriological fruits, not merely to “worldly” benefits such as removing illness. This basic interpretation is followed by Kuo 1994, which remains the most comprehensive survey on Chinese Buddhist repentance practices in a Western language. Bruce Williams, however, has shown that many other groups, particularly those operating in Northeast China during the sixth century, also held that repentance could lead directly to soteriological fruits (Williams 2002; 2005).

57 Stevenson 1987, 175–188

theoretical and practical connections between meditation and repentance.

However almost all scholars who have investigated these questions have taken Zhiyi's incorporation of *chan* into rituals of repentance as something that can tell us how Zhiyi understood repentance. It has been less frequently asked what this might tell us about how *chan* itself was understood. Indeed Zhiyi's approach may stem less from any dissatisfaction on his part with the "worldly" aims of ordinary repentance rituals than it did with the fact that *chan* itself had, by Zhiyi's time, come to be seen as something that is fundamentally related to "karmic obstructions." This, at least, is the impression one gets from Zhiyi's technical writings on *chan* such as the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, where, as we have seen above, precisely what *chan* does, at least in its initial stages, is provoke visions and other experiences that are caused by one's past deeds, and which hence can serve as signs that reveal when karmic obstructions are present or absent.

And as I will now show this is precisely the understanding found in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, which from this perspective can be seen as the earliest surviving expositions of what would eventually become the basic fifth- and sixth-century Chinese understandings of what *chan* was all about.

Visions of Karma in the *Chan Essentials*

As discussed in chapter three, the distinctive feature of the *Five Gates*, *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* is their emphasis on what I have called "verificatory visions." Though these texts do also direct practitioners to consciously bring to mind a particular object or scene, they place far greater emphasis on the unpremeditated visions that will then appear as confirmation that the meditator has completed a given stage or reached a certain level. As seen above Zhiyi too considered *chan* practice, particularly its initial stages, to involve a large number of spontaneous visions. Indeed for Zhiyi even the objects of concentration typically assigned in different forms of basic Buddhist meditation, such as the internal body parts or the various different kinds of corpses, are at least initially not what the practitioner of meditation consciously brings to mind, but visions that arise when the mind is calm, caused by and therefore attesting to the practitioner's practice and attainment of similar methods of meditation in past lifetimes. For Zhiyi these visions reveal the presence of good or evil roots, in particular what he calls good and evil roots of the "retributive" (報) variety. Most interesting of these are what Zhiyi called "karmic obstructions," interference caused by past transgressions whose retribution has not yet been experienced and taking the form of inauspicious or evil visions.

In the following sections I will attempt to show that the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* share Zhiyi's basic understanding that past transgressions interfere with meditation practice and are revealed by inauspicious visions. While it is of course true that the mental defilements (*klesā*) that Buddhist meditation seeks to first suppress and then uproot are themselves inherited from the past, and are thus both hindrances to meditation and the fruits of karma in a broad sense, Zhiyi as we saw strictly differentiates such matters, classified as "habit" (習), from the "retribution" (報) provoked not just by past evil *thinking*, but by past

transgressions of the precepts. This distinction, moreover, had practical, ritual implications. Indeed while “habitual” problems such as lust or hatred are to be treated through application of the appropriate method of meditation, “karmic obstructions” are eliminated through rituals of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔), for which one must interrupt *chan* practice proper. In other words the experiences provoke by *chan* might indicate that the practitioner must stop meditation practice and instead perform rituals of repentance.

Moreover this understanding of the relationship between *chan* practice and rituals of repentance is very different from fifth-century *chan* texts translated (or likely translated) from Indic originals (such as Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* or Buddhahadra’s *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*), where repentance is presented only as a preliminary purification. However for Zhiyi, and as we will now see for the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, the need for repentance is something that *chan* practice itself reveals by stimulating visions that attest to the presence of karmic obstructions.

As discussed in the previous chapter in the *Chan Essentials* success in meditation is indicated by the appearance of “verificatory visions.” Failure to progress, however, does not merely result in the absence of such visions. Rather, hindrances are revealed through the occurrence of other, less desirable visions, and in many cases the proper response to these inauspicious visions is to repent (懺悔). Successful repentance is itself then revealed through the occurrence of new visions. A convenient place to begin our discussion of this is the passage from near the beginning of the *Chan Essentials* that we examined in the previous chapter:

- (1) Further, contemplate your small intestine, liver, lungs, spleen, and kidneys. Make them all liquify and flow into the large intestine and then out your throat onto the ground.
- (2) When this meditation is complete, you will see on the ground [a heap of] shit and piss, and various tapeworms crawling all over each other. Pus and blood flow from their impurity-filled mouths . . . [and] you will suddenly see yourself as snow-white [skeleton], all the joints connected.
- (3) If [on the other hand] you see a yellow or black [skeleton], you must repent your transgressions further. Having repented your transgressions you will see all the skin [which still remained] on your bones fall off, forming a pile on the ground that will grow gradually larger [until as big as a] monks bowl . . . it again gradually expands until [as big as] a large mountain. Various worms chew at this heap, pus and blood flowing [from their mouths]. Innumerable worms squirm about within the pus. You will further see this mountain of skin gradually decay until only a small amount remains and the worms vie with each other to eat it.⁵⁸

Thus having begun the “white bone contemplation” in the previous passage by imagining his body slowly stripped of its flesh, the meditator here concludes by evacuating the inside of his body as well. When this is successful he sees himself as a pure white skeleton (2). But he may instead have a vision of a yellow or a black skeleton, and this indicates that he must repent. The remainder of section (3) then describes what happens when repentance is successful—the

58 See chapter three p.180.

remaining skin falls away, seeming thus to indicate the purification of the yellow or black skeleton and its remnants of rotting flesh.⁵⁹

But the most important point is that the presence of hindrances that can be removed through the practice of repentance is here indicated by the appearance of particular visions. We now can see, moreover, why texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* might have devoted so many of their pages to describing visions that meditators were obviously not supposed to intentionally seek out—such visions must be recognized when they occur since they carry important information about the proper course of subsequent practice.

Although compared with Zhiyi's detailed classifications the *Chan Essentials* here, and elsewhere, does not provide much in the way of explanation for why particular visions occur or what they mean, we may infer that those visions indicating the need to repent (*chan hui* 懺悔) are at least analogous to what Zhiyi describes as “karmic obstructions.” And indeed in a few cases the *Chan Essentials* does say more directly that certain visions are caused by past transgression. The second contemplation, for example, begins with the white bone contemplation (1.32). The imagined skeleton then crumbles into scattered bones (1.33), and on this basis the practitioner contemplates the truth of non-self (1.34). But then the practitioner has a vision of a blazing fire, provoking both fear and various physical ailments (1.36). As we saw in chapter three, these kinds of negative experiences comprising inauspicious visions, negative emotions, and painful bodily sensations, are often countered through an “inverse contemplation” (*yi guan* 易觀), which in this case involves considering the origin of the terrible vision:

[The practitioner] must arouse his thoughts and think as follows: “During countless eons in the past I committed deeds [inspired by] heated passions, and pulled by that karma I now see this fire.” He must further think: “This fire arises from the four great elements. My body itself is empty, and the four great elements [that comprise it] have no master. This raging fire arises from emptiness adventitiously. My body the bodies of others are all also empty. This fire is produced by false imagination. What could it burn? Both my body and the fire are impermanent.”⁶⁰

Although the vision of the fire is here countered by considering it as “empty” and “produced by false imagination,” we also learn that the reason the practitioner now sees the fire is because he is “pulled by the karma” (業緣所牽) of his past evil actions.

In the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* the visions provoked by “karmic obstructions,” especially those described as “oppressive visions” (境界逼迫), often appeared to signify the presence of such obstructions in a patently symbolic manner, such as visions of a torn monk's robe indicating a transgression of the monastic precepts (see p.215). In the *Chan Essentials* too

59 Thus lingering sin is indicated by lingering flesh upon the bones. This brings to mind relics, whose purity resides in being bones from which all remnant of the fleshy body has been removed. We might also recall the more general observations of anthropologists concerning the symbolic contrast between flesh and bones (female versus male, death versus life, corruption versus permanence) found in many cultures where secondary burial is practiced (see for example Watson 1982).

60 當自起念而作是言：我於前世無數劫來，造熱惱法，業緣所牽，故使今者見此火起。復當作念。如此火者，從四大有。我身空寂，四大無主。此大猛火，橫從空起。我身他身，悉皆亦空。如此火者，從妄想生，為何所燒。我身及火，二皆無常。(1.37)

we find such ideas. In the fifth contemplation (1.51–1.55), the meditator first sees his body as filled with worms. But then:

When this meditation is complete he sees a giant *yakṣa*-demon, as big as a mountain, its hair wild and disheveled like a forest of brambles. Its sixty eyes [shine] like lightning. Its forty mouths each have two fangs like flaming pillars that point upwards, and tongues like sword-trees that reach to its knees. It attacks the practitioner with an iron club like a blade-mountain. [The practitioner sees] many other things like this. When he sees these things he becomes terrified, and his body and mind begin to tremble.

The appearance [of these visions results from] his roots of evil [consisting in] the violation of the precepts in a past life. Supposing what is not the self to be the self, what is impermanent to be permanent, and what is impure to be pure, he gave himself over to indulgence and became stained with attachment, craving all kinds of sensual pleasures. He wrongly imagined what is nothing but suffering to be pleasurable, mistakenly imagined what is in fact empty [to be non-empty], and imagined the impure body to be pure. Sustaining himself by means of an evil livelihood, he failed to consider impermanence.⁶¹

In the next passage the vision of this *yakṣa* is countered by contemplating its emptiness (1.54). But again we note that the appearance of the terrifying *yakṣa* is explained to be the result of violation of the precepts (禁戒) in a past life. Notable here as well is the expression “roots of evil” (惡根), the same term used by Zhiyi to describe the source of the inauspicious visions that appear during basic *chan* practice.

The *yakṣa* here is also described using several unusual images—his tongues are like “sword-trees” (劍樹) and his club like a “blade-mountain” (刀山). These two images are immediately recognizable as instruments of torture found in Buddhist hells. These and other similar images appear as part of the practitioner’s negative visions in other passages as well.⁶² While on the one hand we might imagine that a creative author was simply using colorful imagery to describe this *yakṣa*, it seems likely that the connection here is not accidental. Indeed the text rarely uses these images in their literal meanings, but rather treats them symbolically, as in the passage above where “sword-tree” is not a description of the landscape of hell but of the *yakṣa*’s tongue.⁶³ The images are thus symbolic, linking the vision to the problem of the practitioner’s evil karma and its potential result in the future.

In the remainder of the first sutra of the *Chan Essentials* several other passages similarly

61 此想成時，見大夜叉，身如大山，頭髮蓬亂，如棘刺林。有六十眼，猶如電光。有四十口，口有二牙，皆悉上出，猶如火幢。舌似劍樹，吐至于膝。手捉鐵棒，棒似刀山，如欲打人... 見此事時，極大驚怖，身心皆動。如此相貌，皆是前身毀犯禁戒諸惡根本。無我計我，無常計常，不淨計淨，放逸染著，貪受諸欲。於苦法中，橫生樂想。於空法中，起顛倒想。於不淨身，起於淨想。邪命自活，不計無常。(1.53)

62 For “sword-trees,” see also sections 5.98 and 5.100 of the *Methods for Curing*; for “blade mountains,” see 1.87, 1.108, 5.100; for “hot iron balls” (which sinners in hell are made to swallow as a form of torture), see 1.57.

63 We can, moreover, be reasonably sure that these images would have carried this specific meaning for readers of the text because there is at least one passage where the meditator actually has a vision of hell itself, and in this case these items appear in their literal meaning (4.29; 4.62).

link the practitioner's "sins" (罪) to evil visions. Of course how precisely we are to construe the meaning of "sin" in these cases is not always entirely clear. Thus, for example, in section 1.152 the meditator sees (inauspicious) visions of beautiful nymphs, and at this point he reflects that:

These appearances [to me while in trance] are caused by the sins of my evil karma from past lives. This is why I see these women. These women appear from emptiness as a result of my greed and attachment throughout countless lifetimes [based on] false imagination.⁶⁴

Thus the appearance of the vision is linked not only to past "sins of evil karma" (惡業罪), but more specifically to the mental defilements such as greed that presumably served as the past impulse for the evil action in question.

On the one hand we thus see here the deep connection between mental defilement and karma that is characteristic of Buddhist thought as a whole—not only is the karmic valence of action determined primarily by the mental state that accompanies it (the "intention" with which it is carried out), but present mental tendencies themselves are the traces, which later Buddhist doctrinal analysis would call the *vāsana* or "perfumed remnants," of similar mental states from the past. But on the other hand as we saw above in the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, Zhiyi, at least, had a sophisticated doctrinal scheme for distinguishing the influence of past actions as "habit" (習), namely the continuity of either mental defilements or wholesome mental tendencies, from their "retribution" (報) as either objective circumstances in the world or, in the context of meditation, the visions (literally, "objects," *jing* 境) that appear when the mind is calm. Although the *Chan Essentials* does not use Zhiyi's terminology, we may say that it does consider the primary source of the inauspicious visions to be something similar to what Zhiyi calls "karmic obstructions" since on most occasions it treats these visions as signs indicating the need to perform rituals of repentance,⁶⁵ not merely as signs of the need to cultivate antidotes to defiled mental states through the usual forms of meditation practice.

Considered thus in terms of their meaning, the *Chan Essentials* understands the inauspicious visions obtained during meditation to communicate information about the practitioner's "karmic obstructions." This seems to have had practical consequences for how meditation practice was actually carried out, or at least how this was portrayed ideally. Rather than a linear path taking place entirely through meditation itself, for the *Chan Essentials* progress is effectuated through a back-and-forth process whereby meditation provokes visions that indicate when repentance is necessary and successful repentance unlocks the higher attainments that had been previously blocked.

Thus in the final two sections of the first sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, having worked his way through all of the stages of the contemplation of impurity the practitioner obtains a vision of the seven buddhas of the past. These buddhas deliver teachings, and hearing them the practitioner immediately eradicates his defilements and becomes an arhat, an event verified by a

64 如此相貌，是我宿世惡業罪緣，故見此女。此女人者，是我妄想無數世時貪愛因緣，從虛妄見。(1.152)

65 This is the most usual response. See sections 1.15; 1.29; 1.95; 1.106; 1.134; 1.154; 1.164; and 1.170.

vision of the uprooting of the giant tree.⁶⁶ The process that apparently stimulates these visions is described as follows:

[The practitioner] should again fix his thoughts and contemplate that the body is suffering, empty, impermanent and not self, and that everything is empty. When he considers in this way, contemplating his body he does not see a body, contemplating his self he does not see a self, contemplating his mind he does not see a mind. He then suddenly sees the great earth, with its mountains, rivers, rocks, and cliffs, vanish entirely. When he emerges from trance, he is as if drunk or mad.

[The practitioner] must then devotedly cultivate repentance rituals, bowing and cleaning the ground, setting aside his contemplation practice. While he is bowing, even before he has raised his head [from the first bow] he will suddenly see the Tathāgata's true emanation. (真影). [The Tathāgata] will place his hand on [the practitioner's] head and commend him: "Oh Dharma-child, well done, well done! You have today properly contemplated the teaching of emptiness [taught by] the buddhas."⁶⁷

The basic sequence here follows the usual pattern. In the previous passage the meditator had contemplated emptiness and impermanence (1.160), and as a result he obtained a vision of the tree of the defilements beginning to shake (1.161). The meditator then continues and, in the above passage, contemplates suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. As a result he has another vision, or more accurately a non-vision—contemplating his body and mind he simply does not see there to be anything at all, a "vision" of nothingness that then extends to the entire universe. But then something inauspicious occurs, and he is driven into a state of near-madness.

The solution, as in most of the earlier passages where inauspicious visions or other experiences occurred, is repentance, specifically described here as putting aside meditation practice to perform a variety of ritual actions (in chapter five we will see further examples of what these rituals might have been like). The success of these rites is then confirmed by the appearance of the Buddha's "true emanation" (真影) who will eventually deliver the teachings that lead the practitioner to arhatship.⁶⁸ The appearance here of the Buddha's "emanation" thus

66 On the "narrative of the tree" as I have called it, which instantiates the meditator's progress through visions of a giant tree being attacked by elephants and defended by demons, see chapter 3 p.185–186.

67 復還繫念。觀身苦空無常無我，悉亦皆空。作是思惟時，觀身不見身，觀我不見我，觀心不見心。爾時忽然見此大地，山河石壁，一切悉無。出定之時，如癡醉人。應當至心，修懺悔法，禮拜塗地，放捨此觀。禮拜之時，未舉頭頃，自然得見如來真影。以手摩頭讚言：法子，善哉善哉，汝今善觀諸佛空法。(1.163–1.164)

68 The notion of the Buddha's "emanation" (*ying* 影) is best known in medieval Chinese Buddhist sources in connection with what is often translated as the "cave of the Buddha's shadow" (佛影窟), a pilgrimage site in the mountains around Nagarāhāra (modern Jalalabad, Afghanistan) where the Buddha supposedly left his "shadow" on the wall of a cave, said to appear to devotees on certain occasions. First mentioned in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, the "cave of the Buddha's shadow" was visited by numerous Chinese Buddhist pilgrims to India, and Huiyuan of Mt. Lu even supposedly constructed a replica of this cave, though what precisely this was is not clear (Rhie 2002, 113–137; Murata 2009). Although in this context the word *ying* 影 has usually been translated as "shadow," this does not seem to accurately convey the sense. While a full treatment of the term and its significance requires more study, we may note a few points here.

represents the culmination of the entire first sutra,⁶⁹ and it occurs while the practitioner is performing his rite of repentance, while bowing. Even though the meditator had contemplated emptiness, impermanence, and other key notions realization of which is normally taken as one of the highest achievements of Buddhist meditation, his attainment is somehow blocked, and can only be unlocked by a ritual of repentance.

Thus on the one hand the presence of karmic obstructions necessitating repentance provokes inauspicious visions and blocks auspicious ones. In principle repentance thus serves only negatively, to eliminate these obstacles. However as seen in the above example the order of events is such that the appearance of auspicious visions comes to effectively signal successful repentance. Accordingly the impression afforded by the *Chan Essentials* is that repentance is not merely a side activity used to eliminate obstacles before returning to the main task of meditation. Even less is it merely a preliminary purification. Rather repentance itself comes to serve as a principal (or even *the* principal) causal factor that leads the practitioner forward, so much so that final confirmation of successful practice and the attainment of the highest fruits of the path was expected to take place in the midst of a repentance ritual, not while sitting in the calm of meditation.

The remainder of the *Chan Essentials* reveals a comparable understanding of the

One key reference that helps understand how this term is used here in the *Chan Essentials* and perhaps in other fifth-century Chinese sources as well is the biography in the *Records of Mt. Lu* (*Lu shan ji* 廬山記) of Liu Yimin 劉移民, one of Huiyuan's principal aristocratic followers. In this story the term *zhen ying* 真影 (translated above as "true emanation") denotes the vision of the Buddha granted to Liu Yimin during the course of the ritual known as the *Nian fo san mei* 念佛三昧 (T.2095:51.1039c11). The late date of the *Records of Mt. Lu* is perhaps somewhat problematic. Other versions of this same story are recorded in two texts that can be dated to the fifth century (Ji 2007, 288–293): (1) a letter from Huiyuan to Liu Yimin preserved in the *Extended Records of Proselytizing* (*Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集), and (2) the short biography of Liu Yimin in the surviving fragments of Liu Yiqing's 劉義慶 (403–444) *Compendium of Reported Miracles* (*Xuan yan ji* 宣驗集). All of these sources agree that Liu Yimin had a vision of the Buddha, but only the *Records of Mt. Lu* uses the term *zhen ying* 真影, the word found in the *Chan Essentials*. From these contexts, however, it would seem that the Buddha's "true emanation" is the form of the Buddha that appears to a practitioner in a vision. That this is the best way to understand the notion of an "emanation" (影) is further suggested by the use of the often interchangeable *jing* 景 in fourth- and fifth-century Daoist sources, where it means something like "iridescent emanation" (Kaltenmark 1969). As Kaltenmark observes, the root meaning of the term is not shadow, but "light" (*guang* 光), and it is used to describe, among other things, the light of heavenly bodies. By extension the term refers to these asterisms as the dwelling places of the gods, and in Daoist meditation texts, notably the famous *Scripture of the Inner Landscape of the Yellow Court* (*Huang ting nei jing jing* 黃庭內景經) the adept contemplates the "illuminated landscape" of his own body, a process that Kaltenmark interprets as making the body have the same purity and luminescence as the stars, and hence making the gods who dwell in those stars descend into the practitioner's body.

Thus while *ying* 影 can refer to a "shadow," the term itself does not mean shadow but something *cast* by a body, be it light or darkness, and hence I have chosen the word "emanation." In the context of the *Chan Essentials* and other fifth-century meditation texts the idea seems to be that this is the form of the Buddha that the practitioner can hope to meet in meditation, and unlike the many other "transformation buddhas" (化佛) that the practitioner sees but then negates as empty, in the *Chan Essentials* the Buddha's "emanation" is apparently something more substantial, as it does not ever disappear, and it eventually instructs the practitioner in teachings that lead directly to awakening.

69 This much is said explicitly in section 1.179.

relationship between “karmic obstructions” and inauspicious visions obtained during trance, and a similar emphasis on rituals of repentance as an integral force effectuating progress along the path. The second sutra is even framed as a special method of meditation that will enable those with grave sins (*zhong zui* 重罪) to achieve liberation. In the opening narrative the monk Nandika, a figure well-known from the *vinaya* as a forest-dwelling meditator who broke the precept against celibacy (and hence something of a grave sinner himself),⁷⁰ introduces the method with the following question:

[Nandika] arose from his seat, arranged his robes, and clasping his hands together knelt on both knees and said to the Buddha: “Today the Tathāgatha has appeared in the world and brings peace and benefit to all. But after the Buddha has passed into extinction and is no longer present, when those among the four groups of followers who have many karmic obstructions (業障) fix their thoughts, the verificatory vision (境界) will not appear to them. Those who wish to repent these afflictions and sins ranging from the violation of the *duṣkṛta* [offenses]⁷¹ up to the grave sins, how should they proceed so as to extinguish the signs of their sins?⁷² Further if [those who have committed the ten evil deeds ranging from] killing living beings [up to] having false views⁷³ wish to cultivate right mindfulness, how should they proceed so as to extinguish the obstructions of their defilements and the evil deeds of killing living beings [up to] having false views?”⁷⁴

Meditators with “karmic obstructions” (業障) will thus not obtain the proper “verificatory vision” (境界); in other words their meditation will not be successful, and for such people a special method is necessary.

Of course it is the standard Buddhist understanding that prior to starting meditation practice one must atone for any transgression of the precepts, and as discussed in the introduction this constitutes a key implication of the traditional notion that meditation depends on purity of *śīla*, meaning both ordination of some kind and successful purification through repentance when necessary. It is moreover evident that the meaning of “karmic obstructions” here is closely related to the idea of impure *śīla*, and the text uses technical *vinaya* terminology (such as *duṣkṛta*; 突吉羅) to denote the kinds of transgressions that might be at issue.

What makes the *Chan Essentials* noteworthy, however, is that the method eventually

70 For further details on Nandika, see chapter five and appendix one.

71 The *duṣkṛta* offenses are the lowest grade of transgression for monks and nuns, and according to the *vinaya* they can be expiated through simple confession, either to a single person or even to oneself.

72 Here “signs of their sins” may refer simply to the practitioner’s state of impurity, and in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* we find the word used in this way (T.643:15.655b15–20). However in some of Zhiyi’s writings we find this term used specifically to refer to the inauspicious visions that appear during meditation to those with transgressions (see for example *Fa hua san mei chan yi* 法華三昧懺儀, T.1941:46.954c23–27).

73 This must refer to the “ten courses of evil action” (*akuśalakarmapāṭha*), only the first and last of which are mentioned here. (See *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.589a7–8, where these ten are indicated in a similar manner.)

74 即從坐起，正衣服，叉手長跪，而白佛言：如來今者，現在世間，利安一切。佛滅度後，佛不現在，諸四部眾，有業障者，若繫念時，境界不現在前。如是煩惱，及一切罪，犯突吉羅乃至重罪，欲懺悔者，當云何滅是諸罪相。若復有人殺生、邪見，欲修正念，當云何滅邪見殺生惡、煩惱障。(2.2)

given to help sinful meditators is not so much a novel method for eliminating their obstructions as it is a method of meditation that will reveal precisely when such obstructions are present. The meditator thus begins by “contemplating the Buddha” (*guan fo* 觀佛), here given as a step-by-step meditation on the physical components of a buddha-image. By doing this the practitioner eventually comes to “see” the statue in his mind in all its blazing glory (2.14). But within the light of the statue there may appear “various impurities” (2.15), explained as “occurring owing to retribution for past sin” (從罪報得). These indicate that the practitioner must then perform various rituals of repentance.

Thus as in the first sutra the visions obtained while attempting to enter trance indicate whether or not the practitioner needs to repent, and as a result progress through the meditation itself is depicted as something triggered by repentance. Thus after the initial rounds of successful repentance the practitioner comes to see various seated buddha-images, but he then considers:

When the World-honored One was in the world he carried his bowl and staff, entered villages to beg for food, traveled everywhere to teach so as to bring blessings and salvation to living beings. Today I have seen only the image [of the Buddha while] seated, I have not seen the image [of the Buddha while] walking. What sin (罪) did I commit in a past life [such that this is the case]?⁷⁵

The meditator’s failure to progress beyond his vision of the “seated image” (坐像) to a vision of the “walking image” (行像) is thus attributed to some “sin” (罪) from a past life (here perhaps in contrast to the initial sins which seem to have been transgressions of the precepts in the present life), and this problem is addressed by further repentance which when successful provokes a vision of the walking Buddha (2.18) followed by the reclining Buddha (2.20).

Thus while the Buddha initially said to Nandika that by contemplating the image (*guan xiang* 觀像) of the Buddha “monks, nuns, laymen or laywomen who wish to repent and destroy their sins can quickly purify all of their evil, sinful karma,”⁷⁶ this does not seem to mean that “contemplating the image” is itself a technique for eliminating sin. Knowledge of standard methods of repentance is rather presumed. What the *Chan Essentials* offers, in contrast, is a description of the possible visions that meditators will experience and, more crucially, information about which visions indicate the need for repentance and which visions indicate that “karmic obstructions” have been eliminated. At times it is explicit that this is the principal message conveyed by the visions:

He must then make further effort and not allow his mind to slacken. He will then see a cloud-like light circle his body seven times. Each [circle of] light transforms into a wheel of light, within which he will spontaneously see the fundamental signs of the twelve [links of the chain of] conditions. If, however, he is not zealous in his practice, and giving way to indulgence has violated [any of the] minor precepts even including the

75 世尊在世，執鉢持錫，入里乞食，處處遊化，以福度眾生。我於今日，但見坐像，不見行像，宿有何罪。(2.17)

76 佛告禪難提，及勅阿難：佛滅度後，若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，欲懺悔者，欲滅罪者，佛雖不在，繫念諦觀形像者，諸惡罪業，速得清淨。(2.23)

duṣkṛta sins, then he will see this light as black in color, like a wall, or ash-colored. Or else he will see this light as like an old torn monk's robe. Because he has given free reign to his mind and taken lightly the importance of the minor sins,⁷⁷ the light of undefiled sanctity is therefore obscured.

... [the practitioner] must diligently maintain the precepts, upholding them single-mindedly. He must take even minor violations very seriously, remorsefully repenting, being careful not to conceal even tiny violations. If he conceals such a violation, then [in his meditation] he will see the various radiant lights as like rotten wood. When he sees this, *then it can be known that he has violated the precepts*.

He must then further arouse shame and remorse, repent, and rebuke himself. [He must] sweep the sanctuary, clean the floors, and perform various menial chores. Further he must make offerings and do reverence to his teachers and parents. He must look upon his teachers and his parents as if they were the Buddha, giving rise to deep reverence. Further regarding his teachers and parents he should make the following vow: "Today I make offerings to my teachers and parents. May the merit obtained thereby lead to liberation in every lifetime." Having remorsefully cultivated merit in this manner, he should count his breaths as before. [Thereupon] he will again see the light, lovely and radiant, just as it was before [he violated the precepts].⁷⁸

In short the reason for providing descriptions of these impure visions is so that those who are meditating can know when transgressions have occurred. At the same time it is implied that knowledge of such matters was expected to be at least slightly esoteric. Whether or not the practitioner had violated the precepts, even in the present life, was a question whose answer was not thought to be obvious, something that one might need to divine through the interpretation of visions.⁷⁹ We may again note here that the visions bearing such meaning are at times overtly symbolic, such as the "torn monk's robe" see above, an image also mentioned by Zhiyi in his list of the "oppressive visions" produced by karmic obstructions.⁸⁰

77 This is reminiscent of a famous passage from the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* that is much cited by later Chinese Buddhist authors: "Do not think lightly of small offenses, imagining them to be blameless. However small the drops of water, they eventually fill the bowl." 莫輕小罪，以為無殃，水滯雖微，漸盈大器 (T.374:12.451c24–25).

78 復更精進，心不懈息，見光如雲，繞身七匝。其一光，化成光輪，於光輪中，自然當見十二因緣根本相貌。若不精進，懈怠懶惰犯於輕戒乃至突吉羅罪，見光即黑，猶如牆壁。或見此光，猶如灰炭。復見此光，似敗故衲。由意縱逸輕小罪故，障蔽賢聖無漏光明...當勤持戒，一心攝持，於小罪中，應生慙重，慙愧懺悔，乃至小罪，慎勿覆藏。若覆藏罪，見諸光明，如朽敗木。見此事時，即知犯戒。復更慙愧，懺悔自責，掃兜婆，塗地，作諸苦役。復當供養恭敬師長、父母。於師、父母，視如佛想，極生恭敬。復從師、父母，求弘誓願，而作是言：我今供養師長、父母，以此功德，願我世世，恒得解脫。如是慙愧，修功德已，如前數息，還見此光，明顯可愛，如前無異。(2.43–2.45)

79 When we consider the complexity of the *vinaya* rules it is not surprising that whether or not a violation had occurred was not always obvious. But perhaps most fundamentally the Buddhist tendency, both in assessing moral valence in general and in classifying transgressions in the *vinaya*, of relying on the perpetrator's intention to determine the nature or existence of the crime seems to have made such questions difficult. Although in the *vinaya* itself the matter is usually presented rather clearly—the Buddha simply asks the person in question what mental state they had at the moment of the deed in question—things surely did not proceed with this much ease in practice.

80 See above p.215.

Thus for the *Chan Essentials*, as for Zhiyi, the presence or absence of “karmic obstructions,” something distinct from the mere manifestation of negative mental tendencies such as greed, hatred, or confusion, must be determined through special methods. Meditation practice seems to have been one of these methods, and by entering trance, or more precisely by trying to enter trance, a practitioner could gain access to visions that would convey this information.

But perhaps the most important point is what the *Chan Essentials* reveals about the practical relationship between meditation and repentance. As we have seen, using repentance to eliminate “karmic obstructions” was apparently not simply a preliminary practice prior to commencing meditation. Rather the entire path of meditation, from the initial method of mental concentration up to the attainment of arhatship, was thought to be punctuated by sudden, inauspicious visions or other negative states understood as “karmic obstructions” that would block access to higher levels of attainment, and necessitate putting aside formal meditation practice and engaging in rituals of repentance. The *Chan Essentials* thus reveals that the basic assumptions about the relationship between meditation and repentance seen in Zhiyi’s *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, and indeed throughout Zhiyi’s ritual corpus, were indeed part of common Chinese understanding from at least the first half of the fifth century.

In terms of the development of these practices in China we can begin to get a glimpse of what might have been novel about the *Chan Essentials* by comparing its treatment of the relationship between meditation and repentance first with the *Five Gates*, which as discussed in chapter two is a fragmentary example of the material used to compose the *Chan Essentials*, and secondly with texts such as Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*.

Although as discussed in chapter one the “format A” sections of the *Five Gates* devote almost all of their attention to describing the visions that practitioners of meditation will or should encounter, there is little discussion of what these visions mean, though it is certainly implied that having the specified visions constitutes progress. There are, moreover, almost no descriptions of negative or inauspicious visions.⁸¹ In general we find simply a serial list of what the practitioner should contemplate (*guan* 觀) or bring to mind (*nian* 念) followed by the things he must see (*jian* 見) or feel (*jue* 覺) before the master may continue with the instructions.

We do however find a few cases where, as in the *Chan Essentials*, the content of the practitioner’s visions serves as a kind of divination. In one such passage, examined previously in chapter one, the practitioner “contemplates the Buddha” (觀佛) so as to stimulate a vision that the meditation teacher will then use to determine if the practitioner should follow the bodhisattva or *śrāvaka* path:

The master should say: “Go back to your seat. Concentrate the mind on your forehead, and single-mindedly bring to mind the buddha.”

[When the practitioner does this] images of buddhas appear on his forehead, from one up to uncountable numbers. If the buddhas seen by the practitioner emerge from his forehead, go a short distance away from him, and then return, the instructing teacher should know that this person is someone who seeks [the path of] the *śrāvaka*. If [the

81 We do find a few passing references to visions that are “not true” (T.619:15.328c13–20).

buddhas] go somewhat far away and then return, [the practitioner] is someone who seeks [the path of] the pratyekabuddha. If they go [very] far away and then return, he is a person of the Great Vehicle.⁸²

Although what consequences this might have for future instruction are not explained, the basic understanding is similar to the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*—preliminary meditation triggers visions that reveal something about the practitioner’s past “good roots” or absence of them.

In the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, it will be recalled, such visions help determine which methods of meditation the practitioner had mastered in past lives, so that it can be known which methods will be suitable in the present. We find a similar understanding in the *Five Gates*. Having first performed a preliminary meditation of “contemplation of the Buddha” the meditator must “contemplate his own body.” This results in visions used to divine which method of *chan* the practitioner should then pursue:

Then [the practitioner] should again contemplate his own body. If he sees impure pus and blood, instruct him to perform the contemplation of impurity. If he sees white bones, instruct him to perform the white bone contemplation. If he sees suffering sentient beings, instruct him to perform the cultivation of love. If he does not see any of these things, he must again contemplate a single buddha [as described in the previous passage] and begging for pity [must] repent. This is the method whereby beginning [meditators] contemplate the Buddha.⁸³

Although as is typical the text does not really explain what is going on, it would seem that, having completed the preliminary practice of contemplating the Buddha the practitioner focuses his mind on his body with the goal of provoking a vision that will indicate what meditation practice is most appropriate, either the contemplation of impurity, the cultivation of love, or the white bone contemplation, three practices that, while not usually a contained set, do each appear in the regular lists of the four or five methods of *chan*.⁸⁴

82 See p.69.

83 還自觀身。{若見}不淨膿血，即教作不淨觀。若見白骨，即作白骨觀。若見苦痛眾生，即作慈心觀。若不見此事，還觀一佛，至心懇惻，求哀懺悔。是初學家觀佛法。(T.619:15.329b2–b6). I here emended the text and insert 若見. Given the pattern of the ensuing passages this seems to be the meaning, and we may perhaps read the text this way even without the emendation. In contrast it does *not* seem possible to read 還自觀身不淨膿血 to mean “then he should contemplate his body *as* impure, full of pus and blood,” because this would make the ensuing “then instruct him to perform the contemplation of impurity” 即教作不淨觀 both redundant and lacking any antecedent.

84 It is, furthermore, at least theoretically possible to correlate these three with the three root defilements of lust, hatred, and confusion respectively. Of particular note here is the *Stages of the Path of Practice*, which includes the white bone contemplation (*bai gu guan* 白骨觀) and the contemplation of impurity (*bu jing guan* 不淨觀) as separate exercises (T.606:15.191.c17–192b10). In this case the white bone contemplation is prescribed for those with excessive “pride” (*jiao man* 驕慢), in other texts usually counteracted by *dhātu-prabheda*, “analysis according to the elements,” a method that is actually quite similar to the white bone contemplation in that it involves dissecting the body into its constituents, grouped by the four or six primary elements, with the goal of seeing the truth of non-self. In as much as belief in self is a prime example of ignorance, it might be possible to

The basic idea is thus almost identical to the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*. In both cases the appropriate method of *chan* is chosen from a standard list by examining the visions that appear spontaneously when the practitioner focuses his mind. In the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, as in the above passage from the *Five Gates*, the visions in question are of objects or scenes that, in the corresponding method of meditation itself, are what the practitioner consciously brings to mind. Zhiyi, of course, has a developed theoretical framework in which these visions are explained as the sprouting of seeds laid down in previous lives through the cultivation of the corresponding meditation practice. And while the *Five Gates* has no such explanation, it is certainly tempting to see its presentation as an example of the understanding that Zhiyi drew from when formulating the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*.

But perhaps the most significant point here in the *Five Gates* is that should the practitioner fail to experience any visions at all he must repent (懺悔). This is the only time the *Five Gates* mentions repentance. Indeed though the sample size is smaller than would be ideal, when we compare the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* to the passages from the *Five Gates* upon which it was apparently based (as discussed in chapter two), what is immediately noticeable is that all discussion of repentance is absent from the corresponding *Five Gates* passages. For example in the *Chan Essentials* we read:

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must be further instructed to fix his thoughts and contemplate the white bones. He must make the scattered bones collect in one place forming a pile like wind-blown snow, white like a snow-covered mountain. When he has seen this, he is not far from attaining the path. However if he has violated the precepts in either this life or a past life, the pile of bones will appear like ash or dirt. Or else on the surface of the pile he will see various black things. In this case he must repent by confessing his transgressions to his preceptor. Having repented, he will see an intensely white light surrounding the bones, which reaches up to the formless realms. Whether in trance or not he will feel constant ease and happiness, his former desires gradually diminishing.⁸⁵

This corresponds to the following passage from the *Five Gates*:

Next instruct [the practitioner] to focus his mind, and after causing the bones to become white and pure, [to make them] scatter float to the ground. On the ground they are like snow. Or they may be like rotting earth [in color]. Above them there may be white light, or there may be various strange creatures. Instruct [the practitioner] to continue contemplating [the bones]. If he says: “I continue to see them like this, and within my body I feel happiness,” then [the master] must say [to him]: “Try to imagine having

see the triad here of the contemplation of impurity, the white bone contemplation, and the cultivation of love as counteracting lust, hatred and ignorance respectively. Note however that the more usual countermeasure for ignorance is the contemplation of dependent origination.

85 佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教繫念觀諸白骨。令諸散骨，如風吹雪，聚在一處，自然成積，白如雪山。若見此事，得道不難。若有先身犯戒者，今身犯戒者，見散骨積，猶如灰土，或於其上，見諸黑物。復當懺悔，向於智者，自說己過。既懺悔已，見骨積上，有大白光，乃至無色界。出定入定，恒得安樂。本所愛樂，漸漸微薄。(3.22)

having sex with your former lover.” Having contemplated this [the practitioner] says: “When I imagine seeing this person, she transforms into impure pus and blood and is horrible to behold.”⁸⁶

Although we must be careful not to over-read this very brief passage, I believe we can see here evidence of an important shift that has occurred between the *Five Gates* and the *Chan Essentials*. In both cases the practitioner begins by imagining the white bones scattering into a pile, and in both cases the final result is a feeling of happiness and some kind of evidence that the practitioner’s desires have been reduced. But whereas the *Five Gates* presents only positive visions—first the bones, then a vision of impurity (here an auspicious sign indicating dispassion)—in the *Chan Essentials* there are two possibilities, a positive vision indicating imminent success or a negative vision indicating transgression of the precepts and the need to repent.

In short the *Five Gates* lacks the idea, seen so prominently in the *Chan Essentials*, that karmic obstructions are revealed through the visions obtained in meditation. Indeed in the one passage where the *Five Gates* mentions repentance, cited above, the need for repentance is determined not by an inauspicious vision, but by the *absence* of a vision (namely the absence of a vision indicating a suitable method of *chan*). The *Five Gates* thus basically follows the structure of traditional Indian meditation texts, in which meditation, *dhyāna*, is something that can only be attempted by those who are pure with respect to their *śīla*, the monastic or lay precepts.

And this is the model implied in both Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* and Buddhahadra’s *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, the two fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts of known Indian origin, as well as in comparable Indian works such as the *Vimuttimaggā*, the *Visuddhimaggā* or the *Bhāvanākramas*.⁸⁷ In these texts the need for a formal ritual of repentance is mentioned only once, *prior* to the start of meditation itself. The *Vimuttimaggā* discusses this at the conclusion of the introductory chapter on “virtue” (*śīla*), just prior to the beginning of the presentation of techniques of meditation:⁸⁸

When a monk first receives instruction in meditation he must examine himself with regard to the seven classes [of precepts]. If he has violated a *pārājika* then he has cut off his monkhood and dwells in a state lacking the full precepts. And the elders have said

86 次教注意，令骨白淨已，分散飄落。在地如雪。在地或如爛土。其上或有白光種種異物。教更觀之。若言續見如是，身中快樂，當語：汝本時所愛人，試憶念與作世事。彼觀已言：我憶念人見之，但變作膿血不淨，甚可惡見。(T.619:15.328a6–10)

87 See Sharma 1997, 57. This appears to be the only reference to repentance in the *Bhāvanākramas*, and as in texts such as Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* the discussion is both brief and limited in scope, declaring simply that prior to meditation one must purify any transgressions of one’s *śīla*.

88 The precise origins of the *Vimuttimaggā*, generally held to be a work of Sri Laṅka origin and a direct precursor to the *Visuddhimaggā*, has been the subject of considerable debate. The full text survives now only in Chinese translation, though some portions are also extant in Tibetan. The *Vimuttimaggā* predates Buddhaghosa, and is similar to the *Visuddhimaggā* in structure and content. There are some doctrinal differences between the texts, however, and some scholars have postulated that the *Vimuttimaggā* derives from lineage of the Abhayagirivihāra monastery in Sri Laṅka (as opposed to most extant Pāli literature which stems from the Mahāvihāra lineage). Further uncertainties concern whether the text was originally written in Sanskrit or Pāli, and whether it was composed in Sri Laṅka or imported from North India. For a survey of the various questions, see Crosby 1999.

that [only] one who abides in the full precepts [of a monk] will obtain the higher attainments [resulting from meditation]. [On the other hand] if he has violated any of the *sanghādisesa* offenses then he should confess and repent by way of [the confession] procedure involving the whole community [as is appropriate for *sanghādisesa* offenses].⁸⁹

The opening section of Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture* contains a similar passage:⁹⁰

When a person desiring to practice *dhyāna* first goes to the master the master must ask: “Have you maintained the precepts purely? Do you have any heavy sins or evil perversions?” If [the practitioner] says that he is pure in regard to the five classes of [monastic] precepts⁹¹ and has no heavy sins or evil perversions,⁹² then [the master] may next instruct him in the practice. If, however, he says that he has violated the precepts [the master] must ask further: “What precepts have you violated?” If he says that he has violated any of the grave precepts the master must say: “A person with a mutilated face should not look in the mirror! You must go. Chant the scriptures, proselytize, or do good deeds, and in this way you may plant the conditions for attaining the Way in a future life. For the present life you must give up [any practice of *dhyāna*]. Like a withered tree, though one might water it, it will no more sprout flowers, leaves or fruits.” If [the practitioner] has violated any of the other precepts [the master] should instruct him to repent in the proper method.⁹³

89 若比丘初受禪法，於七聚中觀於自身。若[具]{見}犯波羅夷，斷比丘法，住不具足戒。若住具足戒，當得勝法，是先師所說。若見犯僧伽婆尸沙，以眾事懺悔。(T.1648:32.404a10–14). The English translation of this passage by Ehara is deficient in a number of respects. They translate: “If a bhikkhu who has accepted the teaching of meditation and is mindful of the seven groups of offences [sic], sees another committing a Defeat-offence (*pārājika*) he falls from the state of a bhikkhu and lives in incomplete virtue. If he lives in complete virtue, he will acquire the excellent virtue. If he lives in complete virtue, he will acquire the excellent truth. This is the teaching of the predecessors. If a bhikkhu sees another committing a Suspension-offence he confesses fully” (Ehara 1961, 24). Perhaps because in this case there was no clear parallel in the *Visuddhimagga* the translators here seem to have simply misread the Chinese (and have, perhaps accidentally, included two different translations of the same line!)

90 The opening of the *Explanation of Meditation* includes a similar passage, discussed below on p.262–263.

91 The “five classes of precepts” (五眾戒) are five major divisions of the *prātimokṣa*—the *pārājika*, *saṅghāvaśeṣa*, *pāyattika*, *pratideśanīya*, and *duṣkṛta* offenses (sometimes these are further subdivided to make seven). The term *wu zhong jie* 五眾戒, however, is quite rare in this sense, though we find it in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.226a2–3). Both the *Meditation Scripture* and the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* were translated before the introduction of relatively standardized *vinaya* technical terminology beginning with Kumārajīva's translation of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Shi song lü* 十誦律).

92 Yamabe and Sueki translate 重罪惡邪 as “serious transgressions,” seeming to ignore the word 惡邪 (Yamabe and Sueki 2009, 7). The sense here is admittedly not entirely clear. It is possible that only a single idea is intended: “the grave sins that are evil perversions.”

93 學禪之人，初至師所，師應問言：汝持戒淨不？非重罪惡邪不？若言五眾戒淨，無重罪惡邪，次教道法。若言破戒，應重問言：汝破何戒？若言重戒，師言：如人被截耳鼻，不須照鏡。汝且還去。精勤誦經，勸化，作福，可種後世道法因緣。此生永棄。譬如枯樹，雖加澆灌，不生華葉及其果實。若破餘戒，是時應教如法懺悔。(T.614:15.270c28–271a5)

Leaving aside the interesting and important idea mentioned both in the *Vimuttimaggā* and the *Meditation Scripture* that those who have transgressed “grave” precepts (here seeming to mean the *pārājika*)⁹⁴ are unable to practice meditation at all (a point to which I will return in chapter five), the key point is that before beginning meditation one must ensure the purity of one’s *śīla* by atoning for any violations. We find this same idea in Buddhahadra’s *Chan Scripture of Dharma*.⁹⁵ But in these texts there is never any suggestion that the need for repentance might not be clear or that further repentance might be necessary after meditation has begun.

This understanding of the relationship between meditation and repentance is what seems to be presupposed by the single passage in the *Five Gates* that mentions repentance. The meditator thus begins by “contemplating the Buddha” as a preliminary purification and attempts to induce a vision that will indicate the appropriate method for entering trance. But it may also be that no such vision occurs. This means that repentance is required. In other words the absence of a prophetic vision about an appropriate method for *chan* means that the practitioner is simply not yet ready to formally begin meditation practice at all.

There are, of course, significant differences between this presentation in the *Five Gates* and more traditional texts where the need for repentance is determined simply by asking the practitioner whether or not he has violated any precepts. The *Five Gates* thus shares with the *Chan Essentials* the idea that such questions were potentially more opaque, and that visions obtained during meditation might, in a certain fashion, indicate the need for repentance. But the overall conception of how meditation will then progress still resembles earlier texts like Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*—meditation (*chan* 禪) and repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔) are treated as distinct tasks undertaken in a specific order.

As I discussed in the introduction the basic structure of the Buddhist path presupposes the idea that meditation, *dhyāna*, depends on purity of *śīla*, a term that while often translated vaguely as “good conduct” or “ethics” (and indeed the word does often have this meaning) should, in this context, more properly be understood as “vows,” and should furthermore be seen as having an inherent connection to ritual practice and institutional certification. One must, first of all, take on a set of “vows” (*śīla*) during the course of a formal ordination. Moreover one must properly confess any violations of these vows and atone for them in the appropriate manner as stipulated by the *vinaya*. The connection between rituals of repentance and regaining or preserving the ability to obtain states of meditation is indeed something seen already in the earliest known versions of the *poṣadha*, the fortnightly ritual of confession required of all monks and nuns.⁹⁶ The later Indian repentance rituals associated with the Mahāyāna also explicitly

94 In the *Vimuttimaggā* passage this is clear. In the *Meditation Scripture* the expression “grave precepts” (重戒) is potentially ambiguous, but given the reference here to the “five classes of precepts” (see above note 91) it seems almost certain that the *pārājika* are intended. Although the term “grave precepts” (重戒) is actually not common in technical *vinaya* literature, we do find it once in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, also translated by Kumārajīva, where it clearly refers to the *pārājika* (T.1509:25.226a2–3).

95 T.15:618.301c17–25

96 This idea is expressed in the formal ritual script (*karmavacana*) uttered during the *poṣadha*, which in the Pāli version says: “If a monk, when the transgression in question is proclaimed, does not reveal an existing transgression of which he is aware, has committed a conscious lie. And, oh sirs, the lord has proclaimed that a conscious lie constitutes a hindrance. Thus a monk who knows that he has fallen [into transgression] and who desires purification should, being mindful [of his transgressions], should reveal his transgression.”

mention the attainment of *samādhi* as one of their benefits.⁹⁷ In short from the very beginnings of Buddhism there was an understanding that meditation depends not just on “ethics,” “morality,” or “good conduct,” but the purification afforded by confession and repentance.

What we see in the *Chan Essentials* is in many ways an extension of these ideas. But they constitute a significant development, both in terms of the dynamics of meditation practice as a ritual performed in conjunction with others, as well as in terms of the range and meaning of the experiences obtained during meditation. That *dhyāna* depends on the purification of repentance came to be taken not simply to mean that the former depended on the later, but that the experiences obtained while meditating could be used to divine the need for and efficacy of such repentance. And it was this understanding of the relationship that would become fundamental to the Chinese understanding of both how meditation was to be carried out and what its fruits were thought to mean.

Visions of Karma in the Contemplation Scriptures and their Commentaries

Although in the previous section I limited my analysis to the *Chan Essentials*, in the *Methods for Curing* as well we find a similar understanding of the meaning of the negative visions obtained during trance and of the use of such visions in divining when repentance is necessary and when it has been successful.⁹⁸ But rather than examining all of these examples I

[Transgressions] revealed, he is happy.” *Yo pana bhikkhu yāvat atiyaṃ anussāvīyamāne saramāno santim āpattim nāvikareyya, sampajānamusāvādassa hoti. Sampajānamusāvādo kho panāyasmanto antarāyiko dhammo vutto bhagavatā. Tasmā, saramānena bhikkhunā āpannena visuddhāpekkhena santi āpatti āvikātabbā; āvikatā hi ‘ssa phāsu hotīti* (Vin, 1.103). In the word-commentary that follows the nature of the “hindrance” is explained in more detail. It is there said that what is “hindered” by failing to reveal one’s transgressions is the attainment of any of the higher states, beginning with the first *jhāna*. In contrast the “happiness” (*phāsu*) of one who has revealed his transgression is the happiness of the higher states beginning with the first *jhāna*: “What does this gladness concern? Having attained the first *jhāna*, one is glad. Having attained the second *jhāna*, the third *jhāna*, the fourth *jhāna*, one is glad. Having attained the wholesome states that are *jhāna*, release, *samādhi*, absorption, dispassion, escape, and solitude, one is glad.” *Kissa phāsu hoti? Paṭhamassa jhānassa adhiḡamāya phāsu hoti, dutiyassa jhānassa adhiḡamāya phāsu hoti, tatiyassa jhānassa adhiḡamāya phāsu hoti, catutthassa jhānassa adhiḡamāya phāsu hoti, jhānānaṃ vimokkhānaṃ samādhīnaṃ samāpattīnaṃ nekkhammānaṃ nissaraṇānaṃ pavivekānaṃ kusālānaṃ dhammānaṃ adhiḡamāya phāsu hotīti.* (Vin, 1.104). This entire section is expressed in almost identical terms in other *vinaya*. For the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Mahāsāṅghika *prātimokṣa* texts, see Prebish 1975, 48–49. The *prātimokṣa* alone does not contain the explanations, however, but in many of the complete Chinese *vinaya* we see that the words of the *prātimokṣa* are interpreted exactly as they are in the Pāli. See, for example, *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, T.1428:22.817c20–25.

97 This idea is expressed in the *Upāliparipṛcchā*, a key text describing the basic Mahāyāna confession ritual, where reference is made to using the famous *Triskandha* ritual that many scholars have postulated to be the earliest form of the five- or seven-limbed “supreme worship” (*anuttara-pūjā*), the basic Mahāyāna liturgy. According to the *Upāliparipṛcchā* by reciting the text of the *Triskandha-dharma* throughout out the day and night the bodhisattva will be able to “part from the remorse of their transgressions and obtain *samādhi*” (*āpatti-kaukrtyān niḡsarati samādhim ca pratilabhate*; Bendall 1902, 171; see also Python 1973, 32–39). In general what repentance or confession is said to eliminate is “remorse” *kaukrtya*, which is also one of the five hindrances that obstructions the obtaining of *dhyāna*.

98 See for example 5.66; 5.105; 5.106; See also 5.90, which does not explicitly involve a vision. Note also 6.5, where nocturnal emissions are explained as resulting from the “vision” of a succubus-type demon and are said to

will now turn to other material from the fifth- and sixth-centuries. We cannot, I hasten to add, chart a precise path between the *Chan Essentials* and Zhiyi's more systematized presentation in the late sixth century. We can, however, demonstrate that the basic understanding seen in the *Chan Essentials* concerning the relationship between meditation and repentance was widespread, and thus can be rightly considered the common Chinese understanding during this time.

The Contemplation Scriptures are the most obvious place to begin looking for the wider reach of these ideas. As discussed in chapter two these texts were connected, at least in the memory of early sixth-century historiographers, to the same foreign *chan* masters associated with the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, and they too seem to have appeared in south China during the first half of the fifth century. I also suggested, however, that despite the close connections between them the Contemplation Scriptures may have been aimed at a slightly different audience, or have been intended for a slightly different use, than texts such as the *Chan Essentials*. The Contemplation Scriptures, for example, almost never use the word *chan* itself to describe what it is that practitioners should do. And unlike the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* they contain almost no overt references to inauspicious visions or other negative experiences.

The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* contains the only exception to this, within a version of the method for “contemplating the image” (*guan xiang* 觀像) very similar to that discussed above from the second sutra of the *Chan Essentials*. In the *Chan Essentials* version the Buddha presents this practice as a special method that will allow those with many “karmic obstructions” to meditate successfully. In the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* it is given simply as a method for removing sins (罪) suitable for those living in the time after the Buddha's demise.⁹⁹ Such people, the Buddha declares, must “contemplate the image [of the Buddha],” which will “be just the same as contemplating my [living] body” (與觀我身等無有異).

The method that then follows begins with a procedure for repentance,¹⁰⁰ following which the practitioner must sit in meditation and “fix his thoughts” (*xi nian* 繫念) on the various parts of the Buddha's body. From here the method closely follows the second sutra of the *Chan Essentials*. The practitioner eventually imagines many buddhas filling the entire world, and their appearance reveals whether he has any lingering transgressions that need to be purified:

[The practitioner] will then see [buddha]-images filling the worlds of the ten directions, their bodies the color of pure gold, radiating light. But one who has violated the precepts or committed some evil deed, be it in this life or a previous life, will see the various

be the result of past evil karma.

99 “When the Buddha is no longer in the world, upon what can living beings who commit evil actions rely so as to remove their sins?” 多有眾生，造不善業，佛不現在，何所依怙可除罪咎。(T.643:15.690a26–27). For an annotated translation of this chapter of the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* see Ōminami 2001. Note that the “sins” in question are later specified more precisely as including the violation of the “five unpardonables” (*wu ni* 五逆), which are the five *ānantarya* transgressions that normally ensure rebirth in hell, as well as the “sixteen evil forms of discipline” (十六惡律), a curious expression of unknown meaning that later becomes a frequently repeated refrain in Chinese repentance literature.

100T.643:15.690c2–14

buddha-images to be either black or white in color [rather than gold].¹⁰¹

If the practitioner sees these black or white images he must repent further until they become gold. Thus as in the *Chan Essentials* the visions of the buddha that appear during meditation serve to reveal whether or not the practitioner's repentance has been successful. In the *Chan Essentials* reference to performing other rituals occurs within the midst of something framed as the practice of *chan*—one begins with meditation, and then resorts to repentance when problems arise. In the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* the situation is reversed—one begins with repentance and then uses the visions obtained in trance to verify its success or failure.¹⁰² In chapter five we will see numerous other examples of this idea.

However the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* is the only Contemplation Scripture to explicitly mention negative visions. Indeed even statements about auspicious visions attesting to successful repentance are comparatively rare. Read at face value the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, to take the most important example, seems rather to say that “visualization” of the specified imagery will serve to eliminate evil karma, that is to say will serve as a form of repentance. For example after the third contemplation, the “visualization of the ground [of the pure land]” (地想), the Buddha says to Ānanda:

You must preserve my words and preach this method of contemplating the ground [of the pure land] for those beings in future ages who wish to escape from suffering. Those who contemplate the ground [of the pure land] will eliminate sins [that otherwise would have led to] eighty million kalpas of rebirth,¹⁰³ and after death will definitely be reborn in the pure land, where their minds will become free of all doubt. When one performs this contemplation it is called “correct contemplation.” Other contemplation is called “incorrect contemplation.”¹⁰⁴

101滿十方界，見一切像，身純金色，放大光明。若有犯戒，作不善者，先身犯戒及以今身，見諸佛像，或黑或白。(T.643:15.691b12–14)

102In another passage from the same section we are told merely that, upon contemplating the face of the image, one might “not see it clearly” (不明了). In this case one must repent, following which “because one is pure with respect to the precepts one will see the face of the image as like a golden mirror, clear and bright.” 以戒淨故，見佛像面，如真金鏡，了了分明。(T.643:15.690c24–25).

103The precise meaning of the expression “sins of birth and death” 生死之罪, a ubiquitous phrase in the Contemplation Scriptures, has been the subject of a recent study by Tōdō Shun'ei 藤堂俊英 (1999). As he observes, in the few cases where we are able to find Sanskrit or Tibetan parallels for Chinese Buddhist texts that use this term there is no word that corresponds to “sins” (*zui* 罪), and the phrase usually appears in conjunction with practices that will allow practitioners to avoid a certain number of future rebirths in their course along the bodhisattva path, something normally expected to take many millions of lifetimes (see also my discussion in the notes to section 4.65 in appendix three). I thus here translate the expression in this meaning, though it should be noted that in the Contemplation Scriptures it has sometimes been interpreted as pointing to the sins accumulated during lengthy periods in the past. Thus Inagaki Hisao translates, in the present passage, as “the evil karma which one has committed during eight koṭis of kalpas of Samsara” (Inagaki 1994, 325).

104汝持佛語，為未來世一切大眾欲脫苦者，說是觀地法。若觀是地者，除八十億劫生死之罪，捨身他世，必生淨國，心得無疑。作是觀者，名為正觀，若他觀者，名為邪觀。(T.365:12.342a26–b1)

This refrain, repeated in a similar form throughout the text (and in the other Contemplation Scriptures as well), is generally understood to state the benefits promised to those who perform the prescribed “contemplation” of the pure land. It is on this basis that the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is thought to promote a “soteriology of visualization” in which “seeing the Pure Land [serves] . . . as a *means* of being reborn there.”¹⁰⁵

I would suggest, however, that this is neither what the text intended to say nor how it was traditionally interpreted. Indeed in chapter three we saw an example from modern Taiwan in which the contents of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* were taken not merely as a set of prescriptions for “visualization,” but as a handbook that might be used to interpret the meaning of visions. A potentially similar understanding is suggested by early commentaries to the text, which discuss the possibility that practitioners might also encounter inauspicious visions that will necessitate other forms of repentance. In other words in practice those who used the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* may have assumed an understanding quite similar to what is revealed in the *Chan Essentials*—not that “visualization” of the specified things would effectuate rebirth in the pure land, but that these were the visions that would attest to such a destiny, with the corresponding understanding that other visions might reveal a less auspicious fate, and thus signal the need for countermeasures so as to avoid it.

The best evidence for this is Shandao’s 善導 (613–681) commentary, which though not the earliest surviving commentary to the text is the one containing the most information about how the text may have been used in practice.¹⁰⁶ Consider, for example, Shandao’s description of the famous “sun contemplation” (*ri guan* 日觀), the first of the text’s sixteen contemplations. The *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* itself describes this practice in simple terms:

Sitting upright, face west and contemplate (觀) the sun. Fix your mind firmly and single-mindedly imagine (想) [the sun] without shifting [your attention]. [You will then] see (見) the setting sun, its form like a floating drum. Having seen the sun, make it so that it is clearly apparent whether your eyes are open or closed.¹⁰⁷

The usage here of the key terms “contemplate” (觀), “imagine” (想), and “see” (見) closely follows the many examples examined in chapter three. In light of our conclusions there this passage would seem to say that the practitioner first tries to imagine the sun, and that this is deemed successful when he “sees” it in the manner described. Shandao’s commentary supports

105Payne 1996, 250, emphasis mine.

106Shandao’s commentary is included in the Taishō as the *Commentary to the Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (*Guan wu liang shou fo jing shu* 觀無量壽佛經疏; T.1753). We must be somewhat careful with this work, as the only surviving textual tradition goes through Japan. Not included in any of the Chinese canons prior to the Qing dynasty, the Taishō edition is based on three Japanese printed copies, the earliest of which dates to 1695. There are also no Dunhuang or other early manuscript versions, though there is early bibliographic data showing that Shandao did indeed compose a commentary of some kind. As far as I know the authenticity of the text has never been questioned, but given its doctrinal importance in Japan and the lack of ancient textual lineages there remains the possibility that some of the contents may stem from later hands.

107正坐西向，諦觀於日，令心堅住，專想不移。見日欲沒，狀如懸鼓。既見日已，閉目開目，皆令明了。(T.365:12.341c30–342a2)

this idea, but also points to the existence of a more complicated process.¹⁰⁸ Shandao first gives instructions for the preparation of the ritual space, the posture of meditation, and an interesting preparatory practice, not contained in the sutra, that bears a certain resemblance to the white bone contemplation that figures so prominently in the *Chan Essentials* and other fifth-century *chan* texts.¹⁰⁹ Although we have no way of tracing the lineage of this particular version of this practice (which was not, as far as I can determine, drawn from any extant source), it is interesting to note that Shandao begins his exposition of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* by invoking something similar to the basic meditation method of the *Chan Essentials*.

Leaving aside such questions, however, let us look at how Shandao describes the sun contemplation itself:

By performing the [preliminary] meditation [discussed previously] distracted thoughts will be eliminated and the mind will gradually settle. Then [the practitioner] should slowly focus his mind and carefully contemplate the sun.¹¹⁰ Those of sharp faculties will in a single sitting¹¹¹ see the bright form [of the sun] appear before them. When this vision (境) appears it will be as big as a coin, or else as big as the face of a mirror. On its bright surface there will appear signs [indicating] the extent of the practitioner's karmic obstructions. The first of these is the black obstruction, like a black cloud shading the sun. The second is the yellow obstruction, like a yellow cloud shading the sun. The third is the white obstruction, like a white cloud shading the sun. When obscured by clouds the sun does not shine. In a similar manner the karmic obstructions (業障) of living beings shade over the vision (境) [that would indicate a] pure mind, preventing it from clearly appearing to the mind.¹¹²

108This section of the commentary is discussed briefly by Pas 1995, 183–188. See also Stevenson 1987, 359–361.

109“When he first wishes to concentrate his mind [the practitioner] should be instructed to sit in the cross-legged position . . . he must then further be made to contemplate the four elements of his body as entirely empty, not a single one of them [part of his self]. The earth element of the body refers to the skin, the flesh, the sinews, the bones and so forth. He must imagine these scattering into the western direction all the way to the edge of the western horizon such that he no longer sees even a single mote of them. Then he must further imagine the water element of his body, namely the blood, sweat, mucus, and tears, and imagine them scattering into the northern direction . . . Then he must further imagine the wind element of his body scattering into the eastern direction . . . Then he must imagine the fire element of his body scattering into the southern direction . . . Then he must imagine the space element of his body merging with the space of the ten directions such that he no longer sees even a single mote of it [within his body]. Then, having imagined the five elements of his body as all entirely empty, there remains only the consciousness element, abiding in clarity, like a round mirror, clearly reflecting, bright and pure.” 初欲住心時，教令跏趺正坐 . . . 又令觀身四大，內外俱空，都無一物。身之地大，皮肉筋骨等，心想散向西方，盡西方際，乃至不見一塵之相。又想身之水大，血汗津淚等，心想散向北方 . . . 又想身之風大，散向東方 . . . 又想身之火大，散向南方 . . . 又想身之空大，即與十方虛空一合，乃至不見一塵不空之相。又想身之五大皆空，唯有識大湛然凝住，猶如圓鏡，內外明照，朗然清淨。
(T.1753:37.261c15–262a1)

110Although the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* reads as if perhaps this involved literally staring at the setting sun (thus replicating the method used in the *kasina* or corpse contemplations), Shandao definitely interprets the meaning otherwise, and says that it can be used even by those with damaged eyes. Only the congenitally blind (生盲) cannot use this method, as having never seen the sun they cannot even imagine it (T.1753:37.261c1–7).

111Or “as soon as having sat down [to meditate].”

112作此想時，亂想得除，心漸凝定。然後徐徐轉心諦觀於日。其利根者，一坐即見明相現前。當境現時，

Shandao then explains that the darkened sun indicates one must perform various repentance rituals, and he alludes to the usual details about setting up a sanctuary, decorating it properly, and wholeheartedly confessing and repenting before an image of the Buddha. One must then return to seated meditation, and if repentance was successful the sun will appear correctly. This may not happen right away. For example the comparatively serious condition of the black cloud may change only to the yellow or white cloud, and in such cases further repentance is needed.

Shandao thus anticipated something far more complex than simply visualizing or failing to visualize the sun. Most importantly he understood that there might appear other visions apart from those described in the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, and that such visions might indicate the presence of “karmic obstructions” to be addressed through repentance. Indeed this seems to be how he interpreted the meaning of the words “When one performs this contemplation it is called ‘correct contemplation.’ Other contemplation is called ‘incorrect contemplation’” (作此觀者名為正觀，若他觀者名為邪觀), an apparently innocuous refrain found throughout the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, as well as in the other Contemplation Scriptures, the *Chan Essentials*, and the *Methods for Curing*. Commenting on this line Shandao writes:

For all the contemplations given below [the meaning of] incorrect and correct, attaining and losing, is like this. When contemplating (觀) the sun if one sees (見) the sun, mind and object correspond (心境相應), and this is called “correct contemplation” (正觀). If when contemplating the sun one does not see the sun, but rather sees various other objects (境), then mind and object do not correspond, and it is called “incorrect” (邪).¹¹³

Shandao thus even has an explanation for how all this works. Contemplating the sun means orienting the mind towards the sun in some manner. But the “object” or “vision” (境) that then arises may fail to accord with what one wants to see, and this is called “incorrect” (邪).

Shandao’s understanding is thus similar to Zhiyi’s presentation of preliminary meditation practice, particular Zhiyi’s explanation of the appearance of good or evil roots of the “retributive” (報) variety that manifest as visions during meditation. Through initial calming the mind becomes mirror-like, such that objects appear clearly within it. But precisely *what* appears is another matter. For those who are pure, the “correct” object will appear. But inauspicious or “incorrect” visions will manifest instead for those with “karmic obstructions,” who have violated the precepts in this or past lives and have not yet been purified through repentance. Shandao describes this simply as different “shades” (*gai* 蓋) obscuring the desired vision. For Zhiyi, and

或如錢大，或如鏡面大。於此明上，即自見業障輕重之相。一者黑障，猶如黑雲障日。二者黃障，又如黃雲障日。三者白障，如似白雲障日。此日猶雲障故，不得朗然顯照。眾生業障亦如是，障蔽淨心之境，不能令心明照。(T.1753:37.261c29–262a2). For a different translation see Pas 1995, 187. Although we might read 心明照 as “the mind shines brightly” rather than “the mind clearly reflects [its object]” as I have taken it, I suspect that this passage should be interpreted in line with the usual Chinese vocabulary for describing mirrors, which are “bright” (明) when they clearly reflect the objects that “shine” (照) forth from them.

113 已下諸觀，邪正得失，一同此也。觀日見日，心境相應，名為正觀。觀日不見日，乃見餘雜境等，心境不相應，故名邪也。(T.1753:37.262b12–14)

for texts such as the *Chan Essentials*, as we have seen the visions in such cases were potentially much more elaborate.¹¹⁴

Though we cannot know the antiquity of the traditions from which Shandao drew his interpretation, his reading of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is consistent with closely related fifth-century texts such as the *Chan Essentials*, as well as the tradition that finds expression in Zhiyi's early writings. In all these cases the basic understanding is that though a calm mind will lead, in some cases, to the manifestation of auspicious "verificatory visions," karmic obstructions will lead to other, potentially disturbing visions. Determining the presence of such obstructions was, moreover, not merely an abstract fact about a person's past karma—it was a signal that the practitioner must perform rituals of repentance, deemed successful when new, auspicious visions arise.

The Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation

For fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts the visions obtained during meditation were thus important because they served, at least in part, as windows onto the (im)purity of the practitioner. In other words it was not simply that trance (*chan* 禪) led to higher attainments—as a state of acute visionary sensitivity it also served to reveal the fruits of other practices, notably repentance, which in practice seem to have been joined together with meditation in a complex ritual form. We have also seen that Zhiyi expresses a similar understanding in the late sixth century. For the period lying in between, however, there are fewer relevant sources. But there does survive one important example helping to confirm that throughout this period Chinese Buddhists continued to think about *chan* in these terms.

This text is the short, apocryphal *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation*.¹¹⁵ Both Zhiyi

114Indeed the opposition between "correct" (正) and "incorrect" (邪) is not merely a matter of right and wrong, and *xie* 邪, though chosen by Buddhist translators for such terms as "wrong view" (邪見), further carries connotations of malevolent demonic forces or beings, a meaning that seems particularly appropriate for some of the wilder visions in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*. As Strickmann notes the term "applies equally to the human and the spectral worlds, to pathology and demonology and even to theology" (Strickmann 2005, 73–74), and he goes on to observe that the Chinese Buddhist use of *xie* 邪 and *zheng* 正 to refer to heresy and orthodoxy respectively implicitly invokes the general Buddhist (and Daoist) criticism of the gods of Chinese popular religion as, in truth, demonic forces.

115The *Scripture on the Supreme Excellency of Meditation* (*Zui sheng miao ding jing* 最勝妙定經). Although one might be inclined to read this title as "scripture on most supremely excellent meditation" (that is, as a text providing a specific, superior form of meditation practice), its content suggests that the title should be read as a statement about the general supremacy of meditation practice, for in contrast to other practices "cultivating *chan* is what is most excellent, what is most supreme" (修禪最妙最勝). The *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* was first brought to scholarly attention by Sekiguchi Shindai in 1950 (reprinted in Sekiguchi 1969, 379–395), who prepared an edition based on a single Dunhuang manuscript that was subsequently lost. More recently other copies have been found among the Dunhuang manuscripts in the Beijing library, and on their basis a new edition was prepared by Fang Guangchang 方廣錫 (1995). However the most complete edition is now that of Inosaki Jikidō 猪崎直道 (1998), who has used both the Beijing manuscripts consulted by Fang and Sekiguchi's edition, and further suggested emendations. The *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* has also recently been studied by Paul Magnin, who has translated Sekiguchi's edition into French (2002). Below I use

and his teacher Huisi 慧思 (515–568) cite this text in their writings, showing that it was in circulation by the middle of the sixth century at the latest.¹¹⁶ Its importance among sixth-century *chan* specialists is further revealed by a story from Huisi’s biography crediting this text with having encouraged him to abandon doctrinal studies and wholeheartedly devote himself to meditation.¹¹⁷ Indeed the text itself aggressively asserts the primacy of meditation, *chan* 禪, over and above doctrinal study, which it claims can be downright dangerous.¹¹⁸ However what seems to have elicited the most interest among later writers was the connection this text draws between *chan* and repentance.¹¹⁹

The *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* explains that *chan* is “the fastest way to obtain the supreme path of the Buddha.”¹²⁰ It is the most supreme practice, as the title suggests, and to “enter trance (入定) for a single day and night” is more meritorious than building a monastery made of the seven precious substances, making buddha-images, copying scriptures, preaching scriptures, preaching scriptures while actually understanding them, or even preaching so skillfully that listeners obtain the five magic powers.¹²¹ Meditation is most supreme because while the learned but arrogant go to hell, one who obtains *chan* is “able to eliminate the evil karma and heavy sins of birth and death.”¹²² Indeed cultivating *chan* for between one and seven days will entirely eliminate “the five kinds of grave sin” (五種重罪), explained here as all the most evil deeds, including the *ānantarya* sins that necessarily lead to hell, the *pārājika* transgressions that normally entail expulsion from the monastic order, and even the sin of disparaging the Mahāyāna sutras, an offense often considered the one truly heinous crime for which there can be no atonement. No other practice has the power to remove these sins, because only by stilling the mind through *chan* can one perceive the emptiness of all phenomena, which

Inosaki’s edition, but refer also to Fang’s, which is likely to be more widely available as it has been incorporated into the newer versions of CBETA. I have also consulted Magnin’s French translation, but my understanding of many of the key passages differs considerably. For introductions to the text and the question of its probable composition in China, see Sekiguchi 1969, 379–395; Inosaki 1998, 312–319; Magnin 2002, 229–271. There is also a Tibetan translation, made from the Chinese (Tanaka and Shinohara 1980, 355).

116The text is not mentioned in the *Records of the Canon*, suggesting that it appeared no earlier than the first half of the sixth century.

117*Further Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2060:50.562c26–27

118The Buddha tells a story of a past life in which he and another monk (Mañjuśrī in a past life) argued about whether the “highest truth” (*di yi yi* 第一義) was “being” (*you* 有) or “non-being” (*wu* 無). Clinging to their answers, neither of which is correct, both monks fell into hell for innumerable kalpas. The trope of excessive doctrinal study leading to hell, in contrast to meditation practice which is of more certain merit, is also found in a famous story preserved in the mid sixth-century *Records of the Monasteries of Luoyang* (*Luo yang jia lan ji* 洛陽伽藍記). In this story the monk Huining 惠凝 (or in some versions Huiyi 慧巖) visits the courts of hell and returns to tell that monks devoted to exegesis are routinely sent to hell while those devoted to “meditation and recitation” (禪誦) are destined for a better fate. Hearing of this story the Wei empress invited “one hundred meditation monks” (坐禪僧一百人) to live in the palace and receive her offerings. From this point on, the story concludes, all the monks of Luoyang devoted themselves to meditation and recitation and abandoned doctrinal exegesis (Wang 1984, 73–75). The notion that doctrinal study might lead to hell (and was thus best avoided) was later taken up by the so-called Three Levels (*san jie* 三階) movement (Greene 2008, 92).

119See for example *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, T.1916:46.487a14–15.

120最是疾得無上佛道 (Inosaki 1998, 321; Fang 1995, 340).

121Inosaki 1998, 322; Fang 1995, 342.

122能除生死惡業重罪 (Inosaki 1998, 322; Fang 1995, 342).

is what allows these sins to be extirpated.¹²³

That proper understanding of emptiness can eliminate sin is by no means a novel idea, being a key trope in many Mahāyāna sutras,¹²⁴ and something mentioned in a key passage from the *Samantabhadra Contemplation*, one cited by many later Chinese authors.¹²⁵ But the *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* is notable for saying not merely that meditation or the contemplation of emptiness may be used for such a purpose, but that this is main reason for engaging in such practices. Though as Sekiguchi Shindai pointed out in his initial study¹²⁶ declaring meditation to be the supreme Buddhist practice is clearly one of this text's principal messages, what may be even more significant is how it argues this point, namely by declaring *chan* to be a superior method of repentance.

The description of how to actually practice *chan* confirms that eliminating “sins” (罪) is the main goal of this practice:

Oh monks, there are many ways to enter trance. [For example] if performing the contemplation of impurity, at that time one will see the four elements within the body—the spleen, stomach, bones and joints, the blood which flows like turbulent water, the nine openings which leak impurities, and noxious urine and feces. While within trance one might see all kinds of things, some moving, some still, some blue, some yellow, some white, some black. Such strange sights agitate the mind. Having seen them, one must restrain the mind and bring it back [to its object of contemplation]. Then the white bones will radiate light [and trance will be obtained]. Breath meditation should be carried out in this same manner.¹²⁷

123Inosaki 1998, 322–232; Fang 1995, 342–343. This list of the “five kinds of grave sins” (五種重罪) is an unusual one. Pace Magnin (2002, 256), it is not really a variant of the traditional five *ānantarya* sins, and most of those are included in the first item here. Sekiguchi suggested that this should rather be seen as one of many novel lists of precepts developing in China at this time as part of the codification of the bodhisattva precepts (Sekiguchi 1969, 382).

124One early and famous example of this is the *Ajātaśatru-kaukr̥tya-viṇodanā*, which judging from its translation by Lokakṣema (T.626, classed by Nattier as among the “third-tier” texts attributed to him; Nattier 2008, 85) must be among the earliest of Mahāyāna sutras (very early Sanskrit fragments of this text have also now been found; see Hartmann and Harrison 1998). This text is effectively a rewriting of the famous episode from the early sutras in which Ajātaśatru confesses his crime of patricide to the Buddha. In the Nikāya/Āgama version of this story, the Buddha accepts Ajātaśatru's confession but declares to his monks that Ajātaśatru will still be reborn in hell after death, since the crime of patricide, an *ānantarya* transgression, necessarily yields that fruit. In the Mahāyāna version, however, through the contemplation of the ultimate emptiness of karma Ajātaśatru escapes this fate.

125“‘The ocean of karmic obstructions / arises from false thinking. / Those who wish to repent / should sit upright and bring to mind the true nature of things, / for sins (罪) are like frost or dew / that melt away in the sun of wisdom.’ 一切業障海，皆從妄想生，若欲懺悔者，端坐念實相，眾罪如霜露，慧日能消除。(T.277:9.393b10–12). This passage was much cited by Zhiyi in his discussions of repentance (see for example *Great Calming and Contemplation*, T.1911:46.39c14–16, a passage where Zhiyi also cites the *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation*).

126Sekiguchi 1969, 395

127諸比丘，種種方便，得入禪定。若作不淨觀，時見身四大，脾、胃、骨、節、血流，亦如激水，九孔流出不淨之物，屎尿臭穢，甚可厭患。於此定中，見種種物，若動，若住，若青，若黃，若白，若黑。種種異變，令心散亂。見此事已，攝之令還，白骨流光。阿那波那，亦亦如是。(Inosaki 1998, 324; Fang 1995, 344).

The language here draws directly from fifth-century *chan* texts.¹²⁸ The expression “the white bones radiate light” (白骨流光), for example, first appears in Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*, and as we have seen this idea is also taken up in the *Chan Essentials*. In the *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* the basic idea closely follows the *Meditation Scripture*, where in the exposition of the contemplation of impurity the attainment of the first stage of trance is revealed when “the white bones radiate light, like white *ke*-jade.”¹²⁹ The *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* here similarly says that one should first concentrate the mind on the impure body, refocusing it if necessary, and that attainment is revealed when the bones radiate white light.¹³⁰ However if the practitioner has violated any of the precepts things will occur differently:

If [a monk] has violated the four grave precepts [the *pārājika*], or if a nun breaks the eight grave precepts [eight *pārājika* for nun], or a layman breaks the five precepts, or a *śrāmaṇera* [novice monk] breaks the ten precepts [of a *śrāmaṇera*], or if a probationary nun¹³¹ breaks the six grave precepts [of a probationary nun], [or if one] steals the property of the Buddha, the property of the Dharma, the property of the universal Sangha,¹³² the property of one’s teachers or parents, or the property of the monastic community, or if one slanders the Mahāyāna sutras by saying that they have no awesome power, then when in trance this person will see his body as follows: his breath will be like a black cloud, his blood like a raging fire, his bones like mountains or rocks, his vessels like a forest of trees, his five viscera like poisonous snakes.¹³³ His hands [will burn] as if holding a torch against the wind. [He will see] a great mountain upon his head, ready to collapse on him. Lions will emerge from his mouth, *rākṣasa*-demons from his eyes, cobras from his nose, and jackals and wolves from his ears. An ocean of water will flow out from his penis and anus. If the buddhas of the ten directions have appeared to him, they will all become black.

128In addition to the points mentioned below the phrase “restrain [the mind] and bring it back” (攝之令還) is standard in Kumārajīva’s meditation texts, and indicates refocusing the mind after it has been distracted (cf. Magnin 2002, 286n194). Very similar expressions also appear in the *Chan Essentials* (1.10; 2.14; 3.6).

129白骨流光猶如白珂 (T.614:15.272a21). A similar procedure is discussed in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.215b16–23). On this passage from the *Meditation Scripture*, see p.56.

130Note that the three editions (those of Sekiguchi, Fang, and Inosaki) and Magnin’s French translation all punctuate the final lines so as to read: “Having seen these things, concentrate the mind. [The practices of] the flowing light of the white bones [and] breath meditation should also be like this.” Although this is certainly grammatically possible, in light of the parallels with other fifth-century *chan* texts it seems more likely that the glowing bones do not refer to a separate practice, but to the sign indicating the attainment of trance while performing the contemplation of impurity (see previous note).

131“Nun in training” (學戒尼) is a translation of *śikṣamāṇā*, a special two-year probationary status that female postulants must undergo prior to full ordination.

132The word *zhao ti* 招提 is a transcription of *cāturdīśah*, “the four quarters.” In Chinese Buddhist texts this word was retained as a transcription when referring to property belonging to the Sangha “of the four quarters,” that is to say the universal community of Buddhist monks (or nuns) as opposed to the local community of a given temple.

133Here the idea seems to be that one’s intended objects of meditation, such as the breath or the body-parts, will manifest in improper ways.

If [the meditator] sees these signs he should get up from meditation and go to the forest [or another] deserted place and chant scriptures to repent his former sins. When, after between one and seven weeks his sins have been removed, he should enter trance [again]. If his sins have been successfully weakened he will gradually see his body as [pure] like a mountain of beryl. If he has purified himself of his transgression of the four grave precepts¹³⁴ [or the others up to] the five precepts [of a layperson] then while in trance he will see the buddhas of the ten directions simultaneously preach the Dharma.¹³⁵

This description of the terrible visions experienced by violators of the precepts is reminiscent of comparable passages from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, particularly a passage from the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing* where it is a question of those who have violated the grave precepts.¹³⁶ We have also seen similar examples from the *Chan Essentials* and other texts in which “karmic obstructions” (業障) cause one to see buddhas of the wrong color. Thus even though the *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* does not appear to directly borrow from the texts explored above, the basic idea is the same—the initial stages of meditation practice provoke visions that serve to reveal when the practitioner has transgressed. Moreover as in the many examples discussed above the meditator is apparently not supposed to know whether or not he has “violated of the precepts” (*po jie* 破戒) before he begins his practice.

In short when the *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* says that *chan* practice can remove even the heaviest of transgressions, this does not mean that meditation itself removes such sins, or at least this is not the only meaning. Rather *chan* practice allows the practitioner to learn the nature and extent of his karmic obstructions because such obstructions manifest as impure visions when attempting to enter trance. Learning of his condition the practitioner performs repentance rites, and then returns to his meditation where the success of these rites is certified by a vision, either his own body transformed into pure beryl (another image that appears frequently in the *Chan Essentials*) or a manifestation of the buddhas.

Meditation, Dreams, and Deathbed Visions

In fifth- and sixth-century China *chan* was thus understood as a way of gaining access to an acutely sensitive state wherein one would readily experience visions understood as signs of

134Literally “if he does not break the four grave precepts,” but the expression “break the precepts” (破戒) can also be an adjective describing a person “with broken precepts,” that is someone who has violated the precepts and who has not yet properly repented.

135若犯四重性戒，尼破八重，優婆夷破五種戒，沙彌破十戒，學戒尼破六重，盜佛物、法物、招提僧物、師長父母物、大眾僧物，及謗方等經，言無威德。如是之人，於禪定中見自身中氣如黑風，血如猛火，骨如山石，脈如林木，五藏如蛇虺。見手捉大火，逆風如走。頭戴大山，去如復倒。口出師子，眼出羅剎，鼻出蟒蛇，耳出豺狼。大小便道，流水如海。若有十方一切諸佛，皆悉變黑。若見此相，從禪定起，往至林中，空閑之處，讀方等經，懺悔先罪。或以七日、二七、三七、四七、五七、六七、七七日，眾罪已除，便入禪定。罪若薄者，漸見身如琉璃山。若不破四種乃至五重性戒者，禪定中見十方佛同時說法。

136See section 5.66. Note also section 5.102.

either karmic obstructions or, conversely, the purification and elimination of such obstructions. And as discussed in chapter three these were indeed presented as *visions*, not visualizations. Accordingly they can be seen as qualitatively similar to a variety of other experiences, such as dreams or deathbed visions, that for the medieval Chinese were often invested with a similar prophetic significance.

The importance of dreams and other prophetic visions in Buddhism needs no repeating.¹³⁷ And while such visions are often similar in content to the experiences obtained by meditators, scholars usually distinguish Buddhist meditation, at least in its orthodox or canonical forms, as a technique for reproducing or inducing such states in a controlled manner. As I have suggested, however, this contrast between “visualization” and “vision” is often not as clear as has been supposed, and many of the texts that supposedly provide techniques for Buddhist meditation are quite comfortable with the notion that its fruits may be very dream-like indeed. We see this already in the so-called *Pratyutpanna-samādhi*, first translated into Chinese in the second century, which is the earliest extant source for *buddhānusmṛti* meditation in its “Mahāyāna” mode. Although like the later Contemplation Scriptures with which it is often compared this text is usually described as providing instructions for the “visualization” of the Buddha’s form, the text actually promises a vision of the buddhas either while practicing meditation *or* in a dream.¹³⁸

Indeed in this text even waking visions of the buddhas, obtained while in meditation, are eventually analogized to dreams. Of course the dream analogy in Mahāyāna texts is usually taken as a philosophical reflection on ontology—just as dreams are produced by the mind (and hence “empty”) so too are all things, including the buddhas. Interestingly, however, the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* also uses the analogy in a different way, explaining that similar to a dream this meditation practice allows one to actually see and hear faraway things in defiance of the normal laws of space and time.¹³⁹ But apart from what the text explicitly says about why meditation and dreams are similar, the background assumption here seems to be that the two experiences can *mean* the same thing—both kinds of visions attest to success in the meditation practice in question.

The Contemplation Scriptures too often assume a semiotic equivalence between dreams what I have called “verificatory visions,” and in many cases it is said that either result will attest

137For an overview of Indian approaches to dreams (including Buddhist ones), see O’Flaherty 1984. On dreams and their interpretation in China, see Ong 1985 and the papers collected in Brown 1988. For dreams in Chinese and East Asian Buddhism, see Strickmann 1996, 291–336; Faure 1991, 209–230 and 1996, 114–143.

138Harrison 1990, 32 (3B)

139Thus the ability of the practitioner to encounter the buddhas of the ten directions without yet possessing the supernatural powers (*abhijñā*) that would allow physical travel to their realms is explained as similar to the way that dreams afford veridical reports of far away places and people (Harrison 1990, 3C, 3I, 3J). Here the dream analogy is used to explain that this practice does indeed allow the practitioner to hear authentic teachings from the buddhas while in *samādhi*. But elsewhere in the text the comparison is used differently, and the point is that the buddhas seen in *samādhi*, like all phenomena, are ultimately empty, like dreams (Harrison 1990, 3H). These two approaches correspond to what Harrison has suggested is the main thrust of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* as a whole, namely the reconciliation of *prajñāpāramitā*-style emptiness with “shamanistic” practices that sought to bring practitioners into the presence of a deity (Harrison 1978).

to the success of one's practice.¹⁴⁰ Sometimes a dream is the only result mentioned.¹⁴¹ Indeed in one passage the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* seems to suggest that because confirmation can be obtained through dreams formal *chan* practice is unnecessary:

One who wishes to see the signs [described above] must give rise to compassion, maintain the precept against killing life, and work for the benefit of all living beings in the universe. One who cultivates this practice, though he does not practice seated *chan*, will always see the many forms described above in his dreams.¹⁴²

In yet other cases the desired visions first occur during a dream, thereby verifying that karmic obstructions have been removed, following which the practitioner will obtain even more advanced visions during trance.¹⁴³ While there thus appear to have been a variety of opinions about the precise relationship between them, dreams and the visions obtained during trance were considered equivalent in a fundamental way.

But perhaps most interesting of all is the notion that *successful* meditation practice was, simply put, dream-like. Such an understanding is suggested by the biography of the nun Tanhui 曇暉 (var. 曇輝; 431–514), a Chinese disciple of Kālayaśas 曇良耶舍, one of the many foreign *chan* masters living and teaching in south China during the Song dynasty and eventually remembered as the translator of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*.¹⁴⁴ Tanhui spent most of her life in Chengdu 成都, Sichuan, where according to her biographies she met Kālayaśas as a youth.¹⁴⁵ Even before her death Tanhui had become known as famous practitioner of meditation,

140 *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*, T.409:13.677c8–9. In other cases dream visions are reserved for those with weaker mental faculties, such as in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* where it is said: “If the mental power of the one performing this contemplation is weak he will see [the above signs] in a dream [rather than in trance].” 作是觀者若心不利，夢中得見。(T.643:15.663a10). In the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* (see appendix two), Avalokitasvara appears during a dream rather than during meditation for those with particularly strong sins from past lives (T.1043:20.37b2–3).

141 *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T.643:15.665c29–666a4; 666b12–16; c9–11; c26–29. See also *Samantabhadra Contemplation*, T.277:9.391b1–2. Note also sections 5.68 and 5.72 of the *Methods for Curing*, both of which occur in the context of the ritual for repentance of grave transgressions.

142 欲見是相者，當發慈心，修不殺戒，普為十方一切眾生。行是行者，雖不坐禪，恒於夢中得見眾色如向所說。(T.643:15.667a23–25).

143 *Medicine King Contemplation*, T.1161:20.663a19–21; c4–7. See also *Samantabhadra Contemplation*, T.277:9.390b27–c4, where it is not a question of removing sins.

144 In addition to the *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, cited below, the principal source for Tanhui's life is her biography in Baochang's 寶唱 *Biographies of the Nuns* (*Bi qiu ni zhuan* 比丘尼傳, T.2063:50.945c20–946b12). The *Biographies of the Nuns* was most likely compiled between 516 and 519. For an English translation, see Tsai 1994. On biographies of nuns in Chinese Buddhist hagiography, see Georgieva 1996.

145 Like Kālayaśas many foreign monks of the Song dynasty spent time both in the southern capital of Jiankang 建康 and in Sichuan, or Shu 蜀 as it was then called. Indeed for most of the fifth century Sichuan served as the major conduit for people, goods, and information from Central Asia to south China, as after the Gansu corridor was captured by the Northern Wei in 439 travel between the Tarim Basin and south China could only take place via the so-called “south of the river route” (河南道), which went south-east from Shanshan 鄯善 into the Tibetan occupied lands of the Qinghai 青海 plateau (known in Chinese sources as Tuyuhun 吐谷渾), and then descended into the Sichuan basin, allowing river travel from there to the southern heartland (Chen 2002).

and the late fifth-century *Signs from the Unseen Realm* (*Ming xiang ji* 冥祥記)¹⁴⁶ contains the following anecdote about her early proclivity for this practice and her initial meeting with Kālayaśas:

When [Tanhui] was six years old she began to enjoy practicing *chan* meditation. Whenever she meditated she effortlessly attained verificatory visions (*jing jie* 境界). However she did not understand what these were, and thought them to be merely dreams. Once, when sharing a bedroom with her elder sister, [Tanhui] entered trance during the night. Her elder sister came upon her behind the screen,¹⁴⁷ but her body was like wood or stone, and she was drawing no breath. Her elder sister became alarmed and roused the household. Together they picked her up [in an effort to extract her from her trance] but she did not wake until morning. They hurried to consult various male and female shamans, who all said that [Tanhui] was possessed by demons. When [Tanhui] turned ten the foreign *chan* master Kālayaśas came to Shu [Sichuan]. [Tan]hui inquired with him about what she had seen [while in trance], whereupon [Kālayaśas] and the nun [Fa]yu,¹⁴⁸ realizing that [Tan]hui already had attainment in *chan*, encouraged her to ordain as a nun.¹⁴⁹

The story goes on to relate Tanhui's struggles to gain parental permission to ordain and a few details of her later life as a nun. I am more interested, however, in this initial passage which provides, I believe, a number of important indications about how meditation was understood in fifth-century China.

First, Tanhui's *chan* practice was apparently seen as the ability to enter a trance state that her family interpreted as demonic possession. Although in Indian Buddhism meditation in which one remains completely insensitive to the outside world was formally associated with the advanced but soteriologically useless "trance of cessation" (*nirodha-samāpatti*), Chinese Buddhist hagiography frequently speaks positively of monks and nuns who reached such states, which seem to have been considered broadly indicative of advanced meditative attainment.¹⁵⁰

But in terms of our discussion in this and the previous chapter the most interesting point is Tanhui's attainment of "verificatory visions" (*jing jie* 境界), a term whose importance in

146For a translation of the surviving fragments of the *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, see Campany 2012, which I have not been able to consult.

147Translation tentative.

148The line 耶舍尼 is not readily comprehensible. The Ming canon as consulted by the Taishō editors reads 者 for 尼, but this is likely a later attempt to make sense of the passage. In Tanhui's biography from the *Biographies of the Nuns* Kālayaśas eventually entrusts Tanhui to the nun Fayu 法育 for training, and this nun is also mentioned later in the story here. I would thus suggest that here the character 育 (or even 法育) has been dropped from the text, and I emend accordingly.

149年七歲便樂坐禪。每坐輒得境界，意未自了，亦謂是夢耳。曾與姊共寢，夜中入定，姊於屏風角得之，身如木石，亦無氣息。姊大驚怪，喚告家人，互共抱扶，至曉不覺。奔問巫覡，皆言鬼神所憑。至年十一，有外國禪師曇良耶舍者來入蜀。輝請諮所見，耶舍{育}尼，以輝禪既有分，欲勸化令出家。(T.2122:53.453a20–26). The *Signs from the Unseen Realm* does not survive as an independent work, and this passage is preserved in the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma*. This miracle tale was almost certainly one of the sources for Tanhui's longer biography in the *Biographies of the Nuns* (Tsai 1994, 108).

150On the trance of cessation in Indian Buddhism, see Griffiths 1983 and 1986.

fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts we have seen amply demonstrated. This vision appeared to Tanhui without any particular effort, and certainly was not something that she tried to “visualize.” It was, in a word, dream-like, and indeed Tanhui mistook her own meditative attainment for a dream because its *meaning* was unknown to her. For this story “verificatory visions” attesting to success in meditation thus differ from dreams only in terms of their meaning, and not at all in terms of one being a spontaneous, passive vision and the other an active, controlled visualization.

Meditative experiences were thus understood as dream-like visions whose significance often lay in what they revealed about a practitioner’s “karmic obstructions” or lack thereof. And this makes them similar to deathbed visions, another kind of experience about which Buddhist texts have much to say. To analyze the ritual and symbolic connections between Buddhist meditation and death would be a monumental undertaking, certainly not my intention apart from noting such connections did exist in Buddhism from the beginning. What concerns me here is rather the moment of death, both the experiences that were thought to occur at this time and the rituals that Buddhists prescribed to deal with and influence them. This too is a vast topic into which I will take but a few hesitant steps.¹⁵¹

Before examining the material from China, however, I want to look briefly at Buddhaghosa’s famous account of the moment of death from the *Visuddhimagga*. As discussed in chapter one the *Visuddhimagga* is best thought of as a near-contemporary of our fifth-century Chinese meditation texts, albeit one from a very different part of the Buddhist world. I thus consult it here not as an early Indian model, but in order to see how similar issues were addressed in other contemporaneous Buddhist traditions.

According to Buddhaghosa at the moment of death a person experiences a vision of either (1) their past actions (*karma*) that will now determine rebirth, or (2) a premonitory vision of the location of rebirth itself, such as a vision of the fires of hell or the gardens of heaven.¹⁵² These two kinds of visions are called the “sign of karma” (*kammanimitta*) and the “sign of destiny” (*gatinimitta*) respectively, and both are said to be caused by whatever previous karma is now determining rebirth. What precisely determines which previous karma will impel one’s rebirth is a complicated question, one to which the Buddhist tradition rarely gave a categorical answer. Here Buddhaghosa explains merely that the karma in question is “weighty” (*garuka*), “habitually performed” (*samāsevita*), or done “close [in time to death]” (*āsanna*).¹⁵³

Interestingly Buddhaghosa makes a special point of describing what happens for those

151 Studies of Buddhist deathbed ritual have proliferated in recent years (Stone 2004, 2007a, 2007b; Shinohara 2007). For recent studies of Buddhist death rituals more generally, including funerary rituals, see Langer 2007 and Gouin 2010. In general it would appear that one of Buddhism’s major selling points wherever it went was as a ritual technology for dealing with the spirits of the dead. This was true even in India (DeCaroli 2004, 55–86), and no doubt contributed to the development of rich and varied traditions of deathbed ritual practice.

152 Vism, 549–550; Ñāṇamoli 1976, XVII.136–142. The appearance of either the “sign of karma” or the “sign of destiny” at the moment of death is also discussed in the corresponding section of the *Vimuttimaggā* (T.1648:32.451a10–29; Ehara 1961, 264–265). As far as I can determine the terms *kammanimitta* and *gatinimitta* used in this meaning first appear only in the Pāli commentaries. For some other examples, see Ehara 1961, 264n5.

153 Vism, 554.11. The final category, “close [in time to death]” would seem to be that which explains the efficacy of deathbed ritual practice.

who, owing to their attainment of trance, are destined for rebirth in the *jhāna* heavens. In such cases the “sign of karma” that appears to the dying person is that object upon whose basis *jhāna* was obtained during life, and the example is given of the earth *kaṣiṇa*.¹⁵⁴ In other words the deathbed vision of a dying meditator is the same object that appeared to him during life while practicing meditation. As far as I know the classical Pāli tradition does not further elaborate on this potential connection between the “verificatory vision” that one obtains during meditation, the “counterpart sign” (*paṭibhaganimitta*) as the Pāli sources call it, and the “sign of karma” (*kammanimitta*) that appears at the moment of death.

Other Buddhist traditions, however, also seem to have acknowledged, at least implicitly, similar theoretical and conceptual connections between the visions obtained during meditation and the manifestation of one’s past karma or a sign of future rebirth at the moment of death. Buddhist monastic law codes, as is well known, prohibit monks or nuns from speaking to others about their attainments. While most concretely this refers to claims to sanctity (that is, any of the four fruits), extant *vinaya* actually give a broad list of “superhuman states” (*uttarimanuṣyadharmā*), the first of which are the trances (*dhyāna*). Claiming to have reached such states, even when true, was considered an offense.¹⁵⁵ There were nevertheless various exceptions, most notably a general exemption, found in all *vinaya*, when such claims were made in good faith, under the influence of “pride” (*abhimāna*; Pāli, *adhimāna*).¹⁵⁶

Also listed here in many *vinaya* are claims to know one’s future state of rebirth. Interestingly, however, at least one *vinaya*, that of the Mahīśāsikas, takes the trouble to include an exception to this in the case of deathbed visions, introduced through a story of a monk who experiences, and then describes to others, “auspicious signs of imminent birth” (應生瑞相), something that seems to correspond to the “sign of destiny” from the Pāli commentaries.¹⁵⁷ While the issue is not developed any further by this text, whose concern is only to establish what counts as a transgression of the monastic rules, deathbed visions attesting to one’s future rebirth are here implicitly correlated with these other kinds of attainment, and this seems to show that such experiences were seen as having a similar significance.¹⁵⁸

As we would expect Chinese Buddhists too seem to have universally believed that the dying will experience visions attesting to their state of future rebirth. We find this mentioned already in Buddhist texts translated into Chinese in the late third century, though it is likely that such ideas were known whenever and wherever Buddhist deathbed ritual was employed. It is

154Vism, 550.33–551.3; Ñāṇamoli 1976, XVII.143. Interestingly the *Vimuttimagga*’s presentation in this section (see above note 152) does not include an explicit discussion of the rebirth process in this case. It is tempting to correlate this with the fact that the *Vimuttimagga* also does not discuss “visual” counterpart signs in the same way as the *Visuddhimagga* (on this point see chapter one, note 183).

155The rules here are complex, and it was only considered an offense to make true claims of attainment to laypersons. See for example the *Prātimokṣa of the Sarvāstivādins* (*Shi song bi qiu bo luo ti mu zha jie ben* 十誦比丘波羅提木叉戒本), T.1436:23.474a25–27.

156On these rules see Hirakawa 1993–1994, 1:298–323.

157*Mahīśāsika-vinaya* (*Wu fen lü* 五分律), T.1421:22.184c18–22

158A vision of the rebirth process is also one of the standard events included in the narrative of the Buddha’s awakening. There, however, the vision experienced is that of the karmic destinies of *other* people, not of the Buddha himself, who is of course about to escape this process altogether. Nevertheless it is clear from such stories that there was a longstanding connection between advanced meditation and visions of the workings of karma and rebirth.

interesting, however, that in Chinese sources the most developed early discussion of these ideas occurs in a text nominally devoted to meditation practice, the *Stages of the Path of Practice* (*Xiu xing dao di jing* 修行道地經) translated in the late third century and the most comprehensive of the “*chan* scriptures” (*chan jing* 禪經) prior to the fifth century. The relevant passage is worth translating in full:

At this time in the [dying person] the material elements surrounding the heart decay away. His life-force remains but it is as weak as a dying flame. Within his heart there [still remains] his mind-organ. All the good or evil that he did during life suddenly comes to his mind and he becomes aware of the way that evil and good in this life lead to blessing and misfortune in the next. Those who have carried out good will [at this moment] have a relaxed and happy countenance, while those who have done evil will appear unhappy. For when a person is happy their countenance appears beautiful, as they know they go to a good rebirth. On the other hand an ugly face reveals that the person is thinking about the evil [they have done] and are thus going to an unhappy rebirth.

This is just as when an old person looks at himself in a mirror and sees all the features of his body—white hair, wrinkles, missing teeth, boils or stains [on his skin], a dour face, flabby skin, a hunched back, and the jittery hands of old age. When he sees these things he feels ashamed, and putting away the mirror [thinks]: “I am not long for this world!” With old age upon him his heart grieves and he is no longer at ease, for he has reached the end. One who has habitually done evil sees these evil visions¹⁵⁹ at the end of his life and is sorrowful, frightened, and deeply regretful, [thinking]: “Without a doubt I go to an unhappy rebirth!” This situation is just as when an old person looks in a mirror and seeing his body knows he has reached decrepitude.¹⁶⁰

159The word *bian* 變, “transformations,” seems here to indicate an unusual vision. We may note the similar use of the word “transformed scene” (*bian zhuang* 變狀) in the *Chan Essentials* in reference to a frightful vision during trance (1.82). The same word appears in the *Methods for Curing* (5.102). Other examples from Chinese Buddhist texts confirm the meaning of *bian zhuang* more generally as “frightful vision.” For example in a passage from the *Mahīśāsaka-vinaya* it describes Siddhartha’s vision of his harem as a graveyard on the eve of his departure from the palace, supposedly a vision effectuated by the gods (T.1421:22.102a14–16). It is also used in Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Lotus Sutra* to describe the horrid appearance of the burning house (T.262:9.14a3). Such references may further be relevant to the use of *bian* 變 or *bian xiang* 變相 in the meaning “transformation tableau,” paintings or sculptures illustrating scenes from Buddhist scriptures. Victor Mair insists (rightly so) on the Indian origin of the pictorial representations that in China were called *bian xiang*, but acknowledges that the name *bian xiang* itself seems to be a Chinese coining (Mair 1986, 43). Judging from the content of the paintings known as *bian* or *bian xiang* Mair concludes that these were basically “a kind of narrative art.” However he also notes a late (18th century) example where, he suggests, *bian xiang* has a new meaning: “Where in the past *bian xiang* often meant ‘transformational representation [of hell in the form of a painting],’ it has come here to mean ‘horrible sights [in hell itself]’” (Mair 1986, 24). As we can see, however, *bian* 變 was used in Buddhist texts beginning from the third century in this meaning of “visions.”

160爾時彼人，其心周匝所有四大，皆為衰落。微命雖在，如燈欲滅。此入心中，有身意根。其生存時所為善惡，即心念本。殃福吉凶，今世後世，所可作為，心悉自知。奉行善者，面色和解；其行惡者，顏貌不悅。其人心喜，面色則好，當知所歸，必至善道；其面色惡，心念不善，則趣惡道。如有老人而照淨鏡，皆自見形。頭白、面皺、齒落、瘡癩、塵垢、黑醜、皮緩、脊僂、年老戰疣。設見如是，還自羞鄙，閉目放鏡。吾已去少。衰老將至，心懷愁憂，已離安隱，至於窮極。素行惡者，臨壽終時，所見惡變，愁慘恐怖，深自剋責；吾歸惡道，定無有疑。亦如老人照鏡，見身知為衰至。(T.606:15.186a1–13)

In the case of good rebirth the text has less to say, and we read simply that such a person will feel great happiness.¹⁶¹ The *Stages of the Path of Practice* thus mentions only visions of past good or evil deeds (what the *Visuddhimagga* calls *kammanimitta*), not premonitory signs of impending rebirth (*gatinimitta* in the *Visuddhimagga*).

But what I find most interesting here is the analogy invoked to explain how these visions appear—the evil-doer will see his past deeds just as old person holding up a mirror and grieving at the sight of his own decrepit face. Transgressions thus negatively impact one’s person, but under normal circumstances these defects are invisible, like one’s own face. At the moment of death, however, the mind becomes like a mirror and clearly reflects them.

Although in the context of the *Stages of the Path of Practice* the image of the disfigured person gazing into a mirror may simply emphasize the pain one feels at beholding signs of imminent rebirth in a lower realm, it is interesting to note that early fifth-century meditation texts use a very similar image to explain why purification of *śīla*, that is to say confession and repentance of transgressions of the precepts, must precede any attempt to enter trance. Thus in the opening passage of Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* (see above p.232) to those who have violated the grave transgressions for which there can be no atonement the master should refuse to teach meditation, saying: “A person with a mutilated face should not look in the mirror!” Buddhahadra’s *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* invokes this same image, along with several others, to explain why pure of *śīla* is an essential prerequisite for meditation practice:

Just as a bird without its two wings who might wish to soar [but cannot] or a person without his two feet who might wish to roam far [but cannot], having destroyed his virtue of purity with regard to the precepts a practitioner will never be able to produce the two wings of concentration and insight, and though he might wish to escape the cycle of rebirth he will never be able to do so [while his *śīla* remains impure]. Just as a broken vase will not hold water even for a moment, so too for a monk with broken precepts the waters of *samādhi* do not endure even for one moment of mind. Like a magic vase of the gods that when protected from damage would produce jewels to one’s heart’s content, so too a practitioner with undamaged pure precepts is always able to produce the jewels of the holy virtues. Just as the jewels would disappear should the magic vase be mistreated and damaged, so too one who damages the vase of the precepts will forever lose the jewels of the dharma. *Just as one with a severed nose would not delight upon gazing into a mirror, so too upon inwardly examining himself the mind of a monk with broken precepts will not delight.*¹⁶²

Although the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta* here gives many other analogies as well, that the trope of the mutilated or otherwise disfigured person gazing into a mirror appears both here and

161T.606:15.186a18–25

162如鳥無兩翼而欲飛空，人無兩足而欲遠遊，修行如是，毀淨戒功德故，止觀兩翅永不復生，欲出生死是終不能。如破瓶，盛水須臾不住，破戒比丘亦復如是，三昧法水念頃不住。如天德瓶，守護不壞，常出珍寶，隨意無盡，修行如是，不毀淨戒，則常出生聖功德寶，輕壞德瓶，珍寶即滅，若破戒瓶，則永失法寶。譬人截鼻照鏡，不自喜樂，破戒比丘亦復如是，內省其身，心不自悅。(T.618:15.321c21–29)

in the *Meditation Scripture* suggests that this was a common way of explaining why, and more importantly how impure *śīla* might hinder meditation.¹⁶³

Of course that the practice of meditation makes the mind “mirror-like” is a well-known idea found throughout the Buddhist tradition.¹⁶⁴ The *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture* itself on several occasions explains the appearance of the object of meditation to the mind of the meditator as like a mirror reflecting the object towards which it is directed.¹⁶⁵ A similar idea is seen in the *Chan Essentials* where the clear apprehension of the desired object of meditation is likened to gazing at one’s own face in a mirror.¹⁶⁶

In terms of basic Buddhist meditation theory the analogy of the mirror usually refers to the idea that a mirror, like the mind, properly reflects its object only when free of dirt; or, in the often interchangeable image of a surface of water, when unmoved. Found in Chinese discussions of *chan* as early as the third-century, this is the most common meaning ascribed to this image in East Asian Buddhism.¹⁶⁷ Similar to the image of seeing through to the bottom of a pool when the water is calm and free of dirt (the preferred image from early Buddhist sutras), the reflective ability of clean mirrors and still water expresses the fundamental principle of Buddhist meditation theory—that wisdom will manifest only in a calm, purified mind, that is when the conditions of *śīla* and *samādhi* are both present.

But as we have seen in detail throughout this chapter texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* do not say that the minds of those with impure *śīla* will fail to reflect anything, like dirty mirrors or wind-blown water. Rather such people will *clearly* see impure things that attest to their transgressions:

The precept-breaker . . . though he practices trance he falsely claims the verificatory vision (*jing jie* 境界) of breath-counting appears [to him]. But from the very beginning [of his meditation he in fact] sees a blackened buddha that looks like the leg of a black elephant, like a person covered in ash; he sees monks with their heads smashed and legs broken, but sees nuns adorned in flower garlands; he sees various heavenly elephants who transform into monkeys who approach him and try to touch him, the tips of the hairs of their bodies burning; or else he sees a wild fox, or a wild jackal, with a hundred thousand tails, and on the tip of each tail there are innumerable insects and various other assorted vile things; or else he sees starving camels, pigs, or dogs; or he sees a monk being attacked by *kumbandana* demons, evil *yakṣa* spirits, and murderous *rākṣasa*

163It may also be relevant that the severing of the nose and/or ears (as well as the hands and feet) was administered in India as judicial punishment, and *vinaya* codes prohibit the ordination of such individuals on the grounds that it would be tantamount to harboring escaped criminals (*Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya*, T.1425:22.418b14–c27; *Mahīśāsaka-vinaya*, T.1421:22.119a29–b9).

164The classic study is Demiéville 1973. See also Wayman 1974.

165T.618:15.319c23–26. The exact same expression, as if it were a fixed phrase, occurs later during a discussion of the contemplation of *praṭīyasamutpāda* (T.618:15.323c15–16).

166See section 1.138. The same phrase with the same wording occurs several times in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.650a2; 654c7; 660a27–28; 692b20–21.) See also *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, T.365:12.341c20–21; 343a15.

167See for example Kang Senghui’s 康僧會 preface to the *An ban shou yi jing* 安般守意經, written sometime during the middle of the third century (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.43a21–24).

demons each wielding various weapons and vicious fires.¹⁶⁸

Transgressions of the precepts thus do not simply prevent the mind from “reflecting” images during meditation—they cause the wrong images to be reflected.

I would thus suggest that, at least in fifth-century China, the image of the mind of the meditator as like a mirror is best understood primarily in terms of the *revelatory* power of mirrors—mirrors reveal to those who gaze upon them otherwise hidden things, and the key example of the mysteries thus revealed is karma. Among the other images that should thus be considered here is the so-called karma mirror (*ye jing* 業鏡), which in the Chinese tradition greets the dead in the court of King Yama, revealing one’s good or evil deeds from the past and thus functioning exactly as does the mind of the dying person in the accounts described above.¹⁶⁹

168此破戒人... 雖行禪定，偽現數息所見境界，始初之時，見黑色佛，如黑象脚，見如灰人。見諸比丘，頭破脚折，見比丘尼，莊嚴花鬘。見諸天象，化為獼猴，毛端火然，來觸擾已。或見一野狐，及一野干，有百千尾，一一尾端，無量諸蟲種種雜惡。或見羸瘦駝驢、猪、狗。鳩槃荼等，諸惡夜叉，羅刹魁膾，各持種種武器惡火，打撲比丘。(5.65–5.66)

169Concerning the “karma mirror” in the courts of hell, see Teiser 1994, 175. In many paintings depicting this scene it is clear that the principal viewer of the karma mirror is the deceased person himself, and this is mentioned explicitly in the so-called long recension of the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* studied by Teiser. Upon arriving before King Yama, “With their hair yanked and their heads pulled up to look in the mirror of actions (業鏡) / They begin to know that affairs from previous lives are rendered distinct and clear” (ibid, 214). The trope of the karma mirror as an instrument of judgment in purgatory appears to have been a Chinese invention, and seems to first appear in its eventually standard form sometime after the eighth century. But the notion that mirrors have the power to reveal one’s karma is far older than this. Indeed the image is used in the *Methods for Curing*, where in order to cure his transgressions the practitioner must imagine a mirror within which he sees his own evil deeds (5.6–5.7). Although this is not exactly the karma mirror of later Chinese Buddhism, we have here the basic image of the mirror as reveler of karmic truth. A slightly different example can be seen in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, where a mirror reveals to a dying person a vision symbolizing his place of imminent rebirth (in hell), in other words something akin to the *gatinimitta* of the Pāli commentaries: “As retribution for this person’s sins, when he is near to death his mind will be like glue, sticking to everything. He will then think: ‘My mind is held in bondage by attachment. Whatever it encounters it is unable to relinquish, and thus does it crave for liquor and hanker after sex. Though my body is near to death, still my mind does not cease! Would that I had a sharp sword with which to sever this attachment!’ Just then a hell guardian demon, responding to these words, comes before him in the guise of an attendant and holds up a bright mirror for him to see. He says to the sinner: ‘Your mind suffers from attachment. Look into this mirror.’ When [the sinner] looks into the mirror there appears the image of a sharp sword. He then thinks: ‘My body is now weak, and does not allow me to do what I wish. Would it not thus be pleasant to use this sharp sword so as to sever [the attachment of] my mind?’ As soon as he has this thought he dies and is then reborn in the body of a hungry ghost in the midst of sword-trees [in the sword-tree hell].” 此人罪報，臨命終時，心如胡膠，處處生著。即作此念：我心縛著，觸事不捨，耽酒嗜色。身雖遇患，心猶不息。得一利刀，割截此愛。獄卒羅刹，應聲即至，化為侍者，執明鏡示。語罪人言：汝心多著，可觀此鏡。觀此鏡時，見於鏡中，有利劍像，即作是念：我今體羸，不堪欲事，得此利劍，割斷我心，不亦快乎？作此念時，氣絕命終，受餓鬼身，諸劍樹間，忽然化生。(T.643:15.672b3–11). Several similar examples also appear in the *Saddharma-smṛtyupasthāna-sūtra*, a massive compendium of lore concerning the realms of rebirth, particularly the hells, translated into Chinese in the early sixth century. In this text we find the earliest occurrence in Chinese of the word “karma mirror” (業鏡). The expression “karma mirror” occurs in only a single passage describing how the god Indra uses “karma mirrors” to teach the other gods of the Trayatrimśa heaven the dangers of indulgence (*Zheng fa nian chu jing* 正法念處經, T.721:17.177a27–180a20). The recently discovered and as-yet unpublished Sanskrit version of the text here reads *karmādarśa*. (I thank Dan Stuart for examining the photographs of the manuscript and finding this phrase

It is thus perhaps not surprising to find, in a seventh-century Chinese meditation text, the word “karma mirror” (業鏡) used to describe the mind of the meditator.¹⁷⁰ The mind of the meditator is thus just like the mind of a dying person—what appears therein attests to either purity *or* impurity, and like death meditation could bring not only liberation, but also more sinister encounters.

In later Chinese Buddhism deathbed visions attesting to one’s location of rebirth were a frequent topic of discussion, most commonly in the case of “good” deaths and typically involving a vision of a buddha or bodhisattva understood as an envoy from the pure-land or heaven into which the dying person was to be reborn. In hagiographies these visions are usually presented as attesting to the purity that the person had already obtained during life, and a large number of Chinese Buddhist scriptures promise such auspicious deathbed visions to those who follow their practices.¹⁷¹ Not least among such texts was the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation*, though almost all the Contemplation Scriptures mention it.

But in practice the moment of death was more complicated, and Chinese Buddhists were not content to simply wait for such visions. Rather they attempted to induce them or enact them ritually. Thus in the standard Buddhist deathbed ritual in medieval China the dying were to be placed in the presence of an image of Amitābha or another buddha, and a five-colored string was to be tied between the dying person and the statue.¹⁷² The statue facing west, the dying person was supposed to imagine being led to the western pure-land, and this would thus seem to have served as a ritual enactment of the ideal deathbed vision. Although this was the standard Buddhist deathbed ritual in medieval China, as I have suggested elsewhere there may also have existed rituals involving rather different scenery, such as paintings of skeletons, perhaps intended to represent (or enact) the expected deathbed visions of advanced meditators.¹⁷³ Whether the dying person was surrounded by images of buddhas or skeletons, ritual and meditative technologies here seem to fuse with divination, and the moment of death becomes not only a time when visions will attest to the purity achieved during life, but a last chance to effectuate a more favorable destiny.

At work here is the idea that the final moment of consciousness is extremely important, something seen above in Buddhaghosa’s comment in the *Visuddhimagga* that karma done “close [in time to death]” (*āsanna*) might serve as the proximate cause for one’s next rebirth. Such ideas are the doctrinal basis, or perhaps the scholastic refraction, of the widespread, even universal Buddhist understanding that through careful ritual and meditation at the moment of death one can counteract even a lifetime of evil deeds, either through a few moments of pure faith and devotion, or a last burst of mental concentration and insight.

Though not found explicitly in the Pāli sutras this idea is quite old, and it shows up in the

for me.) Note however that here what the mirror reveals is not the karma of each individual person but rather the rebirths of beings generally. However elsewhere in this same text mirrors or pools of water are used to reveal the karmic destiny of the viewer himself, though here the term “karma mirror” is not used (T.721:17.128a17–129a10; 247b6–248a17).

170 *Jing xin jie guan fa* 淨心戒觀法, T.1893:45.819c11–13

171 Fujita identifies over a dozen such sutras in both Sanskrit and Chinese translation (Fujita 1970, 566–567).

172 Shinohara 2007, 108–109

173 Greene 2013

Chinese Āgama translations and the paracanonical *Questions of Milinda* (*Milindapañha*).¹⁷⁴ In both cases the favored practice is “recollection of the Buddha” (*buddhānusmṛti*). Attempts to mitigate a lifetime of evil deeds in this way are, of course, potentially in conflict with the idea that rebirth is determined by the (im)purity achieved during life. Buddhist doctrines of karma, however, were complex, such that this conflict could be resolved to the satisfaction of some. But it was an ongoing topic of discussion among traditional commentators as to precisely how one might account for the efficacy of deathbed rituals without negating the more basic Buddhist teachings on karma.¹⁷⁵

When considered in these terms the different ways of handling the moment of the death, and the possible meaning and function of deathbed visions, are in many ways parallel to what we have seen in the case of meditative visions in general. Thus in Zhiyi’s explanation objects of meditation such as the various kinds of corpses or the internal body parts might appear to a practitioner in one of two ways, either as the result of new meditative attainments actively pursued in the present or as the manifestation, upon reaching a state of preliminary calm, of “roots of good” cultivated in the past. In a similar manner though deathbed visions were, in principle, signs attesting to one’s imminent rebirth earned through the cultivation of good deeds during life, these signs could, using ritual and meditation, be manipulated. Their function was thus not only revelatory, but diagnostic.

This idea can be seen clearly in a famous passage from Shandao’s *Method for the Seven Day Samādhi of the Recollection of the Buddha*,¹⁷⁶ a ritual manual for intensive seven-day rites of “recollection of the Buddha” (念佛) analogous to those that still take place throughout the Chinese Buddhist world. According to Shandao’s description, having arranged the proper ritual space, while either sitting or standing one “recollects the Buddha” (*nian fo* 念佛) for seven days with the goal of obtaining “verificatory visions” (*jing jie* 境界), a term now familiar to us from the *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and other fifth-century meditation texts. And as in those texts the verificatory visions may be either good or bad, though as Shandao explains “one

174“One who does evil for a hundred years and yet at the moment of death produces a single moment of mindfulness with regard to the Buddha will be reborn in heaven” (Mil, 80: *yo vassasataṃ akusalaṃ kareyya maraṇakāle ca ekaṃ buddhagataṃ satim paṭilabheyya so deveṣu uppajeyyāti*). In the Chinese Āgama translations the most frequently cited source for these ideas is a passage from the *Ekottarāgama* (*Zeng yi a han jing* 增壹阿含經): “Moreover those beings who do evil through body, speech, and mind, but who at the moment of death bring to mind the virtues of the Tathāgata will part from the three unhappy realms of rebirth and will be reborn in heaven. That he causes even extremely evil people to obtain rebirth in heaven is the sixth virtue of the Tathāgata.” 復次。眾生身、口、意行惡，彼若命終，憶如來功德，離三惡趣，得生天上。正使極惡之人得生天上，是謂第六如來功德。(T.125:2.725a29–b2).

175See for example the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, where an interlocutor argues that karma would lose its meaning if the final moment of death were really able to determine rebirth (T.1509:25.238b15–c1).

176The full title is *Method for the Seven Day Ritual Recollection of the Buddha as Elucidated in the Inquiry Chapter of the Pratyutpanna-samādhi Scripture* (*Ban zhou san mei jing qing wen pin ming qi ri qi ye ru dao chang nian fo san mei fa* 般舟三昧經請問品明七日七夜入道場念佛三昧法), and is contained in Shandao’s larger collection of rituals, the *Guan nian o mi tuo fo xiang hai san mei gong de fa men* 觀念阿彌陀佛相海三昧功德法門 (T.1959). This entire collection has been translated into English by Inagaki Hisao (1999–2001). The passage cited here on deathbed ritual procedures was eventually made famous in Japan through Genshin’s 源信 (942–1017) *Collection on the Essentials of Rebirth in the Pure-land* (*Ōjō yōshū* 往生要集). For another translation of the passage here, see Stevenson 1995, 377–379.

must not casually tell others about the verificatory visions that you obtain. If they are good, rest content. If they are bad, [deal with them through] repentance.”¹⁷⁷

Shandao concludes his manual with an explanation of how this same procedure may be used for deathbed ritual, and here we see the essential continuity between deathbed visions and the appearance of “verificatory visions” during trance:

Further a when a practitioner or anyone else is about to die, whether he is sick or or well . . . [he should] contemplate Amitābha Buddha. His mind [contemplating] and his mouth [chanting] in harmony, the sound [of his chanting] should not cease, and he should resolutely imagine being reborn in the pure-land and [imagine] the host of holy ones atop the lotus pedestal arriving to lead him yonder. If the sick person sees these visions (境), he must tell his caregiver, who hearing this must note it down. If the sick person is unable to speak, the caregiver must repeatedly question the sick person about what visions (境界) he sees. If he says that he sees signs of sin (罪相), then those nearby must recollect the Buddha on behalf [of the sick person] and aid him in repentance, for the sin [in question] must be eliminated. If [through these means] the sin is successfully eliminated, the host of holy ones atop the lotus pedestal will appear [to the dying person] as soon as he brings it to mind.¹⁷⁸

Thus according to Shandao the dying person should imagine both his imminent rebirth in the pure-land and the descent of Amitābha and his retinue. On the one hand this can be thought of as an act of meditation designed to create, through the imagination, the kind of visions that would ideally occur naturally, thereby effectuating the desired rebirth. But a closer look suggests that this is not an entirely accurate way of thinking about what Shandao anticipated. Indeed he does not seem to think that successfully imagining these things will cause the practitioner to be reborn in the pure land. His notion of the causality is rather the reverse, and the meditation practice here seems to have functioned diagnostically. Good “verificatory visions” in response to his mental application reveal that the practitioner is already destined for salvation, while “signs of sin” (罪相) indicate the reverse. Though no detailed explanation is given of these “signs of sin,” it is probably not far off the mark to see these as visions of the sort described by Zhiyi (p.215) or in texts such as the *Chan Essentials*. When the visions provoked by trying to imagine the pure land are inauspicious, various interventions are required, notably repentance practices, whose success is then indicated by the subsequent appearance of the more favorable visions. Clearly Shandao thought that having such visions was important, and he indicates that they must be written down. It is indeed not hard to imagine that a written record was desired as proof of salvation, one that would have been used to confirm the Sangha’s ability to deliver to its followers the hoped for good death.

Although Shandao here nominally bases his methods on the *Immeasurable Life*

177所見境界，不得輒說，善者自知，惡者懺悔。(T.1959:47.24b15–16)

178又行者等，若病不病，欲命終時 . . . 觀想阿彌陀佛。心口相應，聲聲莫絕，決定作往生想、華臺聖眾來迎接想。病人若見前境，即向看病人說。既聞說已，即依說錄記。又病人若不能語者，看病人必須數數問病人見何境界。若說罪相，傍人即為念佛，助同懺悔，必令罪滅。若得罪滅，華臺聖眾應念現前。(T.1959:47.24b21–28)

Contemplation, the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, and the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi*, with the exception of the one passage from the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* discussed above these texts do no mention unfavorable visions. It is rather texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* where we see most clearly the pattern here, in which contemplation or other mental concentration is used to provoke visions whose content is then scrutinized for meaning about either the need for repentance or its success.

It would be premature to argue that the understanding of deathbed visions as revelations of rebirth destiny or of one's past good or evil karma influenced a more general understanding of the nature and significance of the experiences obtained during ordinary meditation practice. But at the very least we may note that this seems to have been a clearly understood parallel in medieval China. Few scholars would disagree, I believe, with the observation that "meditative" techniques were deployed or recommended at the moment of death to create conditions favorable for an auspicious rebirth. Less frequently noted is a parallel that goes in the other direction—namely that meditative experiences were understood to be similar in kind to deathbed visions. Both trance and the moments before death were thought to place the mind of the practitioner in a state of exquisite sensitivity, one in which he could expect to experience visions and other signs with a wide variety of meanings.

Conclusions

Building on my analysis of the importance of visions (rather than visualizations) in fifth-century Chinese *chan* texts, in this chapter I have demonstrated four principal conclusions.

First, that these "verificatory vision" were frequently understood in relation to the question of a practitioner's "karmic hindrances," the as-yet unripened fruits of past evil karma. This relationship can be understood in terms of the traditional Buddhist notion that meditation, *dhyāna*, depends on purity with respect to one's vows, *śīla*, though here the notion of *śīla* is expanded to include not only violations of the precepts in the present life, but past lives as well. In terms of the kinds of experiences that meditation was thought to produce, in fifth-century China the dependence of *dhyāna* on *śīla* did not simply mean that those with impure *śīla* (that is to say those with "karmic obstructions") would fail to attain significant experiences, but rather that the visions obtained during meditation practice could be used to diagnose the state of the practitioner's *śīla*.

Second, that meditative visions had such meaning resulted in, or was the result of, a close connection, both ritually and symbolically, between meditation and repentance. In sharp contrast to the known contemporaneous Indian Buddhist expositions of the path of meditation, both those surviving in Indic sources and those known only from their Chinese translations, texts such as the *Chan Essentials* assume that a meditator will continue to experience the manifestation of "karmic hindrances" all the way up until his final attainment, and that such occurrences will need to be treated not through continued meditation per se but through the performance of rituals of repentance, *chan hui* 懺悔.

Third, this understanding of the relationship between meditation and repentance became,

Chapter 4: Visions of Karma

by the late sixth century, the normal way of conceiving how meditation was to be carried out and what its fruits were thought to mean. Although most of the writings on *chan* by Chinese authors of the sixth century have not survived, the early writings of Zhiyi, of which I explored most closely the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, reveal an understanding of these matters that is similar to what we find in texts such as the *Chan Essentials*. Seen in the light of texts such as the *Chan Essentials* Zhiyi's system can be understood as the extension of a long-standing Chinese interest in using meditative experiences to verify karmic purity.

Fourth, I have also argued that in as much as the fruits of meditation were understood as spontaneous (in the sense of unexpected) visions that reveal one's karmic purity they were similar to the unusual experiences that a wide range of Chinese Buddhists might have expected to have in forms such as dreams, deathbed visions, or any of the many other types of divine encounters that Buddhist piety of all sorts was thought capable of producing. Despite the recent scholarly tendency to use Buddhist meditation practices as a foil for the understandings that circulated in what is now often called "lived" Buddhism or Buddhism "on the ground,"¹⁷⁹ what medieval Chinese Buddhists hoped to obtain through *chan* was, both in meaning and expected phenomenology, essentially continuous with the miraculous happenings that they thought could occur in any number of other circumstances.

¹⁷⁹Thus, to take one example, Robert Ford Campany explicitly contrasts "monastic" meditation practices with the depictions of the manifestation of Guanyin 觀音 to devotees in miracle tales (Campany 1993, 244).

Chapter 5: Meditation, Repentance, and the *Śīkṣādattaka* Penance

Introduction

In chapter four I concluded that many fifth- and sixth-century Chinese Buddhist texts understand the relationship between meditation, *chan* 禪, and repentance, *chan hui* 懺悔, rather differently than do traditional or even contemporaneous Indian presentations of the so-called path to liberation, the *mārga*. Rather than a preliminary purification rendering the practitioner ready for the higher practice of meditation, in texts such as the *Chan Essentials* meditation practice itself reveals the need for repentance.

So far I have discussed this question from the point of view of how meditation was practiced and what the fruits of meditation were thought to mean. Accordingly I have primarily examined texts and passages framed as instructions in the practice of meditation. But when we turn to texts explicitly framed as rituals of repentance, we also occasionally find that meditation plays a crucial role as a means of divining or confirming success. This is made possible by the same basic understanding seen in the meditation texts themselves, namely that visions obtained during meditation indicate the need for repentance or, conversely, the absence of such a need (and hence by extension the *success* of the previously performed rites).

The key example of this is found in the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing*, which contains instructions for an elaborate rite for purifying a practitioner of transgression of the precepts. As I will show this ritual derives at least in part from the *śīkṣādattaka* penance, an important practice known from *vinaya* literature that allows monks and nuns who violate the *pārājika* transgressions to remain part of the clergy. The influence of these rituals on the development of medieval Chinese Buddhist liturgy seems to have so far escaped the attention of modern scholars.

Meditation and *pārājika* penitents

The connection between meditation and rites for restoring the monastic status of violators of *pārājika* transgressions is intimately connected with the understanding that those who break the *pārājika* precepts will be, in this lifetime, unable to attain *dhyāna* or indeed make any further progress along the path. That this would be the case is implicit in the traditional structure of the Buddhist path to liberation, in which the cultivation of *dhyāna* is said to depend on *śīla*, a word often translated vaguely as “virtue” or “ethics,” but which in the context of the Buddhist path refers primarily to the purity of one’s monastic or other vows.

As discussed in the previous chapter and the introduction, although modern scholars and commentators often explain the dependence of *dhyāna* on *śīla* abstractly or psychologically as a matter of “ethical conduct” serving as the necessary basis for mental training, in practice it amounts rather to the assertion that meditation, and hence progress along the Buddhist path, will only be successful for those who a) take on vows (*śīla*) through a formal act of ordination and b) periodically reestablish the purity of these vows through repentance of any transgressions (a ritual whose most basic form is found in the *poṣadha*). Meditation thus depends not merely on what we might call “ethical” purity, but on ritual and institutional purity as well.

It is here that the problems associated with the *pārājika* become apparent. As is well known, monks and nuns who violate the four (for monks) or eight (for nuns) *pārājika* transgressions are “expelled” from the monastic order. As we will discuss momentarily, however, in Indian Buddhism this did not mean that such individuals must leave the monastic institution altogether. Instead traditional Buddhist law codes allow such monks and nuns to remain within the clerical fold, albeit in a special position with reduced status. Despite this possibility for institutional restitution, however, *pārājika* transgressions were considered “unpardonable” (不可贖), meaning that those who commit them can never regain the purity of their *śīla* and accordingly cannot make further progress along the path during the present life.

This understanding of the soteriological consequences of *pārājika* transgressions is reflected in traditional Indian Buddhist meditation texts. As discussed in chapter four, most such texts mention that one must atone for any transgressions of one’s vows prior to beginning meditation, and at this point it is often said that for certain transgressions there can be no atonement, and thus no practice of meditation. The *Vimuttimaggā* describes this as follows:

When a monk first receives instruction in meditation he must examine himself with regard to the seven classes [of precepts]. If he has violated a *pārājika* then he has cut off his monkhood and dwells in a state lacking the full precepts. And the elders have said that [only] one who abides in the full precepts [of a monk] will obtain the higher attainments [resulting from meditation]. [On the other hand] if he has violated any of the *sanghādisesa* offenses then he should confess and repent by way of [the confession] procedure involving the whole community [as is appropriate for *sanghādisesa* offenses].¹

The opening section of Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* contains a very similar passage that denies violators of the *pārājika* the opportunity to practice meditation while implicitly affirming that there may be such individuals within the monastic community:

When a person desiring to practice *dhyāna* first goes to the master [for instruction in meditation], the master must ask: “Have you maintained the precepts purely? Do you have any heavy sins or evil perversions?” If [the practitioner] says that he is pure in regard to the five classes of [monastic] precepts and has no heavy sins or evil perversions, [the master] may next instruct him in the practice. If, however, he says that he has violated the precepts, [the master] must ask further: “What precepts have you violated?” If he says he has violated any of the grave precepts, the master must say: “A person with a

1 For the original text and further discussion of this passage, see p.232–233.

mutilated face should not look in the mirror! You must go. Chant the scriptures, proselytize, or do good deeds, and in this way you may plant the conditions for attaining the Way in a future life. For the present life you must give up [any practice of *dhyāna*]. Like a withered tree, though one might water it, it will no more sprout flowers, leaves or fruits.” If [the practitioner] has violated any of the other precepts, [the master] should instruct him to repent using the appropriate method.²

Kumārajīva’s other meditation text, the *Explanations of Meditation*, contains an even more detailed passage that in addition to violation of the *pārājika* lists several other conditions that might permanently prevent successful meditation practice in one’s present lifetime:

Question: Who is not included [in the above exposition of meditation practice]?

Answer: Those with the following defects (罪) should not practice [meditation]: those who have violated the monastic precepts that cannot be atoned for [the *pārājika*],³ those with heretical views who are unwilling to abandon them, those who have severed their roots of good,⁴ and those with the three kinds of obstacles, that is to say [the obstacle of] acute mental defilement, [the obstacle of having committed any of the] five sins of immediate retribution, [and the obstacle of having been] reborn in the three unhappy realms [of hell, the world of the *pretas*, and the animal realm].⁵ However in the Mahāyāna teachings it is a different matter for bodhisattvas with sharp faculties, because they possess true wisdom and great merit.

2 See p.233.

3 “Monastic precepts that cannot be atoned for” likely translates what in Pāli *vinaya* texts appears as *appaṭikamma*, “un-repentable.” The technical *vinaya* term for “repentance” in the sense of expiation of transgressions of the *prātimokṣa* is *prati+√kr*, and offenses for which expiation is not possible (most importantly the *pārājika* offenses) are in Pāli called *appaṭikamma*, literally “for which there is no method of atonement,” in contradistinction to *sappaṭikamma* (Mp, 1.94). For a comprehensive analysis of the term *prati+√kr*, usually translated in *vinaya* texts as *chan hui* 懺悔, see Mori 1999. The Jains also used this word, *pratikramaṇa*, in a similar meaning (Derrett 1997, 60). Although the principal “un-repentable” transgressions were the *pārājika*, a few other transgressions not classified as *pārājika* according to monastic law were held to have a similarly detrimental effect. The *Bi ni mu jing* 毘尼母經 (**Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra*), a *vinaya* commentary translated into Chinese in the fifth century which we will discuss in more detail below, thus classifies as “unrepentable” (不可懺) the nominally *sthūlātyaya* offense of Devadatta’s shedding the Buddha’s blood, merely wishing to kill the Buddha (nominally the *payaścitta* transgression of wishing to kill someone), or the nominally *duṣkṛta* offense of a novice monk violating a *pārājika* (T.1463:24.813b22–28). These transgressions are declared to be similar to *pārājika* in that the offender will be unable to obtain any soteriological fruit in the present life.

4 The notion of “one who has cut off the roots of good” (*samucchinnakuśalamūla*) first appears in early sutras to describe those who in the present life enjoy the fruits of their past good karma while failing to generate new good karma. With all their “roots of good” exhausted, at the end of their present lives such people fall into hell. The notion of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* was later developed among the Vaibhāṣikas, where it refers to anyone who, through force of their wrong views (*mithyādrṣṭi*), has eliminated the possibility of further spiritual growth in this lifetime. According to the Vaibhāṣikas such people must be reborn in hell before their roots of good will regrow (Buswell 1992, 112–118).

5 These three are the so-called three hindrances (*āvaraṇa*), the hindrance of the defilements (*kleśāvaraṇa*), the hindrance of [evil] karma (*karmāvaraṇa*), and the hindrance of unfavorable rebirth (*vipākāvaraṇa*). The definitions here are the standard ones. (Recall the unusual interpretation of these terms given by Zhiyi; see p.214–215).

If one is not fit to practice meditation then one should chant scriptures, cultivate merit, built stupas, make offerings, preach the Dharma, proselytize, and act in accord with the ten kinds of wholesome action.⁶

Leaving aside for the moment the possibility, discussed only in the *Explanations of Meditation*, that the situation might be different for some followers of the Mahāyāna,⁷ we see from the above texts a basic understanding that transgression of the most serious monastic precepts, the *pārājika*, ends any further opportunity to practice meditation. Yet these texts do not seem to imagine that those in such a condition would simply no longer be active members of the clergy, and both the *Meditation Scripture* and *Explanations of Meditation* recommend a number of other monastic vocations (loosely speaking) for those unable to practice meditation.

Indeed, frequent scholarly misconception to the contrary, even according to the letter of *vinaya* law *pārājika* violations, in particular breaches of monastic celibacy (the first *pārājika*), did not necessarily entail institutional expulsion.⁸ With the notable exception of the Pāli *vinaya* all extant Indian Buddhist monastic codes allow monks and nuns who violate *pārājika* transgressions to remain part of the monastic order, albeit in a special, reduced status known as a *śikṣādattaka* (or a *śikṣādattā-śrāmaṇerī* in the case of a nun), a term I will translate when necessary as “*pārājika* penitent.”⁹ And even the exception of the Pāli *vinaya* may be less

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- 6 問曰：何事不中？答曰：若犯禁戒不可懺者，若邪見不捨，若斷善根，及三覆障，所謂厚利煩惱、五無間罪、三惡道報，如是等罪不應習行。又摩訶衍中，菩薩利根，有實智慧福德因緣，不同其事。若不任習行，當誦經、修福、起塔、供養、說法、教化、行十善道。(T.616:15.287a27–b3)
- 7 Given this statement’s brevity, and that the remainder of the *Explanations of Meditation* makes no mention of the Mahāyāna or Mahāyāna ideas, I am inclined to believe that this line is Kumārajīva’s own addition to whatever material he was working from. Note that the *Meditation Scripture* too contains a brief, possible inserted line that attempts to moderate the text’s more basic position (see in the passage above) that those who violate the grave transgressions cannot practice meditation. When explaining the different personality types for whom the five different methods of *chan* are suitable, the final method, “bringing the Buddha to mind” (*nian fo* 念佛), is said to be suitable for those with “equally distributed” (等分) defilements (T.15:614.271c4). But later, just before presenting the method for *nian fo* itself, we read that this method should also be used by “those with grave sins who wish to petition the Buddha” (重罪人求索佛; T.15:614.276a7). Yet the actual method for *nian fo* makes no mention of such matters at all. As the *Meditation Scripture* is not the translation of a single text but a compilation put together by Kumārajīva, it is perhaps not surprising that different voices would appear. But given that with the exception of the short note at the beginning of the section on *nian fo* the remainder of the text agrees that those with “grave sins” (重罪) cannot practice meditation at all (and given that this was clearly the position taken by most traditional presentations of meditation), it is again not difficult to imagine that this note was an addition made either by Kumārajīva himself or his Chinese disciples. The brief passage in the *Explanations of Meditation* is, I would suggest, likely to have a similar origin.
- 8 Modern examples of (officially) non-celibate Buddhist clergy are known from Japan and Nepal. And though these cases are much later developments, communities of openly non-celibate “monks” (though never “nuns” as far as I know) are known from far earlier times, most notably in Central Asia where we find evidence of this from the third and fourth centuries of the common era (Agrawala 1954; Ichikawa 1999; Hansen 2004, 293–296). It is often assumed that any such system must have operated in at least tacit contradiction with traditional law codes (Hansen 2004, 293), but this is not necessarily the case.
- 9 Such provisions are found in all the Indian *vinaya* that survive in Chinese translation, and for this reason they have long been known among scholars of East Asian Buddhism (Hirakawa 1960, 442; 1964, 246–254; Satō 1986, 146–152; Kuo 1994, 30–31). Among Western scholars of Indian Buddhism, the existence of this

significant than it seems, as the Pāli commentarial tradition appears to know a similar idea, though it does not use the word *śikṣādattaka*.¹⁰

In the *vinaya* that discuss it the provisions for the *pārājika* penitent are introduced through the story of the monk Nandika, who while dwelling in the forest and practicing meditation is seduced by a goddess and breaks his celibacy.¹¹ Even though he suspects it will mean the end of his life as a monk Nandika immediately confesses his crime, and the Buddha then declares that since Nandika made no attempt to conceal it, there is a special method of atonement that will allow him to repent his transgression and avoid expulsion from the community.

The Buddha then explains that, in general, to avoid expulsion a *pārājika* violator must, like Nandika, first of all make no attempt to conceal the offense, and must then undertake a lifelong penance.¹² For the remainder of his life he assumes a special rank below the fully ordained monks but above novices (*śrāmanera*). He must furthermore perform the menial chores normally assigned to novices (such as cleaning the toilets). He is also denied access to key ritual functions (such as the *poṣadha*), and he is barred from positions of administrative or ecclesiastical responsibility.¹³ But symbolically the most important point is that he is not allowed

institution was recognized early on by La Vallée Poussin (1927, 208), but was subsequently largely ignored. In more recent times the *śikṣādattaka* penance has been discussed by Schopen (1998), and in greater detail by Shayne Clarke (1999; 2009a; 2009b).

- 10 Yamagiwa Nobuyuki 山極伸之 has pointed to the concept of a “[monk] residing in the novice-stage” (*sāmaṇerabhūmi*), mentioned briefly in the *Samantapāsādikā* (Buddhaghosa’s commentary to the Pāli *vinaya*), and seemingly equivalent to the *śikṣādattaka* (Yamagiwa 1996). In fact, though it seems to have escaped the attention of modern scholars, we even find a canonical Pāli *sutta* that explicitly refers to the atonement of *pārājika* violations: “And of him [who has fear of transgressions] the following is expected—that, not guilty of a *pārājika* he will not transgress one, and that guilty of a *pārājika* he will atone for it in accord with the Dharma.” *tass’ etaṃ paṭikaṅkham – anāpanno vā pārājikaṃ dhammaṃ na āpajjissati, āpanno vā pārājikaṃ dhammaṃ yathā dhammaṃ paṭikarissati* (AN, 2.241). Although what was intended by “atoning” (*paṭikaroti*) here is not discussed, the commentary explains that in the case of *pārājika* successful atonement means “residing in the ‘novice-stage’” (Mp, 3.216; *sāmaṇerabhūmiyaṃ thassaṭṭi*), thus offering us another example of the concept of *sāmaṇerabhūmi*, and showing that the Pāli tradition traced this concept, though not the word itself, back to the Nikāyas. In any event as Shayne Clarke remarks ethnographic data from modern Theravāda countries suggests that in practice those who follow the Pāli *vinaya* do in fact have a system of partial restitution for those who transgress the *pārājika*, one that seems very similar if not identical to the *śikṣādattaka* penance as outlined in the other known *vinaya* (Clarke 2009a, 31–35).
- 11 Although the story of Nandika and the provisions for the *pārājika* penitent are introduced only in the case of the first *pārājika*, Shayne Clarke suggests they may have applied for the other *pārājika* as well (Clarke 2000, 154–157). However Clarke’s evidence for this is somewhat shaky; as far as I can tell the only sources explicitly stating this are the Chinese *vinaya* commentaries of Daoxuan. Moreover as I show below (note 35) Daoxuan explicitly acknowledged that his interpretation of this matter differed from previous commentators (who specified that this provision was applicable only for violations of celibacy). Indeed it seems that Daoxuan derived his understanding not from *vinaya* texts per se, but from the *Methods for Curing*.
- 12 Yaśomitra’s *Abhidharma-kośa-vyākhyā* uses the term *daṇḍakarman*, which Clarke translates as “act of punishment,” to describe the penance that a *śikṣādattaka* must undertake (Clarke 2009a, 7). I here follow Clarke in using the general term “penance” to describe this situation. Chinese *vinaya* translations generally rendered *śikṣādattaka* as *xue hui* 學悔, which would seem to mean “one who practices (學) penance (悔).”
- 13 The precise provisions vary between the different *vinaya*. For a description of the daily schedule of a *pārājika* penitent as given in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, see Schopen 1998. For a detailed list of the differences between the various sources, see Clarke 1999, 212–215.

to lodge in the same building as the other monks for more than three nights,¹⁴ thus rendering him formally “not in communion” (*asaṃvāsa*), the word that scholars have often taken to mean actual expulsion from the clergy, but which Shayne Clarke suggests may have simply meant that such monks had separate quarters. Thus taken as a whole the duties and punishments given to the *pārājika* penitent symbolically expel him from the Sangha by denying him access to key ritual functions associated with fully ordained monks, even while allowing him to remain within the monastic institution.

The provisions for the *pārājika* penitent were thus known by all or almost all Indian Buddhist schools. It is difficult to determine, however, how many monks or nuns may have availed themselves of this possibility. I would suggest, however, that the meditation texts examined above, by taking the trouble to mention that those who have violated *pārājika* offenses cannot or should not practice meditation, indirectly suggest that such individuals were, if not common, then at least not unusual. Indeed as Clarke has pointed out the rules for the *pārājika* penitent might even have some connection with the most famous case of a non-celibate, yet eminent monk in China, Kumārajīva, who was “forced” to accept ten concubines so that he might father a child.¹⁵ According to the stories after this Kumārajīva “no longer lived in the monks quarters,”¹⁶ thus perhaps suggesting something similar to the rule that *pārājika* penitents must not live with the other monks.

But what is most important for my present purposes is that the new meditation texts translated into Chinese in the early fifth century, as well as similar contemporaneous works from other parts of the Buddhist world such as the *Vimuttimaggā*, seem to have generally agreed that those who have violated the *pārājika* offenses will be unable to subsequently attain any distinction in the practice of meditation. This understanding of the spiritual potential of *pārājika* penitents is, moreover, supported by many *vinaya* traditions, most importantly all those that were introduced to China in the fifth century.

However Clarke, the scholar who has examined the *vinaya* accounts of the *śikṣādattaka* in most detail, has suggested the opposite, namely that *pārājika* penitents were generally deemed capable of making further progress on the path.¹⁷ But the situation is more complicated than Clarke implies. Although Clarke analyzes the provisions for *pārājika* penitents from all extant *vinaya*, his conclusion about the soteriological potential of such individuals is drawn only from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, where “Nandika the meditator,” having atoned for his breach of celibacy and having been allowed to stay within the order as a *śikṣādattaka*, continues to apply himself in meditation and eventually becomes an arhat.¹⁸

In contrast the other extant *vinaya* that mention the *śikṣādattaka* say nothing about such matters. We might interpret this to mean, as does Clarke, that these traditions at least do not contradict the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. However the discussions of this issue in three early *vinaya* commentaries of Indian descent preserved only in Chinese translation, texts Clarke did

14 This conforms to the *prātimokṣa* rule that monks must not spend more than three nights with an unordained person (Clarke 1999, 117).

15 Clarke 2009a, 34n117

16 *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.332c1

17 Clarke 2009a, 29–30

18 T.1451:245c28–246a11

not examine, make clear that there was also an influential school of interpretation holding that *pārājika* violators, even while remaining within the clergy, were forever barred from higher religious attainments.

The **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* (*Sa po duo pi ni pi po sha* 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙), a commentary to the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* translated into Chinese in the early fifth century,¹⁹ thus explains the negative effects of first *pārājika* in the following terms:

When crops are crushed by hail they do not then yield fruit. In the same way one who violates this precept [concerning celibacy] will not obtain the four fruits of the *śramaṇa*. Further when a seed has been burned, though one might plant it in fertile soil, provide it with fertilizer, and irrigate it, it will neither sprout nor fruit. Similarly one who violates this precept, though he might further exert himself diligently, will never be able to produce the sprouts and fruits [consisting in] the fruits of the path. When the branches of a *tāla* tree are cut they do not grow again, and so too one who violates this precept will not be able to grow further in his attainment of the four fruits. Further when one cuts down a tree at the stump the tree itself withers and then rots. So too for one who violates this precept the tree of the path falls over and withers . . . [in short] one who violates this precept, *even though he remains a member of the pure clerical assembly*, will not be able to achieve the four fruits of a *śramaṇa*.²⁰

In its earlier discussion of the first *pārājika* the **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* does not explicitly mention either Nandika or the provisions for the *śikṣādattaka*. However the passage cited here makes clear that this procedure was both known and accepted, for it considers that one who violates the *pārājika* might still remain “a member of the pure clerical assembly.”²¹ But it also states, in no uncertain terms, that despite remaining thus within the fold violation of this precept bars one from any higher attainment in the present life.

Similar statements are found in the **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra* (*Pi ni mu jing* 毘尼母經), another Indian *vinaya* commentary that appeared in China no later than the early fifth century.²²

19 On this text, see Hirakawa 1960, 259–260. Although long accepted as an authentic, though anonymously translated Indian text, new questions about its status have been recently raised by Funayama Tōru, who points to a number of passages suggesting that it was not a straightforward translation, including what appears to be a passing reference to the *Analects* (Funayama 1998, 280–282). Funayama argues that the text may be a commentary on the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* delivered or written in China by an Indian *vinaya* master. However regardless of where it was composed the information in the text seems clearly to reflect an Indian commentarial tradition on the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*.

20 復次如好田苗，若被霜雹摧折墮落，不得果實。犯此戒亦爾。燒滅道苗，不得沙門四果。復次如焦穀種，雖種良田，糞治，溉灌，不生苗實。犯此戒亦爾，雖復勤加精進，終不能生道果苗實。如斷多羅樹，不生不廣。犯此戒亦爾，不得增廣四沙門果。復次如斷樹根，樹則枯朽。若犯此戒，道樹枯損 . . . 若犯此戒，雖在出家清淨眾中，不能成就四沙門果。(T.1440:23.515b4–15).

21 I translate 出家清淨眾 as “pure clerical assembly” because in Chinese Buddhist texts the word *chu jia* 出家 refers to all those who have ordained in the monastic institution, including novice monks. The **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* is thus not necessarily claiming that the *pārājika* penitent will return to the status of a fully ordained monk, but merely that he or she will not return to lay life.

22 Like the **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* we have no information about the translator(s) of this text. For a survey of the opinions concerning its origin, nature, and possible school affiliation, see Hirakawa 1960, 263–264.

Unlike the **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*, the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra* includes a full version of the story of Nandika and the successful repentance of his *pārājika* violation.²³ It also provides the formal legal utterances (*karmavacana*) that are to accompany the official ecclesiastical act (*karma*) of removing the *pārājika* transgression:

This monk, from today forth, having performed this legal act (*karma*), is to be known as one who holds the precepts purely. The only [negative consequence is that] in this lifetime he will not be able transcended birth and death through the attainment of [any of the] four fruits. Nor will be able to attain any undefiled merit [meditative attainments].²⁴ It is merely that [having undergone this procedure] his obstruction [of having violated the *pārājika*] will not cause him to fall into hell. This is the only [benefit that he will obtain]. Just as a leaf fallen from a tree does not grow again, so too someone who has violated a precept of the first division [the *pārājika*] will find it impossible to attain [any of] the four fruits, or to accumulate any undefiled merit [in this lifetime].²⁵

Finally, although the discussion is much briefer, a passage in the *Pi nai ye* 鼻奈耶, yet another Indian *vinaya* commentary that appeared in China during the late fourth century,²⁶ similarly suggests that *pārājika* violators are disqualified from higher attainments even though they may remain nominally part of the monastic order.²⁷

In short it would appear that the streams of Indian *vinaya* commentarial literature that were appearing in China during the late fourth and early fifth centuries agreed that *pārājika* penitents, though potentially remaining members of the monastic community in many (though

23 The **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra* also contains a very interesting story not found in other *vinaya*. While including the normal method of *pārājika* repentance, another opinion is introduced that includes the following story. After committing his violation Nandika is told that a hermit named **Vaśa* 波奢 has a special repentance method that will allow him to regain his purity. Nandika must vow to never again violate the precepts, and then hurl himself into a pit of fire. Vaśa secretly instructs other monks to catch Nandika should he actually attempt to jump, which of course he does, following which he is said to have obtained purity. Similar practices for the elimination of grievous sins are alluded to in other Buddhist sources where, however, they are attributed to non-Buddhists. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, for example, contains a story concerning the first institution of rule prohibiting the ordination of matricides (Silk 2007, 277–280). The unnamed protagonist (whose eventual ordination is what prompts the Buddha to institute the prohibition), having killed his mother, first seeks out various ways of eliminating his sins. He consults various non-Buddhist ascetics who suggest that he do things like “jump in fire” or “jump from a cliff.” Although in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* these are ridiculed as merely ways of killing oneself, in light of the story from the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra* it would seem that there was a tradition, both within Buddhism and without, of purifying otherwise unpardonable sins through life threatening acts (the implication, presumably, was that if one survived then one’s sin was considered purified).

24 “Undefiled merit” would seem to refer to actions and attainments that while not yet technically of the transcendent (*lokottara*) variety nonetheless lead to those attainments. In the Sarvāstivādin system, for example, we might imagine that this refers to either the *mokṣa-bhāgīya-kuśalamūla* or the *nirvedha-bhāgīya-kuśalamūla*, “good” deeds that are productive of future path-fruits rather than favorable rebirths.

25 此比丘從今得羯磨已，名為清淨持戒者，但此一身不得超生離死，證於四果。亦不得無漏功德。然障不入地獄耳。喻如樹葉落已，還生樹上，無有是處。若犯初篇，得證四果，獲無漏功德，亦無是處。
(T.1463:24.813b12–17)

26 Hirakawa 1960, 156–159

27 T.1464:24.860b6–12

perhaps not all) other respects, were incapable of the higher religious attainments that meditation was normally supposed to produce. It is in this light, I believe, that we should understand the passages from texts such as the *Vimuttimagga* and, more relevant in the present context, Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture*, which address this problem specifically in terms of whether or not those who violate the *pārājika* can or should practice meditation at all.

The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* account, the basis of Clarke's conclusion that *pārājika* penitents were generally thought capable of continued religious progress, now appears not as the standard version of the story, but as a forceful endorsement of what may have been a minority position.²⁸ We must be careful not to say too much about which views were the most common, since the pedigree of the commentaries preserved in Chinese is uncertain (though at least some of them are commentaries to the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*), and in any event only a few early *vinaya* commentaries survive in any form.²⁹ However it is undeniable that the spiritual potential of even

28 Clarke acknowledges that the story of Nandika's eventual arhatship is found only in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* version. But he implies that this understanding either held across the board, or at the least was not contradicted by other traditions. Thus he writes that "the story of Nandika presents us not with a story of monastic failure, but of religious success" (Clarke 2009a, 30). Similarly in his introduction Clarke presents Nandika's eventual arhatship as the normative or at least most common version of the story: "The main textual evidence for this remarkable accommodation to the rule of celibacy is the story of Nandika, preserved in all of the extant monastic law codes except the Theravādin or Pāli Vinaya . . . Nandika continues in the religious life and attains the state of an arhat, religious perfection as known to the traditions of Mainstream . . . Buddhism (Clarke 2009a, 3).

29 Although it presents numerous problems that cannot be fully resolved in the present context, I must at least mention the now-lost *A pi bo lü* 阿毗跋律, known only through a citation in Daoxuan's commentary to the Dharmaguptaka rules for nuns (*Si fen bi qiu ni chao* 四分比丘尼鈔, X.724; on the question of the authenticity of this text see Fujiyoshi 2002, 138–140). Daoxuan first cites a definition of the word *pārājika* from this text (X.724:40.707c14–15), but then later, in the explanation of the *pārājika* penance, gives a longer excerpt of it that clearly has some connection with the story of *Vaśa from the **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra* (see above note 23): "The *A pi bo lü* says there was once a monk named *Sanghvasu who violated his vow of celibacy. Realizing what he had done he set aside his staff and robe, and donning [only his] *śāṭaka* [under-robe] went about crying 'I am thief who steals from the buddhas of ten directions of the past, present, and future.' He went all over seeking a way to repent until he found someone who knew the *vinaya* well. This person, knowing that [Sanghvasu] had transgressed one of the grave offenses, magically created a giant pit of fire. Sanghvasu then bound his body (?) and threw himself into the fire, which instantly transformed into a pool of water. The *vinaya* [master] then said: 'If your mind is like this, then your precepts have returned to you.' Then, free of the sin of having violated the precepts, he immediately became an arhat. This matter for Sanghava[su] applies in the case of all four [*pārājika*]." 阿毗跋律云：有比丘名僧伽婆藪，遂犯婬，便自覺悟，捨錫杖、法衣，著小舍勒，出入大唱云：我是十方三世佛賊。徧求自悔，至持律所，知其犯重，即化作一大火坑。僧伽婆藪便束身，走投火，火即變成涼池。{持}律云汝心如是，戒還得之。無破戒罪，即得羅漢。如僧伽婆，四事皆爾。(X.724:40.761c22–762a3). The nature of the *A pi bo lü* 阿毗跋律, of which this is the only preserved citation, is not clear. This is probably the same text mentioned in the *Records of the Canon* under the name *Pi bo lü* 毘跋律 (T.2145:55.13c7), said to have been "produced" (出) by the monk Fadu 法度 during the reign of emperor Wu 武 of the southern Qi (r. 483–494). In the early Sui-dynasty *Fajing's Catalog* the text is labeled as a forgery written (作) by Fadu himself (T.2146:55.141a4), a verdict eventually accepted in the official catalogs of the eighth century, but one that Daoxuan seems to have disagreed with, for his catalog, the *Tang Catalog of Buddhist Scriptures*, treats it as authentic (T.2149:55.262c22). Indeed the text titled *Pi bo lü* 毘跋律 is cited elsewhere by Daoxuan (T.1804:40.26a23–24), but the name used above, which includes the character 阿, does not appear elsewhere. I presume, however, that it is the same text. It does indeed seem likely that the text is a Chinese composition, as reference in an Indian *vinaya* text to the "buddhas of the ten directions" would be most

fully repentant *pārājika* violators was denied by those *vinaya* traditions known in China in the early fifth century, and this was expressed in contemporaneous meditation texts of Indian origin through a prohibition on instructing such monks in the methods of *dhyāna*.

Before moving on to look at how this question is addressed in the *Methods for Curing*, we should note that according to the Chinese *vinaya* commentaries discussed above the *śikṣādattaka* penance, in addition to restoring some element of the transgressor's monastic status, could also eliminate the negative karma associated with *pārājika* violations. That monastic legal rituals would discuss such matters at all is in and of itself noteworthy. Indeed normally violation of the monastic precepts is not discussed as having negative karmic results, and these rules are not classified according to their underlying moral valence. Accordingly the rites of atonement available to monks and nuns in the *vinaya* are usually discussed solely in terms of restoring institutional status, not as obviating the negative karmic results occasioned by the deeds in question.³⁰

However while this distinction is strictly observed in the Pāli *vinaya*,³¹ elsewhere matters of karma and future retribution are occasionally, though by no means systematically discussed in conjunction with violations of the *prātimokṣa*.³² Such concerns are indeed explicit in the passage from the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra* cited above, which states that the *śikṣādattaka* penance will not only return a violator of the *pārājika* to the status of “one who holds the precepts purely,” but moreover will prevent the rebirth in hell that would otherwise necessarily result.

There are here two important points. First, it would seem that under ordinary circumstances transgressions of the *pārājika* were seen as necessarily leading to rebirth in hell. And while the kinds of actions classified as *pārājika* would surely have always been understood as bringing about serious negative karma, including possibly rebirth in hell, this seems to reveal a blurring of the boundaries between those transgressions defined in terms of their institutional consequences and those defined in terms of their karmic or moral valence. Especially as concerns the *pārājika* this trend seems to have continued, and in some later *vinaya* commentaries the *pārājika* are indeed explicitly defined as those transgressions leading to rebirth in the lower realms.³³ In some circumstances the *pārājika* thus seem to have been considered analogous to the five so-called *ānantarya* sins³⁴—usually patricide, matricide, killing an arhat, creating schism, and drawing the blood of a buddha—named such, “without interval,” because they were held to

unusual. But even if the text was written in China by the monk Fadu, as stated in *Fajing's Catalog*, the story of Sanghavasū is clearly based on something very similar to the story of Nandika and Vaśa from the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra*. The major difference is that in the *A pi bo lü* 阿毗跋律 the monk who violates the *pārājika* becomes an arhat, explicitly contradicting the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra* which declares categorically that the *pārājika* penance cannot restore the ability to attain the fruits. Since the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* also allows such monks to become arhats, there is nothing in this story making it necessarily of non-Indian origin, even assuming the text in which it appeared was a Chinese compilation or composition. In any event the *Pi bo lü* 毘跋律 (assuming again that this is the same as the *A pi bo lü* 阿毗跋律) did not appear in China until the end of the fifth century, so the point still stands that the *vinaya* texts available to the Chinese during the first half of the fifth century never affirm, and usually deny, the spiritual potential of even fully purified *pārājika* violators.

30 We may contrast this with the Jains, for whom this distinction was minimal or even absent. The Jains thus held that atonement was beneficial whether or not one was in fact guilty of the transgression, as such expiation would in any case contribute to the “shaking off of karma” (*kamma-nijjarā*) that, when complete, would bring about liberation (Caillat 1965, 108).

necessarily bring about rebirth in hell in one's immediately subsequent rebirth.

But second and perhaps more significantly, by linking violations of the *prātimokṣa* to specific karmic consequences repentance practices derived from the tradition of *vinaya* law, such as the *śikṣādattaka* penance, apparently came to be understood as efficacious for more than simply restoring the transgressor to his or her status within the community.

Repenting the grave transgressions

As we have seen above the meditation texts translated into Chinese in the early fifth century generally agreed that violation of the *pārājika* transgressions rendered success in meditation practice impossible during one's present lifetime. At the same time the Indian *vinaya* traditions available in China during this time were aware of rituals of repentance that would allow violators of the *pārājika*, particularly those who broke their celibacy, to remain members of the clergy even though they were deemed henceforth incapable of making further progress along the path, and hence, as declared in the meditation texts, unable to attain *dhyāna*.

The *Methods for Curing*, however, contains procedures for a ritual of repentance that claims to provide *pārājika* penitents with a number of otherwise unattainable benefits. This ritual can supposedly restore those who violate the *pārājika* precepts to full, not partial monastic status, and indeed the recitation of the *prātimokṣa* with the other monks, a privilege that the *vinayas* deny to the *śikṣādattaka*, is an integral part of the ritual. In keeping with the complete restoration of their monastic *śīla* those who avail themselves of this rite will once again be able to make progress along the path, and in particular they will again be able to attain *dhyāna*. In fact the ability of the practitioner to once again attain *dhyāna* is used as a crucial test to determine that this ritual has been successful.

In the following sections I will examine in detail the procedure for this ritual, and I will compare it to similar examples from contemporaneous texts. I will suggest that these rituals can be seen as attempts to create a broadly applicable liturgical tradition based on formal *vinaya*

31 This does not of course mean that such ideas were not common in the Theravāda world. In his study of the *Ākāravattārasutta*, a non-canonical Pāli scripture from Thailand, Padmanabh Jaini notes that this text declares that violations of the seven classes of *prātimokṣa* precepts are said to lead to the seven different realms of hell. Noting how unusual it is to formally link violation of the *prātimokṣa* to specific karmic punishments Jaini says that: “No extant *Vinaya* text, *Aṭṭhakathā*, or oral tradition of the Theravāda countries is ever on record for punishing *Vinaya* transgressions with retributions in hells.” The arrangement in the *Ākāravattārasutta*, Jaini suggests, “is not in keeping with the *Vinaya* texts of the Theravāda (and probably of any other Buddhist tradition) or even with the law of karmic retribution (Jaini 1992, 197–198). While I have no reason to doubt Jaini's characterization of the Pāli *vinaya*, his comments are clearly not true of the other known *vinaya* (see the next two notes).

32 We thus find in some *vinaya* passing statements to the effect that failure to atone for certain violations of the *prātimokṣa* will lead to rebirth in the lower realms (Hirakawa 1993–1994, 2:51; 3:10–12).

33 Thus the **Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-saṃgraha*, a commentary to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* preserved in a seventh-century Chinese translation by Yijing, gives “a sin that produces rebirth in the unhappy destinies” (能生惡趣之罪) as one of the definitions of the word *pārājika* (*Gen ben pu sa duo bu lü she* 根本薩婆多部律攝, T.1458:24.534b23–24).

34 On the *ānantarya* sins, see Silk 2007.

procedures for the atonement of monastic transgressions.

The section of the *Methods for Curing* that concerns us here begins with the title “method for healing violations of the precepts” (治犯戒法). Later Chinese commentators, however, generally cited this procedure specifically as a special method for dealing with transgressions of the *pārājika*. The seventh-century *vinaya* commentator Daoxuan, in his discussion of the *śikṣādattaka* penance, thus invokes this ritual as the most effective method in such cases, and he even avers to the authority of the *Methods for Curing* over and above the *vinaya* themselves in order to argue that atonement is possible for all four *pārājika*, not just for breaches of celibacy.³⁵ That Daoxuan and others would have interpreted this ritual primarily as a method for handling *pārājika* violations is not surprising, as it is clearly modeled on the *śikṣādattaka* penance from the *vinaya*. It also makes use of the same kind formal utterances (*karmavacana*) found in technical *vinaya* procedures for atonement.

The opening passage explains that this procedure is to be used in the case of any and all violations of the precepts, including both the monastic precepts and those for laypersons:

Further, Śāriputra, there may be monks, nuns, probationary nuns, novice monks, novice

35 *Si fen lü shan fan bu que xing shi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.97a7. In presenting the *śikṣādattaka* penance Daoxuan uses the *karmavacana* from the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* (*Si fen lü* 四分律, T.1428:22.972c2–15), which specifically indicates that this penance may be applied only for violations of the first *pārājika*. At the end, however, Daoxuan explains that the *śikṣādattaka* penance is indeed applicable for all four *pārājika*: “The above [*karmavacana* formula] shows the method using only the precept concerning celibacy. The other [*pārājika*], including theft and murder, should be purified in accordance with this same method. It should not be taken to mean, as did men of old, that it is only possible to repent in the case of [violations of the *pārājika* concerning celibacy].” 上且約淫戒為方法。自餘盜殺準法除之。不同昔人唯淫開懺。(T.1804:40.97a24–26). The identity of these “men of old” is not clear. However it would appear that Daoxuan recognizes that the *vinaya* themselves only authorize repentance of the first *pārājika*, and that his reference to the *Methods for Curing*, which Daoxuan of course considered to be an authentic sutra, is an attempt to provide canonical support for this idea.

Shayne Clarke, in his detailed studies of the provisions for the *śikṣādattaka* penance, has suggested that repentance of the *pārājika* may have been accepted for violations other than the breach of celibacy (Clarke 2000, 154–157; 2009a, 22). However the major sources for this conclusion are Chinese *karmavacana* texts compiled by Daoxuan and his heirs. Clearly in the Chinese *vinaya* tradition after Daoxuan this was true. However the passage cited here from Daoxuan’s major *vinaya* commentary suggests not only that Daoxuan knew the *vinaya* themselves did not have such a provision, but also that previous generations of Chinese *vinaya* commentators did not accept this. Interestingly Zhiyi, writing slightly less than a century prior to Daoxuan, explicitly states in his commentary to the chapter on repentance from *Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經 that the procedure from the *Methods for Curing* applies only for violations of celibacy (*Jin guang ming jing wen ju* 金光明經文句, T.1785:39.60c4–5). The *Methods for Curing* itself says nothing one way or another, suggesting that Zhiyi interpreted the *Methods for Curing* ritual in light of the *vinaya* procedures for repenting the *pārājika*, which do generally seem to limit this option to the first *pārājika* only.

A similar question is whether or not Chinese *vinaya* commentators prior to Daoxuan accepted that those who violate the *pārājika* might still reach the higher attainments. By citing the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* Daoxuan is explicitly endorsing this possibility. In contrast Daoxuan’s contemporary Huaisu 懷素 (d.682) cites with seeming approval the passage from the **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra* cited above that explicitly rejects this (*Si fen lü kai zong ji* 四分律開宗記, X.735:42.500b20–c13; this text was compiled by Huaisu but is based on the early sixth-century commentary of Fali 法礪. See BKD, 4:221).

nuns, laymen, or laywomen who have received the Buddhist precepts and who go mad in body and mind. Just like wild monkeys destroy planted crops root and branch before they have come to fruition, so too does this practitioner, before the “precept matter” has yet sprouted [in the attainment of the fruits],³⁶ violate Buddhist precepts ranging from *duṣkṛta* [offenses up to] *pārājika* offenses. Like a drunken elephant who, paying no attention to the good or evil of what he does and unable to realize where he is going, tramples and destroys all manners of good things, so too does this practitioner trample and destroy the blue lotus pond of the pure precepts, thereby becoming a most abject precept-breaker.³⁷

The opening passage here signals the specific interests of this method—it is not a matter of atoning for evil actions in general, but for violations of the Buddhist precepts (*śīla*) that one has received. And yet at the same time the method here apparently applies to all such violations, be they committed by monks or nuns, or by laypersons. Already then we find something unusual, for in the case of the monastic precepts the entire system of classification is based on a hierarchy of different methods of atonement, while here a single method is applied to all possible transgressions.

The connection between violation of the precepts and meditation is then introduced immediately. This is first hinted at in the opening passage above, which mentions the “precept matter” (*jie se* 戒色), a concept better known in Chinese texts as the “precept essence” (*jie ti* 戒體), a subtle yet material essence believed to inhere within the body a person who has received the precepts.³⁸ It is the presence of this essence that allows for the higher attainments and, conversely, it can be damaged or even permanently destroyed if one violates the precepts. By invoking this notion here the *Methods for Curing* thus signals that it is concerned most

36 The “precept matter” is thus the root from which higher attainments are born. Later Chinese texts frequently speak about the “precept body” (戒體) as the root that “gives birth to” (生) higher attainments (*Si fen lü shan fan bu que xing shi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.50a28–29). On the “precept essence,” see note 38.

37 治犯戒法。復次舍利弗，若比丘、比丘尼、式叉摩尼、沙彌、沙彌尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，受佛禁戒，身心狂亂。猶如猿猴，種植之法，未及生長，滅枝毀根。七眾亦爾，於佛禁戒，戒色未生，犯突吉羅乃至波羅夷。猶如醉象，不避好惡，不識諸方，踏壞一切諸善好物。[四]{七?}眾亦爾，踏破淨戒青蓮花池，破戒猛盛。(5.64)

38 The most comprehensive discussion of the “precept essence” remains Hirakawa Akira’s seminal article (Hirakawa 2000, 1:184–249; see also Satō 1986, 194–207). As Hirakawa notes the “precept body” is a variety of what Indian sources call *avijñapti-rūpa*. The term *jie ti* 戒體 itself, however, is rarely if at all attested in the Chinese translations of Indian texts, and there does not seem to be any obvious Indic equivalent. However the term *jie se* 戒色, found in the passage cited here from the *Methods for Curing* and in at least one other text (throughout the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*, *Sa po duo pi ni pi po sha* 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙), and this term is noted by Hirakawa as showing that despite the absence of the term *jie ti* 戒體 itself the concept is clearly known in Indian sources. However precisely what *jie se* 戒色 may have translated is unclear. Among the Sarvāstivādins, whose texts are our main surviving source for the concept, there were three kinds of *avijñapti-rūpa*: “restraint” (*saṃvara*), “non-restraint” (*asaṃvara*), and “other” (*itara*). Within the category of “restraint” there were further two categories, that associated with the precepts, *prātimokṣa-saṃvara*, and that associated with the *dhyānas*. The “precept essence” seems to express this notion of *prātimokṣa-saṃvara* as an “unmanifest” (*avijñapti*) material essence created upon the receipt of the precepts and destroyed (or damaged) through their violation. On the Sarvāstivādin treatment of *avijñapti-rūpa*, see also Funahashi 1954, 98–161.

fundamentally with the effect that violation of the precepts has on future spiritual potential.

This potential, the presence or absence of the “precept matter,” is indicated by the practitioner’s success in meditation practice. Thus those who violate the precepts will, the text goes on to explain, not only deceive their preceptors by failing to confess,³⁹ but will also give false reports of success in meditation practice, and instead of the proper “verificatory visions” will experience in meditation a variety of inauspicious visions:

Though he practices trance he falsely claims that the verificatory vision (境界) of breath-counting has appeared [to him]. But from the very beginning [of his meditation he in fact] sees a black-colored buddha that looks like the leg of a black elephant, like a person covered in ash; he sees monks with their heads smashed and legs broken, but sees nuns adorned in flower garlands . . . or else he sees starving camels, pigs, or dogs; or he sees a monk being attacked by various *kumbandana* demons, evil *yakṣa* spirits, and murderous *raṅsasa* demons each wielding various weapons and vicious fires.⁴⁰

The imagery here is similar to many of the descriptions found in the *Chan Essentials* of the inauspicious meditative visions that indicate the need for repentance,⁴¹ but in contrast this section of the *Methods for Curing* is actually framed as a method of such repentance. The question answered here is thus not how one should respond to inauspicious visions when they appear in meditation, but how one can divine when repentance is needed, and meditation was apparently thought to be an important tool in such cases. In keeping with this slightly different context the *Methods for Curing* also provides a complete description of just what ritual procedures are then necessary.

First, the practitioner must confess his transgressions to his preceptor. He must then “bring to mind” (*nian* 念) a litany of deities and other objects of worship: Śākyamuni Buddha and the other six buddhas of the past, the thirty-five buddhas, the “various bodhisattvas” (諸菩薩), and the “Great Vehicle” (大乘). He then “contemplates the truth of emptiness” (心觀於空法), and “imagines” (想) each of these buddhas and bodhisattvas pouring water over his head. He then further imagines that he himself has fallen into the Avīci hell, and he brings to the mind the buddha again and prays to be rescued.

These practices are deemed successful when the practitioner has an auspicious dream: “the various buddhas [he has invoked will appear] in his dreams, emitting a light from the white tuft of hair between their eyebrows that relieves his hellish suffering.”⁴² Full of shame, the practitioner then removes his *saṅghāti*, his formal outer monks robe, and going before the community of “pure monks” (清淨僧所):

39 5.65. It is possible that provision is being made here for a case in which a transgression was not promptly confessed. It will be recalled that *vinaya* provisions for the repentance of the first *pārājika* all state clearly that the *śīksādattaka* penance is only available when no attempt is made to conceal the transgression. If so, then the *Methods for Curing* may be deliberately attempting to extend the possibility of atonement even to cases in which this condition is not met.

40 This passage is also discussed in chapter 4 (p.253).

41 See for example the image of “ash” in sections 2.43, 3.22.

42 諸佛如來，於其夢中，放白毫光，救地獄苦。(5.67)

Like the crumbling of a great mountain he casts his body to the ground. His heart filled with shame, he repents all his sins, and [as a means of atonement] for eight hundred days he performs various menial duties for the other monks [such as] cleaning and emptying the toilets. At the conclusion of the eight hundred days he should bathe, put on his *saṅghāti* [outer robe], enter the sanctuary, concentrate his mind, place his palms together, and for between one and seven days carefully contemplate the light of the white tuft of hair between the Buddha's eyebrows, one of the marks of a great man. He then goes back to see his preceptor and [again] seeks to repent.⁴³

His preceptor then instructs the penitent monk to contemplate his own body as like a golden vase within which dwell the poisonous snakes of the four elements (I will discuss this passage in more detail below). The practitioner must next perform yet further menial tasks, and then “contemplate the Buddha” (觀佛) again until he sees the Buddha “emit golden light and stroke his head with his hand.” Finally he must perform the contemplation of impurity (不淨觀), and when this has been successful the penitent is permitted to again “recite the precepts” among the assembly (可與僧中說戒). The meaning of this is clear—the practitioner is once again to be considered a fully ordained monk or nun, completely healed of any transgression of the precepts.

But before being allowed this final act of institutional reintegration the practitioner must make a formal legal utterance (*karmavacana*) to the Sangha requesting permission to rejoin the order. Although the Methods for Curing does not actually call this speech a *karmavacana* (羯磨), the style and wording have clearly been modeled on this genre:

Before reciting the precepts [with the other monks] he must make the following formal announcement: “I, the monk so-and-so (or, the nun so-and-so), have finished eight hundred days of menial labor, have performed the contemplation of the poisonous snakes, have completed the meditation on hell, have further contemplated a single buddha, recited the repentance text and in the contemplation of impurity I have again reached the stage of the non-existence of self and other, where I have had a verificatory vision of the Buddha pouring a pitcher of water over a monk's head. And in my dreams a god appeared to me and said I am pure. That I am now fully humble is something that I know for certain, thus may you please accept this.”⁴⁴

The penitent must then recite the *prātimokṣa* eight hundred times, corresponding perhaps to the eight hundred days of penance, at which point: “it is allowed that he has regained the state of being no different than a pure monk.” The final section includes a warning indicating that failure to repent in this manner will have dire consequences, and again it is made clear that this method is necessary not just for violations of the *pārājika* transgressions, but for all transgressions:

43 五體投地，如大山崩。心懷慚愧，懺悔諸罪，為僧執事，作諸苦役，掃廁擔糞。經八百日，然後復當澡浴身體，還著僧伽梨，入於塔中，一心合掌，諦觀如來眉間白毫大人相光。一日至七日，還至智者所，求索懺悔。(5.68)

44 欲說戒時，應唱是語：某甲比丘，某甲比丘尼，已八百日，行於苦役。七日觀佛眉間白毫，作毒蛇觀，地獄想成，復觀一佛，說懺悔法，不淨觀門無我人[鏡]{境}，還復通達。境界中，佛以澡罐水，灌比丘頂，天神現夢，說已清淨。今已慚愧。我所證知。唯願聽許。(5.72)

If a Buddhist follower violates one of the minor precepts and allows two nights to pass without repenting, then this person, though he practices meditation, will in this present life never obtain the path. If he violates a grave precept, he will fall into hell, and when he emerges from hell he will be reborn as an animal for three entire eons. After this he will be reborn as a human being, but though born in a human body he will be poor and crippled, and for seventy-seven lifetimes he will neither see the Buddha nor hear the Dharma, and his physical faculties will be impaired. For this reason when they violate even the most minor precepts⁴⁵ the wise should be as afraid as if they had been stabbed with a knife, and should be greatly ashamed. How much more so for the grave precepts!⁴⁶

As in the opening passage this method of repentance is thus presented as something useful for all Buddhists, monastic or lay. It is clear, however, that the genealogy of the ritual form, and even the specific ritual itself, lies in monastic rites of *vinaya* repentance. Indeed the formal *karmavacana* above clearly stipulates only a monk or a nun, and the entire notion of establishing one's purity by being allowed to recite the *prātimokṣa* with the other monks or nuns only makes sense in a clerical context.

The Methods for Curing and the *śikṣādattaka* penance

This ritual from the *Methods for Curing* is thus an attempt to apply clerical rites of confession and atonement derived from the *vinaya* to a potentially wider audience. Although it claims to be effective (and indeed necessary) for transgressions of any and all *prātimokṣa* rules, there is a clear debt to the *śikṣādattaka* penance whose original purpose was to purify those who violate the *pārājika* offenses. At the same time, however, the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* appears to have been intentionally crafted as a superior version of such rites, offering solutions to problems that the major sources for monastic legal ritual known in fifth-century China explicitly declared to be beyond the reach of even the *śikṣādattaka* penance.

Those sources, as discussed above, considered that a violation of the *pārājika* offenses would ordinarily produce three major problems. First, it entailed loss of monastic status, and in principle the violator was to be expelled and returned to lay life. Second, this kind of transgression generated negative karma on par with the five *ānantarya* sins, such that rebirth in hell was assured in the absence of proper intervention. Third, transgressing a *pārājika* was thought to render the person incapable of further spiritual attainments in this lifetime, an idea discussed in meditation manuals by noting that such people should not (or indeed cannot) practice meditation.

The basic *śikṣādattaka* penance from the *vinaya* addressed itself, at least explicitly, only

45 Literally a *duṣkṛta* offense, the lowest class of *prātimokṣa* rules.

46 若有七眾，犯於輕戒，過二夜不懺悔者，是人現身雖行禪定，終不獲道。若犯重戒，墮大地獄，從地獄出，受畜生身。如是具足，足滿三劫。然後為人，雖得人身，貧窮癩病，七十七身，不見佛，不聞法，諸根不具。是故智者，若犯佛戒於突吉羅，應生怖畏，如被刀斫，極懷慚愧，何況重戒。(5.73)

to the first of these points by providing for such persons institutional restitution, albeit at a reduced status. Meanwhile certain *vinaya* commentaries preserved in early fifth- or late fourth-century Chinese translations claim that this atonement will also eliminate some (though perhaps not all) of the negative karmic consequences of *pārājika* violation, such that one will be able to avoid otherwise certain rebirth in hell. The ritual from the *Methods for Curing* provides yet a further development, offering in addition solutions to the soteriological problems that other sources explicitly declare untreatable even for those who carry out the full *śikṣādattaka* penance.

Indeed the ritual is clearly divided into three sections, each of which addresses one of the above problems, marked by the three different times during which the practitioner “repents” (懺悔), first privately to the preceptor (5.67), next to the congregation of “pure monks” (5.68), and then again to his preceptor (5.69). In the first segment, the sinner imagines his own rebirth in hell and then in a dream-vision is rescued from this fate by the light of the Buddha’s *ūrṇa*. In the second sequence, the practitioner removes his robes and for eight hundred days cleans the monastic toilets, a procedure that as we will see below is modeled on the traditional *śikṣādattaka* penance and can thus be seen as the portion of the rite that restores monastic status. In the final sequence the practitioner is assigned a series of meditation practices, and only after he succeeds in obtaining the contemplation of impurity is the repentance complete. This section thus demonstrates that the practitioner has fully regained his soteriological potential, as he is now able to obtain basic states of trance.

In terms of practical procedures the second section of the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* reveals the clearest debt to the *śikṣādattaka* penance and indeed to *vinaya* provisions for the atonement of serious transgressions in general. Immediately after obtaining a vision of his salvation from hell the practitioner must continue his repentance. He first “removes his *saṅghāti* [outer robe] and wears his *antarvāsa* [under-robe]” (脫僧伽梨著安多會), and in this symbolically defrocked appearance goes before the “pure monks” (清淨僧) to confess. The allusion here to the *vinaya* stories introducing the *śikṣādattaka* penance is clear, for in those stories Nandika the meditator, upon committing his misdeeds, similarly declares himself unfit to wear his *saṅghāti* and confesses before the other monks wearing only his *antarvāsa*.⁴⁷

In the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*, having confessed to the other monks, for a period of eight hundred days the penitent must “serve the other monks” (為僧執事) by “performing menial duties” (作諸苦役). Most notably he must “clean and empty the toilets” (掃廁擔糞). These provisions seem to correspond, at in least in part, to the formal *vinaya* penance known as *parivāsa*, “separate dwelling” (*bie zhu* 別住) as it was translated into Chinese, a punishment assigned for the six-day (or longer if the offense was concealed) probation required of those who transgress *saṅghāvaśeṣa* offenses, the second most serious class of rules.⁴⁸ And it is

47 *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*, T.1435:23.3a12. In the *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya* (T.1425:22.232b6), Nandika removes all his robes, and he goes before the other monks naked, “covering his genitals with his left hand” (左手掩形). We may also note the story of *Sanghavasū from the *Api bo lū* 阿毗跋律, who while seeking a method to atone for his *pārājika* violation similarly removes his outer robe (see above note 29).

48 The basic six day punishment in such cases is known as *mānatva* (in Pāli, *mānatta*), a word whose precise etymology is unclear, but which may perhaps mean “conciliation” (Nolot 1996, 117n6). According the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra*, the word means “pleasing” (喜意), as it is used only for the six-day probation that is given to

the restrictions assigned during *parivāsa* (translated henceforth as “probation”) that form the basis of the *śīksādattaka* penance, where they are maintained on a permanent rather than temporary basis.

Those undergoing such “probation” are denied the status of full members of the monastic community—they cannot accept food served by other monks, they cannot have their feet washed by other monks, they cannot preach, and so forth.⁴⁹ Several symbolically potent restrictions reinforce this idea. Thus according to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, which contains the most complete description of these rules in any surviving Indic text:

Then, after all those who are ordained (*upasampannānām*) but before those who are unordained, he, with a pliant demeanor and keeping firmly in mind the awareness that he is not a monk (*abhikṣusamjñām upasthāpya*), must eat.⁵⁰

The probationer thus occupies an intermediary space between the fully ordained monks and those who have not received the full precepts, which here must refer primarily to the novices (*śrāmaṇera*).⁵¹ In addition to losing his privileges as a fully ordained monk the probationer must perform a number of duties that effectively transform him into a monastery servant. Again following the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*:

Having risen at the very break of day, the door must be opened. The lamp-pot must be removed. The *vihāra* must be watered down, swept, and a coat of fresh cow dung applied. The privy must be cleaned. Earth and leaves must be set out, or cool water, depending on the season.⁵²

In sources that would have been known in fifth-century China, however, cleaning the monastery and emptying the toilets are the main tasks that those undergoing probation must perform. According to the **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra* (*Bi ni mu jing* 毘尼母經):

One assigned [the punishment] of “living apart” (*parivāsa*; 別住) must live in a separate dwelling and must not lodge together with the other monks. He is to sit in a [ritually] lower position than all other fully ordained monks, and when eating his mat must not touch theirs. Moreover he is to perform all kinds of menial chores for the other monks, such as sweeping the stupa and the monks’ quarters, and he must thoroughly clean the

those who “please” the Sangha by confessing their transgressions immediately (T.1463:24.811b12–13). When the transgression has been concealed, the length of the sentence is extended, and in this case it is generally called *parivāsa*, though the precise usage of these and other related technical terms varies somewhat between the different *vinaya*. On these provisions in Pāli sources see Nolot 1996, 116–136, and for studies that take into account the extensive evidence from Chinese sources, see Satō 1963, 411–432, and Hirakawa 1964, 246–254.

49 The precise provisions vary. For a comparative table of the provisions for the *śīksādattaka* in all extant *vinaya* see Clarke 1999, 212–215; see also Clarke 2009a, 27–29.

50 Schopen 1998, 158. Schopen here translates the rules for *parivāsa* from the *Parivāsika-vastu*, but the chores of the *śīksādattaka*, given in the *Kṣudraka-vastu*, are apparently identical.

51 That the *śīksādattaka* is to be ranked “below the monks but above the novices” is also mentioned in the *Sarvāstivāda-* and *Mahāsāṅghika-vinayas* (Clarke 1999, 212).

52 Schopen 1998, 158

toilets. Further when he goes among the other monks they must not talk with him. If someone asks him a question, he must not answer. For such reasons [this punishment] is called “living apart.”⁵³

In fifth-century China it thus would have been well known that the major task of the probationer, and by extension the *pārājika* penitent, was cleaning, specifically cleaning the toilets, the stupa, and the monk’s quarters.⁵⁴ And these are indeed the same tasks mentioned in the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* as the “menial chores” (苦役) that the penitent must perform.⁵⁵

That he must perform these chores in particular is at least in part an extension of the idea that, in temporarily losing his status as a full monk, one undergoing probation must adopt the lifestyle of a novice. That the *śikṣādattaka* in particular, consigned to a life-long probation, was indeed considered a kind of novice is seen further in that the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* actually terms such a person a *śikṣādattaka-srāmaṇera* (學悔沙彌),⁵⁶ while the Pāli tradition, as discussed above, used the term “novice-stage dweller” (*sāmaṇerabhūmi*).⁵⁷ Although other *vinaya* do not explicitly refer to *pārājika* penitents as novices, the same menial tasks assigned to probationers are frequently listed among the standard duties of novices or other junior monks.⁵⁸ The Chinese *vinaya* commentator Daoxuan, for one, seems to have noticed this connection, and in his account of the *parivāsa* penance he says that the probationer must “serve the pure monks” (供給清淨比丘) just as a *srāmaṇera* serves his preceptor (*upadhyāya*).⁵⁹ And according to the provisions for such service as described in the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, the text to which Daoxuan was here likely referring, such duties included cleaning the toilets.⁶⁰

The ritual from the *Methods for Curing* thus seems to have been inspired by the *vinaya* rules for probation (*parivāsa*), where we find provisions for either relatively short probation in

53 僧與白四羯磨別住。以何義故名為別住。別[在]{住}一房不得與僧同處。一切大僧下坐不得連草食。又復一切眾僧苦役。掃塔及僧房。乃至僧大小行來處。皆料理之。又復雖入僧中。不得與僧談論。若有問者亦不得答。以是義故名為別住。(T.1463:24.811a28–b6)

54 In China the **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra* seems to have become the locus classicus for the description of these duties, and as scholars have pointed out (Satō 1986, 152–156) in his *vinaya* commentaries Daoxuan draws almost exclusively from this text when discussing *vinaya* methods for repenting *saṅghavaśeṣa* offenses (*Si fen lü shan fan bu que xing shi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.97a27–b1).

55 In section 5.68 the only chore mentioned is cleaning the toilets, but in 5.71, the practitioner must perform further chores and here there is mention of “cleaning the stupa” (掃塔塗地).

56 Clark 1999, 70

57 See above note 10.

58 See for example the **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*, in which the author makes the point that unlike the Brāhmins, who mandate special prohibitions for those in training (specifically celibacy during one’s period of initiation), Buddhist monks all follow the same rules. An interlocutor then asks if this means that “monks with a hundred years [seniority] must like newly ordained monks also sweep and wash the ground, carry water, and other such toilsome tasks” (初受戒比丘，掃地塗地取水種種役使，百歲比丘亦應同不). The author replies by saying that his only point is that all monks follow the same *prātimokṣa*, not that there are no distinctions in the duties of novices and seniors (T.1440:23.514b28–c1). This thus implicitly affirms that such tasks were indeed generally or exclusively the duties of “newly ordained monks.”

59 *Si fen lü shan fan bu que xing shi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.98c27–99a4.

60 *Si fen lü* 四分律, T.1428:22.801c5–6. Daoxuan also discusses this in his description of how a newly ordained monk (a *srāmaṇera*) is to serve his preceptor (T.1804:40.32a9–10).

the case of transgressions of the *saṅghāvaśeṣa* precepts or, in the case of violation of the *pārājika*, the life-long *śikṣādattaka* penance involving roughly the same duties. Just as the *śikṣādattaka* penance itself serves as a middle ground between the full expulsion normally warranted by *pārājika* transgressions and the temporary probation assigned for slightly less grave offenses,⁶¹ the 800 days of humbling service mandated by the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* is a further middle ground between the lifelong sentence of the *śikṣādattaka* and the relatively short *parivāsa*.

In keeping with its finite duration at the conclusion of the ritual the practitioner is once again allowed to recite the *prātimokṣa* with the other monks, a privilege that the *vinaya*, or at least those *vinaya* available in China, permanently denies to those who become *śikṣādattakas*. And not only does the rite thus allow for the complete rather than partial repair of the institutional breach occasioned by his transgressions, it also promises restoration of his soteriological potential, a point emphasized in the third segment when the practitioner must actually attain the contemplation of impurity (in other words, reach *dhyāna*). Indeed full monastic reintegration is contingent on such attainment, and in the *karmavacana* recited before the community to ask for re-admittance (cited above on p.273) the practitioner must publicly declare his successful meditative attainment, describing for his audience the content of his “verificatory vision.”

Similar rituals in the *Chan Essentials*

As discussed above the ritual of repentance from the *Methods for Curing* includes several meditation practices such as the contemplation of the poisonous snakes of the four elements (considered a form of the “contemplation of impurity”), and these methods seem to allude to practices described in more detail in *Chan Essentials*. At the same time the brief references to repentance practices in the *Chan Essentials* often seem to implicitly reference something similar to the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*. Many of the passages in the *Chan Essentials* that instruct practitioners to temporarily stop their meditation practice and repent (usually in response to inauspicious visions) thus also mention that, seemingly as part of this repentance, the practitioner must perform menial chores, termed “toilsome tasks” (苦役) just as in the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*. In some cases nothing more is said.⁶² But other passages mention specific duties, such as “sweeping the sanctuary⁶³ and cleaning the floors” (掃兜婆塗地).⁶⁴

61 Clarke 2009a, 28

62 “If [the previously mentioned visions] are not clear and distinct, he must repent again and perform various menial tasks.”若不分明，更復懺悔作諸苦役。(2.16). See also 4.70.

63 Here “sanctuary” translates *shuai po* 兜婆, a transcription of the word *stūpa*. Precisely what kind of stupa is envisioned is not clear, but as becomes apparent later in the text it was understood to be a place where one could find an image of the Buddha. Although not entirely dismissing the possibility that this could refer to a large, outdoor stupa, the more likely image is the central-pillar cave shrines found in Central Asia. Accordingly I will translate the word throughout as “sanctuary,” which serves well to convey a broad range of possible cultic sites.

64 2.44–2.45. In this passage having to perform such chores is explicitly linked to having concealed a transgression, an interesting point since in the *vinaya* whether the transgression has been concealed or not is the principal

In these cases the *Chan Essentials* also mentions cleaning or at least caring for the toilets, and as part of his penance the practitioner must make what are here called “purity sticks” (淨籌):

If he has a vision (境界) of various impurities, this is something obtained owing to retribution for sin. [In such a case he] must get up [from meditation], sweep clean the sanctuary, wash the floors, make “purity sticks,” humble himself, and cultivate various repentance practices.⁶⁵

In a similar passage from the fourth sutra, in addition to making “purity sticks” the practitioner must “distribute the willow twigs” (施楊枝).⁶⁶ These “purity sticks” are mentioned in a later passage as well, where the practitioner must “sweep the sanctuary, wash the floors, distribute the willow twigs and purity sticks, and perform various menial chores so as to remove his obstructing sins.”⁶⁷ Although perhaps not as humbling as literally emptying the toilets as assigned in the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*, caring for the monastery’s “willow twigs” and “purity sticks” would have had a similar symbolic meaning, “willow twigs” being the equivalent of toothbrushes, and “purity sticks” the equivalent of toilet paper.⁶⁸ The penitent thus here occupies himself with caring for the excretions (in a broad sense) of the other monks.

On the one hand it would seem that these tasks were thought to eliminate the practitioner’s evil karma from past lives. And indeed below I will discuss other examples from Indian Buddhist texts that similarly allow for the elimination of evil karma by cleaning away the impurities generated by or associated with other, pure monks. But it also seems that making and distributing “willow twigs” and “purity sticks” were tasks normally assigned to novices. In China, at least, these duties even seem to have symbolized the services of novices towards the fully ordained clergy. A monastic handbook composed in China sometime during the fifth

factor influencing the length of one’s probation. Note that the necessary rituals here also include various other things not seen in the rite from the *Methods for Curing*, such as making offerings to parents and teachers.

65 若...見[一]{二}境界，雜穢不淨，從罪報得。復應更起，掃兜婆塗地，造作淨籌，謙卑下下，修諸懺悔。(2.15)

66 4.70

67 掃偷婆塗地，施楊枝、淨籌，及諸苦役，以除障罪。(4.70)

68 Although the meaning and use of “willow twigs” (楊枝) is well known, some comment is needed on “purity sticks” (淨籌). In *vinaya* texts *chou* 籌 more usually denotes the tallies used for voting, but in some texts it also refers to the wooden sticks used as toilet paper (Durt 1979, 455–456). It is further interesting to observe that of the Indian *vinaya* texts translated into Chinese in the fifth century the most extensive discussion of such sticks is in the **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra* (*Bi ni mu jing* 毘尼母經), where they are called, as in the *Chan Essentials*, “purity sticks” (淨籌). This is possibly significant in that, as seen above, the **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra* also provides the most extensive discussion of the toilet-cleaning duties of probationers. Moreover as far as I can determine none of the other surviving Indian *vinaya* texts translated into Chinese during the fifth century mention *sticks* as the proper implement for toilet hygiene, instead specifying water, leaves, or round rocks. (The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, not available in Chinese translation during this time but also worth noting, gives water, leaves, or dirt as the possible items; see Schopen 1998, 158.) The *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya* actually explicitly prohibits sticks on the grounds that they might cause injury, and says that one must use only smooth, round objects such as stones (T.1425:22.504b5–7). The **Vinaya-māṭṛka-sūtra*, in contrast, says that bamboo sticks (籌) are the only acceptable item for this purpose, and further provides instructions for how such sticks are to be constructed (T.1463:24.838a28–b8).

century thus has the *śrāmaṇeras* address the other monks as follows on the occasion of the *poṣadha*:

All the monks have thus assembled in the hall to perform the *poṣadha* and recite the precepts. The precepts are able to eliminate evil. They are the basis for the myriad virtues. Because of them there arises the marvelous conduct [of the Buddhist monk], which is the root of liberation. Hearing them, I leap for joy, and am desirous of making an offering. Having no precious treasures I instead humbly offer these five hundred willow twigs and one thousand purity sticks to the pure assembly. I pray with utmost sincerity that you might use them to clean yourselves of dirt and impurity. May you, oh virtuous monks, bless me with your compassion and accept my humble prayer.⁶⁹

Supplying fully ordained monks with willow twigs and purity sticks thus appears to have been central to the institutional identity of the *śrāmaṇera*, and by taking on these tasks a practitioner would be, as in the *vinaya* penances associated with the *śikṣādattaka* or the probationer, ritually removing himself from the ranks of the fully ordained clergy, at least for a time.

Thus while the details are not usually mentioned, the many references in the *Chan Essentials* to practices of “repentance” (*chan hui* 懺悔) would seem to be pointing to something similar to the more elaborate practices spelled out in the *Methods for Curing*, rites that in purpose, symbolism, and execution were in part derived from the *vinaya* penances assigned to those undergoing probation.

Asceticism and the elimination of karma through attenuated retribution

As we have seen, *vinaya* penances in the case of temporary or permanent probation deprive the practitioner of privileges associated with fully ordained monks and compel him to carry out chores and tasks associated with novices. This same idea is seen in the similar repentance practices in the *Methods for Curing* and the *Chan Essentials*. And the most detailed of these, from the *Methods for Curing*, indeed seems to clearly derive from or at least have been inspired by these *vinaya* regulations, particularly the *śikṣādattaka* penance.

But in addition to signifying a reduction in rank or status the chores assigned in the

69 皆僧集堂，布薩說戒。戒能滅惡。為萬善之基。因生妙行，解脫之本。沙彌聞之，踊躍歡喜，意欲布施。為無財寶，且持楊枝五百、淨籌一千，仰奉清眾。表心單誠，除癢去穢。幸煩德僧，慈納呪願。(Shami wei yi 沙彌威儀, T.1472:24.935a19–26). This text, along with several other similar handbooks of rules for *śrāmaṇeras*, was compiled in China on the basis of extracts from Chinese *vinaya* translations and other texts (Ōno 1954, 390–393; see also Hirakawa 1960, 281–282). The high literary style of the short ritual prayer cited here, found at the end of the text, suggests that it was written by a Chinese author. Several other passages in this text mention that a *śrāmaṇera* must every day replace his master’s willow twigs and “washing water” (澡手水), but do not mention “purity sticks.” This is quite interesting because it may suggest that the Indian *vinaya* sources upon which this handbook were based did not themselves discuss the use of sticks for toilet hygiene, and indeed as mentioned above (see previous note) mention of sticks for such purposes seems to appear in only a single translated *vinaya* text, the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra*.

course of these rituals also seem intended as having an ascetic element. Notable here is the **Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra*, which describes the tasks of the probationary monk as *ku yi* 苦役, a word that I translated above as “menial chores” but which might also be rendered as “toilsome labor.” It is this word that appears in the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* and furthermore throughout the *Chan Essentials*,⁷⁰ and just as much if not more than the idea of ritual subservience and loss of status it emphasizes the difficult and perhaps even painful or ascetic nature of such practices. Indeed in some fifth-century Chinese Buddhist texts this same word is used to describe the austerities practiced by the Buddha (though eventually abandoned) prior to his awakening.⁷¹ Similarly in a ritual for removing transgressions from the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*, which like the *Methods for Curing* demands that the penitent monk empty the toilets for 800 days (we will discuss this rite in more detail below), it is said that the ritual will forever remove the practitioner’s sins “owing to the power of his ascetic practice” (因苦行力).⁷²

To what extent then might the efficacy of these rituals have been understood to spring from their ascetic or painful nature? Since the texts at our disposal do not directly explain *why* these rituals were thought to be effective, we cannot answer this question with complete certainty. Still, they explicitly promise, among their other benefits, the destruction of the practitioner’s evil karma, something that the Indian religious tradition as a whole frequently considered to be a chief benefit of ascetic practice (*tapas*). Of course Buddhism is generally held to have rejected the liberative potential of the painful asceticism favored by contemporaneous Indian *śramaṇa* movements. Traditional Buddhist soteriology thus emphasized not the destruction of past evil karma per se, but the elimination of the mental defilements (*kleśa*) through meditation, whose presence, it was claimed, was necessary for past karma to ripen in future rebirth. For those unable to achieve this goal in the present, accumulating good karma through meritorious actions (*punya*) was held to create the future conditions in which the elimination of the defilements would occur more easily.

However while the direct elimination of past evil karma is rarely discussed in early Buddhist texts, we do in fact find one reoccurring explanation for how this might be possible if necessary. In essence the idea is that while the fruits of past karma cannot simply be destroyed, in place of their full effects in a future life one can experience them in an attenuated form in the present. As we will see below this idea is explicitly invoked in certain forms of Buddhist repentance literature where the goal is the destruction of karma, and it is not impossible that it may have informed the way that the chores assigned to *śikṣādattakas* and other probationers were, in texts such as the *Methods for Curing*, conceived not merely as humbling or menial tasks befitting novices, but as forms of asceticism (*ku xing* 苦行).

The earliest discussions in Buddhism of the notion of attenuated retribution are, however, not found in the context of repentance, but in stories of Buddhist practitioners who, in keeping with the promise of basic Buddhist soteriology as outlined above, managed to achieve liberation *despite* their heavy burden of transgressions. The most famous example of this is Aṅgulimālya, “finger-necklace,” who before meeting the Buddha was a serial killer who collected the finger bones of his victims and wore them as a necklace. The Buddha did not reject Aṅgulimālya on

70 2.16, 2.45, 4.70

71 *Chang a han jing* 長阿含經, T.1:1.48a2–3; 103c13

72 T.409:13.677c22–23

account of these crimes, an interesting point that seems to show that early Buddhists were keen to emphasize that for them liberation was not a matter of one's past karma. Instead the Buddha told Aṅgulimālya that if he refrained from further killing he would still be able to achieve liberation. Aṅgulimālya then became a monk and through diligent effort became an arhat. But despite having achieved this exalted rank Aṅgulimālya found that when he went to villages to beg for alms he was invariably recognized by family members of his former victims and was subjected to harassment and even beatings. This, the Buddha declared, was actually a good thing, for through these beatings Aṅgulimālya was “experiencing the results of deeds because of which you might have been tortured in hell for many years.”⁷³

Liberation, in other words, while freeing Aṅgulimālya from rebirth in hell (or indeed any future rebirth at all) actually produces *greater* suffering for him in the present life by drawing out various forms of retribution that otherwise would have been experienced at a later time. Later doctrinal texts present this as a necessary result whenever those with particularly heavy karmic burdens achieve liberation. According to the *Vibhāṣā*:

When a person kills someone, this karma brings forth retribution in hell. If he is unable to diligently pursue the path and become an arhat, then he will experience the fruit of this karma in hell. But if he diligently pursues the path and becomes an arhat, then he will be able to draw forth this hellish suffering and experience [the fruit of] this karma in his present life.⁷⁴

Some texts even used this idea to explain that the Buddha's bodily suffering while alive was the attenuated retribution of past evil karma that, had he not attained liberation, would have resulted in more serious results in future lives.⁷⁵ This early notion of attenuated retribution thus reinforces what we might call the orthodox Buddhist understanding of the relationship between karma and liberation—namely that liberation can occur *despite* the presence of grievous past evil karma.

But the notion of attenuated retribution was also used to explain how even those who had not yet achieved liberation might eliminate the effects of past evil karma. Interestingly in early Buddhist texts we see this idea primarily in connection with the meditation practices known as the “unlimiteds” (*apramāṇas*), the cultivation of love (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekṣā*). Such practices, it is claimed, make the mind “unlimited” (*apramāṇa*), allowing one to experience the fruits of evil karma from the past not as rebirth in

73 *yassa kho tvam kammaṃ vipākena bahūni vassāni bahūni vassasatāni bahūni vassasahassāni niraye pacceyāsi, tassa tvam brāhmaṇa kammaṃ vipākaṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme paṭisaṃvedesī 'ti* (MN, 2.104; Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, 715).

74 有一人，害一生命，此業能引地獄異熟。彼若不能精勤修道成阿羅漢，便往地獄受此業果。彼人若能精勤修道成阿羅漢，便能引取地獄苦事，人身中受此業。(A pi da mo da pi po sha lun 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, T.1545:27.100a17–21)

75 In the *Ekottarāgama* the Buddha thus explains that he has experienced a headache because of having killed a fish in a past life: “[Because] I at that time merely watched and laughed [at the helpless fish], in this present life I suffer from a headache that feels as if a rock the size of Mt. Sumeru were pressing down on my head. Why is it the case [that I have received only this retribution and not something more serious]? Because I will not undergo further rebirth [in which other retribution could be experienced], as I have abandoned all conditioned things and traversed all suffering.” 我爾時。坐見而笑之。今患頭痛。如似石押。猶如以頭戴須彌山。所以然者。如來更不受形。以捨眾行。度諸厄難。(Zeng yi a han jing 增壹阿含經, T.125:2.693c3–6).

hell or an otherwise undesirable realm, but as comparatively minor suffering in the present life, just as a pinch of salt added to a small bowl of water makes it unbearably salty while the same amount of salt added to the Ganges, analogized here to the mind made “unlimited” by these meditation practices, is nearly insignificant.⁷⁶

Enomoto Fumio has suggested that the notion of attenuated retribution was a Buddhist argument against the Brahmanical purification rituals of *prāyāścitta*, which claimed to simply destroy evil karma without any need to experience its results at all.⁷⁷ And though some scholars have argued that these ideas concerning the destruction of karma are antithetical to the main thrust of the teachings attributed to the historical Buddha,⁷⁸ the fact remains that at some point they became a key Buddhist explanation for how karma can be eliminated. And while in the formulations of this idea connected with the *apramāṇas* it would seem that relatively advanced forms of meditation were thought necessary,⁷⁹ eventually we find the idea of attenuated retribution used as an explanation for the efficacy of the basic repentance liturgies so important in Mahāyāna Buddhist ritual.

These ideas were known to fifth-century Chinese Buddhists through Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* (*Shi zhu pi po sha lun* 十住毘婆沙論).⁸⁰ In China this text became one of the most important canonical presentations of ritual repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔), and was the basis for many daily liturgies of sixth century and beyond.⁸¹ According to the formula here, widely cited in the writings of later Chinese Buddhist authors, repentance is effectuated by first confessing one’s sins and then praying to experience their retribution in the present life rather than in one’s future rebirths:

I fully confess any evil that I have done, either in this life or a past life, and if there is any retribution that I am to receive in the three lower realms, I pray that I may take it on in this life, and [thereby] not experience it in the lower realms.⁸²

Although it is not explained how it is possible to effectuate such a transformation, it is clear that the theoretical basis for the elimination of the fruits of evil karma is that they are transformed into lesser suffering experienced in the present life.

76 *Loṇakapalla-sutta* (AN, 1.249). This and other passages are discussed by Enomoto 1989, 48–50.

77 Enomoto 2002

78 Bronkhorst 1998, 12. Here and in his other publications on the subject Bronkhorst suggests that the idea that liberation could be achieved by eliminating past karma through experiencing its results in the present (through asceticism) was what the Buddha rejected, and that the few appearances of these ideas in early Buddhist texts, such as those discussed by Enomoto, must represent later influence and borrowing from Jainism.

79 Moreover in the examples involving the *apramāṇa* meditations discussed by Enomoto (1989) the person performing these actions eventually obtains one of the four fruits. This suggests that at an early stage the destruction of karma through attenuated retribution might have been something only available to those who were about to achieve liberation through other means, and was not simply a way to use ordinary ritual practices to eliminate karma.

80 For an introduction to the practice of repentance as outlined in this text, see Ri 1982, 102–120.

81 See in particular the rituals for daily worship used in the early Tiantai community as outlined in the *Guo qing bai lu* 國清百錄 (T.1934:46.794a18–795b14; Ikeda 1982, 143–145).

82 今身若先身，是罪盡懺悔，於三惡道中，若應受業報，願於今身償，不入惡道受。(Shi zhu pi po sha lun 十住毘婆沙論, T.1521:26.45a24–29)

There is no way to be certain if any of these ideas were directly relevant in the repentance rituals seen in texts such as the *Methods for Curing*, *Chan Essentials*, or *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* (which we have not yet looked at in detail), and they are not mentioned explicitly. Still, it does seem that in these rituals the ascetic nature of the chores and tasks assigned to the penitent is more prominent than in the traditional formulations of the *śikṣādattaka* or probationer penance, where the emphasis remains on loss of ritual status and monastic rank. Moreover this highlighting of the chores as a form of ascetic toil is accompanied by the new claim that the rituals in question will, in addition to restoring monastic status, reduce the future karmic effects of the transgression, making it at least reasonable to think that the notion of attenuated retribution had some role to play.

It might also be possible to connect this idea to other features of the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*. The first segment of the rite, it will be recalled, culminated in a meditation in which the practitioner was supposed to “imagine” (想) his own rebirth in hell. And though the final confirmation of success is a vision of being *rescued* from hell by the light of the Buddha’s *ūrṇa*, it is possible that a vision of one’s rebirth in hell was itself understood as a kind of attenuated retribution, experienced in place of actual rebirth there.

First of all the idea that visions of hell might serve as a form of weak karmic retribution is found in at least some Indian Buddhist texts. For example in the *Koṭīkarṇa-avadāna*, the first story of the *Divyāvadāna*, Koṭīkarṇa experiences visions of both hell and the realm of the *pretas*, and the Buddha eventually explains these to be retribution for having spoken harshly to his mother, a retribution explicitly said to have been attenuated on account of having promptly confessed.⁸³ And while we should rightly hesitate to apply this one example from an Indian Buddhist text never translated into Chinese to our interpretation of the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*, in later Chinese Buddhism, particularly in the writings of Zhiyi and his followers, visions obtained during meditation were indeed often understood as attenuated retribution for past sins.

As discussed in chapter four, the basic early Tiantai understanding is that attempting to enter trance (*chan* 禪) will produce visions pertaining to the practitioner’s good or evil “roots” from the past. Zhiyi’s ideas about the manifestation of evil roots, particularly those that he classified in the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* as “karmic hindrances” (*ye zhang* 業障), seem to have been similar to the basic assumptions of fifth-century meditation texts such as the

83 Rotman 2008, 39–70. In this story the merchant Koṭīkarṇa visits both hell and the realm of the *pretas* and brings back warnings to the living about the inevitability of retribution. Later Koṭīkarṇa becomes a monk and then an arhat, which the Buddha declares to have been made possible by his offerings in a past life to the stupa of Kāśyapa Buddha. On the other hand his visions of the netherworld are explained as retribution for having spoken harshly to his mother (*yadanena māturantike kharavākkarma niścāritam, tasya karmaṇo vipākena dṛṣṭa eva dharme apāyā dṛṣṭā iti*; Divy, 14). Koṭīkarṇa’s transgression is presented earlier in the story, when he gets angry at his mother for attempting to dissuade him from his travels. His mother then points out that Koṭīkarṇa has spoken to her harshly and chides him to confess this, which he does by “requesting that she accept [his] transgression as a transgression” (*sā tenātyayam atyayato kṣamāpitā*), the standard formula for repentance in the *Divyāvadāna* (Divy, 3.14–15; this formula is discussed by Hiraoka 2002, 259). Although it is not specifically said that Koṭīkarṇa’s vision of the underworld occurred as an attenuated retribution for birth in those realms, the sin of “harsh speech” is, in other stories in the *Divyāvadāna*, usually given a severe punishment, and it is reasonable to assume that the point here is that Koṭīkarṇa experienced a vision of the realms that he would have been reborn in had he failed to confess his transgression.

Chan Essentials, in which trance also may produce inauspicious visions that indicate when repentance rituals (*chan hui* 懺悔) are necessary. The seventh-century Tiantai meditation treatise known as the *Outlines of Chan Practice* (*Chan men zhang* 禪門章)⁸⁴ presents an understanding of such inauspicious visions that explicitly links them to the notion of attenuated retribution:

When visions (相) appear during preliminary meditation⁸⁵ this means that prior to experiencing a certain retribution [one experiences] visions of things such as tigers, wolves, lions, government officials, or a cangue. [When such visions appear] you must bear them, and imagine giving up your life. If your mind fully resolves [in this manner], then the obstacle will be transformed and one will not have to experience it later. Indeed even shamans, through rituals for transcending sorrow, are able to avert misfortune. How much more can it be extinguished by experiencing the retribution [in attenuated form] in a mind entered into [Buddhist] meditation!

[That one may eliminate the fruits of karma like this] is similar to the way that according to secular law one does not punish someone twice [for the same crime]. *If in trance one imagines experiencing the retribution, then the suffering of this karma will not come again.* The meditation on death from among the eight recollections is undertaken with precisely this intention.⁸⁶

The inauspicious visions that appear during trance are thus in part “retribution” (報) for past evil karma, an idea that the *Chan Essentials* mentions explicitly on at least one occasion (2.15).⁸⁷ Moreover by experiencing these things and then accepting them fully one can eliminate the actual retribution they would have otherwise produced. The explanation for how this works is,

84 The *Outlines of Chan Practice* has been attributed to Zhiyi since at least the eighth century, and is listed as such in Saicho’s ninth-century catalog of the texts he brought back to Japan (*Chuan jiao da shi jiang lai tai zhou lu* 傳教大師將來台州錄, T.2159:55.1055c18). However Satō Tetsuei has shown that while structurally the text appears to be a commentary on portions of the *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, the text presupposes the full gamut of Zhiyi’s writings, and moreover cites passages from Tiantai works such as the *Si nian chu* 四念處 that are now strongly suspected to have been written by Zhiyi’s disciple Guanding 灌頂 (Satō 1961, 273–276). Because the *Outlines of Chan Practice* has been little studied apart from Satō pioneering research, it is difficult to say more precisely from when this text might date, but it seems safe to take it as a seventh-century work.

85 Literally “when the factors of concentration are not yet established” (定法不立), this refers to the state of preliminary concentration discussed in the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* as “preliminary concentration” (*wei dao ding* 未到定) or “sense-sphere concentration” (*yu jie ding* 欲界定). On these states, which derive from Indian Buddhist meditation theory, see chapter four note 31.

86 定法不立相現者，於未受報前，或虎、狼、師子、縣官、枷理等相起。即當忍受，作捨身命心。心若成，報得轉，後不受。譬如巫師度厄，尚能禳災，何況定心受報而不消滅。亦如國法不重害人，若禪中作受報意，業[福]{禍?}亦不再至。故八念中有念死，其意在此。(Chan men zhang 禪門章, X.907:55.658b9–16).

87 Note that the *Outlines of Chan Practice* refers to these visions as examples of the “obstruction of retribution” (*bao zhang* 報障), which seems to invoke the scheme of the three “obstructions” (*āvaraṇa*). It will be recalled that this classification was used in the *Explanation of the Sequential Path* to describe the different possible ways that evil roots (惡根) can manifest during preliminary meditation. But in that text inauspicious visions were classified not as “obstruction of retribution” but as “karmic obstructions” (*ye zhang* 業障), so there seems to be some difference here (see p.214–215).

furthermore, clearly indebted to the notion of using attenuated retribution to destroy, or rather preempt the full karmic consequences of past actions. And while this passage here seems to mention only elimination of retribution that would have otherwise occurred later during one's present life, it would seem to apply equally well to preventing the retribution of evil karma in one's next life.

This, I would suggest, is thus a plausible explanation for the first segment of the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*. It may also be more broadly relevant to interpreting the presence and meaning of the inauspicious visions described in texts such as the *Chan Essentials*, many of which seem to involve premonitory visions of rebirth in the lower realms.

Mahāyāna repentance and the *vinaya*—the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*

As we have seen the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* for removing transgressions derives in the main from the traditions of *vinaya* law. It is indebted to the *vinaya* procedures for probation (*parivāsa*) and the *śikṣādattaka* penance, but was designed to offer a level of purification and institutional rehabilitation for those who violate severe transgressions (the *pārājika*) greater than what was offered or said to be possible in fifth-century Chinese translations of Indian *vinaya* and *vinaya* commentaries. Yet if this ritual began as a method for monks and nuns to atone for their *pārājika* transgression more effectively than had previously been possible, it was eventually adapted to allow for similar purification in a wider variety of cases, both for lesser *vinaya* transgressions, and also for laymen and laywomen.

But in addition to features deriving from the *vinaya* we also see here the influence of Mahāyāna ritual traditions. These are alluded to at the very beginning of the ritual proper, where the practitioner must invoke the thirty-five buddhas (三十五佛), the “various bodhisattvas” (諸菩薩), and the “Great Vehicle” (大乘). Reference to the “thirty-five buddhas” here is particularly significant because this set of deities is well known from the so-called *Triskandha* ritual, perhaps the most ancient Mahāyāna liturgy.⁸⁸ Similarly the practitioner must “contemplate the truth of emptiness” (心觀於空法), invoking the standard Mahāyāna notion that through the contemplation of emptiness even the gravest transgressions can be eliminated.⁸⁹ Thus despite its roots in *vinaya* procedures for atonement of the *pārājika* the ritual in the *Methods for Curing* evidently took form in an environment where Mahāyāna rites were also known and practiced.

That *vinaya* procedures for atonement would have been practiced in such environments is not, in and of itself, unexpected. Indeed the *vinaya*, or more specifically the *prātimokṣa*, was the core of any Buddhist monk's institutional identity, and was never simply abandoned or ignored by those professing to follow the Mahāyāna path, at least not in India.⁹⁰ But what is notable is that the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* seems to be making a conscious effort to integrate

88 On the *Triskandha* ritual as the foundations of Mahāyāna liturgical practice, see Shizutani 1974, 133–147; Barnes 1993; 1999; Williams 2002, 57–66; Nattier 2003, 117–121.

89 See chapter four note 124.

90 As recent scholarship now routinely points out, in Indian Buddhism the Mahāyāna never formed a new *nikāya* (ordination lineage) distinct from the traditional *vinaya*, and the Mahāyāna does not seem to have had a distinct institutional identity, at least not until a much later period.

two traditions that were rarely placed in direct dialog with one another—namely *vinaya* rituals that offer institutional restitution for those transgressing the *prātimokṣa*, and Mahāyāna repentance rituals that promise to eliminate the negative karmic effects of evil deeds.

That in fifth-century China these two traditions were felt in need of reconciliation, particularly as concerns violations of the *pārājika*, is seen even more clearly in the ritual for the elimination of transgressions from the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*, which like the *Methods for Curing* mentions an 800-day penance of toilet cleaning. The close connection between these two rites was not lost on traditional Chinese commentators, and they are often mentioned together.⁹¹ Although certain aspects of the repentance method in the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* have been studied,⁹² previous scholars have not addressed what I believe is its most significant feature, namely its engagement with the problem of how those who violate *pārājika* offenses might regain their status as full members of the monastic community.

Concern with this question is seen from the opening passages of the text. Here Upāli, the disciple of the Buddha foremost in knowledge of the *vinaya*, questions the Buddha about an apparent contradiction between the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra*, which promises worshipers remission from the very gravest of sins, and “the *vinaya*,” which demands that those who transgress the grave precepts be expelled or, at the very least, lose some of the privileges of their monastic status:

Previously in a holy scripture [the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra*]⁹³ you said that [hearing] the name of the bodhisattva *Ākāśagarbha* will remove all evil karma (惡不善業), and will cure outcast kings and outcast monks of their evil conduct.⁹⁴ How should those who wish to be cured of such evils go about contemplating the bodhisattva *Ākāśagarbha*? Supposing that they do eventually see him [as the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* says they will when their sins have been removed], how should they

91 A variety of sources attest to the popularity of the ritual from the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* in medieval China. One key early source is an essay (or more likely a liturgical text) composed by Emperor Wen 文 (r. 559–566) of the Chen 陳 dynasty on the occasion of a repentance rite devoted to *Ākāśagarbha* (*Extended Records of Proselytizing*, T.2013:52.333c29–334a21). Excerpts from the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* are also included in the chapter on repentance from the seventh-century encyclopedia the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (T.2122:53.913b13–c26). The *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* is also regularly cited by Zhiyi as one of the most effective forms of “phenomenal” (事) repentance, that is to say repentance that eliminates grave sins but does not necessarily effectuate liberation (*Jin guang ming jing wen ju* 金光明經文句, T.1785:39.60b28–c7). Zhiyi also explicitly connects the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* to the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*, noting that the former is a “Mahāyāna” version of the later (Kuo 1994, 69). Daoxuan also mentions the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* as one of the only examples of Mahāyāna repentance rituals that can be used to atone for *pārājika* offenses, by which he means a Mahāyāna repentance ritual that explicitly addresses the institutional (rather than karmic) consequences of such deeds (*Si fen bi qiu ni chao* 四分比丘尼鈔, X.724:40.762a9–12).

92 de Visser 1931; Kuo 1994, 136–138; Yamabe 2005, 32–33. For a comparison of the various repentance texts featuring worship of the 35 buddhas, including the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*, see Shioiri 2007, 281–288.

93 For a different translation of this passage see Yamabe 2005, 32–33.

94 This refers to the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra*, which describes those who have committed “grave” transgressions as *caṇḍala*, “outcasts” (*Xu kong zang pu sa jing* 虛空藏菩薩經, T.405:13.656a17–20). The major part of the early portion of the text is devoted to listing such transgressions in the cases of kings, ministers, monks, and “beginning bodhisattvas” (初發心菩薩). From the later section that describes the proper mode of worship of *Ākāśagarbha* it is clear that the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* is drawing from T.405.

[resume their former status in which they were allowed to] dwell together [with the other monks], [perform the] *poṣadha*, [and take on] monastic responsibilities?

In the *vinaya* the World-honored One said that the following kinds of people must definitely be expelled, like broken rocks [that cannot be made whole again]—laymen who have broken the five precepts or transgressed the eight fast-day precepts, monks, nuns, novice monks, novice nuns, and nuns-in-training who have transgressed the four grave injunctions [*pārājika*], lay bodhisattvas who have violated the six grave rules, and monastic bodhisattvas who have transgressed the eight grave injunctions. But now in this scripture [the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra*] you have said that the merciful bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha can relieve all suffering, and you have further provided a spell that can remove [such] sins. If there really is someone [who manages to purify their sins in this manner], how can this be known [to others]? How can it be verified?⁹⁵

In the second paragraph here we see that the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* is concerned not merely with violations of the *pārājika* by monks and nuns, but with a number of other kinds of precepts as well, including the so-called bodhisattva precepts.⁹⁶ Indeed the particulars of the worship of the 35 buddhas eventually prescribed here are drawn from the version of the *Triskandha* ritual contained in the *Vinaya-viniścaya-upāli-paripṛcchā*, a repentance text that beginning from at least the fifth century was used in conjunction with rituals for receiving the bodhisattva precepts.⁹⁷ These connections to the then-nascent bodhisattva-precept tradition have been noted by previous scholars. But I am more interested in the first paragraph, where the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* engages the debates in *vinaya* texts about the effectiveness of the *śikṣādattaka* penance, and also addresses the question of how the promises made in Mahāyāna sutras might apply in the case of transgressions of the *vinaya*.

Thus Upāli, noting that the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* promises remission from even the gravest transgressions, wonders how those who avail themselves of such methods can “dwell together, [perform the] *poṣadha*, [and take on] monastic responsibilities.” To understand the meaning of this question we must remember that “not dwelling together” (不共住) is a

95 先於功德經中，說虛空藏菩薩摩訶薩名，能除一切惡不善業，治王旃陀羅乃至沙門旃陀羅諸惡律儀。如此惡事若欲治，當云何觀虛空藏菩薩？設得見者，云何共住、布薩、僧事？若優婆塞破五戒，犯八戒齋，出家比丘、比丘尼、沙彌、沙彌尼、式叉摩尼犯四重禁，在家菩薩毀六重法，出家菩薩犯八重禁，如是過人，世尊先於毘尼中說決定驅[擯]{擯}，如大石破。今於此經說大悲虛空藏能救諸苦，及說呪以除罪咎。設有此人，云何知之，以何為證？(T.409:13.677b10–19)

96 The bodhisattva precepts developed in India sometime in the late fourth century, and beginning at this time we find a number of texts translated into Chinese that contain outlines for different systems of such precepts, and different methods for receiving them. Their relative novelty can be seen in that, for example, they do not appear in any of Kumārajīva’s translation, but they are mentioned prominently in the works of numerous translators who arrived in China in next few decades. In China, these various lists and rituals would, in the late fifth century, eventually coalesce in the (Chinese-authored) *Brahma Net Scripture* (*Fan wan jing* 梵網經). Concerning the spread of rituals for receiving the bodhisattva precepts in fifth century China, see Funayama 1995 and 2004.

97 Yamabe 2005, 28–34. Concerning the *Vinaya-viniścaya-upāli-paripṛcchā* itself, the most important study is Python 1973, who collates the Chinese, Tibetan, and fragmentary Sanskrit versions. As Yamabe notes, the earliest Chinese translations do not contain a ritual for receiving the bodhisattva precepts, but this text was, by at least the early fifth-century, combined with a bodhisattva-precept ordination ritual (derived from the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*), namely Guṇavarman’s 431 CE translation of the *Pu sa shan jie jing* 菩薩善戒經 (T.1582).

technical term from the *vinaya*, where it translates *asamvāsa*, “not in communion,” the state acquired by those who violate the *pārājika*. And as discussed above those who avail themselves of the *śikṣādattakas* penance so as to stay within the monastic Sangha nonetheless technically remain “not in communion,” meaning that they are not allowed to sleep in the same quarters as the fully ordained monks. The other two points—performing the *poṣadha* and taking on monastic office—are also privileges the *vinaya* permanently denies to *śikṣādattakas* despite their partial institutional rehabilitation (see above p.263). It thus seems Upāli is actually asking a very specific question—whether or not the complete purification of transgressions promised by the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* includes restoring violators of the *pārājika* to full monastic status rather than to the partial status of the *śikṣādattaka*.

This question is indeed pertinent, for while the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* promises that monks and nuns who violate what it calls the “*pārājika*”⁹⁸ will obtain purification through the worship of Ākāśagarbha, this is discussed solely in terms of avoiding rebirth in hell and preserving their “roots of good” (善根), that is to say their spiritual potential.⁹⁹ As is the norm in Mahāyāna discussions of repentance the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* claims to destroy even the most heinous sins without in any way addressing the *institutional* consequences of such transgressions.¹⁰⁰

Upāli’s initial questions thus frame the ensuing ritual as a method that will provide not only the karmic purification of the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* but also a complete reparation of any institutional breach. And indeed what follows amounts to a combination of the 35-buddha repentance derived from the *Triskandha* ritual (more particularly the version in the *Vinaya-viniścaya-upāli-paripṛcchā*), worship of Ākāśagarbha bodhisattva derived loosely from the fourth-century Chinese translation of the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* (T.405), and an 800-day penance of menial chores that can be seen as stemming from the *vinaya* regulations for probationers and *śikṣādattakas*.

The Buddha begins by instructing Upāli to preach for those who wish to be “upholders of the *vinaya*” (善持毘尼者) a special method for “curing sins” (治罪) known as the “*vinaya-viniścaya*” (決定毘尼). This method involves worshipping the thirty-five buddhas, chanting their names for seven days, and at the same time chanting the name of the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha. Then “either in a dream or when in meditation” (若於夢中若坐禪時), the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha will appear to the practitioner and using a “*maṇi-jewel seal*” (摩尼珠印) stamp the practitioner’s arm with the words “sin removed” (除罪).¹⁰¹ One who has been branded with these

98 Although they are called “*pārājika*,” the transgressions listed are killing, theft, violation of celibacy, lying, and shedding the blood of a buddha (T.405:13.652b21), thus adding to the four *pārājika* the *ānantarya* sin of shedding the blood of a buddha. Note that an extended sense of the word *pārājika* is also frequently found in bodhisattva precept texts (of which the *Ākāśagarbha-bodhisattva-sūtra* is one of the earliest examples), where it describes the most serious precepts.

99 T.405:13.652b19–c4

100The other principal text from which the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* draws, the *Vinaya-viniścaya-upāli-paripṛcchā*, also fails to provide any clear answer to such questions. Indeed that text explicitly contrasts the “bodhisattva *prātimokṣa*” with the “*śrāvaka prātimokṣa*,” explaining that these two sets of precepts are entirely different, and that upholding the *śrāvaka* precepts might mean breaking the bodhisattvas precepts and vice versa (T.325:12.39c2–40c11).

101The therapeutic use of seals in Chinese religion has been well studied by Michel Strickmann, in texts nominally

characters may then “return among the monks and recite the precepts as before” (還入僧中如本說戒),¹⁰² while in the case of an *upāsaka* he will “not be hindered from ordaining as a monk” (不障出家).

If the practitioner does not receive this sign he must perform repentance rituals for another forty-nine days. His sins thereby “weakened” (輕微):¹⁰³

His preceptor must then instruct him to clean the toilets for eight hundred days. Each day he should announce [to the penitent]: “You have done an impure thing. You must now wholeheartedly clean all the toilets without letting anyone else know about it.” After he has cleaned the toilets [for 800 days], he should bathe, and then venerate the thirty-five buddhas, chant the name of Ākāśagarbha, throw himself to the ground before the twelve-fold collection of scriptures and confess his past sins. He should for twenty-one days repent in this manner. Then his preceptor should assemble his friends and intimates, and standing before a statue of the Buddha they should chant the names of the thirty-five buddhas and Ākāśagarbha, and call on Mañjuśrī and all the bodhisattvas of the present eon¹⁰⁴ to be witnesses. [The penitent] must then again speak the same formal utterance (*karmavacana*) that was used originally when he received the precepts.

[Having done the above,] this person, by the power of his ascetic practice (苦行), has now entirely and forever removed his sin, and he will not be obstructed in his pursuit of any of the three kinds of awakening.¹⁰⁵

both Buddhist and Daoist dating from the late fifth or early sixth centuries (Strickmann and Faure 2002, 123–193), though he does not mention the present text. Strickmann traces the apotropaic powers of seals back to Han dynasty, with more detailed examples occurring in Ge Hong’s 葛洪 *Bao pu zi* 抱朴子. But the early examples he gives do not involve seals applied to the body. In texts from the late fifth or early sixth centuries we do find such examples, but here the emphasis is on the power of the seal itself to rid the body of illness, not on the traces of the seal left on the body, if even there were any. This “technology” in the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* thus may be invoking somewhat different concerns. We might consider, for example, the use of tattoos and brands as forms of judicial punishment. Though these punishments were apparently abolished in the early Han (Hulsewé 1955, 124–125), the idea of such punishments no doubt would have remained active. In any event it is clear that the purpose of the sealing here differs from the cases studied by Strickmann. Here the point is not that the seal itself effectuates the desired transformation, but that it provides a sign, one that will be visible and readable to others, proving that the individual has indeed encountered Ākāśagarbha and has thus been purified.

102In other words one is now formally readmitted to the Sangha and allowed to recite the *prātimokṣa* with the other monks (cf. Yamabe 2005, 33).

103There are thus two possibilities. Either the practitioner has a vision of Ākāśagarbha that attests to the destruction of his sins or, through the performance of repentance rituals, his sins are weakened, following which he must perform the “ascetic practice” (苦行) of cleaning the toilets for 800 days. The connection here between “weakened” sins and ascetic practices can be interpreted in terms of attenuated retribution (p.280–286). Thus in this case the preliminary repentance does not remove the transgression but weakens it, such that, through ascetic practice, it can be experienced in an attenuated form and thereby eliminated.

104Literally “the auspicious eon” (賢劫; *bhadra-kalpa*), this is a proper name for the present eon of the universe, named thus because it is said that during this eon there will be a particularly large number of buddhas.

105知法者復教令塗治園廁，經八百日，日日告言：汝作不淨事，汝今一心塗一切廁莫令人知。塗已洗浴，禮三十五佛，稱虛空藏，向十二部經五體投地，說汝過惡。如是懺悔復經三七日。爾時智者應集親厚，於佛像前，稱三十五佛名，稱虛空藏名，稱文殊師利，稱賢劫菩薩，為其作證。更白羯磨如前受戒法。此人因苦行力故，罪業永除，不障三種菩提業。(Ākāśagarbha Contemplation, T.409:13.677c16–23)

In the method for curing violations of the precepts from the *Methods for Curing* we observed that a ritual originally intended for monks and nuns seems to have been adapted for use by the laity as well. The ritual outlined in the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* betrays a similar history. Upāli's initial questions were aimed at reconciling statements made in Mahāyāna sutras and repentance rites with *vinaya* restrictions limiting the degree to which *pārājika* transgressions could be atoned for, a problem that by definition could be of concern only for monks and nuns. Yet the intended audience of the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* is clearly broader than this. Compared with the *Methods for Curing*, moreover, it seems even further removed from the world of *vinaya* ritual. Thus while in the *Methods for Curing* the penitent must eventually confess his sins before a gathering of monks (in conformity with the *vinaya* rules that mandate a large number of monastic witnesses to certify the atonement of serious transgressions), in the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* the penitent merely gathers a group of “friends and intimates” (親厚) to help pray to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and it is these deities that “act as witnesses” (作證).¹⁰⁶ Similarly the final segment of the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*, in which the practitioner attests to his restored soteriological potential by attaining the impurity contemplation, has no parallel in the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*. The only comparable discussion is the final line cited here, stating rather broadly that the practitioner will not be hindered in his pursuit of awakening.

Conclusions

Just as early fifth-century China experienced a sudden influx of new texts pertaining to Buddhist meditation (as discussed in chapter one), it also witness a virtual explosion in the availability and importance of Indian Buddhist monastic rules. Prior to Kumārajīva's translation of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* (*Shi song lü* 十誦律) between 404 and 409 almost no Indian *vinaya* texts existed in Chinese.¹⁰⁷ By the middle of the fifth century hundreds of fascicles of canonical *vinaya* and their commentaries representing at least four distinct schools of Indian Buddhism had been made available in Chinese translation. Although it is difficult to judge the extent to which these newly available materials actually influenced basic monastic life for monks and nuns, it is clear that among many Chinese Buddhists there was a growing sense that in some manner or

¹⁰⁶This understanding is in keeping with the ritual traditions for receiving the bodhisattva precepts, which similarly replace the human witnesses (monks and nuns) that the *vinaya* declares necessary for monastic ordinations with buddhas and bodhisattvas. That the bodhisattva precepts were ultimately conferred and witnessed by the buddhas, rather than by a human assembly of monks or nuns, meant that one could, if necessary, receive them on one's own. This notion of “self-ordination” was an important part of the early manuals for receiving the bodhisattva precepts (Funayama 1995, 23–24; Yamabe 2005, 24–26).

¹⁰⁷Hirakawa 1960, 155–159, notes that only two surviving *vinaya* texts date from before this time, the *Bi nai ye* 鼻奈耶 (T.1464), seemingly translated in 383, and a version of the *prātimokṣa* of the Sarvāstivādins found at Dunhuang. Because the translation of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* introduced standardized terminology that was followed by all subsequent translators of *vinaya* material it is relatively easy to determine when a text dates from after this time even in the absence of other information.

another the rules and regulations these texts contained needed to be carefully studied and taken into account.

This seems to have been especially true in southern China among the Buddhist groups centered in and around the southern capital of Jiankang 建康, where the bulk of the new *vinaya* material was translated, and where there was a comparatively large population of foreign-born monks. It is known, for example, that during the early years of the Song dynasty the famous Zhihuan 祇洹 (Jetavāna) monastery, a temple with close connections to the emperor and home to a large number of foreign monks, attempted to conform to full extent of *vinaya* law (in particular the *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya*), something that had apparently never before been attempted on Chinese soil. Controversy even ensued when Chinese monks, including some with ties to the imperial family, wanted to take on certain practices stipulated in the *vinaya* that offended both Chinese sensibilities and long established clerical precedents, such as eating with the hands in what was perceived as an ungainly squatting posture.¹⁰⁸

An arguably more important conflict between traditional Chinese Buddhist monastic practices and the newly apparent demands of *vinaya* law concerned ordination procedures. We know of at least one major controversy that occurred in this regard concerning the ordination procedures for nuns, prompted by the realization, at the beginning of the Song dynasty, that Chinese Buddhist nuns, communities of which had existed since the early fourth century, were not properly ordained by *vinaya* law since the initial ordinations had not been attended by ten fully ordained nuns. According to historical sources this situation was only realized when the Chinese nun Huiguo 慧果 (364–433), already the abbess of a large convent, inquired with the foreign missionary Guṇavarman about the validity of her own and others' ordinations. Guṇavarman agreed that in principle the Chinese nuns' ordinations were all invalid. Although the matter was eventually sorted out by conducting new ordinations attended by a congregation of the requisite number of properly ordained nuns, brought to China for this purpose,¹⁰⁹ these controversies show that the newly translated *vinaya* texts were being actively consulted by at least some members of the Chinese clergy and were being used to rectify perceived faults in Chinese Buddhist practices and customs.

Among the provisions in these *vinaya* texts that were previously largely unknown in China (or at least for which there did not exist an authoritative collection of texts) were procedures for monastic rites of repentance, which in principle would have been just as important as the regulations concerning ordination since failure to properly atone for violations of the *prātimokṣa* posed a danger to the purity of one's *śīla*, what in China came to be called the "precept essence" (*jie ti* 戒體), threatening both one's status as a monk (of concern to any who would hope to gain merit by making offerings to such a person) and one's future soteriological potential. Concern with such matters is evident in the story of the monk Zhiyan discussed in chapter four (see p.202).

Yet in the subsequent history of Chinese Buddhism repentance practices derived from the

108Kamata 1982, 3:97–100

109Guṇavarman, however, died before the ordinations could take place and it was not until the later arrival of another foreign master, Saṅghavarman, that the ordination could proceed (*Biographies of the Nuns*, T.2063:50.937b25–c5). For further details on this controversy, as well as other aspects of the new ordination procedures for both monks and nuns that Guṇavarman introduced, see Funayama Toru 2004b.

vinaya tradition seem, at first glance, to have exerted little or no influence,¹¹⁰ and modern studies of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔) in Chinese Buddhism have generally discussed such *vinaya* rituals only in passing or in connection with the formal typologies found in the writings of commentators.¹¹¹ And while the full history of such matters will require more investigation, we have seen that, during a certain period of time at any rate, Chinese Buddhists did actively draw from at least some areas of *vinaya* penance literature in order to create new rituals that would not only eliminate the grave karmic consequences of serious misdeeds, but also formally allow transgressors to regain their monastic status (which again was conceived of not only in institutional terms, but metaphysically in terms of the presence or absence of one's *jie ti* 戒體).

The evidence indeed suggests a concerted attempt to create rituals that, while remaining fully within the *vinaya* tradition, would grant those who violated the very gravest precepts (the *pārājika*) a degree of purification greater than what was allowed by the available Indian *vinaya* literature. Although necessarily something of an oversimplification, this seems to represent the influence of “Mahāyāna” ritual practice on *vinaya* procedures. This conclusion must be framed carefully since as recent scholarship on the early Mahāyāna has pointed out in Indian Buddhism the Mahāyāna did not constitute as separate “school” or ordination lineage—the rules of the *vinaya* applied to all monks, those with Mahāyāna inclinations or otherwise. Yet precisely for this reason Indian *vinaya* texts are, to the best of my knowledge, entirely devoid of overt references to the Mahāyāna. We may thus say that the rituals we have examined in this chapter are notable in that they seem to transgress, as it were, the conventions of well-established genres.

Certainly the ritual from the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* discussed above is a patent attempt to reconcile the total karmic purification promised by certain Mahāyāna sutras with statements in the *vinaya* concerning the irrevocable loss of at least some monastic status for those who violate the *pārājika*, even those who remain within the fold as *śīksādattakas*. In order to accomplish this the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* thus integrates key features of the *śīksādattaka* penance from the *vinaya*, notably the performance of menial labor, into the 35-buddha repentance of the *Triskandha* ritual. Meanwhile the ritual from *Methods for Curing* makes passing reference to this same 35-buddha repentance even though on the whole it retains most of the features of a *vinaya* ritual and, perhaps more significantly, is incorporated into a text that betrays almost no other Mahāyāna elements or language.¹¹²

In the end it is difficult to know whether these kinds of rituals also existed in Indian Buddhism, or whether they were Chinese attempts to come to terms with the new *vinaya* literature in a context where Mahāyāna repentance rituals were universally practiced and were indeed in some manner the basis of all Buddhist liturgical practice. It is worth considering as well that Chinese translation practices may have made these two potentially distinct realms seem closer than they would have otherwise. For while *confessing* one's transgressions was a

110 Daoxuan thus comments that the Chinese monks of his day generally ignored the stipulations of the *vinaya* and relied repentance liturgies based on Mahāyāna scriptures (*Si fen lu shan fan bu que xing shi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.99b12–17).

111 This is true of the major book-length studies of Chinese Buddhist repentance such as Kuo 1994 and Shengkai 2004.

112 Note that later Chinese commentators seem to have observed that these two texts in particular seem to mix otherwise established genres (see Zhiyi's comments in *Jin guang ming jing wen ju* 金光明經文句, T.1785:39.60b28–c7).

component of both *vinaya* rites of atonement and Mahāyāna liturgies, *vinaya* ritual used its own technical term, *pratīkaroti*, to refer to the deeds of atonement necessary before being reintegrated into the Sangha. And *pratīkaroti* was, in *vinaya* texts, translated into Chinese as *chan hui* 懺悔, “repent,” the same word that in Mahāyāna liturgies was used to translate terms such as “confession of sins” (*āpatti-pratideśanā*).¹¹³ In any event that the examples we have all come from texts seemingly composed or compiled in China certainly suggests the possibility that these rituals were a Chinese attempt to resolve a perceived conflict between two rather different genres of literature that, in India, may have rarely been put into mutual dialog.

Appendix: other examples

In addition to the examples discussed above a number of other medieval Chinese Buddhist sources describe repentance rituals that seem to incorporate procedures from the *vinaya* penances for *śikṣādattaka*. Some of these, like the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*, appear to have been conscious attempts to provide a superior *vinaya*-style ritual of atonement for *pārājika* transgressions. In others the traces of the *śikṣādattaka* penance are minimal though still discernible.

1. The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*

Given the close relationship between the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* and the *Methods for Curing* and *Chan Essentials* it is not surprising to find that it mentions similar rituals. Like the *Methods for Curing*, however, the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* seems to only allude to these rituals as if more detail presentations were assumed to be available elsewhere. One key passage that seems connected to the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* involves the contemplation of the Buddha’s *ūrṇa* (眉間白毫) as a means of eliminating grave transgressions, including the four *pārājika* and the five *ānantarya* sins.¹¹⁴ Here the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* is content to describe for how long the practitioner must do this. It is then said that “following this there is a formal ritual procedure which is given in another scripture” (然後羯磨，事在他經), and this can plausibly be interpreted as a reference to the ritual from the *Methods for Curing* or something very similar to it.

Later passages allude to similar rites, and also mention the use of menial labor, which as discussed above is one of the key links between these rituals and the *vinaya* penances:

First [the practitioner] must enter the sanctuary and clean the floor using fragrant mud and earth. To the extent that he is able¹¹⁵ he must burn incense and scatter flowers in offering to the image of the Buddha. Having then confessed his evil deeds, he must bow before the Buddha and repent. Humbling his mind in this manner for between one and

¹¹³Hirakawa 1990; Mori 1999

¹¹⁴T.643:15.655b6–24

¹¹⁵I suspect that this means to the extent that he can afford to purchase these offerings.

seven days, he must next return to the assembly [of monks], clean and sweep the floor of the monks' quarters, empty the toilets, and repent before the monks, bowing to their feet. He must serve [the monks] like this for seven days without slacking. If he is a monk, he must then recite the *vinaya* with utmost fluency. If he is a householder, he must serve his parents with filial devotion and honor his teachers . . . [then], dwelling in a pure place, he must burn various kinds of precious incense, bow to Śākyamuni Buddha, and say the following: "Homage to the great worthy one, my preceptor, of right and universal knowledge, the greatly compassionate world-honored one! May you cover and protect your disciple with your cloud-like compassion." Having spoken these words, he must cry forth tears and throw himself to the ground before the image [of the Buddha].¹¹⁶

Here we seem to see further efforts made to include provisions for laypersons, and for such people alternatives are provided in place of the recitation of the *prātimokṣa*, the only option mentioned in the ritual from the Methods for Curing, and this can also be seen in a later passage that describes a similar ritual.¹¹⁷ There, in addition to cleaning the monks' quarters, the practitioner might "massage his parents and teachers" (為父母師長案摩調身). And though it is not explicitly said that this is an alternative for laypersons, this is a reasonable interpretation.

2. The *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* (*Zui miao chu jiao jing* 最妙初教經)

Although no longer extant a few citations of the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* preserved in other sources show that this text, supposedly closely related to the *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* (*Zui sheng miao ding jing* 最勝妙定經) which I discussed in chapter four,¹¹⁸ contained a *vinaya*-style atonement designed to fully purify transgressions of the *pārājika*.

In his *Explanation of the Sequential Path* Zhiyi notes that the *vinaya* themselves do not allow for the complete atonement of the *pārājika*, but that such methods are contained in the scriptures, and as an example he cites the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings*:

Repentance on the basis of formal procedures¹¹⁹ refers to performing good deeds so as to counteract evil. The *vinaya* uses this method exclusively for the destruction of sins . . . but it does not elucidate such a method for repenting the four grave [*pārājika*].

116先入佛塔，以好香泥及諸瓦土，塗地令淨。隨其力能，燒香散華，供養佛像。說已過惡，禮佛懺悔。如是伏心，經一七日，復至眾中，塗掃僧地，除諸糞穢，向僧懺悔，禮眾僧足。復經七日，如是供養，心不疲厭。若出家人，應誦毘尼，極令通利。若在家人，孝養父母，恭敬師長 . . . 住於靖處，燒眾名香，禮釋迦文而作是言：南無大德我大和上，應正遍知，大悲世尊，願以慈雲，覆護弟子。作是語已，五體投地，泣淚像前。(T.643:15.690c2–14)

117In addition to the passage cited below, see also T.643:15.691a7–15.

118Medieval authors noted that these two texts were similar and that one may have been based on the other (*Catalog of the Kaiyuan Era*, T.2154:55.671c1).

119In this passage, as elsewhere in his works, Zhiyi distinguishes three kinds of repentance: "procedural" (作法), "meditative" (觀相), and that "[based on insight into the fundamental truth of] non-arising" (無生). The former category is explicitly associated with the kinds of repentance given in the *vinaya*. The later two categories he declares to be "Mahāyāna" forms of repentance.

Nevertheless elsewhere we find the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* which does present a method for this. This scripture says that one must invite thirty pure monks, and then in the midst of this assembly the monk who has transgressed must confess. The [other] monks then carry out a formal procedure. Further [the sinner] must perform various practices before the three jewels,¹²⁰ and then chant the precepts one thousand times, and following this he will obtain purity. The [scripture] also says that he must obtain a vision that certifies [to his purity] and then further must declare [to the Sangha] that his sins have been destroyed and that he is now pure.¹²¹ Thus know that though it does not appear in the *vinaya*, the divine instructions for this formal procedure are found in the scriptures. The details of the procedure are explained in that scripture, [the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings*].¹²²

One further citation of the text is preserved in the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma*, where it appears prominently in the opening section of the chapter on repentance:

The *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* says: The Buddha said to Śāriputra: “I remember long ago there was a monk named Joyous One who violated the four grave precepts. He came before the other monks and for ninety-nine nights he repented and proclaimed his guilt. His sinful karma was then eliminated, and his precept-root was restored exactly as it had been when he first received the precepts. Just as one might move a sapling and plant it in another location such that it would continue to grow and become a tree, so too is it when those who break the precepts repent [in this manner].”¹²³

Though the references here are brief, the ritual prescribed in the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* seem to have been, like that in the *Methods for Curing*, an attempt to increase the potency of the *vinaya* rites for atoning violations of the *pārājika*, and as Zhiyi claims, and as stated explicitly in the citation from the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma*, the text was concerned specifically these kinds of transgressions. Moreover according to Zhiyi the method involved confessing before thirty pure monks, a number that was likely not chosen arbitrarily as in *vinaya* rituals the maximum congregation ever required for formal procedures is twenty, necessary only when readmitting those subject to probation (*parivāsa*).¹²⁴ By requiring thirty monks the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* thus seems to be

120Precisely what is meant here is not clear. But if we imagine that this ritual is similar to the one in the *Methods for Curing*, then this might refer to, or at least include, the kinds of menial chores seen there and in the other examples.

121This seems to allude to something very similar to the *karmavacana* at the end of the ritual from the *Methods for Curing*, in which the monk must declare his purity (see above p.273)

122作法懺悔者，以作善事反惡事故，故名懺悔。如毘尼中，一向用此法滅罪...但未明懺悔四重法。別有最妙初教經，出懺悔四重法。彼經云：當請三十清淨比丘僧，於大眾中，犯罪比丘，當自發露。僧為作羯磨成就。又於三寶前，作諸行法，及誦戒千遍，即得清淨。亦云令取得相為證，而說罪滅清淨。當知律中雖不出，經中有此羯磨明文。作法相貌，如彼經中廣說。(T.1916:46.485c6–18)

123如最妙初教經說，佛告舍利弗：我憶往昔，有一比丘，名曰欣慶，犯四重禁。來至僧中，九十九夜懺悔自責，罪業即滅，戒根即生，如初受戒時無有異也。如人移樹，餘處得生，彌更滋長，乃得成樹，破戒懺悔亦復如是。(T.2122:53.912c3–10).

124Ordination itself requires only ten monks.

attempting to provide a ritual even more potent than anything found in the *vinaya*. And indeed the results promised go beyond those offered in the *vinaya* by allowing the practitioner to fully regain his “precept root” (戒根)¹²⁵ and hence his soteriological potential, something that, as discussed above, was denied by the Indian *vinaya* traditions known in China in the fifth and sixth centuries.¹²⁶ Zhiyi and his followers seem to have taken this to mean furthermore that by following the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* one would regain full monastic rank, in contrast to the *vinayas* which offer *śikṣādattakas* only an intermediary position “above the novices and below the fully ordained monks” (在沙彌上大僧下) and without the right to hold monastic office or perform other clerical duties.¹²⁷

3. *The Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* (*Da fang deng tuo luo ni jing* 大方等陀羅尼經)

The *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* is an important medieval scripture most famous as the canonical source for the so-called *fang deng* 方等 repentance rituals that were widely popular in the sixth century. Although many Buddhist monks and nuns from this period are known for their devotion to these rituals the only surviving descriptions of the rites, apart from the text itself, are those used in the early Tiantai community, which formed the basis for Zhiyi’s method for “cultivating *samādhi* through part walking and part sitting.”¹²⁸ The scripture itself resists easy summary, and is probably best thought of as a loosely organized compendium that summarizes a number of different though related rituals, most of which are centered around the use of various *dhāraṇī* supplied by the text.

Of particular interest for us here is the fourth fascicle, which describes a ritual for curing violation of the grave precepts, either the *pārājika* or the “grave” (重) bodhisattva precepts. This section of the text was, moreover, noted by medieval commentators as having a particular importance, and it is cited in the chapter on repentance from *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma*, which also included excerpts from the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* (cited above) and the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*. Several different procedures are given depending on the precisely what precepts are being atoned for. First listed are monks who

125This term, though rare, is evidently equivalent to “precept essence” (*jie ti* 戒體).

126Later in this section Zhiyi contrasts the understanding given in the *vinaya* with that in the *Marvelous Scripture of the Original Teachings* as follows: “Question: does the purity obtained through repentance restore one to one’s original state? Answer: There are different explanations. Some say that restoration is not possible, just as though a torn cloth can be mended and made whole it will never again be as it was before being torn. Other say that one can be restored, just as when a cloth is stained it can be washed and made pure such that it is identical to how it was before . . . thus the *vinaya* explains that the first two classes of precepts cannot be restored, while the later three can be. But the [*Marvelous*] *Scripture of the Original Teachings* says that by performing the formal procedure and repenting [even] the four grave [precepts] can be restored.” 問曰：懺悔清淨，得復本不？答曰：解者不同。有言不復，如衣破更補，雖完終，不如不破。有言得復，如衣不淨，更浣淨，與本無異 . . . 如律中所明，初二篇不復，後三篇可復。初教經所明，作羯磨懺悔，四重悉復。(T.1916:46.486c14–20). Note that here Zhiyi seems to imply that according to the *vinaya* even the second class of precepts (the *saṅghāvaśeṣa*) cannot be fully repaired, an understanding that is not supported in the *vinaya* itself as far as I know.

127See *Chan men zhang* 禪門章, X.907:55.653c11–17, which as discussed above is likely a seventh-century Tiantai work.

128Stevenson 1986, 61–67

violate the *pārājika*:

If a monk violates the four grave precepts, he must wholeheartedly bring to mind this *dhāraṇī*,¹²⁹ chanting it one thousand four hundred times. Having chanted it one thousand four hundred times he must repent by inviting a monk to serve as his witness and then confessing before an image [of the Buddha]. Having repented assiduously for 87 days in this manner, his “precept root” (戒根) will without doubt be restored . . . and how can it be known when he has regained the purity of his precepts? It can be known that he [again] possesses the purity of his precepts when he dreams that his teacher pats his head, or [if he dreams that] he receives offerings of food, clothing, bedding, and medicines¹³⁰ from his parents, brāhmins, elders, or other virtuous people such as this. When he sees these signs he must tell his master.¹³¹

Though the brevity of the passage makes it difficult to reach any firm conclusions, given the concern evinced in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* with restoring the “precept root” (戒根) even to those who violate the *pārājika* it would seem that the method here is at least aware of the general issues surrounding the possible limitations of the more normal methods for atoning for such transgressions. But perhaps even more interesting than the above description of how monks and nuns might atone for *pārājika* violations is the subsequent passage which explains practices for the repentance of the eight grave bodhisattva precepts:¹³²

If a bodhisattva, having received the eight grave precepts, later violates them, he will become maddened and feverish. Wishing to confess [his transgressions] he will find no one to whom he may turn, for there is none who can destroy sins such as these. When the monks have assembled, they expel [this person] out beyond the [official] boundaries [of the monastery (?)], and he will be very afraid. He must then dwell alone in a quiet room, cleaning it thoroughly so that it is made extremely pure. He must then invite a single monk knowledgeable in the *vinaya* and he must confess [his transgressions] to him. Addressing this monk he must say: “The monks have expelled me, and I have come to this room. I have now invited you, oh master, to come here too.” The master must then teach him the following method for purifying his precepts . . .¹³³

129Literally “this *dhāraṇī* scripture” but the point seems to be to refer to the *dhāraṇī* given just above.

130These are the four traditional monastic requisites.

131若有比丘毀四重禁，至心憶念此陀羅尼經，誦一千四百遍。誦一千四百遍已，乃一懺悔，請一比丘為作證人，自陳其罪，向形像前。如是次第，經八十七日勤懺悔已，是諸戒根若不還生終無是處 . . . 云何當知得清淨戒？ . . . 若其夢中，見有師長手摩其頭，若父母、婆羅門、耆舊、有德如是等人，若與飲食、衣服、臥具、湯藥，當知是人住清淨戒。若見如是一一相者，應向師說。(T.1339:21.656b21–c4)

132It is not entirely clear to what these refer. The *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* itself provides, in the first fascicle, twenty-four “grave” precepts for bodhisattvas (T.1339:21.645c9–646b7).

133若有菩薩受八重禁，然後毀壞狂亂心熱。欲自陳說，無所歸趣，無能減者如是罪咎。僧已和合，令出境界，應大怖懼。此人應住一空靜室，塗治內外，極令鮮淨。請一比丘，了知內外一部律者，應自陳過。向此比丘作如是言：僧今擯我，來至此間，我今請師，亦來此間。此師應教淨律之法所謂。(T.1339:21.656c29–657a7)

The method that follows consists simply in the recitation of a special *dhāraṇī*, seemingly endowed with the power to purify this otherwise unpardonable sinner.

What I want to draw attention to is the way that the ritual outlined here formally incorporates a symbolic expulsion from the Sangha. Not only does the penitent declare that he has been “expelled” (擯), the word normally used to describe the fate of those who violate the *pārājika* (as mentioned above in the ritual from the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation*—see p.288), but he imitates the life of a probationer or *śīksādattaka* by living in a separate building or room. Thus while the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* does not include any reference to the menial chores or “ascetic” labor that we saw in other examples of these rituals, it too contains at least some elements indebted to the ritual traditions associated with the *śīksādattaka* penance.

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The second sutra of the *Chan Essentials* explains that those with “karmic obstructions” (業障) must “contemplate the Buddha” (觀佛) and thereby eliminate their “sins” (罪), said to comprise past violations of the precepts and past evil karma more generally. Success in this practice is eventually verified by a series of visions in which the Buddha delivers teachings, hearing which the practitioner progresses directly to arhatship.¹ However, the text goes on to explain, “one with excessive lust . . . even if he obtains this *samādhi* of the contemplation of the Buddha will still be unable to attain any of the fruits of the holy path.”² Such people must therefore turn to the contemplation of impurity or the contemplation of the breath, then explained in great detail.

This sequence encapsulates a key feature of fifth- and sixth-century Chinese understanding of Buddhist meditation. Here the ultimate point towards which soteriologically effective practice tends is the elimination of “sin” (罪). And though the entire sutra is framed as a teaching concerning “meditation” (*chan* 禪), the traditional methods falling under this rubric are not higher forms of training but *extra* steps required only for some. Rather than a preliminary activity, the destruction of transgressions through repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔) is here the most fundamental Buddhist practice, one that traditional methods of *chan* such as the contemplation of impurity will assist, not transcend.

This way of framing the relationship between meditation and repentance is seen in China for the first time in *chan* texts composed or compiled in the early fifth century. In these texts significant meditative experiences were not merely rarefied states of mind but “verificatory visions,” visionary encounters that symbolically communicated the presence or absence of “karmic obstructions,” a hindrance felt to be quite different in character than defiled mental tendencies such as lust or hatred. That meditative experiences could and would communicate such information can be seen as an application of the traditional idea that *dhyāna* depends on purity of *sīla*, though the notion of *sīla* here was considerably broader than in early Buddhism, and included transgressions not only from the present life but from past lives as well.

This hierarchy was thus interpreted not as a prescription for what was necessary prior to beginning meditation practice, but as an explanation of what the fruits of meditation meant, namely whether one’s *sīla* was pure or not, and hence whether or not rituals of repentance would be necessary.³ As a practice meditation thus necessarily included repentance because meditation was not a technique of psychological manipulation (or at least it was not *only* this), but a means

1 See 2.29.

2 貪婬多者，雖得如此觀佛三昧 . . . 不能獲得賢聖道果。(2.38)

3 Though I have discussed this largely in terms of elaborate visions attesting to serious obstructions, more mundane problems were also amenable to this treatment, and occasionally repentance was even prescribed when the meditator was simply unable to focus his mind (see section 2.46).

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of *divining* the efficacy of the rituals of repentance that were the core of Chinese Buddhist liturgical life.

This presentation of the practice and meaning of Buddhist meditation was at least somewhat novel. Indeed a significant change in the relationship between meditation and repentance is evident when we compare texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, composed in fifth-century China, to either contemporaneous Indian meditation texts (such as the *Visuddhimagga*) or Chinese translations of similar texts (such as the *Meditation Scripture* or the *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*). But it is less than fully clear how this change on the level of the texts relates to historical changes in the understanding or actual practice of meditation. Indeed the Buddhist path as presented in Indian canonical texts is patently ideal, a linear course of progress making few allowances for anything but success at each step. In these texts meditation appears, by design, as an internal mental cultivation of the mind by the mind that, while depending on preparatory external conditions or ritual practices, necessarily goes beyond them.

It is thus at least theoretically possible that texts such as the *Chan Essentials* appear original as Buddhist literature only because they discuss matters that in the Indian context were either assumed or not seen fit for official or canonical genres. As I suggested in the introduction, the entire question of how success in meditation was to be verified is perhaps one example of this, and fifth-century Chinese meditation texts reveal many of their novel understandings precisely when discussing this question. Indeed the close connection between repentance and meditation is most evident when addressing the *failure* to reach certain attainments, a topic rarely treated in canonical accounts of meditation.

Moreover given their background it would not be entirely unexpected to find that texts such as the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* might include certain kinds of information generally left out of their Indian counterparts. As I have suggested, these texts were composed or compiled during a time when the actual practice of Buddhist meditation was just beginning to become a regular feature of Chinese Buddhism. In the absence of established traditions of practice and instruction information about meditation that in India was confined to oral tradition may have seemed to the Chinese fit for canonical texts. The detailed instructions concerning proper meditation posture found in the *Chan Essentials*, perhaps the earliest example of this in *any* Buddhist text, is one such example. We might also consider that, as observed in chapter one, the Chinese seem to have conceptualized the role of “*chan* master” not as a master of practice in *contrast* to a master of texts, but as a vocation that included expertise in a discrete canonical corpus, the “*chan* scriptures.” This too may have led to the composition of texts containing information that in India was more usually confined to the lore and oral teachings of meditation masters and their students.

We thus here run headlong into a major methodological problem—since our knowledge of the Buddhist practices being introduced to China at this time is incomplete, it is difficult to

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distinguish between novel Chinese interpretations and the transmission to China (and subsequent preservation in the Chinese record) of Indian or other understandings that simply do not survive elsewhere.⁴ But even if many features of the approach to meditation seen in our fifth- and sixth-century Chinese sources do turn out to have Indian, or at least non-Chinese precedents, it is still worth asking why the Chinese were drawn to such interpretations in particular. And though a full answer to this question must await future study, I do want to make a few final remarks to at least show that this line of inquiry is worth pursuing further.

In particular I want to consider the question of repentance (*chan hui* 懺悔), a practice that scholars have long suspected of having been more important in Chinese Buddhism than elsewhere in the Buddhist world. In a short but insightful analysis of this question David Chappell thus observed that in Chinese Buddhism repentance was often credited with far more power than in Indian Buddhism. He further suggested that secular Chinese notions of corporate or familial guilt, in which any one member of a group could be held responsible for the crimes of others, may have helped transform repentance from a personal practice for removing sins into something undertaken for the benefit of others (deceased relatives, for example).⁵

What Chappell did not notice, however, is that the question here concerns more than just the reconfiguration of a fixed and unitary form of practice. Indeed what the Chinese called “repentance,” the frame for almost all medieval Chinese Buddhist ritual, was derived from what Indian sources called the “supreme worship” (*anuttara-pūja*), a three-, five-, or sometimes seven-limbed structure lying at the core of Mahāyāna liturgy.⁶ And while *confession* of transgressions (*pratideśanā*) is indeed one part of this ritual, in China the entire sequence was termed “repentance” (*chan hui* 懺悔). In other words Chinese Buddhists did not simply take Indian Buddhist “repentance” and attribute new powers to it. Rather they used this word, a term that does not in fact directly translate a single Indian Buddhist concept, as a way of thinking about the overall purpose and meaning of practices that, in India, were usually conceived of differently.

Why might the Chinese have approached Buddhism and Buddhist practices in these terms? While we are again not likely to find here a single answer, we might begin by noting that that much pre-Buddhist Chinese religiosity revolved around rituals aimed at eliminating the negative effects of past “sins” (罪) through confession and atonement. For the Daoist sects of the late Han dynasty, for example, misfortunes were the result of transgressions against “precepts” (*jie* 戒) imposed by the gods, a word that, perhaps not coincidentally, was eventually used by the Buddhists to translate *śīla*. Those who suffered illness were made to submit a formal written confession of their sins, conveyed to the heavenly powers through the intermediary of the priest. Other practices thought to aid in obtaining remission included “slapping oneself” (*zi pu* 自撲) or “striking one’s head to the ground and thinking deeply about one’s transgressions” (*kou tou si guo* 叩頭思過).⁷

4 For a thorough discussion of these problems, see Sharf 2002, especially p.11–12.

5 Chappell 1998

6 This is one of the principal conclusions of Dan Stevenson’s dissertation (1987).

7 Such ideas are mentioned in the surviving texts attesting to the doctrines and practices of the various late-Han “Daoist” groups such as the *Tai ping dao* 太平道 and the *Wu dou mi dao* 五斗米道, as well as in the brief records in official histories about the teachings and practices of these groups (Ōfuchi 1991, 122–123; Yoshikawa

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Many such rites were thus indeed penitential, at least in part. By accepting culpability and willingly taking on a portion of the deserved punishment, one could motivate the gods, analogized to earthly magistrates, to lessen one's sentence. This was actually the basic meaning of the Chinese kowtow (*kou tou* 叩頭) prostration, an indispensable part of almost all Chinese ritual practice Buddhist or otherwise. Not merely an act of reverence or a lowering of the worshiper vis à vis the god, it was a ritual display of *punishment*, a simulation of an ancient method of execution in which the criminal's head would be smashed into a brick.⁸ The basic notions here were a) that misfortune was due to sins analogized to transgressions against heavenly laws, and b) that the effects of such sins could be eliminated through wholehearted acceptance of responsibility and a ritualized embracing of the punishment (something that, it should be noted, bears a certain resemblance to the Buddhist notion of "attenuated retribution" discussed in chapter five). These ideas continued to inform Chinese religious practice in later times. In fifth-century south China, the best known example is the so-called "mud and ash retreat" (*tu tan zhai* 塗炭齋) in which those seeking expiation would display themselves as condemned criminals, their hair hung loose and their hands tied behind their backs.⁹

It is possible that these pervasive ideas and practices—based at root on the judicial metaphor that pervades so much of Chinese religion—contributed to the Chinese tendency to use confession, repentance, and the destruction of "sins" (罪) as a frame for understanding Buddhism. Uncovering the precise nature of the influence of pre-Buddhist Chinese ideas and practices in this domain will require much further study. However it seems clear that Buddhism in China was indeed often interpreted in such terms.

Thus, to take one brief example, Buddhist monasticism itself was at least occasionally interpreted as a form of penance, a regime of physical austerity undertaken as punishment for past "sins" (罪). This association was facilitated by a number of symbolically potent parallels such as the shaven heads of Buddhist monks and nuns. That many Chinese objected to the practice of head-shaving is well known, and the usual early arguments against it cite the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao jing* 孝經) to the effect that one's flesh and hair are bequeathed from one's parents, such that only those lacking filial piety would dare to damage them.¹⁰ But bald heads had other symbolic associations when Buddhism was first introduced to China.¹¹ Legally, head-shaving (*kun* 髡) was the lowest grade of punishment by mutilation, given to all household

1998, 77–81; Tsuchiya 2002).

8 On the symbolism of the kowtow, see Fujino 1976.

9 Benn 2000; Bokenkamp 2005 (though note that Bokenkamp proposes a different interpretation of the symbolism of these rites). The notion that one can eliminate the effects of transgression through a ritual display of culpability continued in later times. One of the most elaborate examples of this was the ritual processions of would-be penitents wearing makeshift cangues, a practice attested from at least the 11th century and one that continues to this day in some parts of the Chinese world (Katz 2009, 105–115).

10 This argument against Buddhist head-shaving is first seen in a (likely) 3rd-century pro-Buddhist polemic, the *Mou zi li huo lun* 牟子離惑論 (*Records of Proselytizing*, T.2102:52.2c16–3a6). For a survey of the many later examples where such arguments are mustered to condemn Buddhism, see Michihata 1968, 66–68.

11 A shaven head signifies separation from society in many or even most cultures. Still, in China the contexts in which this symbol was deployed were limited when compared with India. For some remarks on the significance of hair and head-shaving in Indian ascetic traditions, including Buddhism, see Olivelle 1995, 203–207.

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slaves and forced-labor convicts.¹² By a curious coincidence such criminals were also dressed in special red (*zhe* 赭) clothing,¹³ a color that historical sources indicate was shared by the robes of the first Buddhist monks in China.¹⁴

The visual resemblance between Buddhist monastics and criminals did not pass unnoticed, and was exploited for polemical purposes. Thus Zong Bing 宗炳, writing in defense of Buddhism in the early fifth century, observes that opponents of Buddhism think it “fools people [with the doctrine of] transmigration,¹⁵ and oppresses them by making them become Buddhists. It has them shave their heads and don the red garb, scorch their bodies and burn their fingers.¹⁶” These remarks, cited as if they were well known anti-Buddhist arguments, use technical terms from penal literature (“shaving the head and donning the red garb”), and it would thus seem that associating the basic acts of monastic renunciation with criminal punishments was a common trope among those opposed to Buddhism.

Indeed though Zong Bing does not mention it by name, his imaginary interlocutor seems to be drawing from a set of ideas associated with the famous *Scripture on the Conversion of the Barbarians* (*Hua hu jing* 化胡經), an anti-Buddhist polemic from the early fourth century that argued that Buddhism was not the enlightened teaching of an Indian sage, but a regime of punishment imposed by Laozi on the barbarians of India owing to their uncontrolled natures.¹⁷ Although the *Scripture on the Conversion of the Barbarians* is lost, citations preserved in other sources convey something of how it deployed these ideas.

According to one such excerpt:¹⁸ “Buddhism began when, not wanting to harm the bodies

12 Hulsewé 1955, 128–132; 1985, 15–16. According to Hulsewé, in Qin and Han times all those sentenced to “wall building” (城旦), the heaviest form of hard labor for men, were shaved. Those assigned lesser sentences still had their beard shaved (*nai* 耐), but were permitted to keep their hair. Hulsewé further comments that “the iron collar and shaven head of the convict were the main characteristics of this punishment and so we find numerous references either to 髡鉗城旦, ‘shaved and collared *cheng dan*,’ or just simply *kun qian*, ‘shaved and collard’” (Hulsewé 1955, 129). Note that the word *kun* 髡, “shaven” or “to shave,” is found in early (Han or Three-Kingdoms) Chinese translations of Buddhist texts as a description of the appearance of Buddhist monks (*Wu shi jiao ji jing* 五十校計經, T.397:13.401c14–17; *Qian ri mo ni bao jing* 遺日摩尼寶經, T.350:12.192c18–19).

13 The red clothing of convicts is mentioned explicitly in the Qin statutes from Yunmeng 雲夢 (Hulsewé 1985, 68; 72), though the idea of special red clothing (赭衣) as a punishment appears already in the *Xun zi* 荀子 as a “symbolic punishment” (象刑), preferred by kings of old instead of actual mutilations (*Xun zi ji jie* 18/327).

14 That Buddhist monks wear red (赤) clothing is mentioned in the *Mou zi li huo lun* 牟子離惑論 (*Records of Proselytizing*, T.2102:52.4c1–4). However the color was eventually changed, perhaps precisely because red was associated with criminals. According to the *Shi lao zhi* 釋老志 of the *Wei shu* 魏書: “In the Han dynasty Buddhist monks all wore red cotton, but later they changed to a more neutral color.” 漢世沙門，皆衣赤布，後乃易以雜色。(Wei shu, 3029; Tsukamoto 1974, 136).

15 “Transmigration” here is literally “non-perishing” (不滅), referring to the Chinese Buddhist stance that “the spirit does not perish” (神不滅), an interpretation of the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth.

16 今誑以不滅，欺以成佛，使髡首赭衣，焚身然指。(Records of Proselytizing, T.2102:52.20b11–13). “Scorch their bodies and burn their fingers” would appear to refer to acts of self-immolation and auto-cremation. The earliest recorded case of a Chinese Buddhist performing such practices is the monk Fayu 法羽, who died towards the end of the fourth century (Benn 2007, 33), though recorded cases of auto-cremation begin in earnest only from the early fifth century (Funayama 2002a, 352–351 [sic]).

17 Zürcher 1972, 288–320. The earliest version of this text seems to have appeared around the year 300.

18 This passage is preserve in the anti-Buddhist *Treatise on the Three Destructions* (*San po lun* 三破論), attributed

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[of the Indians], [Laozi merely] shaved their heads, and was henceforth named ‘the gentle executioner’ [the Buddha].”¹⁹ In other words rather than mutilate them for their crimes, as would otherwise have been warranted, Laozi merely made the Indian barbarians shave their heads and become Buddhist monks, and this connects with the traditional notion that head-shaving (髡) is a “mutilation” (刑) punishment that keeps the body “whole” (完).²⁰ Another citation of the *Scripture on the Conversion of the Barbarians*, preserved in the ninth-century *Bei shan lu* 北山錄, links celibacy to this same set of concerns: “The barbarian people are vicious and cruel, so [Laozi] converted them to Buddhism, making them shave [their heads], don the red garb [of prisoners], and refrain from procreating.”²¹ Perhaps the most interesting relevant citation is found in the words of an anti-Buddhist author reproduced in a seventh-century Buddhist apologia:

When the barbarian king did not have faith in Laozi, Laozi manifested his divine power to subdue him, and [the king] then begged forgiveness for his errors. [The king then] shaved his hair and cut off his beard so as to atone for his crime. The lord Lao[zi], in his great compassion, took pity on his foolish ignorance, and preached for him an expedient teaching, binding and restricting him in accord with his capacity. He had all [the converted barbarians] practice *dhūta* [austerities] by begging for food so as to curb their obstinate hearts, [don] red clothing and incomplete dress²² so as to crush their fierce and violent nature, sever and cut their bodies and faces [shave their hair and beard] so that they might indicate thereby the mutilated nose and tattooed [faces of criminals], and restrict themselves from wife and sexual intercourse so as to make an end to their rebellious seed . . . [thus] great criminals must be restrained by stern punishment, and it is necessary in such cases to exterminate the clan and destroy the descendants.²³

to the Daoist Zhang Rong 張融. This text too is lost, though citations are preserved in Buddhist apologia. The passage here is found in the *Refutation of Error* (*Mie huo lun* 滅惑論) written in the early sixth century by Liu Xie 劉勰 (author of the *Wen xin diao long* 文心雕龍).

- 19 化其始，不欲傷其形，故髡其頭，名為浮屠。(Records of Proselytizing, T.2102:52.50c4–6). The play here is that Zhang Rong is trying to find a negative connotation to the word *Fu tu* 浮屠, the early transcription of *buddha*, which I here translate as “gentle executioner” to capture some sense of what Zhang Rong was trying to do (indeed he next comments that “the word *tu* 屠 means ‘sever’” 況屠割也). He goes on to explain how the later transcription of *buddha* as *fo* 佛 was an attempt to cover up the original meaning. Zhang Rong finds a similarly pernicious plot in the changing transcriptions for *śramaṇa* (“renunciate”), originally *sang men* 喪門 (later changed to *sha men* 沙門), which Zhang Rong suggests actually means, roughly, “merchant of death.”
- 20 Later commentators sometimes indicate that 髡 and 完 were originally the same word. However in the Qin legal documents from Shuihudi, both words are found, making this theory unlikely, though this does not diminish the symbolism of shaving as a non-damaging mutilation.
- 21 胡人凶獷，故化之為佛，令髡赭，絕嗣。(Bei shan lu 北山錄, T.2113:52.602a17–18)
- 22 “Incomplete dress” (偏衣) is literally “one-sided dress,” referring to the robes of Buddhist monks, which expose one shoulder.
- 23 胡王不信老子，老子神力伏之，方求悔過。自髡自剪，謝愆謝罪。老君大慈，愍其愚昧，為說權教，隨機戒約。皆令投陀乞食，以制兇頑之心，赭服偏衣，用挫強梁之性，割毀形貌，示為剝削之身，禁約妻房，絕其悖逆之種 . . . 深罪約以嚴刑，必須誅宗滅嗣。(Bian zheng lun 辯正論, T.2103:52.185b11–c1)

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The anti-Buddhist author who cites this passage then adds:

But noble men of this country [China] have ever held to the truth of the Dao, so there is no reason to toil them by making them bear their scalps [and become monks]. Indeed, originally revering the highest teaching [of the Dao], to abandon this and take on a shaven head can indeed be called [as foolish as] delighting in wearing the cangue even though one is free of any crime or fault!²⁴

It has been suggested by Zürcher that the *Scripture on the Conversion of the Barbarians* was created when the stories connecting Laozi and the Buddha, known in a less polemical form since the late Han, began to take a nationalist, anti-foreign tone in the waning years of the Western Jin, when the rising power of the northern “barbarians” became a real threat to the Chinese empire.²⁵ This, Zürcher suggests, accounts for the increasingly dim view of Indians seen in the above citations.

But I do not think we can attribute the notion that Buddhism is essentially a regime of punishment entirely to rising xenophobia. Indeed it is interesting to note that in their retorts to the above criticisms Buddhist authors generally did not overtly dispute the claim that monastic discipline is a punishment, or that the purpose of Buddhism is to atone for crimes. Rather they emphasized the benefits that such practices bring to one’s family, one’s self, and the entire world. In other words that Buddhist practice is largely a matter of penance was not something that Chinese Buddhists themselves necessarily rejected. Indeed it seems possible that thinking of Buddhism in these terms allowed the Chinese to make sense of the ascetic and renunciatory elements of Buddhism, which otherwise had little or no precedent in China, in terms of the wider Chinese traditions of penance and atonement mentioned above.

Indeed the Chinese tradition even offered precedents that could encourage and justify repentance on the part of those reluctant to think of themselves as criminals, in particular the ancient trope of rulers or others in positions of power bringing benefits to the realm by accepting responsibility for the sins of their subjects.²⁶ Chinese Buddhist apologists actively made use of these ideas. Thus, according to his biography, the monk Tanzong 曇宗 instructed the Song emperor Xiaowu 孝武 (r. 454–464) in Buddhist ritual. The emperor asked: “Of what crime am I, the emperor, guilty such that I need repent?” (朕有何罪而為懺悔). Tanzong then cited the example of the sage-king Tang 唐, who relieved a drought by performing a “self indictment” (*zi ze* 自責) before Heaven, proclaiming himself guilty of his people’s crimes. Thus, Tanzong said, “For sage-kings to draw to themselves the crimes of others is truly a model for the ages” (聖王引咎蓋以軌世).²⁷

The notion of repentance could thus accommodate the entire range of Buddhist practice, from monastic renunciation to imperial prayers for the well-being of the empire. It is also worth noting how this framework does not necessarily impose a hierarchy of purity between monk and patron. Indeed unlike India, where the ruler/priest distinction was unquestioned, Chinese

24 但此土君子，夙稟道真，無勞禿頂。本遵至訓，詎假髡頭，可謂身無愆疵而樂著桎械。(ibid)

25 Zürcher 1972, 307

26 Schafer 1951, 141

27 *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.416a21–26

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emperors were often keen to assert their own ritual supremacy over the Buddhist clergy.²⁸ If basic Buddhist practice was repentance, perhaps meditation appeared not as something suitable only for those already pure, but as something necessary only for those with grave sins.²⁹ Such an understanding might have gone a long way towards easing the perpetual fears of Chinese emperors that the sanctity of Buddhist monks would too easily be converted into the divine authority that revolutionary leaders throughout Chinese history attempted to appropriate so as to legitimize their claims.

All of these considerations would have to be addressed before arriving at a full understanding of how and why repentance became so important in Chinese Buddhism. It would, furthermore, be necessary to examine Indian Buddhist approaches to such matters more thoroughly than I have been able to in this dissertation. In the end it seems likely that Chinese Buddhist interpretations of the relationship between meditation, repentance, and liberation were neither simply the continuation of Indian precedents nor the mere projection of pre-Buddhist Chinese concerns, but something new that emerged from the meeting of the two.

However we choose to think about such matters, it is clear that it is impossible to understand just what *chan* 禪 was thought to be in early medieval China without taking into account repentance, *chan hui* 懺悔, both as an understanding of what Buddhist practice accomplishes, and as a concrete ritual form. Meditation itself was undertaken so as to destroy the same kind of “karmic obstructions” eliminated by rituals of repentance, and accordingly in practice it was but one element of a broader program of religious cultivation. But the relationship between meditation and repentance extended deeper than their mere co-occurrence as two facets of Buddhist training. Nor, for that matter, was it limited to a progressive hierarchy, with meditation understood only as a “higher” practice of mental training. Precisely because meditative experiences were understood to depend on repentance, *meaning* could flow in the opposite direction, and the “verificatory visions” obtained during trance were often interpreted as communicating information about the success or failure of ritual practices.

Though it is most often conceded that meditation as the cultivation of the mind was indeed promoted in elite doctrinal texts and among a few religious virtuosos as the central matter of Buddhism, in recent years scholars have often turned their attention away from this topic on the theory that it was not nearly so important “on the ground,” where Buddhists of all stripes were concerned with more concrete matters, such as rituals (here taken in the very broadest sense) aimed at securing benefits in this world and the next. I hope that I have been able to show, however, that the elite tradition itself did not always or necessarily approach meditation as merely a matter of the mind and its cultivation. This does not mean that meditation was not expected to produce a wide variety of extraordinary “experiences,” happenings to which the subject has privileged access. But the significance of these experiences did not always point “upwards” toward the transcendent realm of *nirvāṇa*. Though meditation itself may have

28 Greene 2008, 99–102

29 It is interesting to note that, correcting for the difference in their respective number, biographies of fifth-century nuns mention meditation practice more often than do those of monks (this based on a cursory comparison of the *Biographies of the Nuns* and the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*).

Conclusion

remained a discipline undertaken only by a few dedicated specialists, the goals towards which it was thought to lead, and even the kinds of experience it was thought to produce (such as visions attesting to good or bad karma), may have been more widely shared than is usually thought.

Appendix I: The Narratives of the *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*

The six sutras comprising the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are each framed by a brief narrative. These stories introduce a protagonist (or in one case two protagonists) with a particular problem or problems for whom the Buddha preaches meditation instructions. The protagonists can, in many cases, be identified from other sources in the Buddhist tradition. However compared with the traditional stories associated with these figures the narratives in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* differ markedly. For this reason it has seemed worthwhile to explore these stories in more detail. A comprehensive analysis of these narratives and their connection to the themes of the texts must await another occasion. In this appendix I will simply summarize the available information and conclude with a few comments about possible avenues of further investigation. In addition to the six stories from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, I also include a discussion of the story of Upasena, the protagonist of the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* (see appendix two), a text that in all likelihood stems from the same milieu. The story of Upasena is, as we will see, similar to the other narratives in that it radically reconfigures the traditional story of a well-known figure from Buddhist lore, and moreover does in a manner that is similar to several of the other examples.

Mahākauṣṭhīlananda 摩訶迦絺羅難陀

The protagonist of the first sutra in the *Chan Essentials* is not known as such from other sources. Indeed there is reason to believe that the name of this figure resulted from a misreading of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, in which the names Mahākauṣṭhīla and Nanda (two famous arhats) were accidentally combined.¹ While we thus cannot compare the story here

1 In his *Kokuyaku issaikyō* translation of the *Chan Essentials* Satō Taishun suggests *Mahākakilananda*, though he gives no particular justification for this (Satō 1931). Tsukinowa suggests the name is patently “fake” Sanskrit (Tsukinowa 1971, 107). Yamabe, on the other hand, suggests that the first part of the name may be Mahākauṣṭhīla, one of the great disciples of the Buddha (Yamabe 1999, 114n14). The name Mahākauṣṭhīla, however, was regularly transcribed as 摩訶拘絺羅, whereas all known versions of the *Chan Essentials* read 迦, and these characters do not seem to be phonetically equivalent. There is also the matter of the final two characters *nan tuo* 難陀, which we would expect to transcribe *nanda*, a common Indian name. Despite these problems, I believe that Yamabe is correct to link the name to Mahākauṣṭhīla. This, moreover, allows us to find a possible source for this name in a Chinese misreading of the passage from Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Firstly, in a citation of the *Chan Essentials* in Tanzhao's 曇照 13th-century *Annotations to the Biography of the Great Master Zhizhe* [Zhiyi] (*Zhizhe da shi bie zhuan zhu* 智者大師別傳註) the name is

of “Mahākauṣṭhīlananda” (as I will transcribe the name) to other known tales in which he features, the narrative itself is worth examining briefly. Of particular interest is that we see here clear influence from the literary style associated with the narratives used in *vinaya* texts to introduce monastic rules.

The first sutra begins by introducing Mahākauṣṭhīlananda, a “learned monk from the city of Rājagṛha,” who goes to Śāriputra, wisest of the Buddha’s chief disciples, and asks to hear the “essentials of the teaching.” Śāriputra attempts to explain key Buddhist doctrines, but Mahākauṣṭhīlananda remains confused. He receives further instructions from the remainder of the five hundred arhats, but he is still unable to understand. Ānanda then queries the Buddha about this situation:

Owing to what [past] circumstances has this monk Kauṣṭhīlananda been born so wise, with mastery of the four *Vedas*, the Vaiśeṣika scriptures, astronomy, and all the technical arts. Further what sin did he commit such that he alone has been unable to taste the

written as 拘絺羅難陀 (X.1535:77.661b18–19), the standard transcription of Kauṣṭhīla (on Tanzhao’s commentary, see Yamauchi 1953; 1961). Though Tanzhao’s text may have “corrected” the reading based on the more familiar name, one additional point supports the reading 拘 and furthermore suggests that the entire name should be understood as Mahākauṣṭhīlananda. Among the list of arhats in the opening passages of Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Lotus Sutra* we find the words 摩訶拘絺羅難陀 (T.264:9.135a6–7), the same name in the *Chan Essentials* except with the character 拘 instead of 迦. In the *Lotus Sutra* these words refer to two different people, the arhats Mahākauṣṭhīla and Nanda. But there is evidence that this line was, in China, occasionally misread such that the entire name was taken as a single person. In the thirty-fascicle *Fo ming jing* 佛名經 (that included in the second carving of the Korean canon) we find a list of arhats that, with one exception (an otherwise unknown *Zhou tuo yi* 周陀夷), exactly matches the names in the opening passage of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Fo ming jing*, T.441:14.232a24–27). Each name is prefaced with “homage to” (*na mo* 南無). However the editor of the second carving of the Korean canon, Sugi 守其, includes collation notes to this text reflecting his comparison of the first carving of the Korean canon with the Liao canon. By a strange stroke of luck Sugi here mentions that he has corrected an “error” in the original text (meaning the first carving of the Korean canon) whereby the names Mahākauṣṭhīla 摩訶拘絺羅 and Nanda 難陀 had been combined into a single name (南無拘絺羅難陀, 此是二聖之名, 經錯合之, 今分為二. T.441:14.191b8–10). The *Fo ming jing* existed in many versions, and its textual history is complex (Kuo 1995, 244–253). But Sugi’s note indicates the existence of a tradition in which the opening passage of the *Lotus Sutra* mentions an arhat named Mahākauṣṭhīlananda 摩訶拘絺羅難陀. It seems likely then that this was the inspiration for the protagonist of the first sutra of the *Chan Essentials*. If this analysis is correct, it is not surprising that there are no other stories from traditional Buddhist literature featuring this figure. But the context of the *Lotus Sutra* itself is perhaps worth considering. Indeed the arhat listed here play an important narrative role as they are the ones who, in a famous scene, decide to leave before the Buddha begins to preach, such that they fail to hear the Mahāyāna teachings. In Kumārajīva’s translation these arhats are moreover said to “have deep and heavy roots of sin and overbearing arrogance. They claim to have attained what they have not attained, realized what they have not realized” 此輩罪根深重及增上慢, 未得謂得, 未證謂證 (T.262:9.7a7–11). This may indeed have some connection to the story of Mahākauṣṭhīlananda from the *Chan Essentials*, for he is described as “haughty and lazy” (驕慢放逸), such that he is unable to understand even the Buddha’s preaching. Similarly Kumārajīva’s translation says that these arhats “had deep-rooted sins” (罪根深重), and this too recalls the story of Mahākauṣṭhīlananda from the *Chan Essentials* whose problems understanding Buddhist doctrines in the present are linked to his evil actions in past lives (Kumārajīva’s elegant Chinese here corresponds in the Sanskrit only to “because of their unwholesome roots” *akuśalamūlavat*; Karashima 2001, 377).

Buddha’s teaching, even though he has been a monk for many years? You, the World-honored Tathāgata, have personally preached the Dharma for him, and yet like one deaf from birth he neither hears nor understands. The great generals of the Buddha’s teachings one after the other have turned the wheel of the Dharma. All five hundred of them have preached the Dharma for him, yet still it is no use. Please, oh honored one among the gods, explain this for me. Tell me about this monk’s past deeds.”²

The Buddha then explains that in a past life Mahākauṣṭhīlananda had been a learned monk under the previous Buddha, Dīpaṅkara. Owing to his learning, however, he became proud, and “heedlessly” (放逸) failed to cultivate the four *smṛtyupasthāna* (四念處). As a result he was reborn in the lower realms for hundreds of lifetimes. Eventually previous good karma allowed him to be reborn in heaven, and then in the human realm. Finally the Buddha explains that “because in a previous life he [Mahākauṣṭhīlananda] had chanted the Buddhist scriptures, he has now been able to meet a buddha. But because of having been heedless and having failed to cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, in his present life he has been unable to awaken.”³ The Buddha then preaches a method for the contemplation of impurity, and by following this practice Mahākauṣṭhīlananda is able to become an arhat (1.19).

The basic framework of the above narrative is in some respects unremarkable, and indeed Buddhist *āvadana* literature (“edifying tales) contains countless similar stories in which present successes and failures are explained as the fruition of good and bad karma from previous lives. Many Indian collections of such stories were originally associated with the *vinaya*, which seems to have become a repository of narrative tales because, in addition to listing the monastic rules, it also contains a separate section recounting the specific occasion on which the Buddha instituted each rule. In many *vinaya* these narratives are limited to explaining the actions of specific monks and nuns that prompted the Buddha to institute the rule in question for the first time. But in other *vinaya* the Buddha goes further and relates stories of the past lives of the monks and nuns in question to explain why they misbehaved in the way that they did, and such stories effectively become morality tales about the karmic effects of evil deeds and beneficial influence of good deeds (the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* is the *vinaya* in which these stories expand to the greatest extent).⁴

Such past-life stories, in the context of the *vinaya*, seem to have been one of the inspirations for the story of Mahākauṣṭhīlananda (and indeed for the other narratives in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* as well), and we can even see traces of the *vinaya* framework. Thus after Mahākauṣṭhīlananda has used the contemplation of impurity to become an arhat, we find the following explanation:

2 此迦絺羅難陀比丘，有何因緣，生而多智，四毘陀論，違世羈經，日月星辰，一切技藝，無不通達。復有何罪，出家以來，經歷多年，於佛法味，獨不得嘗？如來世尊，親為說法，如生聾人，無聞無得。佛法大將，隨順轉法輪者，數有五百，為其說法，亦無有益。唯願天尊，為我分別，說此比丘往昔因緣。(1.4)

3 前身讀誦三藏經故，今得值佛。由前放逸不修四念處，是故今身不能覺寤。(1.6)

4 Many of the stories from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* were eventually excerpted to form one of the most important independent collections of such stories, the *Divyāvadāna*. We know that the tales from the *Divyāvadāna* were originally part of the *vinaya* (and not vice versa) because many of them still preserve explanations of the monastic rule that the stories were designed to illustrate (Hiraoka 2002, 116–134).

At this time the World-honored One, because of this haughty monk [Mahā]kauṣṭhīlananda, for the first time instituted the rules concerning mental concentration.

He said to the four-fold assembly: “From now on, monks, nuns, laymen or laywomen who strive for the unconditioned path must fix their thoughts and focus their minds on a single spot. If they [instead] shamelessly allow their minds to run wild like a monkey among the six senses, then know that such people are outcasts, they do not belong to the lineage of the noble ones. Their minds untamed, they will become the slaves of the guardians of Avīci [hell]. Over the course of many eons evil people such as this will be unable to attain liberation. These wicked unruly people belong to the lineage of those destined for birth in the triple world, [and within the triple world] because of their [unruly] minds they will fall into the three evil paths [of rebirth].”⁵

This passage unmistakably echoes the phrasing of the *vinaya*, whereby a given rule is instituted “for the first time” because of a certain circumstance, causing the Buddha to declare that “from now on” such a rule will apply, and that those who violate the rule in the future will be guilty of such-and-such a class of *vinaya* offense.

This passage thus appears to be portraying the story of Mahākauṣṭhīlananda as the Buddha’s first instruction in meditation practice, a somewhat remarkable idea. It will be recalled from chapter two that the narratives of the *Chan Essentials* seem, among other things, to be an attempt to correlate each of protagonists with a different method of *chan* drawn from the standard lists of possible methods, and that this is done by linking each protagonist to the particular problematic disposition for which the meditation method in question is the antidote (“pride” in the case of Mahākauṣṭhīlananda). The pairing of particular dispositions with particular meditative antidotes is of course the standard way of presenting these different methods in meditation texts. What makes the *Chan Essentials* unusual is that these dispositions are then linked to actual people. Again the inspiration seems to come here from *vinaya* stories in which the diversity of Buddhist monastic rules are explained as the Buddha’s response to specific circumstances. It is worth considering, moreover, how the introduction of this kind of narrative brings to the foreground something that is typically not the province of meditation texts—past karma. The particular method of meditation suitable for each practitioner is implicitly said to be something with a deep connection to the practitioner’s past-life circumstances, whose particulars, in the form of the specific evil deeds done in past lives, is apparently something directly relevant to the practice of meditation in the present life. I will return to this point below after having considered the remainder of the stories.

5 爾時世尊，因此憍慢比丘摩訶迦絺羅難陀，初制繫念法。告諸四眾：若比丘，若比丘尼，若優婆塞優婆夷，自今以後，欲求無為道者，應當繫念專心一處。若使此心，馳騁六根，猶如猿猴，無有慚愧，當知此人，是旃陀羅，非賢聖種。心不調順，阿鼻獄卒，常使此人。如是惡人，於多劫中，無由得度。此亂心賊，生三界種，依因此心，墮三惡道。(1.20)

Nandika the Meditator 禪難提

The second sutra of the *Chan Essentials* features Nandika the Meditator. Although the name *Nandi* or *Nandika* (難提) is common enough in Buddhist literature, “Nandika the Meditator” clearly invokes the figure known from the *vinaya* stories concerning the first *pārājika*, the monk who violated his celibacy and yet escaped expulsion by becoming a “*pārājika* penitent” (*śikṣādattaka*).⁶ As I have discussed Nandika and the stories associated with him in chapter five, I will not review that information here except to say that what is notable about the second sutra of the *Chan Essentials* is that it contains none of the narrative elements of any of the traditional stories of Nandika. Yet it is also clearly informed by such stories, for it directly addresses the question of the relationship between transgressions of the precepts and meditation practice, which as discussed in chapter five was a key concern in the discussions surrounding the *śikṣādattaka* penance. Moreover in addition to presenting a special meditation method suitable for those with “karmic obstructions,” the story here from the *Chan Essentials* also discusses the proper meditation practice for those beset by lust,⁷ which was, it will be recalled, precisely Nandika’s problem, and this makes it all but certain that the stories of Nandika’s violation of celibacy were in some manner or another the background out of which this narrative was constructed.

The sutra begins with Nandika specifically asking the Buddha how those with “karmic obstructions” (*ye zhang* 業障) should proceed with their meditation practice. The problem, Nandika explains, is that for those who commit transgressions “verificatory visions” (境界) will not arise.⁸ As discussed in chapter four, this introduction is notable because it specifically mentions that all classes of *vinaya* violations will produce this problem.⁹ Indeed in the discussion of such matters in the debates about the *śikṣādattaka* penance, this problem was limited to *pārājika* transgressions. For other violations of the *prātimokṣa* the issue should in principle not arise at all, since those transgressions can be atoned for using the methods given in the *vinaya*, which are supposed to fully purify one’s *śīla* and remove any obstructions to meditative attainment. In short the second sutra of the *Chan Essentials* seems to be asserting, in part, that all *vinaya* transgression have detrimental effects on meditation practice that cannot be resolved through the usual procedures for repentance given in the *vinaya*. Even the most minor

6 The exact transcription *chan nan ti* 禪難提 occurs only in the *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya* (T.1425:22.232a17). This may be significant since this was the most popular *vinaya* in south China during the Song dynasty (see chapter five p.293).

7 Following the initial method of “contemplating the Buddha” (觀佛), it is explained that “those with excessive lust” (貪婬多者) will, additionally, need to perform the contemplation of impurity and breath meditation, and the remainder of the sutra is devoted to this. The method that follows appears to include both the contemplation of impurity and breath contemplation. Both practices are mentioned by name and indicated by the content itself. At the conclusion, however, it is said that “this method of counting the breath is the antidote for lust” (2.63), seeming thereby to associate breath-contemplation with the elimination of lust, which would be quite unusual from the perspective of traditional meditation manuals. But in terms of the connection to the *vinaya* stories of Nandika the important point is that this section is said to be an antidote for those with excessive lust.

8 2.1–2.2.

9 See p.226–227.

transgressions will, unless treated with special methods, have a lingering effect on a practitioner's ability to cultivate meditation.

Panthaka 槃直迦

The third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* stars a monk named Panthaka (槃直迦), whose name and story derive from the well known tales of Cūḍapanthaka (“Panthaka the younger”).¹⁰ Cūḍapanthaka appears in early sutras as an intellectually dull, but meditatively gifted monk.¹¹ More relevant for understanding the narrative from the *Chan Essentials* is Cūḍapanthaka's background story, found in a number of places.¹² Though the details differ, the basic story is similar in all such sources. Cūḍapanthaka was ordained as a monk by his elder brother, Mahāpanthaka (“Panthaka the elder”). Given a verse to memorize, even after several months Cūḍapanthaka still could not remember it. Mahāpanthaka concluded that his brother lacked the aptitude to be a monk and expelled him. Later the Buddha found Cūḍapanthaka and gave him some form of instruction that allowed him to become an arhat. In these sources Cūḍapanthaka is thus an exemplar of the fact that intelligence, in the sense of textual knowledge or the ability to memorize (not necessarily thought of as separate things), is unnecessary for advanced spiritual attainment.¹³

Panthaka in the *Chan Essentials* is clearly derived from the traditional stories of Cūḍapanthaka. This Panthaka too has been unable to memorize a single verse despite years of effort, something that the Buddha explains to be karmic retribution for having been arrogant in past life as a learned monk that he failed to instruct his own disciples. This past life story is,

10 As will become clear there is no doubt that the figure intended here is Panthaka, also known as Cūḍapanthaka, whose name is transcribed into Chinese in other sources in number of ways (DDB gives over seven transcriptions, including 周利槃陀伽, 周稚般他伽, 注茶半託迦, 崑努鉢陀那, 咒利般陀伽, 朱利槃特, 知利滿臺, and 周羅般陀). The transcription in the *Chan Essentials*, however, is not found elsewhere (as noted by Tsukinowa 1971, 107).

11 *Zeng yi a han jing* 增壹阿含經, T.125:2.767c6. In this story a king wishes to make offerings to all the Buddha's disciples *except* Cūḍapanthaka, whom the king had seen loose in debate with another ascetic. The Buddha accepts the invitation, but instructs the king to retrieve his bowl from Cūḍapanthaka in the forest. There, the king sees Cūḍapanthaka sitting in meditation, having magically created five hundred replicas of himself under other trees. The king then realizes his error, in which he had overvalued skill in debate as a mark of sanctity, and begs forgiveness.

12 In Pāli sources we find a version of this tale in the *Cullakaseṭṭhijātaka* as well as in the commentary to the *Dhammapada* (Burlingame 1921, 1:299–310; for Pāli sources see p.299n1). The *Samantapāsādikā* also contains this story (*Shan jian lü pi po sha* 善見律毘婆沙, T.1462:24.783b9–c10; Bapat and Hirakawa 1970, 463–467). Another version appears in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* (T.1442:23.795a20–798a26), which is excerpted into the *Divyāvadāna* as the *Cūḍapakṣa-avadāna* (Divy, 483–515). We find other, abbreviated tales in an Indian commentary to the *Dharmapāda* preserved in Chinese (*Fa ju bi yu jing* 法句譬喻經, T.211:4.588c28–589b8), and scholastic texts such as the *Vibhāṣā* (*A pi do mo da pi po sha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, T.1545:27.902a7–c10), and the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.268a).

13 In some sources Cūḍapanthaka is discussed as the foremost exemplar of the fact that liberation is possible even for those who have little or no textual knowledge (*Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*, T.202:4.381a3–6).

furthermore, similar to, though not exactly the same as, some versions of the story of Cūḍapanthaka that attribute his current stupidity to the karmic fruit of having mocked another monk's foolishness in a past life. Finally as in the stories of Cūḍapanthaka in the *Chan Essentials* Panthaka is only able to progress in his practice upon receiving special instructions from the Buddha himself. These similarities leave no room for doubt about the source of this story, but it is notable that the *Chan Essentials* version explicitly contradicts key details, presenting Panthaka as a disciple of Katyāyana and not, as in all other known versions, his elder brother.

Among the stories known from Indian texts it would seem that the Panthaka of the *Chan Essentials* bears the most resemblance to the version in *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* and the *Dīvyāvadāna*, for only in these versions is the monk's name simply Panthaka, not Cūḍapanthaka. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* and *Dīvyāvadāna* versions also includes some rather interesting details about how exactly the Buddha enabled Panthaka to eventually memorize his verse. In these versions, after Panthaka is expelled from the Sangha for his stupidity, he wanders in the countryside lamenting his fate. The Buddha stumbles across him and asks what has happened. Panthaka says he has been “expelled by his preceptor” (*upādhyāyena niṣkāsitah*),¹⁴ and is now “neither a monk nor a householder” (*na grhī na pravrajitah*).¹⁵ The Buddha then tries to teach him a new verse, but Panthaka is still unable to remember it. The Buddha then examines him carefully (*samlakṣayati*), and declares that Panthaka “must eliminate his [evil] karma” (*karmāpanayo 'sya kartavyam iti*).¹⁶ The Buddha asks Panthaka if he can “clean the other monks' sandals and shoes” (*śakṣyasi tvam panthaka bhikṣūṅām upānahān pūlāṃś'*¹⁷ *ca proñchitum*). This, Panthaka says, he can do, and though the other monks at first do not wish to allow this, the Buddha prevails on them, and as a result of these deeds, Panthaka is able to “weaken” his evil karma just enough to be able to remember the verse taught by the Buddha. Applying himself to understand its meaning, he then becomes an arhat.¹⁸

Like the story of Mahākauṣṭhīlananda in the first sutra, the story of Panthaka in the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* also mimics the style of *vinaya* narratives concerning the introduction of new monastic rules, and after presenting the meditation method that allows Panthaka to become an arhat we read that: “Thus it was that at this time, because of the foolish, puffed-up monk Panthaka, the World-honored One instituted¹⁹ this pure method for the contemplation of the white bones.”²⁰ In short this was the Buddha's first preaching of this particular method of meditation, given specifically for Panthaka.

14 Divy 431.1. Based on a comparison with Yijing's Chinese translation, the *Dīvyāvadāna* version appears nearly identical to that in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*.

15 Divy 431.2

16 Divy 431.17

17 Emending *mūlāc* to *pūlāṃś'*, based on the Tibetan (*lham sgrog gu can*) and Chinese (履) parallels (as suggested by Hiraoka 2002, 461n48).

18 The story of Panthaka bears some interesting resemblances to the tale of Nandika and the *śikṣādattaka* penance, for indeed Panthaka is expelled from the Sangha, enters a kind of intermediate state between a full monk and a householder, and is forced to undergo a humiliating penance.

19 The word used here, “institute” (*zhi* 制), clearly invokes the language of these stories as they are found in the *vinaya*, in which new monastic rules are similarly “instituted” for the first time based on particular circumstance and people.

20 爾時世尊，因此愚癡貢高樂直迦比丘，制此清淨觀白骨法。(3.12).

We may thus provisionally note a key distinction between the Panthaka story from the *Chan Essentials* and the others—in those stories Panthaka’s stupidity (or the bad karma that causes it) is an important, but *indirect* influence on his failure to achieve liberation. Indeed in the earliest stories he is held up as someone who embodies the principle that stupidity (in the sense of bad memory, or lack of doctrinal understanding) is not an obstacle to meditative practice.²¹ In the story from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* this does create an obstacle, but a minor one, and indeed he need only overcome his bad karma just enough to memorize a single verse, and from that point forward such matters are implicitly declared to be irrelevant. In contrast in the *Chan Essentials* these factors are the deciding problem, Panthaka’s troubles require that the Buddha offer him a special method of meditation. In other words we might say that the traditional versions of Panthaka’s story all assert, in one way or another, a distinction between the fruits of past evil karma as the physical or object circumstances of one’s existence (something that Buddhist meditation does not, supposedly, directly take into consideration) and the mental defilements that meditative cultivation combats. The story in the *Chan Essentials*, in contrast, conflates these, such that what Panthaka needs is a special method of meditation.

Agnidatta 阿祇達多

The narrative frame of the fourth sutra is perhaps the most interesting of all, though as with Mahākauṣṭhīlananda (but unlike Nandika or Panthaka) the protagonist does not seem to be a reworking of any traditionally known figure.²² Indian *vinaya* texts do mention a householder (or in some versions a king) named Agnidatta,²³ who promises, and then forgets, to support the Buddha and his monks during a rainy season, with the result that they nearly starve. Nothing in this story, however, seems to have any connection to the narrative in the *Chan Essentials*, where Agnidatta is not a layman but a monk disciple of Mahākāśyapa.²⁴ Despite the lack of a clear source for its protagonist, the story given here is the most detailed of any of the narratives in either the *Chan Essentials* or *Methods for Curing*.

Agnidatta is said to have practiced under Mahākāśyapa for many years, and to have

21 See above note 11.

22 Speculating, I wonder if the name here does not ultimately stem from the character Aṅgulimālya, who became a monk (and eventually an arhat) after giving up his former life as a serial killer. The possible connection to this well-known figure would be the theme of murder, for Agnidatta is said to encounter obstacles in his practice of meditation because of having killed living beings in a previous life, and the story of Aṅgulimālya is perhaps the most famous example of the redemption of a monk bearing the karma of killing. I admit that phonetically or graphically (as Chinese) there is little connection between Agnidatta and Aṅgulimālya. But given that there are indirect connections between most of the other protagonists in these stories and well-known traditional tales, it is worth considering whether some confusion on the part of the author may have resulted in this transformation.

23 More usually Agnidatta’s name is transcribed as 阿耆多達, 阿耆陀, or 阿耆多陀. However the transcription found here does occur in at least one earlier text in Chinese, the *Zhong ben qi jing* 中本起經, where we find a version of the story of Agnidatta from the *vinaya* (T.196:4.162c15).

24 As discussed in chapter two, Agnidatta is also strangely described here as a follower of Mahāvīra, the found of Jainism, and I suspect that the Chinese author/compiler was confused here about the meaning of the term *ni ta zi* 尼捷子, found in the Chinese translations of the Āgama scriptures (see p.97).

already become a “non-returner” (*anāgamin*), third of the four stages of sanctity in traditional Buddhism. Despite this achievement he now finds himself unable to become an arhat. He entreats Mahākāśyapa to instruct him further, but after investigating Agnidatta’s mind using his powers of *samādhi* Mahākāśyapa determines that Agnidatta cannot make further progress in this lifetime:

Mahākāśyapa then entered into *samādhi* and contemplated Agnidatta’s mind. He discerned that [Agnidatta] had not yet eliminated his impurities, and that at the end of his life he would be reborn in the heaven of the *anāgamins*. [Mahākāśyapa] emerged from *samādhi* and said: “Oh disciple, with my perfect mastery of body and mind I have now entered the *samādhi* of mastery and have examined the fate that awaits you owing to your deeds in past lives. In your present life it will be impossible for you to become an arhat.”²⁵

Agnidatta is distressed at this news, but Mahākāśyapa admits that his evaluation is perhaps incorrect. Together they go to the Buddha, who tells them a lengthy story about Agnidatta’s past life that explains why Agnidatta is at present unable to become an arhat.²⁶ In a previous existence Agnidatta, then the son on a wealthy householder, contracted a terrible illness. As a result, “the wind element entered his heart, driving him mad. He then took a sharp sword and went into the streets killing people.”²⁷ The remainder of the story concerns the trials of the wealthy householder to cure his son. In terms of Agnidatta’s current predicament, the Buddha eventually explains that as a result of this “madness” in a past life (which here seems to refer to both the illness itself and the evil deeds committed under its influence) certain kinds of meditation practice now pose Agnidatta a mortal danger:

The Buddha said to Mahākāśyapa: In a past life this monk Agnidatta went mad owing to a disturbance of the wind element, and for this reason when he [now] enters the trance of the four elements he hesitates as concerns the trance of the wind-element and does not enter it.²⁸ Indeed were he to enter the trance of the wind-element, when contemplating the four elements his head would split into seven pieces, his heart would rip in half, and he would die. [Accordingly] he must [instead] be taught to cultivate love.²⁹

Although this is not spelled out explicitly, it would seem that the “trance of the wind-element”

25 爾時摩訶迦葉，即入三昧，觀比丘心，知此比丘不盡諸漏，從此命終，生阿那含天。從三昧起，告言：法子，我今身心一切自在，入[自在]三昧觀汝宿世所有業報。於此身上，無緣得成羅漢道。(4.3)

26 As noted by Yamabe (1999b, 105n87), this story bears some resemblance to one found in the *Da fang bian fo bao en jing* 大方便佛報恩經 (beginning at T.156:3.137c18), a collection of *avadāna* stories usually considered to be a Chinese compilation. The story there is of a prince named Forbearance 忍辱 (very similar to the name Armor of Forbearance 忍辱鎧 in the story from the *Chan Essentials*), who sacrifices his life for a medicine to save his own father. However in that story the illness has no connection to any transgressions of the precepts.

27 風大入心，狂亂無智。手執利劍，走入巷陌，殺害眾生。(4.8)

28 Translation tentative.

29 佛告迦葉：此阿祇發比丘，乃往過去，風大動故，發狂無知。是故今者入四大定，於風定中，心疑不行。設使此人，入風大定，觀四大者，頭破七分，心裂而死。當教此人修於慈心。(4.19)

(風大定) is here taken as the normal way of reaching arhatship, and in the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* the progression through the four elemental meditations of earth, fire, water and wind is indeed correlated with the successive attainment of the four fruits.³⁰

Taken as a whole the point of the narrative can thus be expressed as follows. Owing to a “madness” in a previous life that drove him to murder, Agnidatta now cannot use the normal meditation method leading to arhatship, which would in fact cause his death were he to try. But the Buddha discerns that a different meditation practice will allow him to overcome this obstacle. The correlation here is entirely reasonable, and the cultivation of love (*maitrī*) is indeed the usually prescribed introductory meditation practice for those in whom hatred (*deveṣa*) is prominent. But a number of points make this story unusual. First, the selection of this meditation practice is not simply based on observing that Agnidatta inclines towards hatred (indeed this is not stated at all), but on knowledge of his transgressions from past lives. And those sins are also not presented as connected to the defilement of hatred (which would be a reasonable conclusion), but as having occurred owing to a “wind” illness. Similarly Agnidatta’s present difficulty is not simply the preponderance of hatred (as if, following a more normal understanding, his past murders had produced a tendency towards hatred in his current mental continuum). Rather he is afflicted by a kind of physiological deficiency that makes certain meditation practices fatal. Furthermore Agnidatta is far from a beginner—he has already become an *anāgamin* and his current problem arises only as he nears the very summit of attainment. This story thus seems to imply that past transgressions, apart from producing future mental defilements, will create other kinds of serious obstacles, and these obstacles will affect more than simply the supporting or preliminary conditions for Buddhist practice or meditation (such as being born a human, or encountering the Buddhist teachings), but will also play a decisive role during the attainment of the higher stages of the path.

Nandika 難提 and Upanandi 優波難提

The first sutra of the *Methods for Curing* is divided into a series of methods for “curing” (治) various problems, many of which involve “madness” arising from meditation practice. The narrative indeed frames the sutra in these terms, and opens with a description of “five hundred monks of the Śākya clan” (五百釋子比丘) meditating in the Jetavāna monastery who have reached an advanced state called the “beryl *samādhi*” (毘琉璃三昧).³¹ Then:

At this time the son of King Prasenajit [of Śrāvastī], Virūdhaka, was riding on a great fragrant elephant together with five hundred other sons of prominent men. Playing at *na-luo*³² near the edge of the Jetavāna grove, they got their elephants drunk and had

30 Similarly in a passage from the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* these four states of trance seem to be equated with, or at least directly linked to, the attainment of the four fruits (T.643:15.665a13–14).

31 On the “beryl *samādhi*” see the notes to section 5.1 in appendix three.

32 The *Scripture of the Wise and the Foolish* refers in passing to a game by this name (T.202:4.442a18), but I have not been able to determine anything more about it.

them fight each other for sport.

There was [among these elephants] a black lotus-elephant with a horrid roar like a thunderclap interspersed with the sharp sound of a wailing cat. [Upon hearing this sound] the Śākya monks Nandika, Upanandi, and others became so startled that their hair stood up on end, and while immersed in the contemplation of the wind element there arose in them maddened thoughts. Emerging from their meditation they were then unrestrained, like drunken elephants. The venerable Ānanda then ordered the other monks to lock the doors of [the maddened monks'] rooms, saying: "These Śākyans have gone mad. Let us prevent them from doing harm."

The other monks then went to Śāriputra and said: "Oh venerable one, your wisdom is unobstructed, and like the victory banner of lord Indra fear vanishes in your wake. Please have compassion and rescue these Śākyans from the suffering of their madness!"³³

In this story we find a curious mix of personages known from other sources. Most obvious is the prince Virūdhaka, infamous for having invaded the Buddha's home country of Kapilavastu and slaughtered the men of Śākya clan while taking the women for his harem. Why and how Virūdhaka came to figure in the frame story in the *Method for Curing* is something of a mystery, though some of the details here suggest that the author must have consulted one particular Chinese version of the story of Virūdhaka's attack on Kapilavastu.³⁴

33 時波斯匿王，有一太子名毘琉璃，與五百長者子，乘大香象，在祇洹邊，作那羅戲。復醉諸象，作鬪象戲。有一行蓮華黑象，其聲可惡，狀如霹靂，中間細聲，如猫子吼。釋子比丘禪難提、優波難提等，心驚毛豎。於風大觀，發狂癡想。從禪定起，如醉象奔，不可禁制。尊者阿難勅諸比丘，堅閉房戶。我諸釋子，今者發狂，[脫]{免}能傷壞。諸比丘僧即往舍利弗所白言：大德大德，所知智慧無障，如天帝釋第一勝幢，所至無畏。唯願慈哀，救諸釋子狂亂之苦。(5.2-5.3)

34 Virūdhaka (in Pāli, Viḍūḍabha) is most infamous for his slaughter of the royal Śākya family as revenge for their having tricked his father by supplying him with a wife (Virūdhaka's mother) who was actually the bastard daughter of a Śākya slave rather than a royal princess. As in the other characters from these narratives Virūdhaka's appearance here is both faintly reminiscent of certain legends yet on the whole entirely unique. That the monks injured by the sound of Virūdhaka's elephant are "Śākyans" suggests a connection to the stories of Virūdhaka's attack on Kapilavastu. Of the various versions of this story one stands out, namely that found in the *Da fang bian fo bao en jing* 大方便佛報恩經 (*Bao en jing* hereafter), a semi-apocryphal Chinese collection of legends and stories that, interestingly enough, also contains a story with a close resemblance to the Agnidatta story in the fourth sutra of the *Chan Essentials* (see above note 26). In the version from the *Bao en jing* (T.156:3.151c2-25) Virūdhaka first captures an unspecified number of Śākyans and plans to bury them alive. But the Buddha intervenes and transforms the sand pit (in which the Śākyans are buried) into a flower-filled pool. Virūdhaka then unleashes a horde of drunken battle elephants (thus connecting here to the story in the *Methods for Curing*), who crush the Śākyans to death. Notably the Śākya men here whom Virūdhaka fights are described as "disciples of the Buddha" (佛弟子), whereas in most sources they are simply his kinsmen, and this again seems to connect to the story from the *Methods for Curing*. Some of the elements from the *Bao en jing* version are found in other sources. Thus in a version from the *Chu yao jing* 出曜經 (a commentary to the Dharmapada), the Śākyans are similarly trampled by a "wild" elephant (T.212:4.625a1-2). A very similar version appears in the *Ekottarāgama* (*Zeng yi a han jing* 增一阿含經, T.125:2.691b29-c26). But only the story from the *Bao en jing* describes the elephants as drunk, and it even mentions how Virūdhaka gave them alcohol, a detail also found in the *Methods for Curing* story.

But what seems to show beyond question that the *Methods for Curing* narrative derives from the version

More relevant, or at least easier to understand, are Nandika and Upanandi, presented as two of the meditating monks who go mad upon hearing the screeching elephant. To understand this story we must first see that whatever else this “madness” consists in, it caused the monks to behave in unseemly ways. This is alluded to in the initial passage where it is said that having gone mad these monks were “unrestrained, like drunken elephants.” It is stated more explicitly in the method for “curing” the madness that then follows:

When the heart-organ of one practicing the forest-dwellers’ practice and cultivating his mind [through] the twelve [*dhūtas*] is shaken by an evil noise while he [cultivates] breath meditation, owing to the tenseness of the heart [at such a moment] the 404 channels³⁵ will all at once become agitated. Because wind is the strongest [among the four elements] it is the first to produce madness [in the practitioner.] The [wind] channels of the heart shake about, and five kinds of wind enter the throat. As a first [consequence of this,] evil speech is produced.³⁶

In other words just as in the story of Agnidatta, “madness” here really means, or at least includes, violations of the precepts,³⁷ something confirmed in that one of the methods offered in this section of the *Methods for Curing* is the elaborate ritual for curing violations of precepts that I discussed in chapter five.

The connection here to curing “madness” that has provoked transgression of the precepts is further seen by way of the two protagonists Nandika and Upanandi. Nandika here is in fact “Nandika the Meditator” (禪難提), who appeared in the second sutra of the *Chan Essentials*. But Nandika in the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing* should be connected not to Nandika the *pārājika* penitent, but to another Nandika mentioned in all extant *vinaya* in the story introducing the “non-insanity procedure” (*amūḍha-vinaya*), a legal act that declares a monk or nun “not insane.”³⁸ Despite its name, this important *vinaya* rite was actually an official declaration that a

of Virūḍhaka’s story in the *Bao en jing* is that in the *Bao en jing* version the city Virūḍhaka attacks is *She wei guo* 舍維國, a name that does not appear in any other text. We might think this means Śrāvasti, a city frequently transcribed as *She wei* 舍維 (yet never elsewhere as 舍維國). However Virūḍhaka is supposed to be attacking the Śākya hometown of Kapilavastu, and indeed he could not possibly be attacking Śrāvasti since this was his own home city! There is thus clearly a mistake here, and I would suggest that it stems from the fact that various early versions of the Virūḍhaka legend in Chinese texts used for Kapilavastu the rare translation *She yi guo* 舍夷國, “kingdom of the Śākyans” (e.g. *Fa ju bi yu jing* 法句譬喻經, T.211:4.591a5). The Chinese compiler of the *Bao en jing* must have confused this transcription with the more commonly encountered name Śrāvasti, *She wei* 舍維 (note that *She wei guo* 舍維國 occurs throughout this story in the *Bao en jing* and is thus not simply a copying error). It will be noted, however, that Śrāvasti is the setting for the story in the *Methods for Curing*, and the only way to explain this would be if the author(s) here were drawing from the *Bao en jing* version.

35 On the physiology of these 404 channels, see the notes to section 5.6 in appendix three.

36 若有行者，行阿練若，修心十二於阿那般那，因外惡聲，觸內心根，四百四脈，持心急故一時動亂，風力強故最初發狂。心脈動轉，五風入咽。先作惡口。(5.6)

37 It is worth remarking how the text here seem to attempt to provide a physiological explanation for how madness might provoke transgressions, as if this might explain why those who are mad cannot be held responsible for their misdeeds (see also sections 5.46, and 5.64).

38 This Nandika may, in fact, have been intended as the same figure even in the *vinaya*, but this point is never stated explicitly. However the emphasis on Nandika as a meditator is only, as far as I know, mentioned in the stories

monk previously *was* insane, thereby rendering him innocent of whatever transgressions he may have committed during that time.³⁹ This procedure, introduced in all *vinaya* by a brief story involving Nandika,⁴⁰ thus amounted to a ritual that could eliminate the stain of nearly any previous deed, since even *pārājika* transgressions were absolved if one was judged insane at the time.

Even more remarkably, however, in the *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya*, the “non-insanity procedure” is introduced by a story about Nandika *and* another monk whose name is given in the Chinese translation as *Bo zhe nan ti* 鉢遮難提.⁴¹ Although it is not clear how this *Bo zhe nan ti* might be connected to *You bo nan ti* 優波難提 (Upanandi?) who accompanies Nandika in the story here from the *Methods for Curing*, there is almost certain to be a connection.⁴² That the story here would draw from the *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya* in particular is, moreover, entirely reasonable, for as mentioned in chapter five this was the only *vinaya* text available in fifth-century China in which Nandika the *pārājika* penitent is named “Nandika the Meditator” (禪難提), and moreover we know that this was the *vinaya* used in the major monasteries of the southern capital during the first half of the fifth century.

Lekuñcika 羅旬踰

The opening passage of the second sutra of the *Methods for Curing* tells a brief story of the monk Lekuñcika 羅旬踰, who along with a group of newly ordained monks is attacked by a so-called *bu ti* 埠惕 demon while meditating.⁴³ The Buddha then provides a number of methods for warding off this and other demonic attacks that can cause meditators to go “mad”:

A thousand years after the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* there will be monks who wish to teach monks, nuns, laymen or laywomen how to dwell in a quiet place, count their breaths, and fix their minds [in the practice of] breath meditation. [At this time] there may be various demons who, to disrupt the teachings of Buddhism, transform into black or red rodents, strike the practitioner’s heart, and scratch his feet, hands, ears, and elsewhere. Or else they caw like crows, or moan like ghosts, or else make whispering sounds. Or there may be fox-spirits that take the form of young women, making themselves beautiful and then

associated with the *śikṣādattaka* penance not in the stories associated with the “non-insanity” procedure.

39 For a translation of the entire procedure as given in the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, see Clarke 1999, 166–170.

40 The stories in the *vinaya* surrounding this procedure are extremely brief, and apart from the names of the monks have no other connections to the narrative in the *Methods for Curing*.

41 *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya*, T.1425:22.332a13

42 There is no obvious phonological connection between 鉢遮 and 優波. A graphic corruption is possible.

43 Strickmann has discussed the *buti* demon briefly in the context of dreams in Tantric Buddhism (Strickmann 1996, 320–321). Strickmann reconstructs the name as Bhūtī, though he does not indicate any attested examples of this name in Indic sources. *Bhūta*, however is a common word for ghost, so perhaps *bhūtī* is a feminine form? (We might also consider here the other unusual transcriptions in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* that seem to render -a stem nouns with an -i ending, possibly following a Central Asian pronunciation; see the notes to section 1.166 in appendix three.)

coming before the practitioner to massage his body and speak of improper things. Or there may be [demons] who appear in the form of dogs, howling without cease . . . they strike his heart, causing much disturbance and driving him mad. As a result [of such disturbances the practitioner] goes away from his quiet place [of meditation] and does various heedless things. How can such a practitioner be cured?⁴⁴

We should wonder whether “mad” here implies or at least includes, as it seems to in the previous sutra, the violation of the precepts. Certainly the statement that those attacked by such demons might do “heedless” (放逸) things seems to potentially imply this. This is confirmed by the subsequent passage, which makes clear that the *buti* demon is a succubus that causes nocturnal emissions, construed by the text as a transgression that demands confession and repentance:

The World-honored One then said: This evil *yakṣa* Buti-buti is also called “the dream-demon.” Seeing [her] in one’s dreams one will have a nocturnal emission. One must then repent [as follows]: “Buti has come! Because of evil [committed] in the past, I have met this baleful demon who destroys the precepts. I will now spur on my mind, restrain my sense organs, and not be heedless.”⁴⁵

As for *Lekuñcika*, we again find here a well known character from Buddhist literature, though this time there is no obvious connection between the traditional stories and the narrative (brief as it is) in the *Methods for Curing*. The transcription of the name, however, is exactly the same as the protagonist of the *Luo xun yue jing* 羅旬踰經, a lost text of which a lengthy citation is preserved in the sixth-century *Marvels from the Scriptures* (*Jing lü yi xiang* 經律異相). From this passage it can be determined that *Luo xun yue* 羅旬踰 is the monk *Lekuñcika*, whose story is known from the *Avadānaśataka* and many other sources. The various names under which this monk is known in Chinese and Indian sources, and the numerous variations on the basic theme of his story, have been studied extensively by Lin Likoung, and I will confine my remarks to a few salient points based on his research.⁴⁶

The story from the *Avadānaśataka* concerns a monk who, because of his sins from past lives, is unable to obtain alms (or obtain food by any means). *Lekuñcika* eventually starves to death, a fate the Buddha declares to be retribution for having deprived his mother of food in a past life. There are a number of variations in the different versions of the story. The *Luo xun yue jing* 羅旬踰經, for example, explains that *Lekuñcika* was unable to obtain food even when other monks tried to help (by bringing him their food). Realizing that he cannot escape his karma, *Lekuñcika* devotes himself to contemplating this principle and manages to become an arhat just

44 佛涅槃後，過千歲已，欲教比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，數息靜處，念定安般。若諸鬼神，為亂道故，化作鼠形，或黑，或赤，搥行者心，搔行者脚、兩手、兩耳，無處不至。或作鳥聲，或作鬼吟，或復竊語。或有狐魅，作新婦形，莊嚴其身，為於行者，按摩調身，說於非法。或現作狗，號哭無度 . . . 或復觸心，作種種亂事，因是發狂。捨離靜處，作放逸行。當云何治？(6.3)

45 爾時世尊即說曰：埠惕埠惕，是惡夜叉，亦名夢鬼。夢見此時，即便失精。當起懺悔。埠惕來也，我是過去惡因緣故，遇此破戒賊害惡鬼，我今鞭心，束縛諸情，不使放逸。(6.5)

46 Lin 1949, 278–290

before dying of starvation.⁴⁷ In the version from the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, the Buddha himself intervenes and is able to give Lekuñcika food just before he starves to death, whereupon he continues his practice and becomes an arhat. According to the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* this story shows the upper limits of the Buddha's powers—those with sins more severe than Lekuñcika's cannot have their bad karma weakened or even temporarily turned aside by the Buddha. The most interesting version of all is perhaps that in the *Avadānaśataka*. Here Lekuñcika discovers that by cleaning a stupa he is able to generate enough merit to temporarily override (but not eliminate) his bad karma, ensuring that he gets food that day. The monks thereupon assign him to clean all the stupas in a certain area each day. With this method in place he is able to continue cultivation and eventually becomes an arhat. But even after becoming an arhat Lekuñcika is still required to clean the stupas each day lest his bad karma manifest. However one day Lekuñcika oversleeps. Śāriputra accidentally cleans the stupas, and Lekuñcika is once again unable to obtain any food and dies shortly thereafter.

Since apart from the name there are no shared details with traditional stories associated with Lekuñcika, it is not clear if the author(s) of the *Methods for Curing* has here done anything more than borrow the name. Nonetheless it is worth remarking that Lekuñcika appears to have originally been a typical “sinful arhat,” someone whose story illustrates the key notion that the attainment of liberation is not hindered, at least not directly,⁴⁸ by even a heavy burden of past transgressions, and that those who do attain liberation still must suffer the continuing retribution of their past karma while still alive.

Upasena 優波斯那

The final narrative I will discuss is the story of Upasena, who appears in the *Avalokitasvara Invitation Sutra* (*Qing guan yin jing* 請觀音經, *Invitation Sutra* hereafter). I have chosen to analyze this story here along with those from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* for two related reasons. First, as I will discuss in appendix two, it seems likely that at least part of this text, including the story of Upasena, was originally contained in (or even equal to the whole of) the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation Sutra* (*Guan shi yin guan jing* 觀世音觀經), recorded in catalogs from the early sixth century as one of the Contemplation Scriptures but generally thought to have been lost since the early seventh century. Second, as we will see below, the Upasena narrative turns out to be similar to the stories that frame the sutras in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* in that it draws on a well known character from traditional Buddhist tales while presenting him in an entirely novel way. Moreover like those stories the manner in which the Upasena narrative has been reworked seems to reveal some of their key concerns of these texts as whole (in particular the idea that methods for addressing karmic

47 *Marvels from the Scriptures*, T.2121:53.84c21–25

48 Like Panthaka in the third sutra of the *Chan Essentials* Lekuñcika's pursuit of liberation is indirectly hindered in that he is unable to obtain food. In some versions of the story, however, we see that even this is not necessarily an impediment since he still manages to use his remaining lifespan to become an arhat. In many of the versions there is an attempt to alleviate the karmic burden in question, but all the stories are clear that this intervention at best constitutes a temporary reprieve.

retribution might be directly relevant to the practice of meditation). I will first summarize the versions of Upasena's story found in Indian sources:⁴⁹

- I) Seemingly the oldest version is that in the *Samyutta-nikāya*.⁵⁰ In this story a monk named Upasena is bitten by a poisonous snake. But before dying he declares to Sāriputta (Śāriputra), with whom he has been sharing a cell, that free from the notion of self he feels no fear in the face of death (this is interpreted as a declaration that Upasena is an arhat).
- II) A slightly different version of this story appears in the *Samyuktāgama (Za a han jing 雜阿含經)*,⁵¹ which in addition to the elements seen in the Pāli version includes a further scene after Upasena's death, in which Śāriputra visits the Buddha and learns a spell (咒術) for curing poison that the Buddha says would have cured Upasena had he used it.
- III) Other versions address the past karma that resulted in Upasena's premature death. One of these occurs in the *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*,⁵² and according to this story becoming a monk Upasena lived with his brother, who was betrothed to a local girl. After the brother leaves on a long trip Upasena is tricked by the girl's father into marrying her (he forges a letter reporting the brother's death). Upasena eventually impregnates the girl, but learning that his brother is alive and returning home flees in shame and becomes a monk. Meanwhile the girl procures an abortion, and then claims that Upasena raped her. Upasena's brother is so enraged that he hires an assassin to kill Upasena, but upon seeing the serene visage of Upasena (who has meanwhile become an arhat) the assassin cannot go through with the murder and kills Upasena's brother instead (to avoid having to return the fee). Upasena's brother is then reborn as the poisonous snake who eventually bites Upasena. It is then added in conclusion that Upasena suffered this fate because of having murdered a *pratyekabuddha* while hunting in a previous life.
- IV) The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* contains two further stories about Upasena. The first is an autobiographical exposé attributed to Upasena himself, narrating both the past-life story about killing the *pratyekabuddha* and a story of the snake-bite similar to that in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and *Samyuktāgama* versions.⁵³
- V) The second appears under the account of the second *pārājika*, introduced to address the question of abortion. This version recounts Upasena's life before becoming a monk as in the *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*.⁵⁴ Here, however,

49 In summarizing these stories I draw from Numata 1998 and Ōtuka 2008, who have exhaustively studied the known Indian sources. In addition to that used in the *Invitation Sutra* Numata identifies the following transcriptions of Upasena's name in Chinese: 小軍, 近軍, 優婆先, and 隨勇. The first two are different attempts to translate the prefix *upa* (as either "small" or "close to"), the third is a transcription, and the fourth interprets *upa* similarly to the second while rendering *sena* more generically as "martial."

50 SN, 4.40; Bodhi 2000, 1154

51 T.99:2.60–61. There is also an independent translation of this sutra (*Suiyong zun zhe jing 隨勇尊者經*, T.505).

52 T.202:4.417b10–418a5

53 *Gen ben shuo yi qie you bu pi na ye yao shi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶藥事, T.1448:24.88c3–89a24

54 *Gen ben shuo yi qie you bu pi nai ye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, T.1442:23.654b29–658b2

Upasena is at least partially involved in procuring the abortion,⁵⁵ though he is ultimately judged not guilty of the *pārājika* of murder.⁵⁶

In the *Invitation Sutra* Upasena appears in a short narrative introducing a meditation method that allows one to see Avalokitasvara. Upasena, we are told, used this method to become an arhat:

In the city of Rājagṛha there was a monk named Upasena, who was devoted and diligent, who practiced difficult, painful practices as eagerly as if putting out a fire upon his head, and who in the cremation ground, surrounded by a great host of innumerable [other monks] had confessed that in a past life he had committed various evil deeds, and had killed innumerable living beings. Hearing this six-character incantation of the bodhisattva Avalokitasvara, Upasena concentrated his thoughts and contemplated his heart and his heart channel. Concentrating his imagination, he then saw the bodhisattva Avalokitasvara and attained liberation, becoming an arhat.⁵⁷

This introduction summarizes the story that follows, where further details are provided. There we thus learn that after hearing the method in question from Śāriputra (who first receives it from the Buddha) and using it to become an arhat, Upasena self-destructs in the manner proper to arhats:

When Upasena heard these words, with his body like water and fire he attained the trance of the four elements, comprehended the emptiness of the five *skandha*, destroyed the bandits of the defilements, and was profoundly liberated in mind. He became an arhat, and shooting forth fire from his body he self-destructed and entered *parinirvāṇa*.⁵⁸

Although the story of Upasena here bears little overt resemblance to the tales from Indian Buddhist literature discussed above, it is undeniable that he is supposed to be the same

55 In other ways too this version presents Upasena in a less favorable light compared with the *Sutra of the Wise and Foolish*, where he is entirely blameless in the affair. For example in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* version Upasena's brother is not merely betrothed, but already married. Further Upasena does not become involved with his brother's wife because he honestly believes his brother has died (there is no forged letter in this version), but because he is told that she has sexual needs that must be fulfilled (Upasena deems it better that she consort with him than find a lover elsewhere). Finally Upasena's decision to become a monk is portrayed as an attempt to escape legal complications, not as an act of personal penitence (ibid., T.1442:23.656a7–8).

56 A friend of Upasena visits him and says he knows of herbs that will induce an abortion. Upasena remains silent. His friend construes this reply as consent, and sends someone to deliver the herbs to the girl. The woman who delivers the herbs, however, says “these were sent by Upasena,” and though she takes them willingly when the other women of the village realize what has happened she claims to have been poisoned by Upasena. This leads to indignation among the townsfolk and prompts the Buddha to issue a ruling, in which, however, Upasena is declared not guilty because he only “accepted with satisfaction” (隨喜) the delivering of the herbs but did not himself take part in it. For an analysis of Indian Buddhist understanding of abortion and its relation to the sin of murder, see Agostini 2002, 97–168.

57 王舍大城，有一比丘，名優波斯那。精進勇猛，勤行難行苦行，如救頭然。在寒林中，與無央數大眾圍繞，自說往昔作諸惡，行殺生無量。聞觀世音菩薩六字章句，正念思惟，觀心心脈，使想一處，見觀世音菩薩，即得解脫，成阿羅漢。(section 1, appendix 2).

58 時優波斯那聞是語已，身如水火，得四大定，通達五陰空無所有，殺諸結賊，豁然意解，得阿羅漢，身中出火即自碎身入般涅槃。(section 5, appendix 2).

personage. This is seen most clearly in that fourth *dhāraṇī* given in the *Invitation Sutra* (immediately following the Upasena story) is in fact the spell for removing poison associated with Upasena in early Indian sources (notably II above from the *Samyuktāgama*).⁵⁹ The narrative itself also contains a few details pointing to a debt from the other known stories of Upasena. First, in the *Invitation Sutra* Upasena is introduced as a practitioner of “austerities”⁶⁰ living in the cremation ground near Rājagrha, and this information matches Upasena’s time as a monk as recounted in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* version of his story. More significantly, the Upasena of the *Invitation Sutra* claims to be burdened by his past transgressions of having killed living beings, and this would seem to clearly invoke the various other stories of Upasena, such as his having killed a *pratyekabuddha* in a previous life and also his connection in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* to procurement of an abortion.

Thus like most of the stories from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* the narrative of Upasena from the *Invitation Sutra* (which in appendix two I will demonstrate derives from, or is, the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*) takes as its protagonist a well known figure from Buddhist lore, creates a new story whose central features are nowhere else attested, and yet contains enough traces of the more familiar stories for us to be certain that some kind of connection exists.⁶¹

59 Ōtuka 2008. It is, however, an independent transcription of this *dhāraṇī*.

60 Apart from the narratives discussed above a number of other Pāli sources discuss a monk named Upasena Vaṅgantaputta, and commentaries consider this to be the same Upasena from the *Samyutta-nikāya* story (Malalasekera 1937, 404–405). Upasena Vaṅgantaputta is furthermore praised as a practitioner of the *dhūtas*, so perhaps there is some connection between this and the portrait of Upasena in the *Invitation Sutra*.

61 Although I have not addressed it here the much studied frame story of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* might also be considered in light of the stories discussed here. The *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* takes as its protagonist Queen Vaidehī, mother of the parricidal Ajātaśatru, who is imprisoned by her son for attempting to bring food and drink to her imprisoned husband Bimbāsāra, who is eventually allowed to starve to death by his son Ajātaśatru. While in her cell, the Buddha appears to Vaidehī and teaches a method for “contemplating” the pure land and removing all obstructions. Scholars have long noted that this frame story draws from an well-developed set of stories from Indian Buddhist literature, namely those recounting the evils of Ajātaśatru and his murder of his father Bimbāsāra. These stories, as well as further episodes in which Ajātaśatru eventually tries to atone for his crimes, are found in a range of sources in dozens of slightly different versions. Yet the frame story of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* is fundamentally different from all of these in that Vaidehī becomes the center of attention. My intention here is not to delve into the particulars of how this version of the story was composed, or what the new arrangement is attempting to say, but merely to note that the author(s) of this frame story seems to have had a similar relationship to the traditional narratives as the author(s) of the stories examined above—traditional sources have been used to create an unquestionably novel story that nonetheless shares certain basic features, as well as broad thematic continuity, with the original sources. It is surely significant, for example, that the story of Ajātaśatru is chosen to present a text that promises entry into the pure land even for those who have committed the five *ānantarya* sins (which notably include patricide), something that directly contradicts the larger and shorter *Pure-land Sutras* which declare that such sins will bar rebirth in the pure land, at least in one’s immediately future birth. Yet the matter of Ajātaśatru and his crimes is not even mentioned, as Vaidehī, not Ajātaśatru is taken as the protagonist. The comparison here could no doubt be undertaken in more detail, but I will merely note for now that the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* seems to share with the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* a similar style of storytelling, a similar desire to use well known figures in brief, novel frame stories for introducing methods of meditation or “contemplation” (觀) that themselves have little or no narrative content. It is also worth noting that in both cases we find narrative details that, of the known Indian parallels, seem to bear the closest resemblance to versions the stories from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. Thus only in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* version is Cūḍapanthaka named simply Panthaka as he is in the third

Also notable is the particular way in which the traditional stories have been re-envisioned. Indeed in the known Indian versions of his story Upasena's transgressions or past evil karma serve as an explanation of his premature death. The point of these stories is thus 1) that liberation is possible even for those with heavy karmic burdens, and 2) that even those who attain liberation will still suffer retribution for such crimes. And while the Upasena story from the *Invitation Sutra* does not contradict either of these two points, it does seem to present a significantly different understanding of the impact that such karmic obstructions might have on one's pursuit of liberation. Such obstructions, notably Upasena's past crimes of murder, are here invoked not to explain why even arhats meet unseemly ends when burdened by significant past evil karma, but to explain why those who have such burdens need special methods of practice in order to become arhats in the first place. Although it is never said explicitly that the method of meditation Upasena uses was the only one he could have employed, this is at least in part implied by the structure the story since it proceeds directly from a discussion of Upasena's past crimes to the presentation of the method of meditation that allows his to make progress. This change in the overall message of the story is also seen in the treatment of Upasena's death, which in the traditional stories is the problem in need of explanation, but is in the *Invitation Sutra* entirely unproblematic. Indeed his death now serves not as a means of showing that past evil karma continues to impact even arhats, but as the dramatic confirmation of Upasena's achievement.

sutra of the *Chan Essentials*, and similarly only in that version does Upasena live while a monk in the cremation ground (*śīta-vāna*) near Rajagrha, just as he does in the story in the *Invitation Sutra* / *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*. Similarly in the case of the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* scholars have noted the presence of key narrative elements (such as Vaidehī bringing not just food but also beverages to Bimbasāra, and her using her anklets to hide the food she tries to sneak past the guards) that are found only in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* version of the story (Sueki 1986, 260–264).

Appendix II: The *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*

As discussed in chapter two, beginning with the work of Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信享 in the 1940s modern scholars have generally recognized the so-called six Contemplation Scriptures (六觀經) as a distinct corpus of probably apocryphal Chinese text that appeared in south China during the early fifth century.¹ In his initial studies Mochizuki also observed that early catalogs further record a seventh text, the *Avalokitasvara*² *Contemplation* (*Guan shi yin guan jing* 觀世音觀經). Not only does the title of this text resemble the other Contemplation Scriptures, it was linked to Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲, also credited with the translation of the *Maitreya Contemplation* and, as I argued in chapter two, the material now comprising both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*. In general the Contemplation Scriptures are short texts dedicated to the cult of one or two buddhas or bodhisattvas,³ and it has been supposed that the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* was a similar text centering on Avalokitasvara, a figure whose popularity in China was blossoming at this time.⁴ Historical records suggest the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* was lost around the turn of the seventh century.⁵ As I will now argue, however, a portion or even the entirety of it may survive as part of the *Avalokitasvara Invitation Sutra* (*Qing guan yin jing* 請觀音經, *Invitation Sutra* hereafter).⁶

- 1 Although the notion of “a” Contemplation Scripture (觀經) as a distinct genre was recognized by medieval Chinese Buddhists (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, T.2059:50.337a16–17), it initially escaped the notice of modern scholars because the surviving examples of these texts later became important in different traditions.
- 2 On my choice to render this name in the form *Avalokitasvara*, rather than the more common *Avalokiteśvara*, see chapter 2 p.84n22.
- 3 The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* is, in terms of length, the exception to this, though it too can be seen as devoted to the cult of a single figure, namely Śākyamuni Buddha.
- 4 Of the many surveys of the spread of Avalokitasvara worship during this time, see recently Li 2008 (especially p.245–249 for a survey of the many Avalokitasvara *dhāraṇī* texts that appeared in the late fifth and sixth centuries). In English, Yü 2000, especially p.93–150, is the most exhaustive account.
- 5 The *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* is listed in the *Records of the Canon* (early sixth-century). This title still appears in *Fajing’s Catalog* completed in 594 (T.2146:55.116c4–5), but in the *Catalog of the Renshou Era* completed in 602, it is listed as lost (T.55:2147.175c5), and this is repeated in all later catalogs.
- 6 The *Invitation Sutra* is readily available in the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon (T.1043), in woodblock print editions from the second Korean (K), Jin (J), and Qisha (Q) editions, as well as in two different editions from the Fangshan 房山 carvings, one dating from the Sui or Tang (F), and one from the Liao. We gain partial access to the southern Song Zixi 資溪 edition through the Taishō collation notes (S). To my knowledge there are no Dunhuang copies, though manuscript versions can be found in many Japanese collections that generally preserve lineages stemming from official Tang-dynasty copies. Through the good graces of Professors Ochiai Toshinori 落合俊典 and Hayashidera Shoshun 林寺正俊, I have been able to consult the copy from the Kongō-ji 金剛寺 manuscript canon, and it is similar to the Sui/Tang Fangshan edition. These various versions fall into two main lineages. The first, which appears to be older, is represented by the Kongō-ji version (Kg), the Song canons (S, Q), and the Fangshan editions (both). The Korean (K) and Jin (J) editions (descended from the Kaibao 開寶) form another lineage. Apart from incidental variants, the difference is that the apparently later

Appendix II: The *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*

Among modern scholars the *Invitation Sutra* is best known as the key textual source for Zhiyi's ritual for the cultivation of *samādhi* through “neither walking nor sitting” (非行非坐三昧), one of the Tiantai “four forms of *samādhi*,”⁷ and as far as I am aware scholars have never seriously questioned the traditional attribution holding that the *Invitation Sutra* was translated in or near the southern capital by the Indian boat captain Nandi (難提) at the beginning of the Song dynasty (420 C.E.). However the *Records of the Canon*, the earliest relevant source, lists the *Invitation Sutra* as an anonymous translation,⁸ and Nandi, an obscure figure known from only a few other sources, is linked to this text only in later catalogs beginning from the seventh century. That initially this text indeed did not bear this attribution is confirmed in that the earliest copies of the text itself, from the Sui or early Tang, do not mention a translator while the later versions do.⁹ For some reason, however, these problems have not attracted the attention of even ordinarily suspicious scholars.¹⁰ While it is not impossible that Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518), compiler of the *Records of the Canon*, was simply unaware of the true translator of the text, in his time the *Invitation Sutra* was already popular enough to have produced an active ritual tradition, of which Sengyou was aware.¹¹ It would thus be difficult to argue that the *Invitation Sutra* was unused or forgotten, such that information about it would have escaped Sengyou's attention.

But the most important point is that the version of the *Invitation Sutra* seen by Sengyou may have differed from the extant text. The current text, whose present form dates no later than the early Tang (as evidenced by the Fangshan copy), centers around four *dhāraṇī*, each of which is accompanied by a brief narrative and verses of praise. In the middle of the text is a longer narrative (the Upasena story discussed in appendix one). The overall structure is as follows (references to T.1043, volume 20):

- A) First *dhāraṇī*—introduction, 5-syllable verses, *dhāraṇī*, conclusion (34b11–35a19)
- B) Second *dhāraṇī*—introduction, *dhāraṇī*, praise of the *dhāraṇī* (35b12–c8)
- C) Third *dhāraṇī*—introduction, *dhāraṇī*, praise, 5-syllable verses (35c8–36c1)
- D) Upasena narrative—(36c1–37a26)
- E) Praise for the (third?) *dhāraṇī*, 7-syllable verses, 5-syllable verses (37a27–c16)
- F) Fourth *dhāraṇī*—introduction, *dhāraṇī*, praise for the *dhāraṇī* (36c17–37a19)

As mentioned above this text, or at least a version of it, was the basis for one of Zhiyi's *samādhi* ritual manuals. Although this manual is no longer extant, summaries are preserved in other sources.¹² Moreover a commentary to the *Invitation Sutra* was written by Zhiyi's disciple

version includes glosses within the four *dhāraṇī* (individual terms are usually explained as the names of different kinds of demons).

7 Stevenson 1986, 72–75

8 *Records of the Canon*, T.55:2145.22b22

9 While all the editions of the *Invitation Sutra* from the printed canons include, after the title, the note “Translated in the Eastern Jin by the Indian Layman Zhu Nandi” (東晉天竺居士竺難提譯), this is absent in both the Sui/Tang Fangshan and Kongō-ji (derived from Tang manuscript lineages) copies.

10 See for example Zürcher 2002, 32 and Makita 1970, 111, both of whom accept the attribution without question.

11 Sengyou lists at least one ritual manual in active use that he says was derived from the *Invitation Sutra* (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.91a16).

12 The summary in the *Guo qing bai lu* 國慶百錄 has been translated into English by Paul Swanson (2004,

Guanding 灌頂 (561–632),¹³ which includes a summary of the ritual.¹⁴ These summaries of the ritual manual, however, mention only three, not four *dhāraṇī*, and Guanding’s commentary meanwhile ends after section D.¹⁵ In other words it seems possible that the version of the *Invitation Sutra* commented on by Guanding, and that used as the basis for the early Tiantai rituals, was somewhat different than the current version. Specifically it may not have included sections E and F.¹⁶

Section D, with which the Zhiyi/Guanding version may have concluded, contains the Upasena narrative, which I have discussed in appendix one. Within the context of the *Invitation Sutra* Upasena is introduced to demonstrate the efficacy of *dhāraṇī* number three, which Upasena uses, along with a method of *chan* practice taught to him by Śāriputra, to eliminate his sins, gain a vision of Avalokitasvara, and then, on the basis of the prescribed *chan* practice, become an arhat. It should be noted that Zhiyi’s ritual similarly begins with a repentance practice centered on chanting the first three *dhāraṇī* and then concludes with seated meditation (坐禪), thus perfectly replicating the Upasena narrative itself.

However the connection between Upasena and the third *dhāraṇī* is somewhat problematic. Of great assistance here is Ōtuka Nobuo’s 大塚伸夫 recent study of the other versions of the Upasena story found in Indian and Chinese Buddhist sources, which I discussed in appendix one.¹⁷ One point that emerges from these stories is the connection between Upasena and a spell for curing poison, and as Ōtuka has shown this spell, associated with Upasena in Indian sources, is in fact *dhāraṇī* number four from the *Invitation Sutra*. Furthermore in the version of the Upasena story from both the *Samyuktāgama* (*Za a han jing* 雜阿含經) and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* this spell is preceded by a set of verses invoking the so-called eight

Appendix E: 257–259). There is a substantial discussion of this rite in the *Great Calming and Contemplation* (T.46.14b26–15b19), as well as more detailed explanations in Zhanran’s commentary to it, the *Zhi guan fu xing chuan hong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決 (T.1912:46.193c6–196c8). The version mentioned in the *Great Calming and Contemplation* appears to be more or less the same as the one in the *Guo qing bai lu* 國慶百錄. For a translation of this section of the *Great Calming and Contemplation*, see Swanson 2004, 187–197.

13 This commentary, the *Qing guan yin jing shu* 請觀音經疏 (T.1800), has traditionally been ascribed to Zhiyi, but modern scholarship points to Guanding as the author (Andō 1968, 387–418).

14 Satō 1961, 509

15 We cannot completely rule out the possibility that Guanding’s commentary is incomplete. Not only does it end rather abruptly, but the textual tradition is poor, and only relatively late copies survive. The Taishō edition itself is a collation of two printed copies, one from China dated to 1664, and one from Japan dated to 1677. The commentary is, however, mentioned in Saichō’s ninth-century catalog with a length of fourteen sheets (T.2159:55.1056c3), a length that is actually far too short to account for the present size of the text (at least if the page sized used was the standard Tang-dynasty format for Buddhist scriptures), and Saichō’s catalog thus perhaps should read twenty-four (二十四) rather than fourteen (一十四). But the important point is that there is no reason to think that Saichō had a copy of Guanding’s commentary that was *longer* than the extant edition, though it is of course possible that portions of the text had already been lost by Saichō’s time. Despite these uncertainties in the earlier portion of the commentary Guanding clearly says that there a total of only three *dhāraṇī* (*Qing guan yin jing shu* 請觀音經疏, T.1800:39.974b3). This would seem to make it all but certain that the text Guanding saw was different than the extant versions of the *Invitation Sutra*.

16 The titles of the three *dhāraṇī* mentioned in both the ritual summaries and Guanding’s commentary are not the same as those found in the extant text of the *Invitation Sutra*, which further seems to show that the copy of the text used in Zhiyi’s community was not the same one we have today.

17 Ōtuka 2008, building on the earlier research of Numata 1998.

nāga kings.¹⁸ Ōtuka furthermore shows that the names of these eight *nāga* kings also appear in the *Invitation Sutra*, within the anomalous 7-syllable verse in section E. In short there is clearly an organic connection between the Upasena narrative and sections E and F. And yet in the version of the *Invitation Sutra* used by Zhiyi these sections were, apparently, absent. Moreover even in the present *Invitation Sutra* the Upasena narrative is connected to the third *dhāraṇī*, not the fourth. It is not entirely clear how we can account for these facts, though below I will suggest a tentative explanation.

The Upasena narrative itself is remarkable for a different reason—it contains a preponderance of unusual expressions and terms that, in Chinese Buddhist texts, otherwise occur only in the *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*.¹⁹ Although it might be possible to dispute the relevance of one, or even several of these cases, together they constitute strong evidence for a historical connection between the Upasena narrative (though not necessarily the entire *Invitation Sutra*) and the Contemplation Scriptures and related texts, particularly the three mentioned above. These terms, in their order of appearance within the Upasena narrative, are as follows:

- I) 心脈: “heart channel.” Extremely rare in Chinese Buddhist texts, this term does not derive from the Chinese medical tradition. In the Upasena narrative practitioners of meditation are directed to concentrate their minds in this place.²⁰ Anatomically this “heart channel” branches into fourteen smaller channels, into which the practitioner must direct his “breath” (*qi* 氣).²¹ The word “heart channel” occurs in only three other extant Chinese Buddhist texts (leaving aside later commentaries to these texts): the *Chan Essentials*, the *Methods for Curing*, and the early sixth-century translation of the *Sadharmasmṛtyupasthāna-sūtra*.²² However only in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods of Curing* does the term similar describe the pathway whereby winds enter the heart.²³
- II) 如駛水流: “as [quickly] as fast flowing water.” In the Upasena narrative this expression describes the speed with which the *dhāraṇī* will cause the practitioner to see

18 These verses are very old, and are found already in a *paritta* text for protection from poison included in the Pāli *vinaya* (Vin, 2.109–110). They are also incorporated into a wide number of later texts.

19 These claims, shown in detail below, are made on the basis of electronic searches using the CBETA software. The limitations of this method should be fully acknowledged. Firstly, the texts indexed by CBETA are not entirety of extant Chinese Buddhist texts, though if we limit ourselves to texts translated or written prior to the sixth century CBETA does include almost all relevant material. The CBETA search program also has at least two serious defects—terms which appear only as variant readings cannot be located, and further CBETA does not simultaneously search for common orthographic variants or mistakes, leaving it up to the researcher to account for such details. Finally the Taishō edition, upon which the CBETA data is based, has a small but not insignificant number of misprints and errors. It would thus be dangerous to argue for a connection between texts based merely on the co-occurrence of a few otherwise unattested terms. Yet when we can assemble a larger body of examples, such as I have tried to do here, we can, I believe, make a strong claim.

20 T.1043: 20.36c5

21 從於心端四十脈下，取一中脈，令氣從中安隱，得至十四脈中。(T.1043:20.36c12–13)

22 *Zheng fa nian chu jing* 正法念處經, T.721:17.388a20–21

23 See sections 4.10 and 5.6 (appendix three). In the *Sadharmasmṛtyupasthāna-sūtra* (see previous note) the context is entirely different.

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Avalokitasvara.²⁴ This same expression is used in this meaning in the *Methods for Curing*, and very similar ones appear in the *Chan Essentials* and *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*.²⁵ Although similar phrases are found elsewhere, only in these texts does the image describe speed of attainment or indeed speed at all.²⁶

III) 苦，空，無常敗壞，不久磨滅：“suffering, empty, impermanent and decaying, soon to wear away.” In the Upasena narrative Śāriputra instructs Upasena to contemplate these things while “sitting upright in meditation.”²⁷ Doctrinally there is nothing unusual here, but the combination of “impermanent”無常, “decaying”敗壞, and “soon to wear away”不久磨滅 as three synonyms for impermanence is distinctive. Yet we find all three expressions used together in the *Chan Essentials*, where as in the Upasena narrative, they are part of a contemplation of the impermanence of the body.²⁸

IV) 一一節間：“between each joint [of the body].” In the Upasena narrative this expression describes how one must successively focus the mind on each joint (or bone) of the body.²⁹ Apart from much later works by Chinese authors, the only other contemporaneous Chinese Buddhist texts in which this expression appears are the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, where the meaning is identical.³⁰

V) 芭蕉：“plantain.” The plantain or banana (*kadalī*) tree as an abstract symbol of emptiness (since its “trunk” lacks any core) is well known throughout Buddhist literature. In the Upasena narrative, however, the image is used specifically to refer to the body of the meditator.³¹ The *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* also include this image within instructions for contemplating the body, and understand it rather more literally than is usual, with the onion-like leaves of the trunk of a plantain tree compared to the layers of skin that sheathe the body.³²

VI) 四大定：“trance of the four elements.” In the Upasena narrative Upasena enters this state of meditation just before becoming an arhat. In Chinese Buddhist texts the “trance of the

24 T.1043:20.36c18–19

25 See 4.38 and 5.124. In the *Chan Essentials* we find the similar expression 如大水流 used in the same meaning (1.75), and so too in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.665a10–11). In all these cases the image expresses the speed with which one will become an arhat by following the given practices.

26 As an example of other usages, see *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經, T.278:9.427a15.

27 端坐正受，無外向意，觀於苦，空，無常敗壞，不久磨滅。(T.1043:20.36c21–22).

28 See for example: 諸行性相，悉皆無常，不久磨滅。如我此身，如彈指頃，亦當敗壞。(1.160), and the similar: 復當自觀其身，從諸苦生，從諸苦有，是敗壞法，不久磨滅。(3.46). In another passage we see the very similar: 是敗壞法，不久當滅。(1.107).

29 自觀身，從頭至足，一一節間，皆令係念。(T.1043:20.36c22–23).

30 The expression is common. See for example 1.117 (*Chan Essentials*) and 5.107 (*Methods for Curing*).

31 T.1043:20.36c24

32 Thus in the *Chan Essentials* “[the practitioner] first contemplates his own body making it [appear as] layer up on layer of skin, like [the trunk of a] plantain tree.” (1.129). Similar passages occurs in the *Methods for Curing* (5.22; 5.47; 5.121) and *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.665a8–9).

four elements” as a distinct set of extremely advanced states of meditation is found in only two other sources, the *Chan Essentials* and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*.³³ For these texts, like the Upasena narrative, the “trance of the four elements” is associated with the attainment of arhatship.³⁴ One passage further says that those in this meditation appear “like fire and water,”³⁵ also mentioned in the Upasena narrative.³⁶

VII) 豁然意解: “the mind suddenly and profoundly liberated.” This expression describes Upasena’s attainment of arhatship. And though we do find this rare phrase (whose precise meaning is not entirely clear) in a few other Chinese Buddhist texts, it notably appears four times in the *Chan Essentials* (three times describing the attainment of arhatship and once the attainment of the third fruit, *anāgamin*),³⁷ and once in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*.³⁸

VIII) 如熱時焰，如野馬行: “Like the mirage [that appears in] the heat, like moving wild horses.” These are both common images in Chinese Buddhist texts expressing the idea of an illusion. Here, however, there are two peculiarities. First is the specific wording “like *moving* wild horses” (野馬行). The image of “wild horses (*ye ma* 野馬) is drawn from the opening chapter of the *Zhuang zi* 莊子,³⁹ and while the original meaning is not clear, early commentators gloss it as “shimmering air” (游氣).⁴⁰ Buddhist sources beginning from the third century use the word to describe a mirage (as one might see in the desert), and it was generally used to translate *marīci*, “illusion.”⁴¹ Normally, however, the term is simply “wild horses.” “Moving wild horses” (野馬行), in contrast, appears in only two other Chinese Buddhist texts, the *Chan Essentials* and the *Ocean-samādhi*

33 Meditation on the four elements is of course well known from traditional practices as part of either the *dhātu* meditations (in which the body is divided into the four elements and seen as empty), or four of the ten (or eleven) “totality” (*kr̥ṣṇāyatana*, *kaśiṇa*) meditations. What marks the usage here, however, is that these four in particular are singled out as the states of meditation from within which arhatship or other advanced attainment is achieved.

34 See for example 4.19. This passage occurs within the narrative of Agnidatta, centered around the idea that Agnidatta can only become an arhat by mastering the “trance of the wind element” (風大定). The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* also links the “trance of the four elements” to the four fruits (T.643:15.665a13–14).

35 4.40 (appendix three).

36 T.1043:20.37a12–15

37 1.111; 2.36; 4.21; 4.65

38 T.643:15.681a17. Here it describes *anutpatikadharmakṣanti*, the “realization of the non-arising of all *dharmas*.”

39 *Zhuang zi ji shi* 1/4. For a complete discussion of this term, see Zhu 1990. The original meaning is somewhat obscure. At least one Chinese linguist thinks it may originally have been a local phonetic variant of *yan a* 焰阿, “heat vapors” (Gao 2002).

40 This is the explanation given by the third-century commentator Guo Xiang 郭襄 (*Zhuang zi ji shi* 1/6), but in the context of the *Zhuang zi* the word seems to refer only to the moving air beneath the wings of the Peng 鵬 bird, not to the idea of an illusion (see the next note).

41 The earliest clear example is the late third-century translation of the *Stages of the Path of Practice* (*Xiu xing dao di jing* 修行道地經), where the word describes what a traveler in the desert mistakenly takes to be water (T.606:15.208b13–28; it is clear from the context that this does not refer to actual horses). For further discussion of the word in Chinese Buddhist texts, see Boucher 1998, 497.

Contemplation.⁴²

IX) A further peculiarity is that the Upasena narrative mentions two ideas: “Like vapors in the heat, like moving wild horses” (如熱時焰，如野馬行). The conjunction of these phrases is extremely unusual, as normally “vapors in the heat” and “wild horses” are synonyms. In translated Chinese Buddhist texts we thus almost always find one or the other but not both, and on the few occasions when both appear they are clearly a unit.⁴³ As in the Upasena narrative, however, both the *Chan Essentials* and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* similarly take “wild horses” and “vapors in the heat” as two distinct images.⁴⁴

X) 發三種清淨三菩提心: “Give rise to the three kinds of pure *saṃbodhi* mind.” At the end of the Upasena narrative the Buddha says that one who hears the *dhāraṇī* will be able to “arouse the three kinds of pure *saṃbodhi* mind.” The meaning of this expression is not clear, and my interpretation of 三菩提 as a transcription of *saṃbodhi* is not certain, though it is hard to see what else it could be. More problematic is the notion of three kinds of “*bodhi* mind” (*bodhicitta*), for while the notion of three kinds of *bodhi* (awakening) is well established,⁴⁵ the expression “*bodhi* mind” (*bodhicitta*; 菩提心) is usually singular, denoting the aspiration for buddhahood, third of the three kinds of awakening (*bodhi*). Yet in the *Methods for Curing* too we find a passage that refers to the “three kinds of *bodhi* mind.”⁴⁶

There are thus a preponderance of unusual terms, expressions, and phrases shared between the Upasena narrative from the *Invitation Sutra* and the *Chan Essentials*, *Methods for Curing*, and *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, and the close connection between the Upasena narrative and

42 1.43; 1.137 (*Chan Essentials*) and T.643:15.692b25 (*Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*). I have found one example of the expression 野馬動, “moving wild horses” (*Xiao pin bo re bo luo mi jing* 小品般若波羅蜜經, T.227:8.584b2–3). This is the understanding of the image given by later Chinese commentators to the *Zhuang zi* passage as well, who write that the horses at such a time appear to be “galloping” 奔馬 (*Zhuang zi ji shi* 1/6).

43 Thus, to take but one example, in the *Ekottarāgama* we read: “It is [an illusion], as when in times of extreme heat [there appears to be] wild horses moving to and fro.” 若復極盛熱時，野馬縱橫。(Zeng yi a han jing 增壹阿含經, T.125:2.670c5–6). See also the passage cited in the previous note. The only other example I have found where these two images are distinct metaphors is a single passage from the popular Western Jin translation of the larger *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, which reads: “like a dream, like an echo, like wild horses, like vapors in the heat.” 如夢、如響、如野馬、如熱時之焰。(Fang guang jing 放光經, T.221:8.124c4–5). This passage, however, is anomalous, for in the many other similar lists within this texts we only ever find the expression “vapors in the heat” (熱時之焰; sometimes 熱時焰). It is thus possible that “like wild horses” (如野馬) was originally a note added to the text to explain the meaning of “vapors in the heat” (熱時之焰).

44 1.43; 1.137 (*Chan Essentials*) and T.643:15.692b25 (*Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*).

45 That is to say the awakening (*bodhi*) of the *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *buddha* respectively (see for example *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.266c18–19, where these are called the “three kinds of *bodhi*” 三種菩提).

46 See 5.124, where the practitioner is said to have “cultivated the aspiration for the three kinds of *bodhi*” 修習三種菩提之心 during innumerable past lives.

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these texts thus seems undeniable. It is noteworthy that similar unusual expressions shared by these other texts do not seem to occur in the remaining portions of the *Invitation Sutra*. It is unclear how significant this is. Indeed even if the entirety of the *Invitation Sutra* was in fact produced in the same environment as the Contemplation Scriptures and related texts, the portion dealing with meditation (the Upasena narrative) would naturally be the most likely to share terminology with a text such as the *Chan Essentials*.

Concerning the history and nature of the *Invitation Sutra* there thus remain certain unresolved problems. As seen above, the *Invitation Sutra* used in the early Tiantai community differed from the extant version. It is possible that the extant version existed at this time somewhere else, but even if this were so that in the extant version Upasena is connected to the third rather than fourth *dhāraṇī* (the spell linked to Upasena in traditional stories) shows that at some point two originally separate texts have here come together.⁴⁷

And indeed in the early sixth century, when the *Records of the Canon* catalog was produced, two potentially relevant Chinese texts existed—the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* (觀世音觀經) attributed to Juqu Jingsheng, and the *Scripture of Inviting Avalokitasvara* (請觀世音經), listed as an anonymous translation and already associated with a ritual tradition. Given that the Upasena narrative is clearly related to the Contemplation Scripture corpus, it would make a great deal of sense to imagine that these two texts devoted to Avalokitasvara were eventually combined to form the present *Invitation Sutra*. It is not difficult to imagine how this might have happened. In *Fajing's Catalog* from the late sixth century, for example, these two texts are listed one after the other.⁴⁸ This means that in official collections of the canon these texts would have been adjacent to one another, kept in the same box, or even written on the same scroll as often occurred with short scriptures in official collections. In any of these situations (especially the last one) the two texts might easily have been combined, either intentionally or not.

Regardless of the details the linguistic parallels between the *Chan Essentials* and other relevant texts and the Upasena narrative strongly suggests that it is connected to the Contemplation Scripture corpus, and is hence likely at least part of the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*. Although conjectural, I would hypothesize that the *Scripture of Inviting Avalokitasvara* (請觀世音經) listed in the *Records of the Canon* in the early sixth century comprised only sections A, B, and C, and that sections D, E, and F were the original *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*.

Although we cannot determine precisely why these texts may have been combined, their use in rituals was no doubt a contributing factor. We can thus imagine, for example, that the narrative of Upasena, which describes how a *dhāraṇī* given by Avalokitasvara aids in the practice of *chan*, might have been cited or included in a ritual manual based on sections A, B, and C (the hypothetical original *Invitation Sutra*), which also contain *dhāraṇī* associated with Avalokitasvara. This combination would make sense given a ritual program similar to the one described in Tiantai sources, which combines recitation of the Avalokitasvara *dhāraṇī* with seated meditation. Indeed as we have seen the version of the *Invitation Sutra* used in Tiantai

⁴⁷ This is also suggested in that the beginning of the text describes events taking place in Vaśali, while the Upasena narrative is set in Rājagṛha.

⁴⁸ T.2146: 55.116c3–4

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sources included only the first three *dhāraṇī*, but also had the Upasena narrative, a narrative that must have originally been connected to sections E and F. Although it is possible that new arrangements such as this were intentional, they may also have occurred more organically. For example a short scripture recited in a ritual may be entirely included in a ritual text alongside other texts. Thus what began as a ritual manual that included sections A, B, and C from the *Scripture of Inviting Avalokitasvara* (請觀世音經) along with section D from the hypothetical *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* (sections D, E, and F) may have been later understood as a single scripture. If it was then noticed that section D also existed along with sections E and F as a different text, an editor may have quite reasonably assumed that these were all partial versions of the same text.

While there thus remain a number of questions about the nature of the *Invitation Sutra* and the Upasena narrative, as we have seen there are good reasons for doubting the traditional claim that the *Invitation Sutra* was translated in its present form by the Indian boat captain Nandi, and moreover for considering that the Upasena narrative in particular may have originally belonged to, or even constituted, the lost *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*. In the interests of comparing unusual methods for *chan* to the material from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* translated in appendix three, below I present a translation of the entire Upasena narrative. I have collated the text from the Taishō edition (and its noted variants) with the Sui/Tang Fangshan edition (F), the Jin edition (J) and the manuscript copy from Kongō-ji (Kg).

The story of Upasena

(T.1043:20.36b28–37b6)

1. 爾時世尊說是語已，告阿難言：是六字章句，畢定吉祥，真實不虛。若有聞者，獲大善利，得無量功德。說是語已，王舍大城有一比丘名優波斯那，精進勇猛，勤行難行苦行，如救頭然。在寒林中與無央數大眾圍繞，自說往昔作諸惡行殺生無量。聞觀世音菩薩六字章句，正念思惟，觀心心脈，使想一處，見觀世音菩薩即得解脫，成阿羅漢。

When the World-honored One had spoken [the above] words, he addressed Ānanda: “This six-character incantation⁴⁹ is utterly auspicious. It is efficacious, not vain. One who hears it will reap great benefit and obtain unlimited merit.”

When these words had been spoken⁵⁰ . . . in the city of Rājagṛha there was a monk named Upasena, who was devoted and diligent, who practiced difficult, painful practices as eagerly as if putting out a fire upon his head, and who in the cremation ground, surrounded by a great host of innumerable [other monks] had confessed that in a past life he had committed various evil deeds, and had killed innumerable living beings.⁵¹ Hearing this six-character incantation of the bodhisattva Avalokitasvara, Upasena concentrated his thoughts and contemplated his heart and his heart channel. Concentrating his imagination, he then saw the bodhisattva Avalokitasvara and attained liberation, becoming an arhat.

2. 云何當得見觀世音菩薩及十方佛？若欲得見，端身正心，使心不動，心氣相續。以左手置右手上，舉舌向腭，令息調勻，使氣不麤不[細]{散}⁵²，安祥⁵³徐數，從一至十。成就息念，無分散意，使氣不麤，亦不外向，不澁不滑，如嬰兒飲乳，吸氣□⁵⁴之，不青不白，調和得中。從於心端四十脈下，取一中脈，令氣從中安隱得至十四脈中。從大脈[生]{出}⁵⁵，至於舌下，復從舌脈出，至於舌端。不青不白，不黃不黑，如琉璃器，正長八寸。至於鼻端，還入心根，令心明淨。

How⁵⁶ can one see the bodhisattva Avalokitasvara and the buddhas of the ten directions? One who wishes to see [them] should straighten his body and regulate his mind. He should still his mind and follow his breath with his mind (?).⁵⁷ Placing his left hand atop his right hand⁵⁸ he should push the tongue upwards against his palate. He should make his breathing regular, such that the breath is neither contracted nor dissipated. Gently and slowly he should count from one to ten. To perfect this meditation on the breath he must keep his mind undistracted, and cause the

49 This refers to the previously given *dhāraṇī*.

50 The transition here is slightly odd, and we can perhaps see here where the Upasena narrative was joined to the earlier portions of the text.

51 Concerning these details, which derive from some of the traditional Upasena stories, see appendix one.

52 Following F, J, S, Y, Kg

53 詳 F, S, Y, Kg

54 Following F, S, Y; 味 Kg;

55 Following F, J, S, Y, Kg

56 The voicing here is unclear, and this passage is not clearly framed as Buddha's discourse.

57 Translation tentative. Perhaps we should emmend 心氣相續 to 氣氣相續?

58 We see here the same directions concerning posture that occur in the *Chan Essentials* (1.9).

breath to be neither rough, nor directed outwards, neither coarse nor smooth. He should be like a baby suckling his milk, inhaling and the breath and swallowing it down. [The breath] is neither blue nor white (?), but perfectly balanced between them (?).⁵⁹

He should then make the breath flow out from the tip of the heart into the fourteen channels. Selecting the middle channel (?), he should make the breath proceed gently into the fourteen channels. The breath then comes out through the large channel until it comes to the spot beneath the tongue. It then flows through the tongue to the tip of the tongue. Neither blue nor white, neither yellow nor black (?), [the tongue] (?) is like a container made of beryl, exactly eight inches long. [The breath] then goes to the tip of the nose, from where it returns back to the heart, making the heart bright and pure.

3. 佛告諸比丘：此大精進勇猛寶[幢]{幢}⁶⁰六字章句，消伏毒害大悲功德觀世音菩薩。以此數息，心定力故，如駛水流，疾疾得見觀世音菩薩及十方佛。佛告諸比丘：汝等善聽，欲服甘露無上法味，若諸比丘已得出家，當自攝身，不壞威儀，端坐正受，無外向意。觀於苦空無常敗壞不久磨滅，修五門禪。當自觀身，從頭至足，一一節間，皆令係念，停住不散。諦觀眾節，如芭蕉樹，內外俱空。當知色受想行識亦復如是。

The Buddha addressed the monks: “This is the great and powerful jewel-tower-like six-character incantation of the great compassionate and meritorious Avalokitasvara, which dispels poison and harm. Counting the breath with this [method], by the power of one’s concentration, as quickly as fast flowing water one will be able to see Avalokitasvara and the buddhas of the ten directions.”

The Buddha addressed the monks: “Listen well! One who wishes to taste the sweet-dew taste of the unsurpassed Dharma should, if a home-leaving monk, control his body. Keeping his body firmly fixed in this noble posture⁶¹ he should sit upright in absorption, preventing his mind from going outwards. He should contemplate suffering, emptiness, impermanence, decay, and transience, and cultivate the five methods of trance. He must contemplate his own body from head to toe, concentrating his mind on each and every joint. He should carefully contemplate each joint to be like [the trunk of] a plantain tree, empty both inside and out. He must understand that [the five *skandha*] of form, sensations, perceptions, volitions, and consciousness are also [empty] like this.”

4. 佛說是語時，尊者舍利弗，在寒林中，還坐樹下，已解佛意，端坐正受，入于三昧。身真金色，令無數人見者，歡喜發菩提心。時優波斯那，即從座起，至尊者舍利弗所，頭面著地，接足作禮，白言：尊者，向者如來讚歎數息，以是因緣獲大善利。云何數息？

59 This entire passage is quite difficult to understand.

60 Following F, S, Y, (疏)

61 The expression *wei yi* 威儀 often refers to the proper behavior and conduct that becomes a monk or nun. But it is also used to refer more specifically to the different “postures” that one may occupy (notably the *si wei yi* 四威儀, the “form dignified bearings,” meaning sitting, walking, standing or lying down). Thus while the point may be that the practitioner must, in general, comport himself appropriately, it also seems here to refer specifically to maintaining the meditation posture.

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唯願尊者為我解說。眼、眼識與色相應，云何攝住？耳、耳識與聲相應，云何攝住？鼻、鼻識與香相應，云何攝住？舌、舌識與味相應，云何攝住？意、意識與攀緣相應，云何攝住？諸顛倒想與顛倒相應，云何攝住？色、聲、香、味、觸與細滑相應，云何攝住？而此識賊，如獼猴走，遊戲六根，遍緣諸法，云何攝住？

When the Buddha had spoken these words, the venerable Śāriputra returned to sit beneath a tree in the cremation ground. Having understood the Buddha's meaning, he sat upright in absorption and entered *samādhi*. His body was the color of pure gold, such that the innumerable people who gazed upon it delighted and gave rise to the aspiration for awakening.

At this time Upasena arose from his seat and went before the venerable Śāriputra.⁶² Bowing his head to the ground, he touched [Śāriputra's] feet and made reverence to him, saying: "Venerable! In the past the Buddha has praised breath-counting as very beneficial. How does one count the breath? May the venerable Śāriputra please explain this to me. The eye and eye-consciousness respond to visible form—how can this be controlled?⁶³ The ear and ear-consciousness respond to sounds—how can this be controlled? The nose and nose-consciousness respond to smells—how can this be controlled? The tongue and tongue-consciousness respond to tastes—how can this be controlled? The mind and mind-consciousness respond to distraction—how can this be controlled? The various kinds of false thinking respond to the various false thoughts—how can this be controlled? Visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch, respond to the fine and the smooth (?)—how can this be controlled?⁶⁴ The thief of consciousness is like a frolicking monkey who roams about in the six sense organs everywhere grasping onto things—how can he be controlled?"

5. 時舍利弗告優波斯那：汝今當觀地大，地無堅性；水大，水性不住；風大，風性無礙，從顛倒有；火大，火性不實，假因緣生。色受想行識，一一性相同於水火風等，皆悉入於如實之際。時優波斯那聞是語已，身如水火，得四大定，通達五陰空無所有，殺諸結賊，豁然意解，得阿羅漢，身中出火即自碎身入般涅槃。

Śāriputra then said to Upasena:⁶⁵ "You must now contemplate that the earth element lacks

62 For different translations of this paragraph, see Donner and Stevenson 1993, 280n277 and Swanson 2004, 192n320.

63 The citation of this line in both Guanding's commentary to the *Invitation Sutra* and Zhiyi's *Great Calming and Contemplation* does not include the words "eye consciousness" 眼識 (T.1800: 39.975c5–6 and T.46:1911.15a9). In the final line the *Great Calming and Contemplation* also omits the word "mind consciousness" 意識.

64 This line does not make sense to me. Following the parallelism with the previous lines, this would seem to be how we must read, but the word *xi hua* 細滑, "the fine and smooth," is an old translation of "tangibles" (*sparśtavya*), which should be the same thing as *chu* 觸, "contacts," the translation of this word that became standard after the time of Kumārajīva. It is thus possible that the text originally read only 細滑, and that 觸 was a gloss that crept into the text. But if so things have been further modified, to make 細滑 the object with which the other things "respond." It is possible that the original should simply have read "[in short a person] responds to all five sense objects," and logically this seems to make the most sense. Cf. Swanson 2004, 192n320 who translates as "[Objects of] form, sound, scent, flavor, and touch all respond mutually within the senses." It is not clear from this how Swanson understands the relationship here between 觸 and 細滑, and he seems to be translating 細滑 as "the senses," a meaning that, to my knowledge, this word never has.

65 For different translations of this paragraph, see Donner and Stevenson 1993, 280n279 and Swanson 2004, 193n323.

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the nature of firmness;⁶⁶ that the water element by nature does not abide; that the nature of the wind element is unobstructed, that it exists only because of mistaken perception; that the fire element is insubstantial, arising only provisionally by way of causes and conditions. The essential nature of [the five *skandhas* of] form, sensation, perceptions, volition, and consciousness are exactly the same as that of water, fire, and wind. They are all equal to the ultimate limit of reality [which is emptiness].⁶⁷

When Upasena heard these words, with his body like water and fire he attained the trance of the four elements, comprehended the emptiness of the five *skandha*, destroyed the bandits of the defilements, and was profoundly liberated in mind. He became an arhat, and shooting forth fire from his body he self-destructed and entered *parinirvāṇa*.

6. 時舍利弗，收其舍利，於上起塔已，為佛作禮，白佛言：世尊，佛說禪定第一甘露無上法味，若有服者，身如琉璃，毛孔見佛。觀無明行，乃至老死，一一性相，皆悉不實。如空谷響，如芭蕉[樹無]堅[實]⁶⁸，如熱時焰，如野馬行，如乾闥婆城，如水上泡，如幻如化，如露如電。一一諦觀十二因緣，成緣覺道。或入寂定琉璃三昧，見佛無數，發無上心，修童真行，住不退轉。

Śāriputra then collected [Upasena's] relics and built a stupa to house them. Having done this he bowed to the Buddha and said: "World-honored One, the meditation practice of which you have spoken is the supreme ambrosia, whose taste is that of the unsurpassed Dharma. Those who taste it will have bodies like beryl within whose pores there appear buddhas. They contemplate the insubstantiality of each of [the links of dependent origination] from ignorance and volitional formations up through old-age and death. They are like echoes in an empty valley, only as firm as the trunk of a plantain tree, [illusory] like heat vapors or like the mirage of running wild horses, like a city of the *gandharvas*, like foam on the water, like a magical illusion, like dew or like a flash of lightening. Carefully contemplating each of the twelve links of dependent origination [in this way] one attains the path of the one awakened to conditionality (*pratyekabuddha*). Or else one enters the meditation of the beryl-*samādhi* where one sees innumerable buddhas and arouses the aspiration for the unsurpassed [awakening of a buddha], cultivates the practices [of the eighth bodhisattva stage known as] 'youthful' [buddha] (*kumārabhūta*), and thereafter abides in irreversibility [with respect to buddhahood]."

7. 佛告舍利弗：如優波斯那聞我說是大悲章句數息定法，破無數億洞然之惡，成阿羅漢，具戒、定、智、{解脫}、解脫知見，身出水火碎身滅度，令無數人發大善心。舍利弗當知，若善男子善女人，[得]⁶⁹聞觀世音菩薩大悲名號，及消伏毒害六字章句數息係念淨行之法，

66 Compare with *Chan Essentials*, 1.106, where we seem to have a similar negation of the ultimate reality of the four elements (*mahābhūta*).

67 Compare *Chan Essentials*, 4.37: "[The practitioner must] then carefully contemplate each of these four elements. These four elements in truth have no inherent characteristics, and they equal to [emptiness,] which is the ultimate limit of reality." 如此四大，一一諦觀。此諸大者，實無性相，同如實際。On the "limit of reality" 實際, see the notes to section 4.37 in appendix three.

68 Following F and Kg. This reading is supported the citation in the *Great Calming and Contemplation*, T.1911:46.15a23–24.

69 Following F, S, Y, Kg

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除無數劫所造惡業，破惡業障，現[身得]⁷⁰見無量無邊諸佛，聞說妙法，隨意無礙，發三種清淨三菩提心。若有宿世罪業因緣及現所造極重惡行，夢中得見觀世音菩薩，如大猛風吹於重雲，皆悉四散，得離重罪惡業，生諸佛前。

The Buddha addressed Śāriputra: “Thus did Upasena hear me preach this method for meditation on the contemplation of breath through the great-compassion incantation, and thereby he destroyed innumerable millions of mountain-like evil [defilements]⁷¹ and became an arhat, fully possessed of precepts, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge and vision of liberation. Fire and water shot forth from his body, which was annihilated into extinction, [and seeing this] innumerable people gave rise to the mind of great good.

“Oh Śāriputra you must know that sons or daughters of good families who hear the name of the bodhisattva of great compassion Avalokitasvara [as well as] this method for the pure practice of meditation upon the counting of the breath using the six-character incantation for destroying harmful poison will eliminate the evil sins they have committed for countless eons. They will destroy the obstacle of sins, and will right away see innumerable buddhas, hear them preach the marvelous dharma, and will be able to give rise without hindrance to the aspiration for whichever of the three kinds of awakening they so wish.⁷² [However] if they have committed any of the extremely grave offenses, either as sins from past lives or in the present life,⁷³ then [having heard this incantation,] in a dream they will see the bodhisattva Avalokitasvara and, just as dark dark clouds scattered into the four quarters by a strong wind, they will part from their grave sins [and in the future be] reborn in the presence of the buddhas.

70 Following F, J, S, Y, Kg

71 On the expression 洞然之惡, see the notes to section 4.65 in appendix three.

72 There is some difficulty here with the phrase 隨意無礙. In the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* this same expression occurs, where it seems to mean “as one wishes” (T.643:15.667b28–29). However there the construction is to place these four characters *after* that which one performs freely. If this is the grammar here as well, it might construe all the way back with “presently see the innumerable buddhas.” This however creates a rather long, syntactically awkward phrase, so I have elected to construe it with the subsequent verb instead.

73 I here take 極重惡行 with both parts of this phrase, if only because otherwise I do not see what is supposed differentiate these sins committed in past lives from the ones spoken of previously.

Appendix 3: Translations and Chinese editions of the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing*

Introductory notes and conventions

The base text is the CBETA edition of the Taishō edition. When CBETA has corrected mistakes in the Taishō, these have been noted in the footnotes.

The format for emendations is: [] = removed text

{ } = added text

All emendation is with regards to the base text. Thus [如]{汝} indicates I read 汝 in place of 如. The source of the new reading, if any,¹ is indicated in the footnotes, as are other variants followed by the edition(s) in which they appear. For variant readings:

- + indicates the presence of additional characters immediately following the footnote.
- [] Indicates that the character(s) in question are not found in the edition(s) in question.
- = Used when multiple adjacent characters differ. Thus “念此 = 想彼 P” indicates that 念此 in the base text occurs as 想彼 in P.

Other editions consulted are:²

K The “second” carving of the Korean canon (高麗藏再雕本).³

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- 1 When warranted I have occasionally made emendations basic on graphical similarity, misplaced characters, and other criteria. Explanations, when appropriate, are included in the footnotes.
 - 2 K, J, P, S, Y, Q, Kg are for both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*; Sgz, N(a) and N(b) are for the *Chan Essentials* only. I have also collated some passages with citations preserved in other sources, and the symbols for these are as noted in the footnotes. Late in the process of preparing this edition and translation it became possible to access copies of both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* from the first carving of the Korean canon through the *Tripitaka Koreana Knowledgebase* (http://kb.sutra.re.kr/ritk_eng/index.do). Ideally I would have included this information in my edition, but time constraints have made this impossible.
 - 3 The printed copy of K held at the Zōjōji 増上寺 temple in Japan is nominally the base text of the Taishō edition of both the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, but I have consulted K based on the modern re-printing of the original woodblocks (http://kb.sutra.re.kr/ritk_eng/index.do). In principle K should be the same as the base text, but in practice the Taishō contains a number of misreadings and typographical errors. The precise genealogy here is complicated because the Taishō itself was actually based on a previous Japanese edition of the canon, the

Appendix 3: Translations and Chinese editions of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*

- J The Jin 金 canon (*Zhong hua da zang jing* 中華大藏經 printing).
- P The so-called Fuzhou 福州 edition, the principal surviving copy of which is held by the Japanese imperial library. This version was collated by the Taishō editors (under the symbol 宮), but my notes are based on direct inspection via the microfilm version held by the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University.¹
- S, Y The Sixi 思溪 and Puning 普寧 editions held, collated by the Taishō apparatus as “Song” (宋) and “Yuan” (元) respectively.
- Q The Qisha 磧砂 edition (Xin wen feng 新文豐 printing).
- Sgz The Tempyō-era manuscript from the Shōsōin 正倉院 held by the Japanese imperial library. Collated as 聖 by the Taishō editors, I have based my readings on the photographs of the manuscript itself.² Scroll 1 and scroll 2 of this edition overlap for a short section, and in those passages only I use Sgz¹ to refer to scroll 1, and Sgz² for scroll 2.
- Kg The Kongō-ji 金剛寺 manuscript editions.³
- N Two manuscript copies, labeled “a” and “b,” from Nanatsudera 七寺.⁴
- A The 735 CE inscription from cave 59 at Anyue 安岳, which includes several excerpts from the *Chan Essentials* (in addition to including relevant variants in the footnotes I have underlined the passages present in the inscription).⁵

I have marked all variants that are at least potentially not mere graphic variants. This is necessarily at times a subjective evaluation, and the line between graphic variant and new character is not always firm.

Sections 1–4 comprise the *Chan Essentials*, T.613 (禪祕要法經), while sections 5–6 comprise

Dainihon kōtei daizōkyō 大日本校訂大藏經 published in the late 19th century, which had itself been based on the Zōjōji 増上寺 copy of K. Leaving aside such details, since it is the most commonly used edition for all canonical Chinese Buddhist texts, I treat the Taishō edition (through CBETA) as an independent version. When the Taishō (and consequently CBETA) has seemingly made an error vis à vis K, I note this as a variant, indicating the Taishō reading in [] and the corrected reading in { }. On the other hand when the Taishō seems to have simply replaced a character not available in its character set (i.e. 牀 with 床), when feasible I use the original character and make a footnote.

- 1 I wish to thank Jan Nattier for helping me gain access to these microfilms.
- 2 Many of these texts can now be consulted through the CD-ROM version of the collection, of which new volumes are being published regularly. See *Kunaichō Shōsōin Jimusho shozō shōgozō kyōka* 宮内庁正倉院事務所所蔵聖語藏經卷. Edited by Takasaki Jikdō 高崎直道, Tsukishima Hiroshi 築島裕, and Minagawa Kan'ichi 皆川完一. Tokyo, Hakkō hatsubai Maruzen, 2000–. I wish to thank Funayama Tōru for helping me obtain photocopies of this material from the Ōtani University library.
- 3 Access to the Kongō-ji editions was made possible by visits to the International College of Postgraduate Buddhist Studies in Tokyo in the spring of 2010. I wish to thank professor Ochiai Toshinori 落合俊典 for inviting me and for helping to make this possible.
- 4 Copies of the Nanatsudera manuscripts were generously provided by professor Ochiai Toshinori.
- 5 The text is cited along with a number of other scriptures, and the passages are drawn from throughout the text, though they have clearly been chosen so as to constitute a coherent whole. I have had access to this inscription thanks to a photograph graciously provided by Professor Lothar Ledderose and his Stone Sutras project (www.stonesutras.org), through the intermediary of Professor Funayama Tōru 船山徹.

Appendix 3: Translations and Chinese editions of the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*

the *Methods for Curing*, T.615 (治禪病秘要法), each section corresponding to a distinct “sutra” framed by the canonical opening line “thus have I heard” (*ru shi wo wen* 如是我聞). Following the arguments in chapter two, I conclude that this material likely originally formed a sequence in this order. For the purposes of the edition and translation, however, the main point has been to provide a numbering scheme that facilitates reference to the texts. The numbered divisions within each sutra are for the most part my own imposition, and are intended simply to break the text into manageable chunks.

1.1

如是我聞。一時佛住王舍城迦蘭陀竹園，與大比丘眾千二百五十人俱。復有五百大德聲聞，舍利弗、大目犍連、摩訶迦葉、摩訶迦旃延等。

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling in the city of Rājagṛha, in the bamboo garden of the Kalandaka birds¹, together with a great assembly of 1,250 monks. Additionally there were 500 eminent voice-hearers, including Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana,² Mahākāśyapa, and Mahākātyāyana.³

1.2

爾時王舍城中有一比丘，名摩訶迦絺羅難陀，聰慧多智，來至佛所，為佛作禮，繞佛七匝。爾時世尊入深禪定，默然無言。時迦絺羅難陀見佛入定，即往舍利弗所，頭面禮足白言：大德舍利弗，唯願為我廣說法要。爾時舍利弗即便為說四諦，分別義趣，一遍乃至[六]{七}⁴遍。時迦絺羅難陀，心疑⁵未寤⁶，如是乃至遍禮五百聲聞足，請說法要。諸聲聞等，亦各七遍為轉四真諦法。時迦絺羅難陀，心亦不寤⁷，復還佛所，為佛作禮。

At this time a wise and learned monk from Rājagṛha named Mahākauṣṭhīlananda came to the Buddha, and having saluted him processed around him seven times [as a display of reverence]. At this time the World-honored One [the Buddha] had entered into deep trance [and thus] remained silent. Kauṣṭhīlananda⁸ saw that the Buddha had entered trance, and thus went to Śāriputra and bowing his head to his feet said: “Venerable Śāriputra, please tell me the essentials of the teachings.” Śāriputra then taught him the four noble truths and clearly explicated their meaning. He did this once, and then again, up to seven times. But Kauṣṭhīlananda’s confusions remained unresolved, so in a similar manner he bowed to the feet of [each of the] five hundred voice-hearers and requested to hear the essentials of the teachings. The voice-hearers similarly each expounded for him the teaching of the four noble truths seven times. But Kauṣṭhīlananda’s confusions remained unresolved, so he returned to the Buddha and paid him reverence.

1.3

爾時世尊從禪定起，見迦絺羅難陀頂禮佛足。淚如盛雨，勸請世尊：唯願為我轉正法輪。

1 The so-called *Kalandaka-veṇuvana*, a frequent setting of Buddhist sutras.

2 Below (1.165) Maudgalyāyana’s name is transcribed as 目捷羅夜那. Curiously there, in Kg and Sgz, we instead find 目捷連, the same transcription that appears here (1.2) in all versions. Kg and Sgz, likely representing a lineage derived from official Tang manuscript copies, thus seem to have been regularized vis à vis the putative original in which there were multiple transcriptions for the same name, stemming perhaps from the collation of originally separate material. Interestingly the transcription 目捷羅夜那 for Maudgalyāyana seems to appear in only one other extant text, the *Guo qu xian zai yin guo jing* 過去現在因果經, a collection of past-life tales translated in south China by Guṇabhadra during the first half of the fifth century (T.189:3.652a15–16).

3 Note that these four arhats are also the four whose students are presented to the Buddha in each of the four sutras of the *Chan Essentials*.

4 Following K, P, Q, Kg, and N(b). The Taishō is presumably a misprint.

5 N(b) is here missing the next 37 characters.

6 悟 Kg

7 悟 N(b)

8 From this point on the prefix “mahā” (“great”) is no longer used.

爾時世尊，復為廣說四真諦法，一遍乃至七遍。時迦絺羅難陀，猶故未解，五百天子，聞佛所說，得法眼淨，即持天華，以供養佛，白佛言：世尊，我等今者因迦絺羅難陀比丘，快得法利，見法如法，成須陀洹。

When the World-honored One had emerged from trance he saw Kauṣṭhīlananda with his head bowed at his feet. With tears raining down his face [Kauṣṭhīlananda] besought the World-honored One: “Please turn for me the wheel of the true Dharma!” At this time the World-honored One too explained to him the teaching of the four noble truths seven times. Just as before Kauṣṭhīlananda was unable to understand, but five hundred young gods, having heard the Buddha’s teaching, attained the pure Dharma-eye. They made offerings of heavenly flowers to the Buddha and said: “World-honored One, thanks to the monk Kauṣṭhīlananda we have today rapidly attained benefit, have seen the teaching as it [really] is,¹ and have become *śrotāpannas*.”

1.4

時迦絺羅難陀，聞諸天語，心懷慚愧，悲咽²無言，舉身投地，如太³山崩，即於佛前，四體布地，向佛懺悔。爾時阿難，即從坐起，整衣服，偏袒右肩，為佛作禮，繞佛三匝，胡跪合掌，白佛言：世尊，此迦絺羅難陀比丘，有何因緣，生而多智，四毘陀論，違⁴世羈經，日月星辰，一切技⁵藝，無不通達。復有何罪，出家以來，經歷多年，於佛法味，獨不得嘗⁶？如來世尊，親為說法，如生⁷聾人，無聞無得。佛法大將，隨順轉法輪者，數⁸有五百，為其說法，亦無有益。唯願天尊，為我分別，說此比丘往昔因緣。

When Kauṣṭhīlananda heard what these gods said he was deeply ashamed. Whimpering pitifully, without speaking he threw his body to the ground like the collapsing of a great mountain.⁹ Placing all four limbs on the ground before the Buddha he repented. At this time Ānanda arose from his seat, arranged his robes, and uncovering his right shoulder made reverence to the Buddha, circled him three times, knelt before him with his palms together, and said:

“World-honored One, why has this monk Kauṣṭhīlananda been born so wise, with mastery of the four Vedas, the Vaiśeṣika¹⁰ scriptures, astronomy, and all the technical arts. Further what sin did he commit such that he has been unable to taste the Buddha’s teaching even though he has been a monk for many years? You, the World-honored Tathāgata, have personally preached the Dharma for him, and yet like one deaf from birth he neither hears nor understands. The great generals of the Buddha’s teaching one after the other have turned the wheel of the

1 The text could also be punctuated 快得法利，見法，如法成須陀洹, as does Satō 1931, 179.

2 口+臺 N(b)

3 大 P, S, Q, Y, Kg, N(b)

4 韋 N(b)

5 伎 S, Kg

6 寤 S, Q, Y; 當 Kg; 掌 N(b)

7 坐 P

8 雖 Kg

9 On the expression “collapsing like a great mountain” (or perhaps “collapsing like Mt. Tai”), see Tanaka 1997.

10 The Vaiśeṣikas are a non-Buddhist school of Indian philosophy. It is not entirely certain that *wei shi ji* 違世羈 is indeed a transcription of this word as it does not appear in any other known text, but this seems to be the most likely interpretation, and if so is the earliest known reference to the Vaiśeṣikas in Chinese Buddhist texts.

Dharma. All five hundred have preached the Dharma for him, yet still it is no use. Please, oh honored one among the gods, explain this for me. Tell me about this monk's past deeds.”

1.5

阿難問時，佛即微笑，有五色光從口中出，繞佛七匝，還從頂入。告阿難言：諦聽諦聽，善思念之。我當為汝分別解說。阿難白佛言：唯然世尊，願樂欲聞。

After Ānanda had made this inquiry the Buddha smiled, and lights of five colors emerged from his mouth, circled him seven times, and then re-entered [his body] through the top of his head. He said to Ānanda: “Listen carefully, listen carefully, and ponder it well. I will now explain this matter for you.” Ānanda said to the Buddha: “May it be so, World-honored One, for I do earnestly desire to hear.”

1.6

佛告阿難：此迦絺羅難陀比丘，過去久遠無數劫時，有佛世尊，名曰然燈如來、應供、正遍知、明行足、善逝、世間解、無上士、調御丈夫、天人師、佛、世尊。彼佛法中，有一比丘，名阿純難陀，聰明多智，以多智故，憍慢放逸，亦不修習四念處法。身壞命終，墮黑闇地獄，從地獄出，生龍象中，五百身中，恒作龍王，五百身中，恒作象王。捨畜生身，因前出家持戒力故，得生天上。天上命終，來生人間。前身讀誦三藏經故，今得值佛。由前放逸不修四念處，是故今身不能覺寤¹。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Incalculable *kalpas* in the past, this monk Kauṣṭhīlananda [lived during the era of] a World-honored Buddha named Lamp-lighter [Dīpaṅkara], a Thus-come One, Worthy of Offerings, Of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Conduct and Wisdom, Well-gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed One, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World-honored One. During that buddha's ministry there was a wise and learned monk named Ārjavananda,² who because of his great learning became haughty and heedless and also failed to cultivate the four bases of mindfulness. When he reached the end of his bodily life he fell into a dark and gloomy hell. Emerging from hell he was reborn among the dragons and the elephants.³ For five hundred lifetimes he was reborn as a dragon-king, and for five hundred lifetimes as an elephant king. When he had finished life as an animal, owing to the power of having upheld the precepts while a monk he was reborn in the heavens. When his life in the heavens ended he was reborn as a human being. Because in a previous life he had chanted the Buddhist scriptures, he has now been able to meet a buddha. But because of having been heedless and having failed to cultivate the four bases of mindfulness, in his present life he has been unable to awaken.”

1 悟 Sgz, Kg

2 Reconstruction tentative. In the *Glossary of Indian Words* we find this transcription in the seemingly unrelated context of the name of one of the bodhisattva stages (T.2130:54.992c9). Based on the meaning given, this transcription can be reconstructed as Ārjavananda (Chen 2004, 41), and for lack of a better alternative I use this here.

3 The text here seems to treat *long* 龍 and *xiang* 象 as two different animals, and this may be evidence that the author was working in Chinese, as in the Chinese translations of Buddhist texts this compound usually simply means “elephant,” a translation of *hasti-nāga* (*Bongo jiten*, 319, 1553). Modern dictionaries of Buddhist terms indeed follow this (BGDJT, 142). Traditional Chinese commentators too knew that this was the meaning, and also that Chinese readers often wrongly took this as two words (T.1775:38.383b15–16; T.1781:38.964c19–20).

1.7

爾時迦絺羅難陀，聞佛此語，即從坐起，合掌長跪，白佛言：世尊，唯願天尊教我繫念。爾時佛告迦絺羅難陀：諦聽諦聽，善思念之。汝於今日，快問如來滅亂心賊甘露正法，三世諸佛，治煩惱藥，關¹閉一切諸放逸門，普為人天開八正道。汝好諦觀，莫令心亂。

When Kauṣṭhīlananda heard what the Buddha said he immediately got up from his seat, knelt with both knees on the ground, put his palms together, and said: “World-honored One, may you, oh honored one among the gods, please teach me how to concentrate my mind.”

The Buddha then said to Kauṣṭhīlananda: “Listen carefully, listen carefully, and ponder it well. You have today wasted no time in asking the Tathāgata for the ambrosia of the true teaching that destroys one’s rapacious, distracted mind, for the medicine of all buddhas of the three times that cures afflictions² and blocks all forms of heedlessness, and to reveal the true eight-fold path for all humans and gods. You must now contemplate carefully. Do not allow your mind to become distracted.”

1.8

佛說此語時，眾中有五十摩訶羅比丘，亦白阿難：世尊今者欲說除放逸法，我等隨順欲學此事。唯願尊者，為我白佛。說此³語時，佛告諸比丘：非但為汝，亦為未來諸放逸者，我今於此迦蘭竹園，為迦絺羅難陀比丘，說繫念法。

After the Buddha had spoken these words, fifty unlearned⁴ monks from the assembly also said to Ānanda: “The World-honored One is now going to teach the method for removing heedlessness. We too wish to take this opportunity to learn about this matter. Please venerable sir, speak to the Buddha about this on our behalf.” When they had said this, the Buddha said to these

1 [關] Kg

2 Indian Buddhist texts use a number of terms to describe the mental impurities that meditative cultivation (*bhāvanā*) is intended to eliminate, and whose final destruction constitutes liberation. These fall into three primary conceptual categories: words related to stain and defilement (*kleśa*), words related to bondage (*saṃyojana*), and words pertaining to latency and accumulation (*anuśaya*). Chinese translations of these terms were not consistent. The two most common ones, and those used most frequently in the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing*, are *fan nao* 煩惱 and *jie shi* 結使. The first of these seems to express the way that mental states characterized by these impurities are in fact unpleasant. Accordingly I will throughout translate this word as “affliction.” The connotations of *jie shi* 結使 are rather different. Here *jie* 結 seems to convey the idea of bondage (a “fetter” or a “tie”), but also that of latency and accumulation, as the more basic meaning of the word is “knot.” Meanwhile *shi* 使, most basically a verb meaning “order” or “command,” seems to convey the sense of an impulsion or constraint forcing one to act contrary to one’s will. The compound *jie shi* 結使 thus conveys the idea of an accumulated, constricting presence that not only impedes one’s freedom but actively directs one towards unwanted ends. An English word such as “yoke” might be the closest, but even here several levels of connotation are missing. In the absence of a perfectly satisfactory translation, I will here translate the compound *jie shi* 結使, as well as the characters individually when used in this meaning, as “defilement.”

3 是 Kg

4 *Mo he luo* 摩訶羅 transcribes *mahallaka*, “foolish,” or “unlearned” (BGDJT, 1278). It is notable that this word is strongly associated with the early fifth-century translation of the *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya* (*Mo he seng zhi lü* 摩訶僧祇律, T.1425), where it appears dozens of times as a term of abuse for foolish or misbehaving monks. As noted in chapter five, the *Mahāsāṅghika-vinaya* was used in the major temples of the southern Song during the first half of the fifth century, and as discussed in appendix one there are other points suggesting that the author of the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing* was familiar with it.

monks: “Not only for you, but also for all heedless people in the future will I now teach this method for concentrating the mind to the monk Kauṣṭhīlananda here in the bamboo garden of the Kalandaka birds.”

1.9

佛告迦絺羅難陀：汝受我語，慎莫忘¹失。汝從今日，修沙門法。沙門法者，應當靜處敷尼師壇²，結跏³趺坐，齊整衣服，正身端坐，偏袒右肩，左手著右手上，閉目以舌拄⁴腭，定心令住，不使分散。先當繫念著左脚⁵大指上，諦觀指半節，作泡⁶起想，諦觀極使明了。然後作泡⁷潰想。見指半節，極令白淨，如有白光。見此事已，次觀一節。令肉劈⁸去，見指一節，極令明了，如有白光。佛告迦絺羅難陀：如是名繫念法。迦絺羅難陀聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Kauṣṭhīlananda: “Hear my words and do not forget them. From today forward you must cultivate the monks practice [of meditation] as follows. In a quiet place you should spread out a sitting cloth, sit cross-legged, arrange your robes, straighten your body, and sit upright. Uncover your right shoulder and place your left hand on top of your right hand. Close your eyes and press your tongue against the palate. Calm your mind and make it still. Do not allow it to wander. First, fix your thoughts on the tip of your left big toe. Carefully contemplate one half of the toe bone⁹ and imagine a swelling. Carefully contemplate [the half bone] until this is very clear. Then imagine a burst-open swelling. When you see the half bone [beneath the now burst-open swelling] make it extremely white and pure, as if glowing with white light. Having seen these things next contemplate the entire toe bone, making the flesh strip away until you see the toe bone, extremely bright and clear as if glowing with white light.”

The Buddha said to Kauṣṭhīlananda: “This is called the method for fixing one’s thoughts.” When Kauṣṭhīlananda heard the Buddha’s words, he joyfully undertook to carry them out.

1.10

觀一節已，次觀二節，觀二節已，次觀三節。觀三節已，心漸廣大。當觀五節。見脚五節，如有白光，白骨分明。如是繫心，諦觀五節，不令馳散。心若馳散，攝令使還，如前念半節。念想成時，舉身煖燼¹⁰，心下熱。得此想時，名繫心住。

1 妄 Kg

2 檀 Sgz, Kg

3 加 Sgz, Kg

4 跂 Kg

5 [脚] Sgz

6 炮 P, S, Q, Y; 胞 Sgz

7 炮 P, S, Q, Y; 胞 Sgz

8 擘 S, Q, Y, P

9 The word *jie* 節 here and throughout the text seems often to mean “segment [of bone],” not “joint.” In other words the term functions as a measure word for bones. This use is occasionally attested in other sources (HYDZD, 2977a, citing the *Huai nan zi* 淮南子).

10 煖燼 = 燼煖 Sgz, Kg

Having¹ contemplated one bone, next contemplate two [toe] bones. Having contemplated two bones, next contemplate three bones. Having contemplated three bones, allow the mind to gradually expand.² You must then contemplate five bones [until you] see the five toe bones, as if glowing with white light, the white bones clear and distinct. Fix your mind in this manner, carefully contemplating the five [toe] bones without allowing it to wander. If the mind wanders, seize it firmly and bring it back.³ Then start [the above method] again by bringing to mind the half-bone [of the big toe].

When this meditation is complete your entire body will feel warm and there will be a sensation of heat below your heart. When you have attained this meditation it is known as “dwelling with well-fixed mind.”⁴

1.11

心既住已，復當起想，令⁵足趺肉兩向⁶披，見足趺骨。極令了了，見足趺骨，白如珂雪。此想成已，次觀踝骨，使肉兩向⁷披，亦見踝骨，極令皎白。次觀脛骨，使肉禡⁸落，自見脛骨，皎然大白。次觀膝骨，亦使皎然分明。次觀臑骨，亦使極白。次觀脇骨，想肉從一一脇間兩向禡⁹落，但見脇骨，白如珂雪，乃至見於脊骨，極令分明。次觀肩骨，想肩肉如以刀割，從肩至肘，從肘至腕，從腕至掌，從掌至指端，皆令肉兩向¹⁰披，見半身白骨。見半身白骨已，次觀頭皮。見頭皮已，次觀薄¹¹皮，觀薄¹²皮已，次觀膜。觀膜已，

- 1 Presumably here the intention is that this be the speech of the Buddha, but note that this is not explicitly stated.
- 2 The expression “[allow] the mind to gradually expand” 心漸廣大 occurs elsewhere in the *Chan Essentials* and also in two of the Contemplation Scriptures, always seeming to refer to the moment when the object of contemplation is multiplied (*Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T.643:15.691a22–23; *Medicine King Contemplation*, T.1161:20.662c15).
- 3 The expression “seize [the mind] firmly and bring it back” 攝令使還 is a slight variant of “grasp [the mind] and return it [to the object]” 攝之令還, a common expression in fifth-century meditation texts that seems to originally derive from Kumārajīva’s *chan* texts (*Meditation Scripture*, T.614:15.272b7–8; *Explanations of Meditation*, T.616:15.296b5; *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.215b20–21).
- 4 The wording here suggests that 繫心住 is a technical name. And indeed in Guṇabhadra’s early fifth-century translation of the *Saṃyuktāgama* (*Za a han jing* 雜阿含經) this expression is a regular translation of (taking the Pāli equivalent) *anupassī viharati* (compare for example 內身身觀繫心住，精勤方便，正念正知，除世間貪憂, T.99:2.140a14–16, with its corresponding *idhāvuso, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam*, SN 5.299). However elsewhere in this text we find the same expression in places where *xi xin* 繫心 renders *suppatiṭṭhitacittā* (“with mind well-fixed”), and 住 again seems to translate *viharati* (T.99:2.172b2–3, corresponding to *catūsu satipaṭṭhānesu suppatiṭṭhitacittā viharantiyo*, SN 5.154). For other examples, see T.99:2.72a26; 271a22–25.
- 5 念 Kg
- 6 何 Kg
- 7 何 Kg
- 8 陁 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz. Kg is close to 禡. These characters seem to be interchangeable.
- 9 陁 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz; Kg is close to 禡
- 10 何 Kg
- 11 落 Kg
- 12 落 Kg

次觀腦。觀腦已，次觀[肪¹]{脈}。觀[肪]{脈}已，次觀咽喉。觀咽喉已，次觀肺膈²。

After the mind is settled you must further imagine the flesh on the top of the foot to split wide open³ so that you see the upper foot bone. Make it extremely clear, so that you see the upper foot bone to be white like snow or white *ke-jade*.⁴

When this meditation is complete next contemplate the ankle bones⁵ and make the flesh split open so that you see the ankle bone as well, making it brilliantly white. Next contemplate the calf bone and make the flesh fall off so that you see the calf bone, brilliantly white. Next contemplate the knee bone and make it too brilliantly white and clear. Next contemplate the thigh bone and make it too extremely white.⁶ Next contemplate the ribs. Imagine that the flesh splits open from between each rib and falls off, so that you see only the rib bones, white like snow or [white] *ke-jade*. [Continue for each rib (?)] until you see the spine, making it extremely clear. Next contemplate the bones of the shoulder. Imagine the flesh of the shoulder as if cut with a knife from the shoulder to the forearm, the wrist, the hand, then all the way to the tips of the fingers. Across this whole area cause the flesh to split open such that you see half your body as a skeleton. Having seen half your body as a skeleton next contemplate the skin on the head. Having seen the skin on the head next contemplate the inner layer of skin. Having contemplated the inner layer of skin next contemplate the [brain] membranes.⁷ Having contemplated the [brain] membranes next contemplate the brain. Having contemplated the brain next contemplate the channels⁸ [attached to the brain]. Having contemplated the channels next contemplate the throat.

1 昉 Sgz

2 俞 P, S, Q, Y, Kg; 愈 Sgz

3 For another example of the curious expression *liang xiang* 兩向 that helps clarify its meaning, see 5.59.

4 The character *ke* 珂 occurs frequently in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* to describe the color of pure, white bones. Chinese glossaries gives several meanings. The *Glosses on the Canon* cites several authorities giving various definitions such as “a white jade used as a belt ornament,” “a white stone second in quality to jade,” “coral,” or “a conch” (T.2128:54.329c3; 501b23–24). In Dharmarakṣa’s early fourth-century translation of the *Lotus Sutra* 白如珂雪 translates *śaśi-śaṅkha-pāṇḍara*, “white like a moon-conch” (T.263:9.132b2–3; Karashima 1998, 252). I here translate as “white *ke-jade*,” opting for the jade connotations rather than the shell connotations, which given the pervasive trope of jade-like bones in China seems likely to be more apposite.

5 *Glosses on the Canon* explains *huai* 踝 here as the four protruding spots on the ankles (T.2128:54.314a11).

6 *Glosses on the Canon* takes 臑 as either the thigh, 髀上, or sacrum, 尻 (T.2128:54.750a10). Here thigh seems preferable.

7 The word *mo* 膜 is a standard item in lists of the body parts in Chinese Buddhist texts, where it usually translates *mastakaluṅgaṃ* (or its middle-Indic equivalent), which the *Glosses on the Canon* clearly explains (commenting on a different text) to mean a membranous material within the brain (T.2128:54.318b2–3). In Indic sources the term *mastakaluṅgaṃ* occurs in some, but not all body-part lists together with *mastakaṃ* (Glass 2007, 52–56). And while these two words are understood by Andrew Glass to mean “head” (*mastakaṃ*) and “brains” (*mastakaluṅgaṃ*) the standard Chinese translation of *mastakaṃ* as *nao* 腦 (“brains”), along with explanations such as the passage cited above from the *Glosses on the Canon*, suggest that this word really means, at least in this context, the material *within* the head (see also SUS 2.5.2 where *mastakaṃ* is classified as belonging to the water element). As for the meaning of *mo* 膜, however, though in the present passage the meaning seems to be the “membrane” within the head specifically, later in the *Chan Essentials* the word appears to be used to refer to a third layer of skin in addition to the “outer [thick] skin” (厚皮) and “inner [thin] skin” (薄皮; see below 1.51). Indeed in the *Methods for Curing* (5.24) it is clearly implied that the “membrane” associated with the brain is simply a special instance of a more pervasive “membrane” found throughout the body.

8 Although *fang* 肪 is often found in lists of the body parts in Chinese Buddhist texts, where it often translates

Having contemplated the throat next contemplate the lung-point¹.

1.12

觀肺膺²已，見心、肺、肝、大腸³、小腸、脾、腎、生藏、熟藏。四十戶蟲，在生藏中，戶領八十億小蟲。一一蟲從諸脈生孚乳產生，凡⁴有三億，口含生藏。一一蟲⁵有四十九頭，其頭尾細猶如針鋒。此諸蟲等，二十⁶戶是火蟲，從火精生。二十⁷戶是風蟲，從風氣起。是諸蟲等，出⁸入諸脈，遊戲自在。火蟲動風，風蟲動火，更相⁹呼吸，以熟生藏，上下往復，凡有七反。此諸蟲等，各有七眼，眼皆出火，復有七[身]{耳}¹⁰。吸火動身，以熟生藏。生藏熟已，各復還走，入諸脈中。

Having contemplated the lung-point you will see the heart, lungs, liver, large intestine, small intestine, spleen, kidneys, receptacle of undigested food, and receptacle of digested food.¹¹ Within the receptacle of undigested food there are forty kinds of worms, and for each kind there

vasā, “fat,” it is clearly out of place in this context, as having reached the head the meditator now proceeds inwards and then down through the neck into the rest of the body. This word thus should mean something within the head but above the neck. Indeed we may consult section 5.24 of the *Methods for Curing*, which seems to invoke the same anatomy given here (including the rare term *fei yu* 肺膺), where we find 脈 but not 肪, and where it is clear, based on other details, that 脈 is correct. In that passage we also see that the “channels” in question are those joining the brain to other parts of the body. I will thus assume that here 脈 must be correct.

1 *Fei yu* 肺膺, translated here as “lung-point,” is glossed in the *Glosses on the Canon* commentary to the *Methods for Curing* (T.2128:54.668c23; said also to be written as 肺俞). We also find a gloss to the term 肺腴 (how the word is written in some versions of the *Methods for Curing*) in the entry for the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.2128:54.595a11). In any of these forms this word appears in only three known Chinese Buddhist texts—the *Chan Essentials*, the *Methods for Curing*, and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*. The *Glosses on the Canon* entry for the *Methods for Curing* explains it as the acupuncture / moxibustion point (針灸之穴) associated with the lungs, noting that similar points exist for all five organs, and this meaning is said to be found in “various medical books such as the *Ming tang* 明堂” (presumably referring to the *Ming tang zha jing* 明堂灸經, an early acupuncture / moxibustion treatise). Such “vital points” (膺) are mentioned in the *Ling shu* 靈樞 (*Ling shu*, 51), positioned in between different vertebrae three *cun* 寸 from the spine. The “lung-point” is the first of the five, located at the third vertebrae. Meanwhile the glosses on the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* give a slightly different explanation, and cite the lost *Cang jie pian* 蒼頡篇 lexicon with the meaning of “throat” (咽喉). The idea seems similar here as the third vertebrae is roughly at the bottom of the neck.

2 俞 P, S, Q, Y, Kg; 愈 Sgz

3 脇 Kg

4 几 Kg

5 [蟲] Sgz

6 [十] Sgz, Kg

7 [十] Sgz, Kg

8 互(?) Kg

9 想 Kg

10 耳 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

11 The terms 生藏 and 熟藏 are found in Buddhist texts as translations of the Indian anatomical terms *āmāsaya* and *pakvāsaya* respectively. On the terms for stomach-like things, see the notes to section 1.61.

are eighty million¹ smaller worms.² Each worm is born, nurtured, and raised within the channels [of the body].³ About three million of them clasp the receptacle of undigested food with their mouths. Each worm has forty-nine heads, their heads and tails as thin as the tip of a needle. Of these worms, twenty [of the forty] kinds are fire worms born from the essence of fire. Twenty are wind worms that arise from the essence of wind. These various worms go in and out of the channels playing freely. The fire worms stir up [the body's] wind [element] while the wind worms stir up [the body's] fire element. Blowing upon each other in this way they cook the [food in] the receptacle of undigested food. [The worms] go up and down seven times (?). Each worm has seven eyes that shoot fire and also seven ears. Exhaling fire and wiggling their bodies they cook [the food in] the receptacle of undigested food. When the [food in] the receptacle of undigested food is cooked the worms return to the channels.

1.13

復有四十戶蟲，戶領三億小蟲，身赤如火，蟲有十二頭，頭有四口，口⁴含熟藏，脈間流血。皆觀令見。見此事已，又見諸蟲從咽喉出。

There are another forty kinds of worms, and for each kind there are three million small worms whose bodies are as red as fire. [They each have] twelve heads and each head has four mouths that clasp the receptacle of digested food, [causing?] blood to flow within the channels. Contemplate them all and make them visible. Having seen these things you will further see the various worms go up through the throat.

1.14

又觀小腸、肝、肺、脾、腎，皆令流注入大腸中，從咽喉出，墮於前地。此想成已，即見前地，屎尿臭處，及諸虯蟲更相纏縛。諸蟲口⁵中，流出膿血，不淨盈滿。此想成已，自見己身，如白雪人，節節相拄⁶。

Further, contemplate your small intestine, liver, lungs, spleen, and kidneys. Make them all liquify and flow into your large intestine, then out your throat and onto the ground.⁷

1 The word *yi* 億 is used in several meanings in Buddhist texts, both in the Chinese fashion as a concrete number meaning one hundred thousand (十萬), as well as in translations of words like *koṭi* where the sense is “a very large number” (Funayama 1998, 287n24). Throughout my translation I will assume the vague sense of “a very large number,” and translate accordingly as “millions.”

2 *Hu* 戶, “household” or “family,” appears to be a measure word for kinds or classes of worms. Note that the late third-century translation of the *Stages of the Path of Practice* similarly indicates 80 species of worms in the human body, and this number agrees with the *Chan Essentials* (which here gives two sets of forty), though in the former text these worms live throughout the body, not just in the digestive track (T.606:15.188a28–29). These “families” of worms come up again throughout the *Chan Essentials*. In some cases we find the number “eighty-thousand” (八萬). In manuscripts, however, 萬 is usually written 万, so these might be errors for 十.

3 Translation tentative.

4 +四 Kg

5 [口] Sgz

6 跬 Kg

7 This passage implies that food travels from the stomach to the “large” intestine. A similar anatomical description is found in the *Methods for Curing* (T.620:15.333c8–10). Other Chinese Buddhist translations similarly describe food flowing from the “large” intestine to the “small” intestine (*Zhong a han jing* 中阿含經, T.26:1.505c4–9;

When this meditation is complete, you will see on the ground [a heap of] shit and piss, and various tapeworms¹ crawling all over each other. Pus and blood flow from their impurity-filled mouths.

When this meditation is complete, you will suddenly see yourself as a snow-white [skeleton], all the joints connected.²

1.15

若見黃黑，當更悔過。既悔過已，自見己身骨上生皮。皮悉褫³落，聚在前地，漸漸長大，如鉢多羅。復更長大，似如瓮⁴垆，乃至大如乾闥婆樓。或大或小，隨心自在。又漸增⁵長，猶如大⁶山。而有諸蟲，啖食此山，流出膿血。有無數蟲，遊走膿裏。復見皮山，漸漸爛壞，唯有少在，諸蟲競食。

If [on the other hand] you see a yellow or black [skeleton], you must repent your transgressions further. Having repented your transgressions you will see the skin [which still remained] on your bones fall off,⁷ forming a pile on the ground that will grow gradually larger [until as big as a] monks bowl. It grows larger still [until] as big as a large urn, [then continuing] until as big as a tower of the Gandharvas. It freely follows your mind, [becoming] big or small [as you wish]. It again gradually expands until [as big as] a large mountain. Various worms chew at this heap, pus and blood flowing [from their mouths]. Innumerable worms squirm about within the pus. You will further see this mountain of skin gradually decay until only a small amount remains and the worms vie with each other to eat it.

1.16

有四夜叉，忽從地出，眼中出火，舌⁸如毒蛇，而有六頭，頭各異相。一者如山，二者如貓，三者如虎，四者如狼，五者如狗，六者如鼠。又其兩手，猶如猿猴。其十指端，一一皆有四頭毒蛇。一者雨水，二者雨土，三者雨石，四者雨火。又其左脚似鳩槃荼鬼。右脚似於毘舍闍鬼，現醜惡形，甚可怖畏。時四夜叉，一一荷負九種死屍⁹，隨次行列，住行者前。

corresponding to the *Devadūta-sutta*, MN 3.185). This passage, for example, clearly describes the order of digestion as 大腸 → 小腸 → 胃, corresponding to *udaram*, *antam*, *antagūṇam* in the Pāli. This calls into question the idea that *wei* 胃 is generally a translation of *udaram* (“stomach”). Other texts present the same sequence, so this is not an isolated occurrence (*Stages of the Path of Practice*, T.606:15.187a20–22).

1 The *Glosses on the Canon*, citing the lost *Cang jie pian* 蒼頡, explains 虬蟲 as “bugs living in the stomach” (T.2128:54.595a13).

2 In other words not yet fallen into disjointed bones.

3 陁 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz; 褫 Kg

4 盆 Sgz

5 漸 P, S, Q, Y

6 太 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

7 Here I take 生 as an adjective (“living skin”) rather than a verb (“skin grows”). The point would seem to be that the yellow or black skeleton is so colored because of skin still attached to its surface. When the repentance is successful, this skin then falls off and is consumed.

8 互? Kg

9 尸 Kg

Four *yakṣa*-demons¹ suddenly spring out of the ground, their eyes flaming, their tongues like poisonous snakes. [Each] has six heads, and each head is different—one like a mountain, [the rest] like the heads of a cat, a tiger, a wolf, a dog, and a rat. Further [each demons'] two hands are like those of an ape. The tips of each of their ten fingers are poisonous snakes with four heads, one spraying water, one spraying dirt, one spraying rocks and one spraying fire. The left legs [of the four *yakṣa*-demons] resemble those of *kumbhāṇḍa*-demons, and their right legs those of *piśācā*-demons. Their horrid appearance is truly frightful. These four *yakṣas* then stand in a line before the practitioner, each bearing on its back the nine kinds of corpses.

1.17

佛告迦絺羅難陀：是名不淨想最初境界。佛告阿難：汝持是語，慎莫忘失，為未來眾生敷演廣說此甘露法三乘聖種。

The Buddha said to Kauṣṭhīlananda: “This is the first verificatory vision² of the meditation on impurity.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Preserve these words. Be sure not to forget them. This method of ambrosia, a seed [for the attainment of] sanctity [in] the three vehicles, is to be thoroughly expounded for sentient beings in the future age.”

1.18

時迦絺羅難陀，聞佛說此語，一一諦觀，經九十日，不移心想，至七月十五日，僧自恣竟。時諸比丘，禮世尊已，各還所安。於日後分，次第³修得四沙門果，三明六通，皆悉具足。心大歡喜，頂禮佛足，白佛言：世尊，我於今日，因思惟故，因正受故，依三昧故，生分已盡，不受後有，知如道真，必定得成，清淨梵行。世尊，此法是甘露器⁴，受用此者，食甘露味。唯願天尊，重為廣說。

Having heard the Buddha speak these words Kauṣṭhīlananda then carefully contemplated each of these things, and for ninety days thought of nothing else. When the fifteenth day of the seventh month arrived and the community of monks had ended their summer retreat, all the monks made reverence to World-honored One and then each went off where they wished. In the later part of the day [Kauṣṭhīlananda] cultivated and attained, one after the other, the four holy fruits,⁵ thereby fully acquiring the three knowledges and six supernatural powers.

Overjoyed, he bowed his head to the Buddha's feet and said: “World-honored One, today, through meditation, absorption, and *samādhi* [I have attained the fruits such that] my life allotment is now ended, I will not be reborn again, and I truly know that I have definitely

1 Although in Indian mythology *yakṣas* are not always evil or demonic, in the present text they are indistinguishable from various other evil spirits, and I have in general added the word “demon” after all of these terms so as to convey the basic meaning easily while still retaining the flavor of the transcriptions as they appear in the Chinese.

2 On *jing jie* 境界 as “verificatory visions,” see chapter one.

3 篤 Q

4 +器 Kg

5 Literally “the four fruits of a *śrāmaṇa*” (四沙門果)

completed [the practice] and am completely pure.¹ World-honored One, this teaching is like a vessel of ambrosia. One who uses it will experience the taste of ambrosia. May you, honored one among the gods, thoroughly expound it once again!”

1.19

爾時世尊，告迦絺羅難陀：汝今審實得此法者，可隨汝意作十八變。時迦絺羅難陀，住立空中，隨意自在，作十八變。時諸比丘見迦絺羅難陀，我慢心多，猶能調伏，隨順佛教，繫心一處，不隨諸根，成阿羅漢。爾時會中，有千五百比丘亂心多者，見此事已，皆生歡喜，即詣佛所，次第受法。

The World-honored One then said to Kauṣṭhīlananda: “If you have really obtained these things you should be able to easily perform the eighteen displays of supernatural power.”

Kauṣṭhīlananda then immediately flew into the air and effortlessly performed the eighteen displays of supernatural power. All the other monks then saw that even the conceited and arrogant Kauṣṭhīlananda had been tamed [by the Buddha], and that following the Buddha’s instructions had become an arhat by fixing his mind on a single spot without becoming distracted by sensory perceptions.

At this time in the assembly there were 1,500 monks with unruly minds. When they had seen [Kauṣṭhīlananda become an arhat] they all rejoiced, immediately went before the Buddha, and one after the other received this method [of meditation].²

1.20

爾時世尊，因此憍慢比丘摩訶迦絺羅難陀，初制繫念法。告諸四眾：若比丘，若比丘尼，若優婆塞³優婆夷，自今以⁴後，欲求無為道者，應當繫⁵念專心一處。若使此心，馳騁六根，猶如猿猴，無有慚愧，當知此人，是旃陀羅，非賢聖種。心不調順，阿鼻獄卒，常使此人。如是惡人，於多劫中，無由得度。此亂心賊，生三界種，依因此心，墮⁶三惡道。時諸比丘聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

At this time the World-honored One, because of this haughty monk Kauṣṭhīlananda, for the first time instituted the rules concerning mental concentration.⁷ He said to the four-fold assembly: “From now on, monks, nuns, laymen or laywomen who strive for the unconditioned path⁸ must fix their thoughts and focus their minds on a single spot. If they [instead] shamelessly allow their minds to run wild like a monkey among the six senses, then know that such people

1 It may also be possible to read 必定得成清淨梵行 as a single phrase, such that 清淨梵行 is the object of 得成.

2 The story here seems to emphasize that meditation instructions are tailored to the student and thus must be received individually.

3 +若 Sgz, Kg

4 已 P, S, Y, Sgz

5 騁 Q

6 隨 Q

7 On the style here, which invokes the presentation of new rules in the *vinaya*, see appendix one.

8 “Unconditioned path” is *wu wei dao* 無為道, literally “the path of non-doing.” *Wu wei* 無為 is an ancient translation of *nirvāṇa*, but was also used for other technical terms such as *asaṃskṛta* (“unconditioned”).

are outcasts¹ who do not belong to the lineage of the noble ones.² Their minds untamed, they will become the slaves of the guardians of Avīci [hell]. Evil people such as this will be unable to attain liberation for many *kalpas*. These wicked unruly people belong to the lineage of those destined for birth in the triple world,³ [and within the triple world] because of their [unruly] minds they will fall onto the three evil paths [of rebirth].”

When the monks had heard the Buddha’s words they joyfully undertook to carry them out.

1.21

佛告阿難：汝今見此摩訶迦絺羅難陀比丘，因不淨觀，得解脫不。汝好受持，為眾廣說。阿難白佛：唯然受教。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Do you see this monk Kauṣṭhīlananda, who has obtained liberation through the contemplation of impurity?⁴ You must preserve [this teaching] and preach it for the assembly.” Ānanda said to the Buddha: “It will be thus.”

1.22

佛告阿難：諦聽諦聽，善思念之。第二觀者，繫念額上，諦觀額中，如爪甲大，慎莫移⁵想。如是觀額，令心安住，不生諸想，唯想額上。然後自觀頭骨，見頭骨白如頗梨⁶色。如是漸見舉身白骨，皎然白淨，身體完⁷全，節節相拄⁸。復見前地諸不淨聚，如上所說。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Listen carefully, listen carefully, and ponder it well. In the second contemplation [the practitioner]⁹ should fix his thoughts on his forehead and without shifting his thoughts to anything else carefully contemplate an area in the center of his forehead the size of a fingernail. In this manner he should still his mind in the contemplation of his forehead. He must think only about his forehead without producing other thoughts. Following this he must contemplate his skull, [whereupon] he will see his skull to be as white as crystal. In this manner he gradually sees his entire body as white bones, brilliantly white and pure, the [bones of] the body fully complete and mutually connected. He further sees a heap of impurities on the ground, as was explained previously.¹⁰

1.23

不淨想成時，慎莫棄身，當教易觀。易觀法者，想諸節間白光流出，其明熾盛，猶如雪山。見此事已，前不淨聚，夜叉吸去。

1 Literally *caṇḍālas*, those below even the lowest of the four traditional *varṇas*.

2 On the use of *xian sheng* 賢聖 to translate *ārya* in Chinese Buddhist texts, see Funayama 2005, 380.

3 Translation tentative. My best guess is that 三界種 is meant to contrast with 賢聖種 in the previous sentence.

4 Here something has perhaps been lost, as the connection between this sentence and the next is not clear.

5 雜 S,Q,Y

6 梨 Q

7 Kg

8 拄 Kg

9 From this point onward the Buddha’s instructions are no longer directed to Kauṣṭhīlananda, and I translate in the third person.

10 This appears to refer to the instructions from section 1.15 through 1.16

When the meditation on impurity is complete, so that he does not attempt to end his life¹ he should be taught an “inverse contemplation.”² The method for the inverse contemplation is to imagine white light radiating from between the bones [of his skeleton], blazing brightly like [the gleam of] snow-covered mountains. When he has seen this, the *yakṣas* suck up the pile of impurities before him.³

1.24

復當想⁴前，作一骨人，極令大白。此想成已，次想第二骨人。見二骨人已，見三骨人。見三骨人已，見四骨人。見四骨人已，見五骨人。如是乃至見十骨人。見十骨人已，見

1 The idea is that the contemplation of impurity might lead to excessive disgust with the body and hence an urge to commit suicide, a problem mentioned in early stories found in the *vinaya* (Wiltshire 1983).

2 The “inverse contemplation,” or sometimes “inverse meditation” (*yi xiang* 易想) is a concept that occurs throughout the *Chan Essentials* (see 1.43, 1.48, 1.50, 1.84, 1.97, and 3.61–3.62), and in general it refers to practices prescribed to counteract the negative effects of the previous exercise. This often involves a contemplation of the emptiness of whatever object was previously seen, though we also find cases, as in the present passage, where the goal is to generate a contrary mental state (thus here the meditator imagines pure light in contrast to the foul impurity of the previous passage). There are many other scenes that seem to take place in a similar manner even though this word is not used.

Although the exact source of this expression is not clear, it may be a technical term, and if so a likely candidate is *vivarta* (in Pāli, *vivaṭṭanā*), “turning [away],” fifth of the six stages of *ānāpāna* as found in meditation manuals from Gandhāra and Sarvāstivāda-Vaiśāhika Abhidharma sources more generally. (Pāli sources know a related list of eight stages; see Vism, 278.) In Sarvāstivādin sources the fifth stage is the key moment in *ānāpāna* practice, when the meditator leaves behind the contemplation of the “particular characteristic” (*svalakṣana*) of breath itself and begins to practice the *smṛtyupasthāna* proper by considering breath from the point of view of its *samānya-lakṣana*, its general characteristics such as impermanence, non-self and so forth, “marks” that in truth characterize all phenomena (Matsuda 1989, 19). In the Sarvāstivādin system abandoning the defilements can take place only through the contemplation of a given object’s *samānya-lakṣana*, so this stage of *ānāpāna* formally marks the beginning of soteriologically effective meditation practice.

When we look at how this stage of *vivarta* was translated and explained in fifth-century Chinese texts we see some potential connections to the “inverse contemplation” of the *Chan Essentials*. Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*, for example, translates this term as “the shifting [of] contemplation” (轉觀), and explains it as follows: “[Having mastered the fourth stage, ‘contemplation’ 觀,] one abandons abiding in the ‘gate of wind,’ and departs from the practice of coarse contemplation. To depart from coarse contemplation means that one knows that the breath [which had been the previous object of contemplation] is impermanent. This is called the ‘shifting of one’s contemplation.’ One [now] contemplates that the five aggregates are impermanent, and also considers that the in- and out-breath, in their arising and passing away, are impermanent. One sees that the initial breath does not come from anywhere. One next contemplates that the subsequent breath too lacks any traces [of coming and going]. [These two breaths] come into existence when the proper causes and conditions are present, and go out of existence when those causes and conditions disperse. This is called the method of ‘shifting one’s contemplation.’” 捨風門住，離麤觀法。離麤觀法，知息無常，此名轉觀。觀五陰無常，亦念入息出息生滅無常。見初頭息，無所從來。次觀後息亦無跡處，因緣合故有，因緣散故無。是名轉觀法。(T.614:15.275b7–11; for a somewhat different translation, see Yamabe and Sueki 2009, 29–30).

In the previous four stages the meditator had been concentrating on aspects of the breath itself. Here, it seems, a new level is reached. The expression “abandons abiding in the gate of wind” 捨風門住 may well mean, as Yamabe and Sueki would have it, that one now no longer keeps the mind fixed upon the nose (the “gate of wind”) as had been specified in stages three and four (“abiding” 止 and “contemplating” 觀). But it also seems to indicate that the object of contemplation is now no longer the breath qua breath (wind). In other words that, following the interpretation from Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma sources, one “shifts” from the contemplation of the

二十骨人。見二十骨人已，見三十骨人。見三十骨人已，見四十¹骨人。見四十骨人已，見一室內滿中骨人，前後左右²，行列相向，各舉右手，向於行者。

Next he should direct his imagination before himself and create a skeleton, making it extremely white. When this meditation is complete he should next imagine a second skeleton. Having seen two skeletons, he sees three skeletons. Having seen three skeletons, he sees four skeletons. Having seen four skeletons, he sees five skeletons. He should continue in this manner until he has seen ten skeletons. Having seen ten skeletons, he sees twenty skeletons. Having seen twenty skeletons, he sees thirty skeletons. Having seen thirty skeletons, he sees forty skeletons. Having seen forty skeletons, he sees an entire room filled with skeletons, in front, behind, to the left and to the right, row upon row without any space between them, each raising its right hand and pointing it at the practitioner.

1.25

是時行者，漸漸廣大，見一庭內³，滿中骨人，行行相向，白如珂雪，各舉右手，向於行者。心復廣大，見一頃地，滿中骨人，行行相向，各舉右手，向於行者。心漸廣大，見一由旬 … 百由旬 … 閻浮提 … 弗婆提 … 瞿耶尼 … 鬱單越。

At this time the practitioner gradually expands [his meditation] until he sees the inside of the entire building filled with skeletons, row upon row without any space between them, white as *ke*-jade or snow, each raising its right hand and pointing it at him. Next, he should expand his mind further until he sees an acre of land filled with skeletons⁴ . . . a *yojana*⁵ . . . a hundred

breath's *svalakṣana* (wind) to the contemplation of the breath's *samaṇya-lakṣana* (impermanence, etc.) We may also note the wording in Kumārajīva's translation, *zhuan guan* 轉觀, which Yamabe and Sueki translate as "the shifting contemplation." Here it is probably significant that the word "contemplation" 觀 is also the name of the previous (fourth) stage. None of the other six stages have the word "contemplation" 觀 as part of their titles, so the sense here may not be "shifting contemplation" so much as the "shifting of [the previous stage of] contemplation." If so, the meaning would seem to be similar to the term *yi guan* 易觀 from the *Chan Essentials*.

Finally, and most significantly, we should note the specific language used in the *Meditation Scripture* to describe how the breath is now to be contemplated as impermanent, in particular the expression "has nowhere from which it comes" 無所從來. This is remarkably close to the language used in many of the "inverse contemplations" from the *Chan Essentials*, which similarly proceed by analyzing the impermanence, non-self, and dependent origination of the previously contemplated object. In the *Chan Essentials*, however, we also see rather different forms of "inverse contemplations," such as the imagination of a seemingly opposite kind of object (such as the passage here, where blazing white light is imagined as the "inverse" of the previously undertaken contemplation of the skeleton). Nevertheless the close similarity between these "inverse contemplations" and the stage of *vivarta* from the Sarvāstivādin accounts of *ānāpāna* would seem to suggest a connection.

3 These *yakṣas* would seem to be the same ones that had appeared in 1.16.

4 思 Q

1 四十 = 卅 Kg

2 左右 = 在在 Kg

3 中 Sgz

4 Here and throughout the remainder of the translation I have often elided the lengthy repetitions that occur when a given passage is repeated verbatim for increasingly large areas.

5 A *yojana* is usually understood as a unit of length (MW, 858). However here and throughout the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* it is used as if it were a unit of area. It is possible that the intention is simply "a [square]

yojanas . . . all of Jambudvīpa . . . [the other continents of] Pūrvavideha . . . Godānīya . . . Uttarakuru.¹

1.26

見四天下滿中骨人已，身心安隱，無驚怖想。心漸廣大，見百閻浮提² … 百弗婆提 … 百瞿耶尼 … 百鬱單越。

Having thus seen the entire world beneath the heavens filled with skeletons, [the practitioner's] body and mind feel at ease, and he is without any thought of terror at all. He then should gradually expand his mind until he sees [an area the size of] a hundred continents of Jambudvīpa filled with skeletons, row up on row without any space between them, each raising its right hand and pointing it at him. Having seen a hundred continents of Jambudvīpa, he should see a hundred Pūrvavidehas . . . a hundred Godānīyas . . . a hundred Uttarakurus.

1.27

見此事已，身心安樂³，無驚怖想⁴。心想⁵利故，見娑婆世界，滿中骨人，皆垂兩手，伸舒十指，一切齊立，向於行⁶者。

When he has seen these things his body and mind will become calm and joyful, without any thought of terror. With his imagination now sharpened,⁷ he will see the entire universe filled with skeletons. Each lowers⁸ its two hands and extends its ten fingers. Standing in straight lines, they face the practitioner.

yojana” or something like this. More speculatively, the hypothetical Chinese author may have been unclear about the meaning of the term. For the purpose of the translation I will simply treat the word as if it were a unit of area.

1 In Indian Buddhist cosmology these are the four land-masses of this world.

2 The text here repeats itself exactly for each of the continents.

3 隱 Sgz

4 相 Kg

5 相 Kg

6 +行 Kg

7 The expression “his imagination now sharpened” (心想利) occurs several other times in the *Chan Essentials* (1.65; 3.8), and also with a similar meaning in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* in the context of the contemplation of buddha-images: “When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner's] mind becomes calm and his body feels joyful. Whether walking or standing still, his imagination sharpened, he sees an entire acre filled with buddha-images.” 此想成已，心得安隱，身體悅樂。若行若止，心想利故，見一頃地滿中佛像。(T.643:15.691a19–21). Here too the meditator has been imagining an increasing number of the same image. He then experiences bodily and mental well-being, following which he is able to see, as the result of his new-found powers of “imagination” (心想), a larger field filled with the object. In another passage from the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* those whose “minds are not sharp” (心不利) will not be able to see the buddhas during meditation but must await them in a dream (T.643:15.663a10–11). The *Samantabhadra Contemplation* also uses this same phrase: “Having seen one buddha, [the practitioner] will next see another. In this manner he will gradually see all the buddhas of the eastern direction. Then, his imagination sharpened, he will see all the buddhas of the ten directions.” 見一佛已，復見一佛。如是漸漸，遍見東方一切諸佛。心[相]{想}利故，遍見十方一切諸佛 (T.277:9.390c4–6).

8 This seems to represent a shift from the previous sections where the skeletons each raised (舉) their arms.

1.28

于時行者，見此事已，出定入定，恒見骨人。山河石壁，一切世事，皆悉變化¹，猶如骨人。爾時行者²見此事已，於四方面，見四大水，其流迅駛³，色白如乳。見諸骨人，隨流沈沒。

When the practitioner has seen these things, whether or not he is in trance he will always see [these] skeletons. Mountains, rivers, rocks, walls, and all things in the world transform into skeletons. When the practitioner has seen this, in each of the four directions he will see four great fast-flowing rivers, milk-white in color. He will see the skeletons swept away by the current.

1.29

此想成時，復更懺悔。但[純見]{見純?}水，涌[住]{注}⁴空中。復當起想，令⁵水恬靜。

When this meditation is complete [the practitioner should] repent further until he sees [the milk-white water become] pure and clear, surging upwards into the air. He should then imagine that the water becomes calm and still.

1.30

佛告阿難：此名凡夫心想白骨白光涌⁶出三昧，亦名凡夫心[海⁷]{想?}生死境界相。我今因迦絺羅難陀，為汝及未來一切眾生等，說是白骨白光涌⁸出三昧門，為攝亂心渡⁹生死海。汝當受持慎勿忘失。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: This is called the “*samādhi* of the surging white radiance of the white bones [produced by] the imagination of ordinary non-enlightened beings.” It is also called the “verificatory vision of birth and death¹⁰ [produced by] the imagination of ordinary non-enlightened beings.” Because of Kauṣṭhīlananda, I have today spoken for you and all sentient beings of the future this method of the *samādhi* of the surging white radiance of the white bones, so that you may restrain your unruly minds and traverse the ocean of birth and death. You, [Ānanda,] must preserve it and must be careful not to forget it.

1.31

爾時世尊，說此語已，即現白光三昧一一相貌，皆令阿難悉得見之。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此名白骨觀最初境界。

When the World-honored One had spoken these words he manifested all of the signs and

1 +化 Kg

2 [者] Sgz

3 駛 P, Q

4 Following P, S, Q, Y

5 合 Kg

6 踊 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

7 悔 Sgz

8 踊 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

9 度 P, Q, Sgz, Kg

10 I tentatively take this to mean that this attainment does not yet lead to escape from the cycle of rebirth.

features [of this] *samādhi* of white radiance and showed them to Ānanda.¹ When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

This is called the first verificatory vision of the white-bone contemplation.

1.32

佛告阿難：此想成已，更教餘想。教餘想者，當自觀身作一白骨人，極使白淨，令頭倒下入臙骨中。澄心一處，極使分明。此想成已，觀身四面，周帀四方，皆有骨人。此想成已，即於前地作一白骨人，如似己身，亦復倒頭入臙骨中。想一成已，次當想二。想二成已，次當想三...四...五。想五成已，乃²至想十。如是滿一房內，見諸骨人，皆悉倒頭入臙骨中。見一房內已，乃至見於百房之內...一由旬...乃至見無量諸白骨人，皆悉倒頭入臙骨中。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete [the practitioner] must be taught other meditations. He is to be instructed as follows. He must [first] contemplate his body as a skeleton, making it extremely white and pure, and [then] making the skull fall down into the pelvis. Settling his mind upon this single thing he should make it extremely clear.

When this meditation is complete, he [should] contemplate on all four sides of his body. On each [side] there are skeletons. When this meditation is complete, right before him he creates a skeleton resembling his own, its head fallen into its pelvis. Having imagined one [such skeleton], he next imagines two. Having imagined two, he next imagines three... four... five. Having imagined five, he continues until he has imagined ten, and similarly until he sees the entire room full of skeletons, each with its head fallen into its pelvis. When he has seen one roomful [of skeletons], he should continue until he sees a hundred roomfuls... a *yojana*... until he sees innumerable skeletons, their heads having fallen into their pelvises.

1.33

此想成已，見諸骨人，各各縱橫，悉在前地，或見頭破，或見項折，或見顛倒，或見繚戾，或見腰折，或見伸脚，或見縮脚，或見脚骨分為二分，或見頭骨倒入胸³中，或見頭骨偃仰掣縮，紛亂縱橫，悉在前地。周帀上下，滿一室內。此想成已，乃至見於無量無邊諸白骨人，紛亂縱橫，或大或小，或破或完。如此眾事，皆當住心諦觀，極令分明。

When this meditation is complete, he see all these skeletons arrayed on the ground before him, some with broken skulls, some with broken necks, some fallen over, some twisted upon themselves, some with broken waists, some with legs extended, some with legs curled up, some with feet broken in half, some with their skulls fallen into their rib-cages, some with their skulls scattered about on the ground, face up or face down, twisted and bent.⁴ [He sees such skeletons] above, below, and all around, filling his room.

1 Translation tentative. The meaning seems to be that, having explained all these things to Ānanda, the Buddha actually caused them to appear directly so that Ānanda himself could see them.

2 及 Kg

3 旬 Kg

4 In the *Glosses on the Canon* 掣 is here said to mean “pulled taught and then released” (引而縱之), while 縮 is glossed as 亂 (T.2128:54.674b2–3).

When this meditation is complete, he continues until¹ he sees limitless, innumerable skeletons scattered about, some large and some small, some broken and some whole. He must still his mind and carefully contemplate these various things until they are extremely clear.

1.34

佛告阿難：是時行者，見此事已，當自思惟。前骨完具，今者破散，縱橫紛亂，不可記錄。此白骨身，猶尚無定，當知我身，亦復無我。諦觀是已，當自思惟。正²有縱橫諸雜亂骨，何處有我及與他身。爾時行者，思惟無我，身意泰然，安隱快樂。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When the practitioner has seen these things he must consider: “Formerly the bones were complete, but now they are broken and scattered about beyond recognition. Even these skeletons have no fixed existence, and so too this body of mine lacks a self.” Having carefully contemplated this, he must consider [further]: “There are only bones, scattered about in disorder, where could there be self or other?”

When the practitioner has considered non-self in this manner, his body and mind will feel at ease and he will be peaceful and joyful.

1.35

佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教令心廣大，使彼行人見一閻浮提縱橫亂骨。見諸骨外，周布四面，有大火起，焰焰³相次，燒諸亂骨。見諸骨人，節節火起。如是火相，或有眾火，猶如流水，明炎熾盛，流諸骨間。或有眾火，猶如大山，從四面來⁴。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation has been completed, the practitioner must again be instructed to expand his mind so that he sees scattered bones [filling] the continent of Jambudvīpa. He then sees that out beyond all the bones a great fire arises in all directions, its flames continuing one after the other, burning the scattered bones. [The practitioner] sees fire appear between the bones of all the skeletons. As for the appearance of these fires, some are like blazing, flowing water running between the bones. Some are like great mountains closing in on [the practitioner] from all sides.

1.36

此想成已，極大驚怖。出定之時，身體蒸熱。還當攝心，如前觀骨。觀一白骨人，極令明了。是時行者，入定之時，不能自起，要[當]{人}⁵彈指，然後得起。

When this meditation has been completed [the practitioner] will feel extremely afraid. When he emerges from meditation his body will be hot and sweaty. But still he must restrain his mind and contemplate the bones as before, contemplating [his own]⁶ single white skeleton and making it very clear. This time when the practitioner enters trance he will be unable to emerge on

1 Here 乃至 seems to mean that the meditator will repeat the entire sequence, beginning with his own body, proceeding to external bodies that are then multiplied, now all under this new aspect.

2 政 Kg

3 焰焰 = 炎炎 Kg

4 奉 Kg

5 Tentatively following Sgz; [當] Kg.

6 It is not clear if this refers to the meditator's own body as a skeleton, or to a single imagined skeleton.

his own. He will only be able to emerge [from trance] when someone snaps their fingers.¹

1.37

此想成者，當自起念而作是言：我於前世無數劫來，造熱惱法，業緣所牽，故使²今者見此火起。復當作念。如此火者，從四大有。我身空寂，四大³無主。此大猛火，橫從空起。我身他身，悉皆亦空。如此火者，從妄⁴想生，為何所燒。我身及火，二皆無常。

When this meditation is complete he must arouse his thoughts and think as follows: “During countless eons in the past I committed deeds [inspired by] heated passions, and pulled by that karma I now see this fire.”⁵ He must further think: “This fire arises from the four great elements. My body itself is empty and the four great elements [that comprise it] have no master.⁶ This raging fire arises from emptiness adventitiously. My own body and the bodies of others are all also empty. This fire is produced by false imagination. What could it burn? Both my body and the fire are impermanent.”

1.38

佛告阿難：行者應當至心諦觀如是等法。觀空無火，亦無眾骨。作此觀者，無有恐懼，身意恬安，倍勝於前。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: The practitioner must exert himself and contemplate carefully these various things. Contemplating emptiness, there is no fire, and also no bones.

1 On the idea that meditators can be awakening from trance with a finger-snap, we may note the following story in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* concerning Wang Kai 王恢 (a general under the first Song emperor) and the monk Zhiyan 智嚴. In the year 417, the future founding Song emperor Liu Yu 劉裕 sacked Chang’an, and as he and his troops were returning east they came across Zhiyan meditating in his temple: “At that time Wang Kai, lord of Shixing, while sightseeing among the mountains and rivers came across [Zhi]yan’s hermitage. He saw Zhiyan and his two companions sitting on meditation chairs immersed in deep trance. [Wang] Kai waited there for a while but [the monks] did not awaken. He then snapped his fingers and the three monks open their eyes for a moment, but then closed them again. [When Wang Kai] asked them questions they did not reply. [Wang] Kai marveled as this strange sight, and inquired about it with various elder [monks]. They all told him that these three monks were hermits intent on liberation, Dharma masters of exceptional purity.” 時始興公王恢從駕遊觀山川，至嚴精舍。見其同止三僧，各坐繩床，禪思湛然。恢至良久不覺，於是彈指，三人開眼，俄而還閉。問不與言。恢心敬其奇，訪諸耆老，皆云：此三僧隱居求志，高潔法師也。(T.2059:50.339b13–18). Although I am not sure if it is related, another interesting reference to snapping the fingers can be found in the Dunhuang manuscript entitled *The Five Precepts on Deportment from the Scripture of Trapusa and Bhallika* (*Ti wei jing wu jie wei yi* 提謂經五戒威儀; Makita 1976, 207–209). This text describes the proper behavior for laypersons when attending fast-day (*zhai* 齋) rites at a temple. When “entering a monks quarters” 入沙門戶, one must “snap three times” 當三彈指 (ibid., 208a6). On the one hand this may be a simple way of signaling one’s presence, but perhaps there is also the idea that the monk, immersed in trance, needs to be summoned back to the world with a finger snap.

2 [使] Sgz; Kg is damaged, but there is definitely a character here.

3 +四大 Kg

4 忘 Kg

5 Similar language appears in a passage from Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture*: “The meditator should think: Each person transmigrates through the universe led by their own karma. Where then could there be those close to us and those not close?” 應如是念：世界生死中，自業緣牽，何者是親，何者非親？(T.614:15.274a5–6).

6 On the expression “the four elements have no master,” see the notes to section 1.54 below.

When [the practitioner] has performed this contemplation he will be free of fear. His body and mind will feel even more at ease than before.

1.39

爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成者。名第二觀白骨竟。

When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said he joyfully undertook to carry it out. When this meditation is complete it is the completion of the second contemplation of the white bones.

1.40

佛告阿難：觀第二白骨竟¹已，復當更教繫念法。繫念法者，先當繫心著左足大指上，一心諦觀足大指，使肉青黑津膩，猶如日光炙於肥²肉，漸漸至膝，乃至於臍。觀左足已，觀其右足，亦復如是。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Having finished the second [stage of the] white-bone contemplation, [the practitioner] should further be instructed in the method for fixing his thoughts. To fix his thoughts he must first fix his mind on the big toe of his left foot. He should single-mindedly contemplate his big toe and then cause the flesh to darken and ooze³ like fatty meat scorched by the rays of the sun, continuing gradually [up the leg] until reaching his knee and then his hip. Having contemplated his left leg, he contemplates his right leg in this same manner.

1.41

觀右足已，次當觀腰，至背至頸⁴，至項至頭，至面至胸，舉身支節，一切身分，皆亦津黑，猶如日光炙於肥⁵肉，不淨流溢，如屎尿聚。諦觀己身，極使分明。想一成已，復當想二...三...四...五...十。想十成已，見一室內，滿中津黑，猶如日光炙於肥⁶肉，如屎尿聚。諸不淨人，行列縱橫，滿一室內。見一室已，復見二室。見二室已，乃至見無量眾多不淨人，四維上下，皆悉充⁷{滿}⁸，滿娑婆世界。

Having contemplated his right leg, next he must contemplate [from] the hip up to the back, the lower neck, the upper neck,⁹ the head, the face, [and then back down to the front of] his

1 竟 = 意 Kg

2 肌 S, Q, Y, P

3 In the previous section the meditator contemplated his body as “swelling,” and now he contemplates it as “dark and oozing.” This appears to be a progression through some version of the stages of the decaying corpse, though in those lists “darkened” (*vinīlika*) usually is the first stage.

4 The Taishō marks 項 as the Sgz reading but this is incorrect.

5 肌 S, Q, Y, P

6 肌 S, Q, Y, P

7 死 Kg

8 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

9 The only distinction I am aware of between 頸 and 項 as Chinese words is that while the former usually refers to the entire neck the later often refers to the back of the neck. However given that the sequence here goes up the back side of the body, down over the head to the face and then the chest, it would seem we that we must take these as the lower and upper parts of the back of the neck. Another possibility is that 項 is an error for 頂.

chest, such that all his limbs, joints, and other body parts become dark and oozing, like fatty meat scorched by the rays of the sun, overflowing with impurity, like a heap of piss and shit. He carefully contemplates his body, making it very clear.

Having successfully imagined one [such corpse], he then imagines two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . ten. Having successfully imagined ten, [he then] sees the whole room filled with dark oozing [corpses], like fatty meat scorched by the rays of the sun, overflowing with impurity, like a heap of piss and shit. Row upon row of these impure bodies fill the room. Having seen one roomful, he next sees two roomfuls. Having seen two roomfuls, [he continues] until he sees innumerable multitudes of impure bodies filling the entire world above, below, and all around.

1.42

此想成已，行人自念：我於前世，貪婬愚癡，不自覺知，盛年放逸，貪¹著情色，無有慚愧，隨逐色聲香味觸法。今觀我身，不淨流溢，他身亦爾，何可愛樂。見此事已，極自厭身，慚愧自責。出定之時，見諸飲食，如屎尿汁，甚可惡厭。

When this meditation has been completed the practitioner thinks to himself: “In former lives I was greedy and foolish, without any self-awareness. For many years I was heedless, shamelessly craving sensory pleasures and delighting in the objects of the six senses. Today I have contemplated my body. It is overflowing with impurity, and so too the bodies of others. How then could I delight in these things?”

Having seen these things,² [the practitioner] develops deep loathing for his body, and full of shame he rebukes himself [for his past cravings]. When he exits from trance he sees food and drink to be as deeply repulsive as shit and piss.

1.43

次教易觀。易觀法者，當更起想念。想念成時，見其身外，諸不³淨間，周布四面，忽然炎起。如熱時焰⁴，其色正白，如野馬行，映諸不淨。爾時行者，見此事已，當大歡喜。以歡喜故，身心輕軟，其心明朗，快樂倍常。

Next, the practitioner should be instructed in an inverse contemplation. The method for the inverse contemplation is to imagine [the inverse of what he has seen]. When this imagination is complete, he sees fire suddenly arise amidst the impurity surrounding his body. Like vapors in the heat, pure white in color, like wild horses running [on the horizon],⁵ [the fire] illuminates all

1 染 Sgz

2 This would seem to refer to those things described in section 1.41.

3 牙 Kg

4 炎 Kg

5 On the meaning of “wild horses” 野馬, see appendix two. Briefly, the term is used in Buddhist texts as a image for illusory or empty phenomena (often translating *marīci*). As discussed in appendix one, the notion of “vapors that occur during hot weather” 熱時焰 is similar, and indeed the terms appear to be synonyms. What is most interesting about this passage here, however, is that both of these images are used as *literal* descriptions of the visual attributes of what the practitioner sees. Later we find similar examples where terms normally presented as metaphors or symbols of emptiness (such as the “trunk of a plantain tree”) are taken as visual descriptions. We may presume that the connection here is not accidental. Indeed other examples of the “inverse contemplation” often involve contemplating emptiness. The point would thus seem to be that the meditator counteracts his

the impurities. When the practitioner has seen these things he will feel great happiness, and feeling such happiness his body and mind will be at ease, his mind will be clear, and he will experience extraordinary joy.

1.44

佛告阿難：是名第三慚愧自責觀。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成者，名第三津膩慚愧觀竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “This is called number three, the contemplation of shame and self-reproach.”

When Ānanda heard the Buddha’s words, he joyfully undertook to carry them out. When this meditation is complete, it is known as the completion of the contemplation of shame and the dark oozing [corpse], [contemplation] number three.

1.45

佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教繫念，住意左¹脚大指上，令諦觀脚大指節，起臃²脹³想。見臃脹已，起爛壞想。見爛壞已，起青黑赤白諸膿血想。是諸膿血，極使臭處，難可堪忍。如是漸漸，至膝至臑，皆令臃脹，爛潰不淨。觀左⁴脚已，右脚亦然。如是漸漸，至腰，至背。至頸，至項，至頭，至面，至胸，舉身支節，一切臃脹，皆悉爛壞，青黑赤白，諸膿流出，臭惡雜穢，不可堪處。想一成已，復更想二...三...四...五...十。想十成已，見一室內，周帛上下，諸臃脹人，皆悉爛壞，青黑赤白諸膿，悉皆流出，雜穢臭處，不可堪忍⁵。復當更想一由旬。想一由旬已，乃至想百由旬。想百由旬已，乃至見三千大千世界，周帛上下，地及虛空，一切彌滿臃脹爛壞，青黑赤白諸⁶膿流出，雜穢充滿，不可堪處。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must further be taught to fix his thoughts and concentrate his mind on the big toe of his left foot. He is to carefully contemplate the toe bone of his left foot and imagine a bloated swelling. Having seen it bloated and swelling, he imagines it festering. Having seen it festering, he imagines it [full of] all kinds of pus and blood, blue, black, red, and white. He makes all this pus and blood become extremely foul and hard to bear.⁷ He continues gradually in this manner reaching his knees and

perception of impurity by contemplating emptiness, but what is meant by “contemplating emptiness” here is that he has a vision of certain things that have a symbolic connection to emptiness.

1 在 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

2 臃 P, Q. According to the *Glosses on the Canon* these characters are interchangeable (T.2128:54.745b22–23).

3 腹 Q

4 在 Kg

5 [忍] Sgz

6 訶 Kg

7 In other Chinese Buddhist translations the expression 臭處 often simply means “foul.” See for example *Zhong a han jing* 中阿含經, T.26:1.453c13–14, where it seems to translate *pūti* (AN, 4.375). Occasionally 臭處 is used for one of the stages of the decaying corpse (*Zeng yi a han jing* 增一阿含經, T.125:2.568b5, where it corresponds at MN 1.57 to the stage “festering,” *vipubbakajāta*; see also *Stages of the Path of Practice*, T.606:15.212a14–18). Perhaps 處 was an attempt to translate the final *-jāta* of *vipubbakajāta* (or its equivalent), though in some lists this stage is simply *vipubbaka* (or *vipūyaka*, *vipūtika*; see Allon 2001, 282–283).

then his thighs, causing everything to become bloated [and then to] burst open, leaking impurity.¹

Having contemplated his left leg, [he contemplates] his right leg in the same manner. In this way he gradually continues to the hips, the back, the lower neck, the upper neck, the head, the face, and his chest. All parts of his body are bloated, [then] festering, [until] blue, black, red and white pus flow out, becoming unbearably foul and filthy.

Having successfully imagined one [such corpse], he then imagines two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . ten. Having successfully imagined ten, [he] sees his room [filled with] bloated corpses, above, below, and all around, which all begin to fester [until] blue, black, red, and white pus flows out, [becoming] unbearably foul, filthy. He then further imagines a *yojana* [filled with such corpses]. Having imagined a *yojana*, he continues until he imagines a hundred *yojanas*. Having imagined a hundred *yojanas*, he continues until he sees the entire universe, above, below, and all around, from the earth to the sky, entirely filled with bloated, festering [corpses] oozing blue, black, red, and white pus, filled with filth, and difficult to bear.

1.46

佛告阿難：爾時行者，見此事已，自²觀己身，不淨充滿。觀於他身，亦復如是。當作想念。我此身者，甚可患厭，眾多不淨，彌滿一切。諦觀是已，畏生死患，其心堅固，深信因果。出定入定，恒見不淨。欲求厭離，捨棄此身。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When the practitioner has seen these things, he contemplates his own body, filled with impurities, and he contemplates that the bodies of others are also like this. He thinks thus: “This body of mine is extremely loathsome, entirely filled with many impurities.” Having carefully contemplated this, he begins to fear the misfortune that is birth and death. His will becomes firm and he [acquires] deep faith in the principles of karma. Whether in trance or not he constantly sees impurity, and he wishes to escape from [this impurity] by abandoning his body.

1.47

作此想時，自見己身，舉體皮肉，如秋葉落。見肉墮地，在前地已³，即大動心。心⁴生驚怖，身心震掉，不能自寧。身氣熱惱，如熱病人，為渴所逼。出定之時，如人夏日行於曠野，渴乏無水，身體疲極。此想成已，乃至食時，見所食物，如臙死屍⁵，見所飲漿⁶，猶如膿血。此想成已，極大厭身。觀於身內及於身外，求淨不得。

When he has this thought [of suicide] he sees the skin and flesh of his whole body fall away like autumn leaves. When he sees his flesh fallen on the ground before him he is deeply shaken. He becomes afraid, and his body and mind quake and tremble uncontrollably. He feels hot and agitated, like someone sick with fever oppressed by thirst. When he emerges from trance his body feels exhausted as if he had been traveling in the desert during the summer with no

1 爛潰, here translated as “burst open,” appears in other texts as one of the nine kinds of corpses (*Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T.643:15.686a4–5; *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, T.618:15.316a18–20).

2 白 Kg

3 [已] Sgz, Kg

4 [心] Sgz, Kg

5 尸 Kg

6 漿 = 將水 Sgz, Kg

water to quench his thirst.

When this meditation [above] has been completed, even at mealtimes he sees his food to be like a bloated corpse, and he sees his drink to be like pus and blood.

When this meditation has been completed, he feels extreme loathing for his body. Contemplating both the inside and outside of his body he is unable to find anything pure at all.

1.48

佛告阿難：復當更教令其易¹想，莫使棄身，唐無所得。易觀法者，當於遠處臭穢之外，作一淨物。教其繫心想一淨物，心眼明了，即欲往取。如是漸漸，所見廣遠，諸不淨外，有諸淨地，如琉璃地。見此淨處，即便欲往。轉復廣遠，意不能達。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: [The practitioner] must then be further instructed to invert his imagination, [for] he must not abandon his body and thereby fail to achieve any fruit.

The method for the inverse contemplation is as follows. In the distance beyond the foul filth [he should] imaginatively create a pure object. Instruct him to fix his mind and imagine a pure object. When it is clear in his mind's eye, he will want to go towards it and take hold of it. In this manner he gradually expands what he sees, such that out beyond all the impurities there are various pure expanses of beryl-like ground. When he sees this pure place he wishes to go there. But it becomes ever farther away and seems impossible to reach.²

1.49

佛告阿難：爾時當教如此行人，而作是言。汝所見事，是不淨想。此不淨想而雜穢物，當知此想從顛倒起。皆由前世顛倒行故，而得此身。如此身者，種子根本，皆為不淨。汝今實見此不淨不。雖見不淨，於外見淨。當知此淨及與不淨，不可久停。隨逐諸根，憶想見是。此不淨身，屬諸因緣，緣合則有，緣離則無。爾所見事，亦屬緣想，想成則有，想壞則無。如此想者，從五情出，還入汝心。諸欲因緣，而有此想。此不淨想，來無所從，去無所至。汝當一一諦觀不淨，求索彼我，了不可得。世尊說我及他皆悉空寂，何況不淨。如是種種，呵責其心，教令觀空。見髮、毛、爪、齒、一切悉無。豁然捨諸不淨之物，如前住意，還觀骨人。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: At this time you must instruct this practitioner with the following words: “These things you see [are produced from] the imagination of the impure. These assorted filthy things [exist only because] of your impure imaginations.³ Know that these imaginations arise from erroneous thinking. They are all the result of having obtained your present body as a result of actions based on erroneous thinking in past lives. This body of yours is fundamentally impure.⁴ Do you now really see this impurity or not? Though you see impurity,

1 [易] Kg

2 Translation tentative. Satō 1931, 190, suggests 意達する能はず, “he is unable to reach it with his mind.”

3 此不淨想而雜穢物 is baffling. Satō has parsed the grammar as 此は不淨の想にして雜穢の物なり (Satō 1931, 190). If this is the meaning, it must surely count as terrible Chinese. We might imagine that 不淨想而雜穢物 mechanically translates a long Sanskrit compound, with 而 perhaps indicating a *karmadhārya* relationship.

4 This perhaps refers to the notion of “impure [from the point of view of its] seed” (種子不淨), that is to say the impurity of the body considered in terms of its origins as the coagulation of impure blood and semen (*Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.199a2–5; Lamotte reconstructs as *bijāsuci*, Lamotte 1944–1981, 1151).

out beyond it you see purity.¹ Know that both purity and impurity are impermanent, and you see [them both?] through your imagination, in accord with your faculties (?).² [But] your impure body itself depends on causes and conditions. When conditions come together it exists, and when the conditions go away it will disappear. The things you see now also depend on and are conditioned by your imagining. When you imagine them completely they exist. When your imagination ceases they are no more. Such imagination arises from the five sense organs entering back into the mind.³ This imagination occurs based on [your] desires.⁴ But this imagination of the impure arrives without arriving from somewhere, and when going it does not go anywhere. You must carefully contemplate each bit of impurity. If you search [in it] for self or other, they are impossible to find. The World-honored One has said that both self and others are all entirely empty and quiescent. How much more so then is what is impure [empty and quiescent]!”

In this manner, [Ānanda], in various ways you must rebuke the practitioner on account of what he has been thinking and instruct him to contemplate emptiness. He will then see that his head hair, body hair, nails, and teeth are all entirely non-existent. He will suddenly turn away from these impure things [that he sees] and as before will concentrate his mind and return to the contemplation of the skeleton.⁵

1.50

佛告阿難：汝持是語，慎莫忘失，此不淨觀，及易想法。爾時阿難，聞佛此語，歡⁶喜奉行。此想成時，名第四臃脹膿血及易想觀竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Preserve these words. Be sure not to forget [this teaching of] the contemplation of impurity and the method for the inverse meditation.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this meditation has been completed it is called the completion of number four, the [contemplation of] the bloated, the bloody, and the pus-filled [corpses] and the inverse contemplation [associated therewith].

1.51

佛告阿難：此想成已，次當更教繫念一處，端坐正受，諦觀右脚大指上。令⁷指上皮，携携欲穿⁸，薄皮厚皮，內外映徹。其薄皮內，有一薄膜，亦當諦觀。如是漸漸，至膝至臑，

1 This presumably refers to section 1.48, where the practitioner imagined a pure space out beyond the impurities.

2 Translation tentative.

3 Translation tentative. At the least this passage seems to show clearly that “imagination” 想 consists not merely in *visual* images but all five sensory modalities. Here *wu qing* 五情 refers to the five sense organs, meaning not the gross physical organs of the eye, ears, etc., but the subtle matter responsible for the sensing of each organ.

4 The idea seems to be that one’s various desires for the sensory contact in question stimulate the sense organs to produce their own objects.

5 In other words the purpose of the inverse meditation was to counter the suicidal thoughts provoked by the previous contemplation. This threat eliminated, the practitioner continues contemplating the bones as before.

6 觀 Kg

7 合 Kg

8 窮 Kg

Appendix 3: Translations and Chinese editions of the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing*

左脚亦然。至腰，至背，至頸，至項，至頭，至面，至胸，舉身皆爾¹，薄皮厚皮，內²外映徹，携携欲穿³，如被⁴吹者。其皮臃脹，不可具說。身諸⁵毛中，一一毛孔，百千無量，諸膿雜汁，猶如雨滴，從毛孔出，疾於[震]{暴}⁶雨，內外俱流，膿血盈滿。不淨之極，難可堪忍，猶如膿池，亦如血池，諸蟲滿中。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, instruct [the practitioner] to fix his thoughts in a single place and, sitting upright in absorption, to carefully contemplate the big toe of his right foot, making the skin of the toe slowly stretch to the verge of tearing, such that the thin [inner] and thick [outer] layers of skin⁷ become transparent. Beneath the inner layer there is a thin membrane which he must also contemplate. In this manner he continues gradually until reaching the knees and then the thighs. [He then contemplates] the left leg in the same way, and then continues to the hips, the back, the lower neck, the upper neck, the head, the face, and then the chest, until over his entire body the inner and outer layers of skin have in this same

1 +時 Sgz. There are two possibilities. Either the original text read 舉身皆爾, 爾時 and the second 爾 was lost, following which 時 dropped out of the other versions because it no longer made sense, or else 時 in the Sgz edition is a mistake inspired by 爾, a character that does frequently occur before 時 elsewhere in the text. Kg is damaged here.

2 [內] Sgz

3 窮 Kg

4 披 Sgz

5 說 Kg

6 電 S,Q,Y, Sgz. 電 Kg. I here emmend to 暴 on the basis of a similar passage in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.669a27; see also the *Samantabhadra Contemplation*, T.277:9.394a22).

7 The terms “thin skin” (薄皮) and “thick skin” (厚皮) occur frequently in Chinese Buddhist anatomies. That “thin” refers to the inner layer is suggested by the passage above (1.11) where we find simply “skin” (皮) followed by “thin skin” (薄皮), and also below (1.56) where the “thick skin” is what remains when all other fleshy parts of the body have been hollowed out (suggesting that it is the outermost layer). In the present passage we also see a third term, “membrane” (膜), and these three are also mentioned in the *Methods for Curing* (5.22). A number of other Chinese Buddhist texts similarly contain three terms for skin, including Kumārajīva’s *Explanations of Meditation*, which gives the three terms 皮, 膜, and 肌 (T.616:15.286c2). Interestingly the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, from which the *Explanations of Meditation* is usually thought to derive, gives only “thin skin” and “thick skin” (T.1509:25.403a23–24). Indeed the presence of three skin terms is unexpected in comparison to extant Indian lists. The standard Pāli lists contain only *taco*, and Sanskrit lists that I have found similarly contain only the equivalent *tvac*. Only in the Gāndhārī fragments of the *Samyuktāgama* do we find a list containing two terms, *tvaya* and *chaḍi* (Glass 2007, 52). *Chaḍi* must correspond to Pāli *chavi* (Skt *chavī*), and term while not appearing in Pāli lists of the 32 body parts in meditation texts does occur in other contexts, such as the following passage from the *Sutta-nipāta*: “You do not see this body as it really is: a thing bound together with bone and tendon, dressed in flesh and skin (*taca*) and covered with skin (*chavi*).” (Sn, 196; *aṭṭhinahārusaṃyutto, tacamaṃsāvalepano; chaviyā kāyo paṭicchanno, yathābhūtaṃ na dissati*). Here *chavi* is apparently the outermost layer of skin, contrasted with *taco*, something closer to the muscles. This meaning is confirmed by the other uses of *chavi* in Pāli texts, namely in a standard pericope describing the dissection of the body progressing through outer skin (*chaviṃ*), inner skin (*cammaṃ*), flesh (*maṃsaṃ*), tendons (*nhārum*), bones (*aṭṭhim*) and marrow (*aṭṭhimiñjam*; see MN, 3.184). In another interesting case we find *chavi* and *camma* together, with no mention of *taco*, in a description of bodily components of the earth element (Peṭ, 102). This suggest that *taco/tvac* is equivalent to *camma/carma* meaning “inner skin.” Given all this is it not clear how we are supposed to interpret the three terms for skin found in some Chinese texts. This is made all the more complicated in that, as seen in 1.11, the *Chan Essentials* seems to interpret “membrane” (膜) as equivalent to *mastakaluṅgam*, “brain membranes.”

manner become transparent, stretched to the verge of tearing, as if they had been inflated from within. His skin thus becomes incredibly bloated. From the uncountable hundreds of thousands of pores of his body various kinds of pus and other assorted fluids then pour forth like drops of water, faster than a violent shower of rain,¹ such that both within and without [his body] there flows a profusion of pus and blood. The impurity is so extreme that it is difficult to bear. It is as if there were an entire pool of pus or an entire pool of blood filled with various bugs and insects.

1.52

此想成已，當觀胸裏。舉身是蟲，猶如蟲聚。復當更觀左脚大指，腫²脹膿潰，青³膿，黃膿，赤膿，黑膿，紅膿，綠膿，白膿，爛潰交橫，與屎尿雜。復有諸蟲，遊戲其中。穢惡臭處，不可堪忍。厭患此身，不貪諸欲，不樂受生。

When this meditation is complete, he must contemplate within his chest [where he sees that] his entire body is as if a giant swarm of worms. He should then again contemplate the big toe of his left foot, swelling up and overflowing with pus. Blue pus, yellow pus, red pus, and black pus fester and overflow, mixing with one another and intermingling with piss and shit, while the various worms squirm about therein. The awful filth and horrid stench is unbearable. Filled with revulsion for his body [the meditator] no longer craves sensual pleasures and has no wish to continue living.⁴

1.53

此想成時，見大夜叉，身如大山，頭髮蓬⁵亂，如棘刺林。有六十⁶眼，猶如電⁷光。有四十口，口有二牙⁸，皆悉上出，猶如火幢。舌似劍樹，吐至于⁹膝。手捉鐵棒，棒似刀山，如欲打人。如是眾多，其數非一。見此事時，極大驚怖，身心皆動。如此相貌¹⁰，皆是前身毀犯禁戒諸惡根本。無我計我，無常計常，不淨計淨，放逸染¹¹著，貪受諸欲。於苦法中，橫生樂想。於空法中，起¹²顛倒想。於不淨身，起於淨想。邪命自活，不計無常。

When this meditation is complete he sees a giant *yakṣa*-demon, as big as a mountain, its hair wild and disheveled like a forest of brambles. Its sixty eyes [shine] like lightning. Its forty mouths each have two fangs like flaming pillars pointing upwards, and tongues like sword-trees

1 Translation tentative.

2 腫 Q

3 責 Sgz

4 We might also translate 不樂受生 as “he has no wish for future rebirth.” But it seems to me that the point here is, as in the previous section, that the contemplation of impurity generates a negative emotional state that needs to be counteracted through a contemplation of impermanence, which occurs below in section 1.54.

5 鬢 S, Q, Y, P

6 千 Sgz

7 電 Kg

8 帀 Kg

9 乎 Sgz

10 相貌 = 想猶 Kg

11 深 Sgz, Kg

12 趣 Sgz

that reach to its knees. It attacks the practitioner with an iron club like a blade-mountain.¹ [The practitioner sees] many other things like this.

When he sees these things he becomes terrified, and his body and mind begin to tremble. The appearance [of these visions results from] his roots of evil [consisting in] the violation of the precepts in a past life. Supposing what is not the self to be the self, what is impermanent to be permanent, and what is impure to be pure, he gave himself over to indulgence and became stained with attachment, craving all kinds of sensual pleasures. He wrongly imagined what is nothing but suffering to be pleasurable, mistakenly imagined what is in fact empty [to be non-empty], and imagined the impure body to be pure. Sustaining himself by means of an evil livelihood, he failed to consider impermanence.

1.54

此想成時，復當更教。汝莫驚怖。如此夜叉，是汝惡心猛毒境界。從六大起，六大所成。汝今應當諦²觀六大。此六大者，地、水、火、風、識、空。如此一一，汝當諦推³，汝身為是地耶。為是水耶。為是火耶。為是風耶。為是識耶。為是空耶。如是一一，諦觀此身，從何大起，從何大散。六大無主，身亦無我。汝今云何畏於夜叉。如汝心想，來無所從，去無所至。想見夜叉，亦復如是。但安意坐，設使夜叉來打汝者，歡喜忍受，諦觀無我。無我法中，無驚怖想。但當⁴正心，結加⁵趺坐，諦觀不淨及與夜叉。

When this meditation is complete [the practitioner] must be instructed as follows: “Do not be afraid. This *yakṣa*-demon is a vision [produced by] the poison of your evil mind. It arises from the six elements, and is formed of the six elements. You must now carefully contemplate these six elements. The six elements are earth, water, fire, wind, consciousness, and space. In this manner you must carefully consider each [element]. Is your body [the same as] the earth element? The water element? The wind element? The consciousness element? The space element? In this way, one by one, consider from which element [your] body arises, and from which element it passes away (?).⁶ The six elements have no master, and the body too is without a self.⁷ Why then do you now fear this *yakṣa*? Just as your imagination itself arrives but does not arrive from somewhere and departs without going anywhere, so too this *yakṣa* that you have seen through your imagination. Even if this *yakṣa* comes forward and strikes, simply accept it joyfully and carefully contemplate that there is no self. For in regards to what is lacking in self there can

1 “Sword-trees” (劍樹) and “blade-mountains” (刀山) are standard instruments of torture in Buddhist hells. Here they seem to symbolize that this vision is caused by transgressions that will result in hell (see further p.208).

2 [諦] Sgz

3 惟 Sgz

4 [當] Kg

5 跏 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 The meaning here eludes me.

7 This passage bears a close resemblance to a line from Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*: “The conjunction of the four elements is provisionally called the body, but the four elements have no master and the body too is without a self.” 四大合故，假名為身，四大無主，身亦無我 (*Wei mo jie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, T.475:14.544c29–545a1). The *Chan Essentials* passage here, however, mentions six rather than four elements, though below we find the same phrase with four instead of six (3.53).

be no fear or terror.¹ You must simply have this right understanding² as you sit in meditation, carefully contemplating impurity and this *yakṣa*.”

1.55

作一成已，復當作二。如是漸漸，乃至無量，一一諦觀，皆令³分明。佛告阿難：汝好受持，觀⁴薄皮不淨法，慎莫忘失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成時，名第五觀薄皮竟。

Having imagined one [such corpse], he should imagine two. In this manner he continues gradually until [he has imagined] innumerable [such corpses]. He carefully contemplates each one until they are clear.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must well preserve this method for the contemplation of the impurity of the inner skin. Be sure not to forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this meditation is complete, it is to be known as the completion of the contemplation of the inner skin, [contemplation] number five.

1.56

佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教繫念著右脚大指上。當諦觀脚指，使脚腫脹。從脚至頭，如吹皮囊，腫脹津黑，青瘀⁵難堪，滿中白蟲，如粳米粒。蟲有四頭，蠢蠢相逐，更相啖⁶食。肌肉骨髓，皆生諸蟲。一切五藏，蟲皆食盡。唯有厚皮，在其骨外。其皮厚薄，猶如繒練。諸蟲出入，如穿竹葉。內外携携，其皮欲穿。眼中躁⁷癢⁸，有無數蟲，穿眼欲出，生眼眶⁹間。身分九孔，亦復如是。諸蟲爾時，從厚皮出，入薄皮中。皮遂穿盡，蟲皆落地，其數眾多，不可稱計，作一大聚，猶如蟲山，在行者前，更相食噉，或相纏繞。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must again be instructed to fix his thoughts on the big toe of his right foot. He must carefully contemplate the toe and make it swell. As if an inflated skin sack, from foot to head [his body] swells and darkens, becoming horribly bruised. Inside it is filled with white worms like kernels of hulled rice. Each worm has four heads. They squirm in circles, biting and eating each other. Worms appear within his flesh, muscles, bones, and marrow, and all his internal organs are consumed by them, leaving only the thick skin atop his bones. This skin is about as thick as silk, and the worms go in and out of it as if tunneling through bamboo leaves. The skin stretches inwardly and outwardly until about to burst. Countless worms squirm excitedly within his eye. Boring through the eye, they try to come out and they appear (?) within the space between the

1 I understand the point to be that the *yakṣa* lacks self, and is thus insubstantial, and is thus not something that can logically be the object of fear.

2 Alternatively we might translate 正心 as verb-object: “you must regulate your mind.”

3 [令] Sgz

4 +皮 Sgz

5 游 S,Q,Y; 淤 P, Sgz, Kg

6 *Glosses on the Canon* here seems to read 嚼.

7 足+柔 Sgz; 足+參 Kg

8 虫+養 Kg

9 匡 P, Sgz; 走+主 Kg

eyeball and the eye-socket. Within each of his body's nine openings [the worms appear] in this manner. Then all the worms come out through the thick skin and go into the thin skin. The skin is then entirely bored through and the worms all fall to the ground. There are uncountably many of them, forming a big pile before the practitioner like a mountain of worms. They then begin to twist about and consume each other.

1.57

爾時行者，見眾多蟲已，復當繫念諦觀一蟲，使此一蟲，噉諸蟲盡。既噉蟲已，一蟲獨在。其心漸大，見向一蟲，大如狗許¹，身體[困頓]{混沌}²，鼻曲如角，嗅³行者前。其眼正⁴赤，如燒鐵丸。

When the practitioner has seen these multitudes of worms he must further fix his thoughts and carefully contemplate one of the worms, making this one worm devour all the other worms. This single worm remains after having eaten all the other worms. Gradually expanding his mind, he sees this one worm facing him, as big as a dog, its body like a big lump, its nose bent like a horn, sniffing the ground before the practitioner. Its eyes are pure red, like hot iron balls.

1.58

見此事已，極大驚怖，當自憶念：我身云何，忽然乃爾，作如此事。先見諸蟲，更相食噉，今見此蟲，形體醜惡，何甚⁵可畏。此想成時，當自觀身。我此諸蟲，本無今有，已有還無。如此不淨，從心想生，來無所從，去無所至，亦非是我，亦⁶非是他。如⁷此身者，六大和合因⁸緣成之，六大散滅，身亦無常。向者諸蟲，來無所從，去無所至，我身蟲聚，當有何實。蟲亦無主，我亦無我。

Having seen these things [the practitioner] becomes extremely afraid. He must then consider: "How is it that my body suddenly appears in such a state? At first I saw these worms devour each other, and now I see [only] this [one] ugly, horrid, and terribly frightening worm."

When this meditation is complete he must contemplate his body [as follows]: "These worms within my body at first did not exist but now do exist. Having now come into existence, they will return to non-existence.⁹ These impure things are produced by the imagination of my

1 [許] Sgz

2 The usual meaning of 困頓 (tired, worn-out) does not seem to make sense here, and this is likely mistake for the phonetically similar binome 混沌.

3 現 Sgz; *Glosses on the Canon* seems to record 嗅.

4 政 Kg

5 其 Sgz

6 +亦 Kg

7 [如] Kg

8 目 Kg

9 Similar language occurs in Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture*: "This mind is impermanent, for it arises from causes and conditions. It arises and passes away without cease. It is only the arising of apparently similar [things], and only through misperception does one consider it unitary. Originally non-existent, it comes to exist in the present. Having existed, it returns to non-existence. For this reason it is impermanent." 是心無常，從因緣生故。生滅不住，相似生故，但顛倒故，謂是為一。本無今有，已有還無，是故無常 (T.614:15.279a1-3; see also *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.78c8-10). The notion that things are "originally non-existent but come to exist in the present" appears to be a refutation of the Sarvāstivāda-

mind. They arrive without arriving from somewhere and depart without going anywhere. They are not me, nor are they someone else. My body is formed through the coming together of the six elements. When the six elements disperse this body will be no more. So too the many worms before me arrive without arriving from somewhere and depart without going anywhere. What substance then is there to this worm-heap body of mine? These worms have no master and I too am without self.”

1.59

作是思惟時，所見蟲眼，當漸漸小。見此事已，身心和悅，恬¹然安樂，倍勝於前。

When [the practitioner] considers in this way the eyes of the worm become gradually smaller. When he has seen this, to an even greater extent than before his body and mind become happy and at ease, calm and joyous.

1.60

佛告阿難：汝好受持是厚皮蟲聚觀法，慎莫忘失。阿難聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成已，名第六厚皮蟲聚觀竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must remember this method for the contemplation of the thick skin and the mass of worms. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this meditation is complete, it is called the completion of the contemplation of the thick skin and the mass of worms, [contemplation] number six.

1.61

佛²告阿難：復當住意³繫念一處，諦觀右脚大指上。從足至頭，好諦觀之。當使皮肉⁴都盡，腸胃腹肝，肺心⁵脾腎，一切五藏，悉落墮地。唯有筋骨，共相連持。殘膜著骨，其色極赤，或如淤泥，或如濁水。作濁水想，持用洗皮。從足至頭，皆使如是。自觀己身，極令分明。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: [The practitioner next] must further concentrate his mind and fix his thoughts to a single thing, carefully contemplating the big toe of his right foot. He carefully contemplates [his body] from head to foot, making the skin and flesh disappear, and all his internal organs, the intestines, stomach, belly,⁶ liver, lungs, heart, spleen and kidneys, fall

Vaibhāṣika thesis that *dharmas* exist in the three times (see *A pi tan pi po sha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論, T.1546:28.295b19–20, where such statements are presented as the opinion of non-Vaibhāṣikas and then refuted).

1 恰 Sgz

2 The second fascicle of the Nara manuscript begins here. During this section where the first and second fascicles overlap I will label them Sgz¹ Sgz² respectively.

3 竟 Kg

4 內 Kg

5 肺心 = 心肺 Sgz¹

6 Earlier (1.11) there was mentioned the “large intestine” (大腸), “small intestine” (小腸), “receptacle of undigested food” (生藏) and “receptacle of digested food” (熟藏). Here we find further the “stomach” (胃) and “belly” (腹), for a total of six stomach-like item. Pāli lists of the 32 body parts give only three such items: *antaṃ*, *antaṅgaṃ*, and *udariyaṃ*. The lists of 36 or 37 body parts found in Chinese and Sanskrit sources often

onto the ground. All that remains is the bones with tendons still attached, each [bone] linked to the other. A thin membrane remains attached to the bones, deep red in color, [speckled] here and there with mud and dirty water. He then imagines that from head to toe his skin is bathed in muddy water. He contemplates his body and makes this very clear.

1.62

觀己身已，於現前地，復作一身，使在前立，如己無異。想一成已，復當想二。想二成已，復當想三。想三成已，復當想四。想四成已，復當想五。想五成已，乃至想十。想十成已，見一室內，周帛上下，滿中皆是赤色骨人。或有淤泥色者，或有濁水色者，以濁水洗皮。如是眾多，漸漸廣大，滿一由旬。想一由旬已，想二由旬。想二由旬已，漸漸廣大，想百由旬。想百由旬已，乃至見三千大千世界，滿中赤色骨人，或有淤泥色者，或有濁水色者，以濁水洗皮，周帛上下，縱橫¹彌滿。

Having contemplated his own body, he imaginatively creates another body, identical to his own, standing on the ground before him. Having successfully imagined one [such body], he imagines two. Having imagined two, he must then imagine three. Having imagined three, he then imagines four. Having imagined four, he then imagines five. Having imagined five, he continues until he can imagine ten. Having imagined ten, he sees the entire room, above below and all around, entirely filled with red skeletons, [stained] here and there with mud or dirty water, whose [remaining] skin has been bathed in dirty water. This multitude [of skeletons] becomes gradually larger, filling a *yojana*. Having imagined a *yojana*, he imagines two *yojanas*. Having imagined two *yojanas*, he gradually increases until he imagines a hundred *yojanas*. Having imagined a hundred *yojanas*, he continues until he sees the entire universe, above below and all around, filled in every direction with red skeletons, [stained] here and there with mud or dirty water, whose [remaining] skin has been washed in dirty water.

1.63

佛告阿難：汝今諦觀此赤 [色] {骨?} [相] {想}²，慎莫忘失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成時，名第七，極赤、淤泥、濁水、洗皮雜想竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Carefully contemplate³ this meditation on the red bones.⁴

additionally include the *āmāśaya* and the *pakvāśaya* (生藏 and 熟藏), for a total of five. And while rare, we do find a few examples of six, as seen here in the *Chan Essentials*. Xuanzang’s translation of the *Śrāvaka-bhūmi* thus lists 大腸, 小腸, 生藏, 熟藏, 肚, and 胃 (T.1579:30.428c24–27). As Shi Huimin has observed, the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels here lack terms corresponding to 肚 or 胃, leading him to suggest that these two words may be Xuanzang’s glosses added to explain 生藏 and 熟藏 (Shi 1992). Yet in the second chapter of the *Saddharma-smṛtyupasthāna-sūtra*, we do in fact find an Indic list with six terms: *āmāśaya*, *pakvāśaya*, *antrāṇi*, *antragunā*, *udaram* and *udīryakam* (SUS, 2.4.2). The Chinese translation of this passage, carried out in the early sixth century, renders these as 生藏, 熟藏, 小腸, 大腸, 肚, and 胃 respectively (*Zheng fa nian chu jing* 正法念處經, T.721:17.12c15), and while the final two terms thus differ from the 胃 and 腹 found here in the *Chan Essentials*, this at least suggests that we are justified in taking these as two separate terms.

1 彡+黃 Q

2 Following Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg

3 Strangely here the Buddha tells Ānanda to “contemplate” 觀 rather than “preserve” 受持 the teaching. The next several sections all have this same wording.

4 Translation tentative. In the other sections the Buddha always gives names associated with the decaying corpse,

Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this meditation has been completed it is known as the completion of the miscellaneous meditations¹ on the very red [bones], and the [bones] covered in skin stained with dirty water and muddy water, [contemplation] number seven.

1.64

佛告阿難：復當更教繫心住意，觀左²脚大指。從足至頭，如新死人，其色萎³黃，當觀己身，亦復如是。見萎黃已，當令黃色變成青赤。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: [The practitioner] must then further be instructed to fix his mind, concentrate his thoughts, and contemplate the big toe of his left leg. From foot to head he contemplates his own body as like a fresh corpse, the flesh slightly jaundiced. Having see [his body] as a jaundiced [corpse], he must then make the yellow color change to bluish-red.

1.65a

此想成時，見於前地，有一新死人，其色黃赤。見一已，見二。見二已，見三。見⁴三已，見四。見四已，見五⁵。見五已，心想利故，恒見己身，如新死人。如是想成，見一切人，滿閻浮提，如新死人。此想成已，轉復廣大，見三千大千世界，滿中新死人。自見己身及以他身，等無有異。此想成時，心意[憊]{快}⁶然，貪欲轉薄。

When this meditation is complete, he sees a fresh corpse on the ground before him, yellow-red in color. Having seen one, he sees two. Having seen two, he sees three, Having seen three, he sees four. Having seen four, he sees five. Having seen five, because of the sharpness of his imagination he always sees his own body as a fresh corpse.

When this meditation has been completed, he sees all the people of the continent of Jambudvīpa as fresh corpses. When this meditation has been completed, he continues to expand it, until he sees the entire universe filled with fresh corpses. He sees both his own body and the bodies of others in exactly this same way. When this meditation has been completed, his mind feels happy and his cravings are diminished.

1.65b

佛告阿難：汝好諦觀是新死想，慎莫忘失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成時，

so 赤色 by itself would be somewhat strange.

1 The meaning of *za xiang* 雜想, tentatively translated as “miscellaneous meditations,” is not clear. The character *za* 雜 is frequently used in this text for disordered or impure things. On the other hand in the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* this word appears in the title of the thirteenth contemplation (雜想觀; T.365:12.344c6–7), and here the meaning seems to be “various” of “miscellaneous.”

2 右 Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg

3 痿 Sgz¹

4 [見] Sgz¹

5 四已見五 = 五見四 Sgz¹

6 Normally *chuo* 憊 means “fatigued” (GHYZD, 318). This does not fit the present context. We find the expression 心意快然 below (2.25), and I emend based on this parallel.

名第八新死想竟¹。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Carefully contemplate this meditation on the fresh corpse. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this meditation is complete, it is called the completion of the meditation on the fresh corpse, [contemplation] number eight.

1.66

佛告阿難：復當更教繫念住意，諦觀左脚大指上。從足至頭²，使心不散。見身諸骨，一一分明，共相支柱³，亦相連持，無有破者。毛髮爪齒，皆悉具足，皎然大白。見⁴己身已，往⁵復反覆，想令白淨。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: [The practitioner] must then further be instructed to fix his mind, concentrate his thoughts, and carefully contemplate the big toe of his left foot. From foot to head [he contemplates his body], making his mind free of distraction. He sees the bones of his body, each clear and distinct. They each support one another and are mutually connected. None are damaged in any way. [This skeleton] is brilliantly white, with its body hair, head hair, nails and teeth all complete. Having seen his own body [in this manner], he reviews it over and over, and using his imagination makes it white and pure.

1.67

想一身已，復想二身。想二身已，復想三身。想三身已，復想四身。想四身已，復想五身，乃至於十。想十身已，見一室內，周匝上下，悉是骨人，毛髮爪齒，皆悉具足，白中⁶{白者}⁷，白如珂⁸雪。見一室已，復見百室。見百室已，見一閻浮提。見一閻浮提已，乃至見三千大千世界，滿中骨人，毛髮爪齒，皆悉具⁹足，其色¹⁰極白，白如珂雪。此想成時，心意恬安，歡喜倍常。

Having imagined a single body, he next imagines two bodies. Having imagined two bodies, he next imagines three bodies. Having imagined three bodies, he next imagines four bodies. Having imagined four bodies, he next imagines five bodies, and so on up to ten [bodies]. Having imagined ten bodies, he sees the entire room, above below and all around, full of skeletons, their body hair, head hair, nails and teeth all complete, the purest white in color, like

1 意 Sgz¹

2 願 Sgz²

3 柱 Sgz¹; 跂 Sgz², Kg; these readings are repeated throughout.

4 見 = 見自 Sgz¹, Sgz²; 自見 Kg. I would here postulate that 皎然大白見己身已 may have become 皎然大白白見己身已, which then became 皎然大白自見己身已 (Kg), and then finally 皎然大白見自己身已 (Sgz¹, Sgz²).

5 [往] Sgz¹, 住 Sgz²

6 白中 = 白中白者 Sgz¹ (the reading adopted); 白中白 Sgz²; 白中白如 Kg

7 Tentatively following Sgz¹. The phrase 白中白者 occurs in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.654c21–22).

8 阿 Sgz²

9 見 Kg

10 已 Sgz¹

ke-jade or snow. Having seen one roomful, he next sees a hundred roomfuls. Having seen a hundred roomfuls, he sees all of Jambudvīpa. Having seen all of Jambudvīpa he continues until he sees the entire universe filled with skeletons, their body hair, head hair, nails and teeth all complete, extremely white in color, white like *ke*-jade or snow.

When this meditation is complete, his mind becomes peaceful, and he feels extraordinarily happy.

1.68

佛告阿難：汝好諦觀具身骨想，慎莫忘失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成時，名第九具身想竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Carefully contemplate this meditation on the complete skeleton. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda had heard what the Buddha had said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this meditation is complete, it is called the completion of the meditation on the complete body [skeleton], [contemplation] number nine.

1.69

佛告阿難：復當更教繫心住意，諦觀右足大指兩節間，令¹心專住，無分散意。觀兩節，使相離去，唯角相拄。觀兩節已，從足至頭，皆令如是。使節節解，唯角相拄。從頭至足，有三百六十三[解]{節}，一一諦觀，令節節各解。若不足者，安心諦觀，令節²節各解，唯角相拄。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Next [the practitioner] must be instructed to fix his mind, concentrate his thoughts, and carefully contemplate the space between the two bones of the big toe of his right foot. He [must] make his mind focused and still, completely free of distraction. He contemplates the two bones and makes them separate from one another until only the tips are touching. Having contemplated the two bones, in this same manner he [successively] makes all the bones of his entire body from head to toe separate such that only their tips are touching. From foot to head there are 363 bones, and he carefully contemplates each one, making each bone separate. If [he is unable to make them separate] sufficiently (?), he must with calm mind contemplate carefully, and make each bone separate, such that only their tips are touching.

1.70

觀己身已，當觀他身。觀見一已，觀見二。觀二已，觀見三。觀三已，觀見四。觀四已，觀見五。觀五已，乃至觀見無量諸白骨人，節節各解，唯角相拄。見此事已，復見四方眾多骨人，亦復如是³。

Having contemplated his own body, he must contemplate the body of another. When he has contemplated and seen one body, he must contemplate and see two bodies. Having contemplated two bodies, he must contemplate and see three bodies. Having contemplated three, he must contemplate and see four. Having contemplated four, he must contemplate and see five.

1 念 Sgz²

2 [節] Sgz²

3 [是] Sgz¹

Having contemplated five, he continues until he has contemplated and seen innumerable white skeletons, their bones each detached, such that only their tips are touching. Having seen these things, in this same manner he further sees a multitude of skeletons in all directions.

1.71

得此觀時，當自然見諸骨人外，猶如大海，恬靜澄清。其心明利，見種種雜色光，圍繞四邊。見此事已，心意自然¹安隱快樂，身心清淨無憂喜想。

When he has obtained this contemplation he will spontaneously see, out beyond all the skeletons, something that appears like a great ocean, calm and pure. His mind being clear and sharp, in all directions he sees various kinds of multicolored lights. Having seen these things his mind becomes spontaneously peaceful and happy. His body and mind become pure, free of distress, and full of happy thoughts.

1.72

佛告阿難：汝好諦觀此節節解想，慎莫忘失。阿難聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。得此觀者名第十節節解觀竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Carefully contemplate this meditation on the [skeleton with] separated bones. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this contemplation has been attained, it is called the completion of the contemplation of [the skeleton with] separated bones, [contemplation] number ten.

1.73

佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教繫念住意，諦觀右脚大指兩節間，令節相離，如三指許，作白光想²，持用支拄。若夜坐時，作月光想。若晝坐時，作日光想。連持諸骨，莫令解散。從足至頭，三百六十三[解]{節}，皆令相離，如三指許，以白光持，不令散落。晝日坐時，以日光持，若夜坐時，以月光持。觀諸節間，皆令白光出。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] should next be instructed to fix his thoughts, concentrate his mind, and carefully contemplate the space between the two bones of the big toe of his right foot, making the bones separate about three-finger widths apart. He then imagines a white light supporting [the now separated bones]. If he is meditating during the night, he imagines the light of the moon. But if he is meditating during the day, he imagines the light of the sun. [The light] links together and supports the bones so that they do not fall apart. From his foot to his head he makes all 363 bones separate about three finger-widths apart, held together with white light so that they do not fall apart, either with the light of the sun if he is meditating during the day, or with the light of the moon if he is meditating at night. [In this way] he contemplates the space between the bones and makes them radiate white light.

1 利 Sgz¹

2 相 Sgz¹

1.74

得此觀時，當自¹然於日光中，見一丈六佛，圓²光一尋左右，上下亦各一尋，軀體金色，舉³身光明，炎⁴赤⁵端嚴。三十⁶二相，八十種好，皆悉炳然。一一相好，分明得見，如佛在世，等無有異。

When he has attained this contemplation he will suddenly see a sixteen-foot buddha⁷ within the light of the sun [between his bones]. Its halo measures six feet⁸ horizontally and six feet vertically.⁹ Its body is golden, radiating white light all over, brilliant and majestic. Its thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks are each distinctly apparent. Each major and minor mark is clearly visible, exactly as if the Buddha were still present in the world.

1.75

若見此時，慎莫¹⁰作禮。但當安意諦觀諸法，當作是念：佛說諸法，無來無去，一切性相，皆亦空寂。諸佛如來，是解脫身，解脫身者，則是真如。真如法中，無見無得。

If [the practitioner] sees this¹¹ he must not make reverence. He must merely carefully contemplate all *dharmas* with a calm mind, considering as follows: “The Buddha has said that all *dharmas* neither come nor go, their nature being empty and quiescent. All buddhas-tathāgatas are [in truth] the body of liberation, and the body of liberation is nothing other than true thusness. And within true thusness there are no *dharmas* that can be seen or grasped.”

1 白 Kg

2 [圓] Sgz¹

3 與 Sgz²

4 焰 P, Q, Sgz¹

5 赫 Sgz¹

6 三十 = 卅 Sgz²

7 Throughout medieval Chinese Buddhist texts one encounters reference to images (chiefly statues) of the Buddha said to be “sixteen-foot” (丈六). Although referring in part to the physical size of the image, “sixteen-foot” here seems primarily to denote the Buddha’s celestial, rather than human form. Thus the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* says that Sengquan 僧詮 (fl. early fifth century) “while in the country of Huanglong had crafted a sixteen-foot golden image, and then after traveling to Wu further had crafted a golden image [of the buddha in] his human form” (詮先於黃龍國造丈六金像，入吳又造人中金像; T.2059:50.369c14–15). Though the distinction between the celestial Buddha (what in later Buddhism would be called the *Sambhogakāya*) and the Buddha-as-man also naturally corresponds to a distinction in size, equally important is that an image of the “sixteen-foot buddha” is one on which the special marks of the Buddha are visible. During the fifth century the Buddha’s “sixteen-foot body” as his celestial, god-like form was also distinguished from the unchanging, eternal “dharma-body” (法身), and in doctrinal treatises from this time this is how the word “sixteen-foot body” is primarily used (Funayama 1995, 98). All of this is merely to say that when the *Chan Essentials* speaks of seeing a “sixteen-foot buddha” the main point is to emphasize iconography, not size.

8 Literally one *xun* 尋. One *xun* is usually understood be eight *chi* 尺 (at this time between 24 and 30 cm), thus approximately 2 meters.

9 I here break the four-character prosody, but this appears necessary. A similar description of the Buddha’s halo is found in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.659c2–5).

10 勿 Sgz¹

11 The grammar is peculiar.

1.76

作此¹想時，自然當見一切諸佛。以見佛故，心意泰然，恬怕²快³樂。

Having thought thus [the practitioner] will suddenly see all the buddhas [of the universe]. Because of having seen the buddhas, his mind will become settled, calm, and happy.

1.77

佛告阿難：汝今諦觀是流光白骨{想?}⁴，慎莫忘失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。得此觀者，名第十一白骨流光觀竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Carefully contemplate this meditation on the radiant light of the white bones. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this contemplation has been obtained, it is to be known as the completion of the contemplation of the radiant light of the white bones, [contemplation] number eleven.

1.78

佛告阿難：得此觀已，復當更教繫心住意，諦觀脊骨，於脊骨間。以定心力作一高臺想。自觀己身，如白玉人，結加⁵趺坐，以白骨光普照⁶一切。作此觀時，極使⁷分明。坐此臺已，如神通人住須⁸彌山頂，觀見四方，無有障⁹闕¹⁰。自見[故]{己}身，了了分明。見諸骨人，白如珂雪，行行相向，身體完具，無一缺落，滿於三千大千世界。此名白光想成。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When [he] has obtained this contemplation [the practitioner] must further be instructed to fix his mind, concentrate his thoughts, and carefully contemplate his spine between his vertebrae.¹¹ Using the power of his concentrated mind he imagines a high platform. He then contemplates himself like a white-jade person sitting in meditation posture [upon the platform] illuminating everything with the light of his white bones. When performing this contemplation he makes [everything appear] extremely clearly. Clearly and distinctly he sees his own body seated upon this platform, just as one who possesses the supernatural powers and dwells atop Mount Sumeru,¹² when viewing the four directions, encounters no obstacle [to his vision]. [Externally] he sees skeletons filling the universe, white like *ke*-jade or snow, row upon

1 是 Sgz¹

2 泊 P, S, Q, Y

3 故 Sgz¹

4 Emendation tentative, based on parallelism with the other sections (i.e. 1.72).

5 跏 Q, Sgz², Kg

6 映 Kg

7 極使 = 然後 Sgz²; 然使 Kg. We may imagine 極使 → 然使 → 然後 as a plausible evolution. Because the bottom of 然 is often written in manuscripts as one straight line, the character is quite close in appearance to 極.

8 復 Kg

9 鄣 Sgz¹, Kg

10 礙 Sgz¹, Sgz²

11 It is also possible that 於脊骨間 construes with the following line, such that the practitioner is to imagine a platform within his spine.

12 To ascend Mt. Sumeru is typically said to be something that only those with magic powers may accomplish (see *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.67b29).

row without any space between them, their bodies complete without any [bones] missing.

This is called the completion of the meditation on the white light [of the bones].

1.79

次見縱¹骨，亦滿三千大千世界。復見橫骨，亦滿三千大千世界。見青色骨人，行行相向，滿三千大千世界。復²見黑色骨人，行行相向，滿三千大千世界。復見臃³ [癩] {潰}⁴人，復見膿血塗身人... 爛壞舉身蟲出人... 薄皮覆身人... 皮骨相離人... 赤如血色人... 濁水色人... 淤泥色人... 白骨人，毛髮爪齒，共相連持... 三百六十三節解，唯角相拄... 節節兩向解離相去三指許間有白光{共相連持}⁵人... 散白骨人，唯有白光，[共相連持]⁶，滿三千大千世界。如是當見眾多白骨人，數不可說。

Next [the practitioner] sees the vertical bones, which similarly fill the entire universe. He further sees the horizontal bones, which similarly fill the entire universe.⁷ He sees row upon row of blue skeletons without any space between them, filling the entire universe. He next sees row upon row of black skeletons, without any space between them, filling the entire universe. He further sees row upon row of bloated corpses, without any space between them, filling the entire universe. He further sees corpses leaking pus. He further sees corpses smeared with pus and blood, filling the entire universe... rotting worm-ridden corpses... bodies covered [only] with the thin and thick skin... blood red corpses... corpses the color of muddy water... bruised corpses... skeletons with bones still held together, [complete with] head hair, body hair, nails, and teeth... skeletons in which [the tendons and other material have disappeared] and the 363 bones simply rest against each other... skeletons in which the joints have come apart about three finger-widths and are held together with white light⁸... skeletons that have been scattered,

1 從 Sgz²

2 [復見黑色骨人，行行相向，滿三千大千世界] Kg (a single manuscript line has been skipped)

3 病 P

4 Though all versions share the reading 癩, this does not seem to make sense. P's variant of 病 instead of 膿 seems to be an attempt to make sense of the problem. I am more inclined to see 癩 as an error, perhaps for 潰. The compound 膿潰 occurs elsewhere in this text to describe one of the stages of decay (1.52). Another similar term is 爛潰, which could also be what is intended here.

5 See next note.

6 These four characters seem to have been wrongly carried over from the previous line, and I here shift them back exactly 17 characters, one standard manuscript column.

7 These two sentences are problematic. The expression 縱橫, literally “horizontally and vertically,” is frequently used in the *Chan Essentials* to refer to scattered bones, and could be translated as “scattered here and there.” Similarly in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* one of the nine stages of decay is a skeleton whose “bones are scattered here and there in different places” (骨節縱橫不在一處; T.643:15.652c11). But here in the *Chan Essentials* we see that the two characters are taken individually. Given the location in the progression, we indeed would expect here a stage or stages roughly corresponding the stage of the “scattered” bones, which in the formal lists often follows the stage of the complete skeleton. In Pāli lists, for example, first is the stage of *aṭṭhikasaṅkhalikaṃ* (a complete skeleton) followed by *aṭṭhikāni apagatasambandhāni disāvidisāvikkhittāni* (the disconnected bones scattered here and there; see *Kayagatāsati-sutta*, MN 3.91). But I am not sure how we can account for this strange usage of 縱橫 as individual terms.

8 Here 節節兩向解離相去三指許間有白光{共相連持}人 may represent a poorly translated Indic compound, with the first 18 characters modifying the final one.

such that there remains only white light filling the entire universe.

In this manner he is to see uncountably many different kinds of skeletons.

1.80

得此觀時，當起想念：我此身者，從四大起，枝 [葉]{條}¹種子，乃至如是，不淨之甚²，極可患厭。如此境界，從我心³起。心想則成，不想不見。當⁴知此[想]{相}，是假觀見⁵，從虛妄⁶見，屬諸因緣。我今當觀諸法因緣。云何名諸法因緣。諸法因緣者，從四大起。四大者，地水火風。

When he has attained this contemplation he must then think as follows: “This body of mine arises from the four elements, and from seed to branch⁷ it is very impure, exceedingly loathsome. These visions arise from my mind. When I imagine them, they are formed. When I cease imagining, I do not see them. These appearances are thus seen only in dependence on my contemplation.⁸ They appear⁹ out of emptiness and depend on causes and conditions.

I must now contemplate the conditionality of all *dharmas*. What is meant by the conditionality of all *dharmas*? The conditionality of all *dharmas* is their arising from the four elements of earth, water, fire and wind.”

1.81

復當觀是風大。從四方起，一一風大，猶如大蛇，各有四頭，二上二下，眾多耳中，皆出是風。

[The practitioner] must then contemplate the wind element. It arises in each of the four directions, each instance of it like a giant snake. Each snake has four heads, two pointing up and two pointing down.¹⁰ Wind emerges from each of their many ears.

1 Following Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg; later we find the expression 枝條種子 in all versions (4.62).

2 其 Kg

3 [心] Kg

4 常 Sgz²

5 是 Sgz¹, Sgz²

6 空 Sgz²

7 Elsewhere in the *Chan Essentials* the “branches” 枝條 of the defilements are contrasted with their “roots” 根本, seeming thereby to indicate their active and latent forms (4.26). In the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* we find similar plant imagery, and one must “cut off the branches of the defilements” (斷使支; T.643:15.682b28). The image also occurs in the *Samantabhadra Contemplation*: “You must now confess and repent [evil actions] of body and mind. With your body you have killed, stolen, and fornicated, while with your mind you have thought of all manners of evil things. You have committed the ten evil actions, as well as the five sins of immediate retribution. [Your mind] is like a monkey or like lacquer—it sticks to everything the six sense organs encounter. The *branches, flowers and leaves* of these [evil] actions of the six sense organs [lead you to rebirth] in all the twenty-five states of existence of the triple-world.” 汝今應當身心懺悔。身者，殺盜婬。心者，念諸不善。造十惡業及五無間。猶如猿猴，亦如黏膠，處處貪著，遍至一切六情根中。此六根業，枝條華葉，悉滿三界二十五有一切生處。(T.277:9.392c8–12). Note here how the “root” of the sense organs (*indriya*) leads to the “branches” of evil actions.

8 Translation and emendation tentative.

9 Here reading 見 as equivalent to 現.

10 On the expression “two pointing up and two pointing down” (二上二下), see p.83.

1.82

此觀成時，風變為火，一一毒蛇，吐諸火山。其山高峻，甚可怖畏。有諸夜叉，住火山中，動身吸火，毛孔出風。如是變狀，遍滿一室。滿一室已，復滿二室。滿二室已¹，漸漸廣大，滿一由旬。滿一由旬已，滿二由旬。滿二由旬已，滿三由旬。滿三由旬已，轉復²廣大，滿閻浮提。見諸夜叉，在火山中，吸火[負]{焰}山，毛孔出風，周憚³馳走，遍閻浮提。復 [驚夜]{擎火}⁴叉，以逼⁵行者。

When this contemplation is complete the wind transforms into fire. Each of the poisonous snakes breathes out great mountains of fire. Towering above, they are very frightening. Dwelling within the mountains of fire are various *yakṣa*-demons, who roam about inhaling the fire and spewing wind from their pores.

This frightful scene⁶ fills a single room. Having filled one room, it further fills two rooms. Having filled two rooms, it gradually grows, until it fills one *yojana*. Having filled one *yojana*, it fills two *yojanas*. Having filled two *yojanas*, it grows yet further, filling Jambudvīpa.

[The practitioner then] sees the various *yakṣa*-demons within the mountains of fire, inhaling the mountains of burning flames, spewing wind from their pores. They rush about⁷ frantically throughout Jambudvīpa. They further grab hold of burning pitchforks with which they threaten the practitioner.

1.83

見此事時，心大驚怖，求易觀法。易觀法者，先⁸觀佛像。於諸火光端，各 {各}⁹作一丈¹⁰六佛像想。

When he sees these things he becomes frightened, and [must] seek out a method of inverse contemplation. The method for the inverse contemplation is as follows. He first contemplates an image of the Buddha. [Then], within each tip of flame he imagines a sixteen-foot buddha-image.¹¹

1 [已] Sgz¹, Sgz²; [滿二室已] Kg

2 +一 Kg

3 章 Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg

4 Tentatively following Sgz¹, Sgz², and Kg. Neither reading is perfectly satisfactory. “Burning pitchfork” 火叉 is not attested elsewhere, which certainly complicates my proposal that this is the correct reading.

5 遍 Kg

6 On the meaning of *bian zhuang* 變狀, see p.237n159.

7 周憚 is probably equivalent to 惆悵. Written 周憚, it is glossed in the *Glosses on the Canon* as “frightened and unsettled” (遍驚不安之狀; T.2128:54.487b1).

8 光 Kg

9 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg

10 大 Kg

11 The idea would seem to be that he first contemplates an external statue and then imagines it within the fires.

1.84

此想成時，火漸漸歇，變成蓮華，眾多火山，如真金聚，內外映徹。諸夜叉鬼，似白玉人。唯有風¹大，迴旋宛²轉，吹諸蓮華。無數化佛，住立空中，放大³光明，如金剛山。是時諸風，靜然不動。

When this meditation is complete, the flames of the fire gradually diminish and transform into lotus flowers. The mountains of fire [become] like heaps of transparent gold. The *rākṣasa*-demons [become] like white-jade men. There [remains] only the wind element, blowing gently back and forth against the lotus flowers. Innumerable transformation-buddhas⁴ stand in the air like adamantine mountains shining brightly. The winds then settle and all is still.

1.85

時四毒蛇，口中吐水，其水五色，遍滿一牀。滿一牀已，復滿二牀。滿二牀已，次滿三牀。如是乃至⁵遍滿一室。滿一室已，次滿二室⁶。滿二室已，次滿三室。如是乃至遍滿十室。水⁷滿十室已，見五色水，色色之中，各有白光，如頗梨幢。有十四重，節節皆空，白水涌出，停住空中。

Then the four poisonous snakes spew water of five colors from their mouths, which fills [an area the size of a] meditation cot. Having filled [an area the size of] one cot, it further fills two cots. Having filled two cots, it next fills three cots. It continues in this manner until it fills one room. Having filled one room, it next fills two rooms. Having filled two rooms, it next fills three rooms. It continues in this manner until it has filled ten rooms. When the water has filled ten rooms, [the practitioner] sees a white light within each stream of the five-colored water, like crystal pillars with fourteen levels.⁸ There is an empty space between each [level] from which white water gushes forth into the air, where it then stops and remains still.

1.86

此想成時，行者自見身內心中，有一毒龍。龍有六頭，繞心七匝，二頭吐水，二頭吐火，二頭吐石，耳中出風。身諸毛孔，各生九十九毒蛇。如是諸蛇，{各有四頭?}，二上二下。諸龍吐水，從足下出，流入白水。如是漸漸，滿一由旬皆見是事。滿一由旬已，復滿二由旬。滿二由旬已，滿三由旬。如是乃至滿閻浮提。滿閻浮提已，是時毒龍，從臍而出，漸漸上向，入於眼中。從眼而出，住於頂⁹上。

When this meditation is complete the practitioner will suddenly see a poisonous dragon

1 +火 Sgz¹

2 婉 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz², Kg

3 火 Sgz¹

4 On “transformation-buddhas” (*hua fo* 化佛), see the notes to section 1.155.

5 是 Sgz²

6 Here Kg repeats the previous 17 characters (one manuscript line).

7 +水 Kg

8 In the *Chan Essentials* crystal (*po li* 頗梨; usually a translation of *sphātika*) frequently describes the bones. The number 14 may symbolize a list of 14 different stages of advanced attainment, which are mentioned later (see 4.28). This vision is thus perhaps a preliminary sign that such attainment is not far off. There are several other passages in which the number 14 is incorporated into the visions (1.109; 4.59).

9 項 Sgz², Kg

within his heart. The dragon has six heads, and it wraps itself around his heart seven times. Two of its heads breathe out water, two breathe out fire, and two breathe out rock, while wind blows from its ears.¹ From the pores of its body there emerge ninety-nine poisonous snakes. Each snake {has four heads}, two going up and two going down.² The water spewed forth by the poisonous dragon (?)³ emerges from the [practitioner's] feet and flows into the white water. [The water] continues gradually in this manner until [the practitioner] sees a full *yojana* of water. Having filled one *yojana*, next two *yojanas* are filled. Having filled two *yojanas*, it continues like this until all of Jambudvīpa is filled. When all of Jambudvīpa has been filled the poisonous dragon emerges from [the practitioner's] navel and ascends gradually until it enters his eyes. It then emerges from his eyes and perches atop the crown of his head.

1.87

爾時諸水中，有一大樹，枝葉四布，遍覆一切。如此毒龍，不離己身，吐⁴舌樹上。是龍舌上，有八百鬼，或有鬼神，頭上戴山，兩手如蛇，兩脚似狗。復有鬼神，頭似龍頭，舉身毛孔，有百千眼，眼中火出，齒如刀山，宛⁵轉在地。復有諸鬼，一一鬼形，有九十九頭，各有九十九手，其頭形狀，極為醜惡，似狗野干，似狸似貓⁶，似狐似鼠。是諸鬼頭，各負獼猴。是諸惡鬼，遊戲水中，或有上樹騰躍透擲。有夜叉鬼，頭上火起。

Within the waters there then appears a great tree whose canopy spreads in all directions. Without leaving the practitioner's body the poisonous dragon touches the tree with its tongue. On the tip of its tongue there appear eight hundred demons. Some of these demons have mountains atop their heads, snakes for hands, and legs like dogs. There are other demons with the heads of dragons, each of their pores a flame-shooting eye, hundreds of thousands of which cover their bodies. Their teeth are like sword-mountains, and they roll upon the floor. There are various other demons, each with ninety-nine heads and ninety-nine hands. Their heads are extremely ugly, like [the heads of] dogs, jackals, racoons, cats, foxes and rats. Around the necks of each of these demons hangs a monkey. These evil demons play within the waters, some climbing up the tree and jumping off it. There are [also] *yakṣa*-demons, their heads aflame.

1.88

是諸獼猴，以水滅火，不能制止⁷，遂使⁸增長。如是猛火，從其水中頗梨幢邊，忽然熾盛，燒頗梨幢，如融真金。焰焰⁹相次，繞身十匝，住行者上，如真金蓋，有諸羅網¹⁰，彌覆樹

1 These would thus seem to refer to the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind.

2 Translation tentative. The original text, 如是諸蛇二上二下, does not make sense to me. Earlier (1.81) we saw the expression 二上二下 used to refer to the four heads of a single snake. Tentatively assuming that this is the meaning here, I have inserted the characters 各有四頭 as found above in section 1.81.

3 The text says 諸龍, "the various dragons," but it is clearly said that there is only a single dragon.

4 坐 Kg

5 婉 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz², Kg

6 獼 Kg

7 心 Sgz²; 上 Kg

8 更 Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg

9 焰焰 = 炎 Kg

10 納 Kg

上。此真金蓋，足滿三重。爾¹時地下，忽然復²有四大惡鬼，有百千耳，耳出水火，身毛孔中，雨諸微塵，口中吐風，充滿世界。有八萬四千諸羅剎鬼，雙牙上出，高一由³旬。身毛孔中，霹靂⁴火起。如是眾多，走戲水中。復有虎、狼、師子、豺豹、鳥獸，從火山出，遊戲水中。

The monkeys try to extinguish these flames with the water but they are unable to control them, and indeed rather make [the flames] grow. The raging fire approaches the crystal pillar within the waters and suddenly flares up, burning the crystal pillar [which then appears] as if molten gold. The flames spread, wrapping around [the practitioner's] body ten times and then rising up above him like a golden canopy, like nets spread out across the top of the tree, forming three layers in all.

Suddenly on the ground there appears an evil demon of the four elements, with hundreds of thousands of ears out of which pour water and fire. From the pores of its body small particles of earth rain forth, and it vomits forth a wind that fills the universe. There also appear eighty-four thousand *rākṣasa*-demons, lightning shooting from their pores, each with fangs one *yojana* long. All these creatures romp and play within the water. From the mountains of fire there emerge tigers, wolves, lions, leopards, and [various other] beasts, and they too play within the water.

1.89

見是事時，一一骨人，滿娑婆界，各舉右手。時諸羅剎，手執鐵叉，擊⁵諸骨人，積⁶聚一處。爾時復有九色骨人，行行相次，來至行者所。如⁷是眾多，百千境界，不可具說。

When [the practitioner] sees these things each of the skeletons, which [all together] fill the entire universe, raises its right hand.⁸ Then the *rākṣasas* stab the skeletons with iron pitchforks and collect them into a pile. Then skeletons of nine different colors come one after the other before the practitioner [and the same scene is repeated (?)].

The many hundreds of thousands of verificatory visions [that the practitioner might see at this point] cannot all be explained.

1.90

佛告阿難：此想成時，名四大觀。汝好受持，慎勿忘⁹失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡¹⁰喜奉行。此想成時，名第十二，地大觀、火大觀、風大觀、水大觀，亦名九十八使境界。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “When this meditation is complete, it is called the contemplation of the four elements. You must preserve it. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1 金 Sgz²

2 [復] Kg

3 一由 = 百 Kg

4 霹靂 = 霹靂 Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg

5 驚 Kg

6 種 Sgz²

7 Kg here has some major confusion and has mixed up the order of several lines.

8 This thus seems to show that the formal subject of the meditation is still the skeletons.

9 妄 Kg

10 觀 Kg

When this meditation is complete it is called [contemplation] number twelve, the contemplation of the earth element, the fire element, the wind element and the water element. It is also called the verificatory vision of the ninety-eight defilements.

1.91

佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教繫念住意，諦觀腰中脊骨。想諸脊骨，白如珂雪。見脊骨已，見舉身骨，節節¹相拄，轉復明淨，白如頗梨。見一一骨，支節大小，一一皆明，如頗梨鏡。火大風水地大，是諸境界，皆於一節中現²。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must be further instructed to fix his thoughts, concentrate his mind, and carefully contemplate his spine. He imagines all the bones of the spine to be white like *ke*-jade or snow. When he has seen the bones of the spine, he then sees all the bones of his body, each resting against the other, become increasingly bright and pure, [until] white like crystal. He sees each and every bone, both big and small. Each one is bright, like a crystal mirror. The verificatory visions of the fire, wind, water and earth elements³ appear within each bone.⁴

1.92

此想成時，見下方地，從於牀下，漸漸就開。見一牀下地已，復見二牀下地 ... 三牀下地 ... 一室內 ... 二室內 ... 三室內。見三室內已，復見一庭中地，漸漸就開。

When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] sees the ground beneath his meditation cot gradually open up. When he has seen the ground beneath one meditation cot [open up], he then sees this of the ground beneath two meditation cots ... three meditation cots ... the [ground of] an entire room ... two rooms ... three rooms. Having seen three rooms, he next sees the ground of an entire building gradually opening up.

1.93

見此事時，應當諦觀，乃至下方，無有障⁵闕⁶。下方風輪中，有諸風起。向諸夜叉，皆吸⁷此風。吸此風已，身諸毛孔，生鳩槃荼。一一鳩槃荼，吐諸山火，滿大千世界。是諸山間，忽然復有無量妙女，鼓樂絃⁸歌，至行者前，羅剎復來，爭取食之。行者見已，極大驚怖，不自勝持。出定之時，恒⁹患心痛，頂骨欲破。

When he sees these things he must carefully contemplate in the downward direction,

1 [節] Kg

2 見 Kg

3 This presumably refers to the visions described in the previous section.

4 The ability of jewel-like objects to reflect and display other things is a common theme in Indian visionary literature of all traditions (Granoff 1998). Here the point seems to be that the bones have now become so pure that they are like jewels in their ability to reveal or reflect other objects.

5 郭 Sgz¹, Kg

6 礙 Sgz¹, Sgz²

7 及 Kg

8 弦 Sgz², Kg

9 [恒] Kg

where there is [now] no obstruction.¹

Various winds arise in the wind-circle below.² They head towards the various *yakṣas* who inhale them. When they have inhaled these winds from the pores of their bodies emerge *kumbhāṇḍa*-demons. Each *kumbhāṇḍa*-demon vomits forth mountains of fire that fill the entire universe. Within these mountains [of fire] there suddenly appear innumerable nymphs playing music and singing. They come before the practitioner where they are devoured by a horde of fighting *rākṣasas*.

When the practitioner has seen this he becomes extremely alarmed and afraid, such that he is unable to control himself. When he emerges from trance he is perpetually afflicted by pain in his chest, and his skull feels as if it were about to burst.

1.94

攝心入定，如前悉³見四大境界。見此境界已，四大定力故，自見身體，白如玉人，節節上火起，節節下水流，耳中風出，眼中雨石。見此事已，於其前地，有十蚺⁴蛇，其身長大五百由旬，有千二百足，足似毒龍，身出水火，宛⁵轉於地。

He must then restrain his mind and enter trance once again. As before he will see the verificatory vision of the four elements. When he has seen this verificatory vision, by the power of the trance of the four elements he sees his body as if made entirely of white jade. From each of his bones fire shoots upward and water flows downward. Wind emerges from his ears and rocks rain from his eyes.

When he has seen these things on the ground before him there appear ten giant millipedes⁶, each 500 *yojanas* long, with 1,200 feet. Their feet resemble poisonous dragons. Water and fire stream forth from their bodies as they squirm about on the ground.

1.95

此想成時，但當至心，懺悔先罪。出定之時，不得多語⁷，於寂靜⁸處，一心繫念，唯除食時。復當懺悔，服諸酥⁹藥，然後方當易此觀法。

1 The idea seems to be that the ground has now opened up giving the practitioner an unimpeded view into the bowels of the earth.

2 On the “wind-circle” (*vāyumaṇḍala*) as a cosmological term indicating the lowest point of material universe, see p.60n201.

3 患 Sgz¹

4 口+元 Sgz¹. Note that while Sgz², as well as P, does indeed read 蚺, K itself has (虫+[沈-辵]). Kg meanwhile reads (虫+瓦). I presume that there is not difference in meaning between these forms.

5 宛 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz², Kg

6 Modern dictionaries often explain *wan she* 蚺蛇 as a kind of poisonous snake (HYDCD, 5092), and in Buddhist texts too it often translates Indic words meaning snake (Karashima 2001, 275). The *Glosses on the Canon*, however, repeatedly cites the lost *Records from the Realm of Mystery* (*Xuan zhong ji* 玄中記) which defines the word as a snake-like creature with four legs and poisonous spikes along its back, “resembling a lizard” (T.2128:54.531c3). Although what is intended here in the *Chan Essentials* is not clear, that it has feet would suggest something closer to the creature described in the *Records from the Realm of Mystery* than to a snake. With no obviously appropriate translation, I here give “millipede.”

7 諸 Kg

8 寂靜 = 靜寂 Sgz¹, Sgz²

9 蘇 Sgz¹, Sgz², Kg

When this meditation is complete, he must simply focus his mind and repent his past sins [as follows]. Emerging from trance, he must not speak too much, and except while eating he should stay in a solitary, quiet place where he is to single-mindedly fix his thoughts. [There] he must repent and take various milk-based medicines. Only after doing this is he to invert his contemplation method.

1.96

佛告阿難：此觀名為第二¹四大觀。汝好受持，慎勿忘²失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。此想成時，名第十三結使根本觀竟³。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “This contemplation is called the second four-element contemplation. You must preserve it. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this meditation is complete it is called the completion of the contemplation of the roots of the defilements,⁴ [contemplation] number thirteen.

1.97

佛⁵告阿難。此想成已，當更易觀。易觀法者，火⁶大動時，應起山想。當想諸山，猶如冰霜，為火所融。如是猛火，極大熾盛。火熾盛時，身體蒸熱。復更想龍，令雨諸石，以掩猛火。復當想石，使碎如塵。龍復吐風，聚諸微塵，積至成山，無量林木荊棘叢刺，皆自然生。爾時白水，五色具足，流諸刺間⁷。如是諸水，住山頂上，猶如積冰⁸，凝然不動。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must again invert his contemplation. The procedure for the inverse contemplation is as follows. When the fire element begins to move about, he should imagine various mountains. He should imagine these various mountains to be like ice or frost melted by the fire. Thus when the fierce fire blazes high [the practitioner’s] body [is merely] steamed warm [instead of being burned (?)].

He further imagines a dragon, and makes it spew forth various rocks that smother the fire. He must then imagine the rocks broken into dust. The dragon further spews forth wind, which gathers up all the tiny particles of dust and piles them up until they form a mountain upon which innumerable trees and thorny brambles then spontaneously grow. Then pure water of five colors flows through the brambles. These waters then collect at the summit of the mountain, frozen still like a mass of ice.

1 第二四大觀 = 第十三四大觀 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz¹

2 妄 Kg

3 Sgz¹ ends here.

4 The expression 結使根本 occurs in Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* in a passage explaining that while *dhyāna* meditation blocks the activity of the defilements, only attainment of the path “uproots the roots of the defilements” (拔結使根本; T.614:15.273b4–7).

5 Here Sgz¹ ends. The Taishō footnote indicating that fascicle two of Sgz¹ begins here is a mistake.

6 大 Sgz

7 聞 Kg

8 The CBETA edition incorrectly transcribes this character as 水.

1.98

此想成已。名第十四易觀法。佛告阿難：若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，三昧正受者，汝當教是易觀法，慎勿忘¹失。此四大觀，若有得者，佛聽服食酥²、肉等藥。其食肉時，洗令無味，當如飢世食子肉想：我今此身，若不食肉，發狂而死。是故佛於舍衛國，勅³諸比丘，為修禪故，得食三種清淨之肉。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

When this meditation is complete it is called the inverse contemplation, [contemplation] number fourteen.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must teach this method for the inverse contemplation to monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen who [practice] absorption in *samādhi*. Do not forget it! I allow those who attain this contemplation of the four elements to eat the medicine of milk-products and meat.⁴ When they eat meat, however, they must rinse it so that it becomes flavorless,⁵ and they must [eat it] as would one who in a time of famine [had no choice but to] eat the flesh of his own child,⁶ thinking: ‘If I do not now eat this meat I will be driven mad and will die.’⁷ For this reason in Śrāvasti I commanded that [to help in] their cultivation of meditation monks may eat the three kinds of pure meat.”⁸

1 妄 Kg

2 蘇 Q, Sgz, Kg

3 制 Sgz

4 This passage suggests that the previous and subsequent references to “medicine,” usually said to be made of “milk product” 酥, probably refer simply to ordinary (but perhaps rare or expensive) foodstuffs understood as “medicine.”

5 This rather remarkable prescription appears to derive from a creative (mis)interpretation of a key section of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in which the eating of meat is prohibited, and methods are given for separating meat from other food and purifying vessels that have contacted meat (T.376:12.869b7–15, Faxian’s translation; T.374:12.386c5–11, Dharmakṣema’s translation). In this passage the Buddha says that bowls that have contacted meat must be washed in order to purify them, and that meat must be removed from food in which it appears. Faxian’s translation seems particularly relevant here: “If meat is mixed in with the food, then [the food] should be placed in water so that the food can be separated from the meat and then eaten. . . . when in a country where all food has meat in it, I allow you to squeeze the juice out of the meat so that it loses its flavor of meat. Then it can be eaten.” 若食雜肉，應著水中，食與肉別，然後可食 . . . 若常食肉國一切食皆有肉現，我聽却肉去汁壞其本味，然後可食. On this passage, see also Shimoda 1997, 411.

6 The *locus classicus* of this image is the *Puttamamsūpamasuttam* (SN, 2.97–100), where it is question not just of meat but of all food. A corresponding sutra is found in Chinese translation of the *Samyuktāgama* (*Za a han jing* 雜阿含經, T.99:2.102b18–29). However the exact wording of the present passage (飢世食子肉想), though again with reference to all food not just meat, is found in Dharmakṣema’s translation of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, suggesting that it was borrowed from there (T.374:12.406a13–14). That text, of course, attempts to prohibit meat-eating entirely (see previous note). Indeed the *Laṅkavatāra-sūtra*, the other major Mahāyāna text promoting vegetarianism, suggests that opponents will argue that meat eating is permissible if one eats only the four kinds of pure meat as specified in the *vinaya* and thinks of such food as the flesh of one’s child (T.671:16.564b20–c1). The *Chan Essentials* seems to be precisely one such opponent. On the question of vegetarianism in Chinese Buddhism, which did not become the norm until Emperor Wu mandated it during the first half of the sixth-century, see Wang-Toutain 1999–2000, Lavoix 2002, Kieschnick 2005, Heirman 2006; on vegetarianism in Indian Buddhist scriptures, particularly concerning the possible connection between the rise of Buddhist vegetarianism and Tathāgathagarba doctrines, see Shimoda 1997, 388–420.

7 The quotation might possibly continue to the end of the next sentence.

8 This is a reference, albeit with twist, to the *vinaya* story about the institution of the rule concerning the three kinds of pure meat. In the story as told in the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* (*Si fu lü* 四分律), a lay patron once

When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1.99

佛告阿難：教易觀已，復當更教如前，繫念住¹意，諦觀脊骨，復使白淨，過前數倍。於[二]²{一一}³節間，以明淨故，得見一切諸穢惡事。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Having been instructed in the inverse contemplation, he must as before be instructed to fix this thoughts, concentrate his mind, and carefully contemplate his spine, again making it white and pure, hundreds of times more so than before. Between each vertebrae, because of their clarity and purity, [the practitioner] will be able to see all manners of horrible impure things.

1.100

此想成時，當自觀身，作一骨人。節節之中，白淨明顯，如頗梨鏡。閻浮提中一切骨人，及四大觀所有境界，皆於一節中現。

When this meditation is complete, he must contemplate his body, transforming it into a skeleton, each bone white, pure, and radiant, like a crystal mirror. Skeletons filling Jambudvīpa⁴ and all the verificatory visions associated with the contemplation of the four elements appear within one of the bones.

1.101

見此事已，見⁵諸骨人，從東方來⁶。向於行者，行行相次，數如微塵。如是東方滿娑婆世界，諸白骨人，皆行行相次，來向行者。南西北方，四維上下，亦復如是。復有青色骨人，行行相次，來向行者，滿閻浮提，漸漸廣大，乃至東方滿娑婆世界。南西北方，四維上下，亦復如是。復有淤泥色骨人 ... 濁水色骨人 ... 赤色骨人 ... 紅⁷色骨人 ... 膿血塗身骨人 ... 黃色骨人 ... 綠色骨人 ... 紫色骨人 ... 那利⁸瘡⁹色骨人，於諸節間，[二]{一一}¹⁰節流出十六色諸惡雜膿，行行相次，來向行者，滿閻浮提，漸漸廣大，乃至東方滿娑婆世界。南西北方，四維上下，亦復如是。

When he has seen these things, he sees many skeletons arriving from the eastern direction. Row upon row of them face the practitioner, as numerous as [all] the particles of dust

prepared a large meal for the Buddha and his monks in which a cow was killed specifically for the occasion.

Various Jain monks heard about this and rebuked the Buddha, whereupon the rule was instituted that meat could be eaten only when it is neither seen, heard, nor suspected that the animal was killed specifically for the monks or nuns in question.

1 注 Kg

2 三 P, S, Q, Y

3 Following Kg

4 Literally “all the skeletons of Jambudvīpa.” This seems to refer to the next scene (1.101).

5 [見] Sgz

6 東 Kg

7 黃 Kg

8 梨 Kg

9 創 P, Sgz, Kg

10 Following Kg.

[in the world]. In this manner the entire universe in the eastern direction becomes filled with skeletons, arranged in rows, coming towards the practitioner. To the south, west, north, four intermediate directions, above, and below it is also like this. Next, row upon row of blue skeletons come towards the practitioner, [first] filling Jambudvīpa, and then gradually increasing until filling the entire universe in the eastern direction. To the south, west, north, four intermediate directions, above, and below it is also like this. Next row upon row of muddy skeletons . . . row upon row of skeletons the color of dirty water . . . row upon row of blood-red skeletons . . . row upon row of red skeletons . . . row upon row of skeletons smeared with pus and blood . . . row upon row of yellow skeletons . . . row upon row of green skeletons . . . row upon row of purple skeletons . . . row upon row of skeletons that are like open sores,¹ leaking noxious pus of sixteen colors from between their bones, come towards the practitioner, [first] filling Jambudvīpa, and then gradually increasing until filling the entire universe in the eastern direction. To the south, west, north, four intermediate directions, above, and below it is also like this.

1.102

此想成時，行者驚怖，見諸夜叉，欲來噉己。爾時復當見諸骨人，節節火起，焰焰²相次，遍滿娑婆世界。復見骨人頂上，涌出諸水，如頗梨幢。復見骨人頭³上一切眾火，化為石山。是時諸龍，耳出諸風，吹⁴火動山。是時諸山，旋住空中，如窯⁵家輪，而無 [分] {障?}闕⁶。見此事已，極大驚怖。以驚怖故，有一億鬼，擔山吐火，形狀各異，來至其所。

When this meditation is complete, the practitioner feels frightened and sees various *yakṣas* coming to eat him. At this time he will see fire appear on each of the bones of the skeletons. Flames following one after the other fill the entire universe. He further sees jets of water like crystal pillars emerge from the crowns of skeletons' skulls. He further sees the fires on the skulls transform into mountains of rock. Then, wind emerges from the ears of the dragons (?), blowing the fire and shaking the mountains. The mountains then spin unimpeded in the air like potters' wheels.

When he has seen these things, he becomes extremely frightened, and because of his fear ten million demons, each different in appearance, carrying boulders and belching fire,⁷ appear

1 The *Glossary of Indian Words*, citing the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, explains this word by saying that *na-li* 那利 means “leaking” 漏, presumably here meaning something like “infected” (T.2130:54.989c8; Chen 2004 has no good reconstruction for this word). In the extant versions of the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* the word is written 那利瘡 (T.643:15.655a19). It also occurs in the *Methods for Curing* (5.54). In both these texts the meaning “infected sore” would fit well, and indeed Zhizhou's 知周 (668–723) commentary to the *Brahma Net Scripture* (*Fan wang jing pu sa jie ben shu* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏), which cites the passage of the *Methods for Curing* in question, includes the interlinear gloss of “infected sore” 毒惡瘡 (see the notes to 5.54). The source for all of these examples may be Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture*: “like an infected sore beyond the power of any medicine to cure” (亦如那利瘡，絕治於醫藥; T.614:15.270a17).

2 焰焰 = Sgz, 炎炎 Kg

3 頸 Sgz, Kg

4 吸 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz; 及 Kg

5 陶 Sgz, Kg

6 礙 Sgz

7 The expression “carrying boulders and belching fire” 擔山吐火 occurs in a number of influential Chinese texts

and draw near to him.

1.103

佛告阿難，若有比丘，正念安住，修不放逸，見此事時，當教諸法空無我觀。出定之時，亦當勸進，令至智者所，問甚深空義。聞空義已，應當自觀：我身者，依因父母不淨和合，筋纏血塗，三十六物，污露¹不淨，屬諸業緣，從無明起。今²觀此身，無一可愛，如朽敗物。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Monks who see these things and who dwell peacefully with correct mindfulness cultivating heedfulness should be taught the contemplation of the emptiness and absence of self of all *dharmas*. [Such a monk,] when he emerges from trance, should be taken to his preceptor³ to inquire about the profound truth of emptiness. Having heard this teaching, he should contemplate [as follows]: “This body of mine was created through the joining together of the impurities of mother and father, is bound together by tendons and painted over with blood, is [filled with] the thirty-six dirty, oozing, impure things, is dependent on past actions and arises from ignorance. Contemplating my body, no part of it is worthy of attachment, for it is a rotting, decaying thing.”

1.104

作是思惟時，諸⁴骨人皆來逼己。當伸⁵右手，以指彈諸骨人，而作是念：如此骨人，從虛妄想，強分別現，我身亦爾，從四大生，六入村落，所共居止⁶。何況諸骨，從虛妄出。

When he considers in this way all the skeletons press near. He must then extend his right hand and tap the skeletons with his finger, thinking as follows: “This skeleton comes from empty, false imagination, and appears only because of incorrect discrimination. My own body is also thus. It arises from the four elements and dwells within the village of the six sense gates.⁷ [The body being empty], how much more so these bones, which have been produced by groundless [imagination]!”

describing the assault of Māra’s hordes (see for example *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.242c19–24; *Xiu xing ben qi jing* 修行本起經, T.184:3.471a11). Among Chinese authors it became a standard way of referring to these hordes. Thus in a memorial written by Baolin 寶林 (fl. mid fifth century) preserved in the *Records of Proselytizing* (*Hong ming ji* 弘明集), Māra’s hosts are described as the “the arraying of the host of boulder-bearers and fire-belchers” (列擔山吐火之眾; T.2102:52.94b1–2). See also the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.651b14) and *Methods for Curing* (T.620:15.339a11).

1 染 Sgz

2 令 Sgz

3 On the meaning of the title *zhi zhe* 智者, literally, “a wise one,” see the notes to section 4.84.

4 二 Sgz; 一一 Kg

5 申 P, Q, Sgz, Kg

6 上 Kg

7 Translation tentative.

1.105

作是念時，諸白骨人，碎散如塵，積聚在地，如白雪山。眾多雜色骨人，有一大虺¹，忽然吞食。於白雪山²上，有一白玉人，身體端嚴，高三十六由旬，頸赤如火，眼有白光。時諸白水并頗梨幢，悉皆自然入白玉人頂。龍、鬼、蛇、虺³、獼猴、師子、狸猫、之屬，悉皆驚走。畏大火故，尋樹上下。身諸毛孔九十九蛇，悉在樹上。爾時毒龍，宛⁴轉繞樹。復見黑象在樹下立。

When he thinks in this way, the white skeletons shatter into dust, forming a pile on the ground like a snow-covered mountain. As for the other skeletons of various colors, they are suddenly eaten up by a giant snake-like creature. On top of the mound of white snow there is a white-jade person, his body straight and imposing, thirty-six *yojanas* tall, with a neck as red as fire and white light glowing in his eyes. Then the various white waters and crystal pillars all suddenly enter into the crown of the white-jade man's head. The many dragons, demons, vipers, snakes, monkeys, lions, and cats all run in fright. Fearing the great fire, they scurry up and down the tree. The ninety-nine snakes [that had emerged from the] pores of [the dragon in the practitioner's heart]⁵ all gather atop the tree. The poisonous dragon then twists and turns, coiling itself around the tree. [The practitioner] further sees the black elephant standing at the base of the tree.

1.106

見此事時，應當深心六時懺悔，不樂多語，在空閑⁶處，思諸法空：諸法空中，無地無水，亦無風火，色是顛倒，從幻⁷法生，受是因緣，從諸業生，想為顛倒，是不住法⁸，識為不見，屬諸業⁹緣，生貪愛種。如是種種，諦觀此身。地大者，從空見有，空見亦空，云何{想地}為堅 [想地]。如是推析¹⁰，何者是地。作是觀已，名觀外¹¹地。一一¹²諦觀，地大無主。

When he has seen these things he must with a reverential mind repent during the six times [of the day]. He must avoid excessive talking, remain in a solitary secluded place, and consider the emptiness of all *dharmas* [as follows]: “All *dharmas* are empty, and within the emptiness of *dharmas* there is neither earth nor water nor wind nor fire. Material form¹³ is a delusion, it arises from illusory *dharmas*. Sensation is conditioned by causes, arising from

1 虺 Sgz; 尤+王 Kg

2 [上] S,Q,Y, P

3 蛇虺 = 虺蛇 Sgz

4 宛 S,Q,Y, P, Sgz, Kg

5 This presumably refers to the ninety-nine snakes mentioned in section 1.86.

6 明 Kg

7 劫 Kg

8 +諸 Kg

9 因 Sgz

10 折 Sgz, Kg

11 水 Kg

12 一一 = 二 Kg

13 Here follows the five *skandha*.

various [past] actions.¹ Perception is a delusion, a non-permanent *dharma*. Consciousness cannot be seen. It is something conditioned by [past] action, born from the seeds of craving.² In such a manner should I contemplate this body. The earth element appears from emptiness. But a manifestation [from] emptiness is itself empty.³ How then could I imagine the earth element to be something solid?⁴ Analyzing in this manner, what then is earth?”

When he has performed this contemplation it is called the “contemplation of the external earth element.” Carefully contemplating it in every detail, [he sees] the earth element to be lacking in substance.

1.107

作是想時，見白骨山，復更碎壞，猶如微塵，唯骨人在，於微塵間，有諸白光，共相連持。於白光間，復生種種四色光明。於光明間，復起猛火，燒諸夜叉。時諸夜叉，為火所逼，悉走上樹。未至樹上⁵，黑象踏⁶蹴，夜叉出火燒黑象脚。黑象是時，作聲鳴吼，如師子吼音⁷，演說[若]{苦}⁸空無常無我，亦說此身是敗壞法，不久當滅。

When he performs this meditation he sees the mountain of white bones shatter yet further, becoming like tiny specks of dust. There remains only [the practitioner’s own (?)] skeleton⁹ amidst the dust, glowing with white light, [its bones] linked together.

Within the white light there further appear various lights of the four [other] colors. From within these lights there further arise raging flames, which burn the *yakṣas*. As the fire closes in on the *yakṣas* they flee towards the top of the tree, but before they can reach it they are trampled by the black elephant. The *yakṣas* then shoot flames that scorch the black elephant’s legs. With a voice like a lion’s roar the black elephant trumpets loudly, proclaiming [the teachings of] suffering, emptiness, impermanence and non-self, and also that the body is something subject to decay, soon to be extinguished.

1 This would seem to conform to the usual understanding that while alive karmic retribution takes the form of pleasant or unpleasant *vedanā* (sensation).

2 We seem to have some attempt to render the five *skandhas*, though one item (*samskāra* 行) is missing. We might also translate 生貪愛種 as “gives rise to the seeds of craving.”

3 Satō construes 空見 as “an empty view,” yielding “the earth element arises from empty views, and yet empty views are themselves empty” (Satō 1931, 203).

4 The proper parsing here is unclear, and I have assumed there is an error in the text. We might also read 云何為堅。想地，如是推析, though this is not fully satisfactory. Satō renders as 云何んが堅想を地と為さん (Satō 1931, 203), though I neither understand what this is supposed to mean nor do I see how this is a grammatically feasible rendering of the text as it stands. In typical Abhidharma analysis “solidity” 堅 is the *svabhāva* (defining characteristic) of earth, and this passage seems to invoke this idea in order to criticize it.

5 項 Sgz, Kg

6 蹋 Sgz

7 +中 Kg

8 Following K, P, Q, Sgz, Kg (The Taishō is presumably a misprint).

9 Translation tentative.

1.108

黑象說已，與夜叉戰。夜叉以大鐵叉刺黑象心。黑象復吼，一房¹地動。是時大樹，根莖枝葉，一時動搖。龍亦吐火，欲燒此樹。諸蛇驚張，各申九十九頭，以救此樹。是時夜叉，復更驚起，手執大石，欲擲黑象。黑象即前，以鼻受石，擲置²樹上。石至樹上，狀似刀山，是{時}³夜叉奮身大踊，身諸毛孔，出諸毒龍，龍有四頭，吐諸烟焰⁴，甚可怖畏。

When the black elephant has thus spoken, he battles with the *yakṣas*. The *yakṣas* stab at the black elephant's heart with iron pitchforks. Again the black elephant roars, shaking the ground over an area the size of a house, whereupon the trunk, branches, and leaves of the great tree all begin to shake. The dragon [in the practitioner's heart] too spews forth fire so as to burn the tree, and all the ninety-nine⁵ snakes, startled and alarmed, each reach out their heads and try to save the tree.

The *yakṣas* then become even more alarmed. Grabbing giant boulders, they try to throw them at the black elephant. But the black elephant advances, and catching the boulders in his trunk throws them at the top of the tree. The boulders, like blade-mountains, arrive atop the tree, and the *yakṣas* then leap up, four-headed poisonous dragons emerging from their pores spewing forth smoke and flames. It is most frightening.

1.109

此想成時，自見己身，身內心處，深如坑井，井中有⁶蛇，吐毒上下。現於井上，有摩尼珠，以十四絲繫懸在虛空。時彼毒蛇，仰口吸珠，了不能得。失捨⁷地，迷悶無知。是時口火，還入頂中。

When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] sees his own heart within his body to be like a deep pit or well. Within the well there is a snake, spewing poison all about. Above the well there appears a *maṇi* jewel suspended in the air by fourteen silk threads.⁸ The poisonous snake reaches up its head to swallow the jewel, but try as it may it cannot grasp it, and loosing its grip crashes into the ground and is knocked senseless, whereupon the fire from its mouth returns and enters its head.

1.110

行者若見此事，當起懺悔，乞適意食，調和四大。極令安隱，當坐密⁹屋，無鳥雀聲處。

If the practitioner sees this, he must repent and then beg for pleasing food so as to

1 聲 S, Q, Y, P; 百万 Kg

2 買 Kg

3 Tentatively following Kg.

4 炎 Sgz, Kg

5 Here the text reads as if there were many snakes, each of which had ninety-nine heads. But earlier the snakes were clearly introduced as ninety-nine in number.

6 見 Kg

7 擲 Sgz

8 On the significance of the number 14, see the notes to section 4.28 (see also 1.85, 1.109, 4.59).

9 蜜 Kg; +泥 Sgz

harmonize his four elements.¹ He must keep himself extremely calm and stable,² sitting in sealed chamber away from the noise of birds.³

1.111

佛告阿難，若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，得此觀者，名得地大觀。當勤繫念，慎莫放逸，若修不放逸行，疾於流水，當得頂法。雖復懶惰，已捨三塗惡道之處。捨身他世，生兜率天，值遇彌勒，為說苦空無常等法，豁然意解，成阿那含果。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: If monks, nuns, laymen or laywomen attain this contemplation it is known as attaining the earth-element contemplation. They must diligently fix their thoughts and avoid heedlessness. If they cultivate the practice of heedfulness, faster than a stream of flowing water they will attain the stage of “summit.”⁴ [After this], though they may again backslide they will have already [definitively] escaped the three evil realms of rebirth. After death, in their next life, they will be born in Tuṣita heaven where they will meet Maitreya, who will teach them about suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and so forth. They will suddenly understand, and will become *anāgamin* [non-returners].

1.112

佛告阿難，汝今諦受地大觀法，慎勿忘失，為未來世一切眾生敷演廣說。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。得此觀者，名第十四地大觀竟⁵，亦名分別四大相貌，復名見五陰麤相⁶。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must now carefully receive this method for the contemplation of the earth element. Do not forget it. Preach it widely for all sentient beings of the future.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When this contemplation is obtained, it is called the completion of the earth-element contemplation, [contemplation] number fourteen.⁷ It is also called discerning the attributes of the four elements. It is further called seeing the gross characteristics of the five dark elements [*skandha*].

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- 1 The implication seems to be that eating fine food will help insure that the four elements remain balanced in the body.
 - 2 Although this phrase might also go with the previous line, I read the point to be that he must keep himself sheltered from excess noise precisely so that his physical condition might remain “calm and stable.”
 - 3 The meaning of the expression 密室 is not entirely clear. It may simply mean a room with closed doors. The emphasis here on the need to shield the meditator from noise is seen again most prominently in the frame story to the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing* (section 5).
 - 4 Here, and elsewhere in the text, reference is made to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika theory of the four “aids to penetration” (*nirvedha-bhāgīya-dharmā*; 四善根位), which constitute the four stages of attainment just prior to the path of vision (*darśana-mārga*) and the attainment of the fruits (for further discussion of these stages, see p.31).
 - 5 意 Kg
 - 6 想 Sgz
 - 7 There seems to be a numbering problem here as 14 was given already.

1.113

有智慧者，亦能自知結使多少。四念處中，名身念處，唯見身外，未見身內¹。身念處境界四分之中，此是最初。得此觀者，身心悅樂，少於諍²訟。

Those with wisdom [upon attaining this contemplation] will know for themselves the extent of their defilements. Within the four bases of mindfulness [this contemplation] is called “the body as a base of mindfulness,” though one [here] only sees outside the body, not inside the body.³ This is the first of the four verificatory visions [associated with the cultivation of] the body as a base of mindfulness.⁴ One who attains this contemplation will feel physically and mentally happy, and will not be argumentative.

1.114

佛告阿難，此想成已，次當更觀身外火{大}⁵，從因緣有。有緣則起，緣離則滅。如此眾火，來無所從來，去無所至，恍忽⁶變滅，終不暫停。作是思惟時，外火即滅，更不復現。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete [the practitioner] must next contemplate the external fire [element as follows]: “[Fire] comes into being from causes and conditions. When conditions are present it arises and when they pass away it too disappears. All this fire arrives without arriving from somewhere, and goes away without going anywhere. Quickly flashing before the eyes, it transforms and passes away without stopping for an instant.”

When he considers in this way the external fire suddenly dies down and does not appear again.

1.115

復當思惟，外諸水等，江河池流，皆是龍力變化所成，我今云何橫見此水。此諸水等，來無所從來⁷，去無所至。作是思惟時，外水不現。

He must further consider: “External waters, such as rivers, streams, ponds, and brooks, are all created through the power of the dragons. How then could I now truly see this water?⁸ These waters arrive without arriving from somewhere, and go away without going anywhere.”

When he considers in this way, the external waters disappear.

1.116

復當起念，此風者，與虛空合，諸龍鳴吼，假因緣有。如此想者，亦不在內，亦不在外，不在中間，顛倒心故，橫見此事。作是思惟時，外風不起。

He must further give rise to the following thought: “This wind merges together with

1 肉 Sgz

2 爭 Kg

3 Below, after the contemplations of fire, water, and wind, the text mentions moving on to contemplate the internal earth element. Despite the many references in the previous sections to the meditator’s own body, it would appear that these are all technically classed as the contemplation of external bodies.

4 The remaining three are presumably the remaining three elements of water, wind and fire as described below.

5 Tentatively following Kg.

6 惚 Sgz, Kg

7 [來] Kg

8 Translation tentative. The point would seem to be that true water is something created by the dragons, such that what the meditator now sees cannot truly be water.

space. The cries and roars of these dragons exists only in dependence on causes and conditions. My imagination [of these things] does not exist inside, outside, or in between. Only because of my confused mind do I wrongly see these things.”

When he considers in this way, the external wind does not stir.

1.117

復當更繫念思惟身內脊骨。見身內骨，白如珂雪，一一¹節間，三十六物，穢惡不淨，皆於中現。或見身皮，猶如皮囊，盛²諸不淨。無量瘰疽，百千[癰]{癰}³疾，悉在其中。諸膿流出，滴滴⁴不絕，當在骨人頭上，極可厭患。或見身內五藏，悉皆走入於大腸中，大腸膨脹⁵，爛潰難堪。

He must then again fix his thoughts and consider his spine within his body. He sees the bones within his body, white like *ke*-jade or snow. Within each bone there appear the thirty-six filthy impurities. Or else he sees the skin of his body, like a bag of skin filled with impurities, filled with innumerable tumors and pustules. [Or else he sees his body] ceaselessly leaking a steady stream of pus from the top of the skull, exceedingly loathsome. Or else he sees the five organs inside his body all enter into the large intestine, which then swells up and bursts open most horribly.

1.118

爾時行者，以定力故，出定入定，見一切人及與己身，同不淨聚。見諸女人，身如蟲狗，穢惡不淨。自然當得不貪色[想]{相?}。

At this time because of the power of his concentration, whether or not he is in trance he sees his own body and the bodies of all other people as equally one mass of impurity. He sees the bodies of women as like wormy dogs, filthy and impure. He will then naturally be free of lust for material things.⁶

1.119

佛告阿難，此想成時，名第十四⁷觀外四大，亦名漸⁸解學觀空。佛告阿難，汝持佛語，慎勿忘失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “When this meditation is complete, it is called the contemplation of the four elements externally, [contemplation] number fourteen.⁹ It is also called

1 一一 = 二 Sgz, Kg

2 +盛 Kg

3 Following K, Sgz, Kg. P, however, does read 癰.

4 滴滴 = 滲滲 Sgz, Kg

5 膿 Sgz, Kg

6 Or possibly following the originally reading of 想 in its more generic meaning of “meditation,” such that the practitioner here attains the “meditation [in which there is] no lust for material things.”

7 五 Kg

8 漸 Sgz

9 The previous two contemplation were also numbered 14. Kg, however, here reads 15, and it remains one number ahead until number 29, at which point it again matches the other versions because all other versions skip directly from 27 to 29. It is not clear how we are to resolve these problems. Either Kg preserves a very early

the contemplation of emptiness [for] those learning gradual realization (?).”¹

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must remember my words. Do not forget them.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1.120

佛告阿難。此想成已，復當更教繫念，諦觀身內地大。身內地大者，骨、齒、爪、髮、腸、胃、腹²、肝、心、肺、諸堅實物，悉是地大精氣所成。外³地無常。所以知之，譬如大地，二日出時，大地焦⁴枯。三日出時，江河池沼，悉皆枯竭。四日出時，大海三分減二。五日出時，大海枯盡。六日出時，大地焰⁵起。七日出時，大地然盡。外地猶爾，勢不支久，況身內地當復堅牢。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must again be instructed to fix his thoughts and carefully contemplate the earth element within his body.⁶

The earth element within his body [is comprised of] bones, teeth, nails, head hair,⁷ intestines, stomach, belly, liver, heart, lungs, [in short] all things that are solid and firm. These are all made of the essential *qi* of the earth element.⁸ External earth is impermanent. How does one know this? For example when two suns appear the great earth itself becomes dry and scorched. When three suns appear the rivers, streams, ponds, and swamps all dry up. When four suns appear the great ocean is reduced by two-thirds. When five suns appear the great ocean dries up. When six suns appear the earth begins to burn. When seven suns appear the earth itself is incinerated.⁹ If even the earth element external to the body does not long endure, how much less so is the earth element within the body something solid or secure!

1.121

爾時行者，應自思惟。今¹⁰我此身，髮是我耶，爪是我耶，骨是我耶。身諸五藏，為是我耶。如是諦觀身諸¹¹支節，都無有我。自觀諸骨，一一諦觀。此骨者，從何處生。父母和合赤白精時，如乳{肥}¹²時，如泡時，如是歌羅邏時，如安浮陀時。如是諸時，何處有骨。

reading that was somehow corrupted or changed in the later versions, or else it was an attempt of the Kg lineage to correct the problem of the missing contemplation number 28.

1 Translation tentative.

2 腸胃腹 = 陽胃腸 Sgz

3 水 Sgz

4 火+焦 Sgz, Kg

5 炎 Sgz, Kg

6 Having moved through the four elements externally, now the meditator proceeds to the elements internally.

7 Lists of the body-parts in Buddhist texts almost always begin with the hair, so it is interesting that here bones are listed first.

8 The expression “essential *qi* of the four elements” also occurs in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.646c16–17).

9 These descriptions invoke the process of the destruction of the earth at the end of each eon (see 5.108 for even more detailed use of this imagery).

10 尔 Sgz

11 [諸] Sgz

12 Following P, S, Q, Y, Kg; 胞 Sgz

當知此骨，本無今有，已有還無。此骨者，同虛¹空相。外地無常，內地亦爾。

At this time the practitioner should consider thus: “Within this body of mine, is the head-hair myself? Are the nails myself? Are the bones myself? Are the five internal organs myself? In this manner carefully contemplating each part of the body, nowhere is there a self.”

[He] carefully contemplates the bones one by one: “From where do these bones arise? Where were the bones at the moment of conception?² At the time [when the growing embryo resembled] milk-curds (*ghana*)? When [it resembled] a foamy bubble?³ At the stage [of development called] *kalala*? At the stage [called] *arbuda*? At these times, where were the bones? One should thus know that these bones exist now but did not exist originally. Having come into existence, they will return to non-existence. These bones have the same character as space. As the external earth element is impermanent, so too the internal earth element.”

1.122

作是思惟時，諦觀己身，一切諸骨，自然破散，猶如微塵。入定觀骨，但見骨處，不見骨相。出定見身，如前無異。

When he has considered thus, he carefully contemplates his body and [sees] all its bones suddenly shatter into dust. When he [again] enters trance and contemplates the bones, he sees only the space where the bones once were, not the bones themselves. But when not in trance he sees his body just as it was before.

1.123

復當更觀身內諸火，從外火有⁴，外火無常，無有暫停。我今身火，何由久熱。作是觀時，觀諸骨上，一切火光，悉滅不現。

[The practitioner] must then further contemplate the various instances of the fire element within his body: “These fires within me exist only because of external fire, and external fire is impermanent, never remaining still even for a moment. For what reason then do these fires of my body burn for such a long time? Contemplating in this way, when he contemplates the bones all the fires atop them die down and disappear.

1.124

復當更觀身內諸水。我此諸水，因外水有。外水無常，勢不支久，內水亦爾，假緣而有，何處有水及不淨聚。

[The practitioner] must then further contemplate the various instances of the water element within his body: “This water within me exists in dependence on external water, and as external water is impermanent and transient, so too does the water within me exist only in provisional dependence upon conditions. Where then could there [really] exist these various waters or this mass of impurity?”

1 盡 Sgz

2 Literally, “at the time when father and mother have joined the red and white essences.” Cf. the *Stages of the Path of Practice*, where the meditator contemplates non-self by considering that a given part of the body was not present at conception or the other early stages of life (T.606:15.206b7–10).

3 On these terms for the different stages of the embryo, which are somewhat problematic, see p.96n78.

4 +內 P, Q, Sgz

1.125

外風無常，勢不支久，從因緣生，還從緣滅。今我身內所有諸風，假偽¹合成，強為機關²，何處有風。從妄想起，是顛倒見。作是思惟時，不見身內諸龍耳中所有諸風，悉滅不現。

[He then further contemplates the wind element internally]:³ “The wind outside my body is impermanent and transient, coming into being based on causes and conditions, and passing away when the conditions cease. [Similarly] the various winds within my body are but provisional conglomerations, artificially contrived, like mechanical contraptions.⁴ Where in fact is there any wind? [What I see] arises only because of false thinking. My seeing it is a misperception.”

When he considers thus he no longer sees the various winds emerging from the ears of the dragons within his body, and they vanish without a trace.

1.126

如是種種諦自思惟，何處有人及地水火風。觀此地是敗壞法，觀此火猶如幻{化}⁵。又⁶觀此風從顛倒⁷起。觀此水從虛妄想現。

In such various ways should he carefully consider where there might be a person, let alone earth, water, fire or wind. [He should] contemplate the earth element as subject to decay, the fire element as an illusion, the wind element as arising from misperception, and the water element as appearing because of false imagination.

1.127

作是觀時，行者見身，猶如芭⁸蕉，中無堅實。或自見心，如水上泡。聞諸外聲，猶如谷聲。作是觀時，見諸骨上，一切火光，見白光水，見諸龍風，悉在一處。觀身靜寂，不識身相，身心安隱，恬怕⁹悅樂。

When he performs this contemplation he sees his body as like [the trunk of a] plantain tree, without anything solid inside. Or else he sees his heart-organ as like a foam on the water. He hears sounds from outside as like echoes.

When he performs this contemplation he sees the fires on his bones, the radiant white water, and the winds [that emerged from the] dragons all in a single place. He contemplates the body calmly and tranquilly, not recognizing any distinguishing marks of the body. His body and mind are calm and stable, relaxed and joyous.

1 為 Sgz

2 開 Kg

3 There would appear to be some missing text. We would expect a conclusion to the contemplation of the internal water element in section 1.124, as well as an introduction to the contemplation of the wind element.

4 A verse from the *Stages of the Path of Practice* similarly uses the image of a *yantra* 機關 to describe the non-self of the internal wind element (T.606:15.207b15).

5 Following Kg.

6 人 Sgz

7 +想 Sgz, Kg

8 芭 Sgz

9 泊 P, S, Y, Q, Kg

1.128

如此境界，名第十五¹四大觀竟。² 佛告阿難：汝今至心受持此四大觀法，慎勿忘失。為未來世一切眾生，當廣演說。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

These verificatory visions are called the completion of the contemplation of the four elements, [contemplation] number fifteen.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must now with all your might receive and remember this method for the contemplation of the four elements. Do not forget it. It is to be widely preached for all sentient beings of the future.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1.129

作此觀時，以學觀空故，身虛心勞³，應⁴服酥⁵及諸補藥。於[深]⁶禪定應作⁷補想觀。補想觀⁸者，先自觀身，使皮皮相裹，猶如芭蕉。然後安心自開頂上想。復當勸⁹進。釋¹⁰、梵、護世諸天，使持金瓶盛天藥。釋提桓因在左，護世諸天在右，持天藥灌頂，舉身盈滿。晝¹¹夜六時，恒作此想。若出定時，求諸補藥，食好飲食。恒坐安隱，快樂倍常。修是補身，經三月已，然後更念其餘境界。

When performing this contemplation, because he is training in the contemplation of emptiness [his] mind and body will become weak and exhausted. He should therefore consume milk-products and restorative medicines.

Within trance he should perform the “restorative” meditation.¹² To perform the restorative meditation he first contemplates his own body making it [appear as] layer upon layer of skin, like [the trunk of a] plantain tree. Then he should settle his mind and imagine opening up the crown of his head. He should then invite Śakra, Brahmā, and the world-protector gods, and cause them to hold in their hands golden vases filled with heavenly medicine. Indra, lord of the gods, is on the left, while the world-protector gods are on the right. They pour the heavenly medicine into the crown of [the practitioner’s] head, and his entire body is filled with it. During all hours of the day and night he must constantly imagine this.

When he emerges from trance he should seek out restorative medicines and consume good food and drink, [enabling him to] constantly sit peacefully, feeling extraordinary joy. After cultivating this restoration of his body for three months he may again bring to mind other objects

1 六 Kg

2 Here ends fascicle one of the three-fascicle versions (K, J, P, S, Q, Y, Kg) and fascicle two of Sgz, N(a) and N(b).

3 身虛心勞 = 心身虛勞 Kg

4 +當 Kg

5 蘇 N

6 Following P, S, Q, Y, N, Kg

7 [作] N

8 [觀] N, Kg

9 觀 N

10 禪 N

11 [護世諸天在右持天藥灌頂舉身盈滿晝] N

12 This section is similar in style and content to some of the practices found in the *Methods for Curing*.

of meditation.¹

1.130

禪定力故，諸天歡²喜。時釋提桓因為說甚深空無我法，讚歎³行者，頭面敬禮。以服天藥故，出定之時，顏色和悅，身體潤澤，如膏油塗。

Because of the power of his trance the gods will rejoice. At this time Indra, lord of the gods, will preach for him the profound teachings of emptiness and non-self. He will praise the practitioner and bow his head before him.⁴ Because he has consumed heavenly medicines when he emerges from trance his face will appear peaceful and happy, and his skin will be rich and glossy, as if smeared with oil.

1.131

見此事者⁵，名第十六⁶四大觀竟。

When he has seen these things it is called the completion of the contemplation of the four elements, [contemplation] number sixteen.

1.132

佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教繫念住意，令觀外色。一切色者，從何處生。作此觀時，見外五色，如五色光，圍繞己身。此[想]{相}現時。自觀身胸。胸⁷骨漸漸明淨如頗梨鏡，明顯可愛⁸。復見外色，一一眾色，明如日光。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must further be instructed to fix his thoughts and concentrate his mind. He is to contemplate form externally [as follows]: “From where does all this form arise?” As he performs this contemplation, he sees the five [kinds of] form⁹ externally as like five colored lights encircling his body.

When these signs have appeared [the practitioner must] contemplate his own chest. His chest bone gradually becomes pure and clear like a crystal mirror, radiant and lovely, and he further sees the myriad external forms to be as bright as the light of the sun.

1 Here “objects of meditation” is *jing jie* 境界, elsewhere often translated as “vision” or “verificatory vision.”

2 觀 N

3 嘆 Q, Kg

4 Translation tentative. The text appears to say that Indra both gives Buddhist teachings and worships the practitioner.

5 [者] N

6 七 Kg

7 [胸] N, Kg

8 受 N

9 Presumably this refers to the division of *rūpa* as the objects of the five bodily sense organs.

1.133

得此觀時，四方自然生四黑象。黑象大吼，踏¹眾色滅。如是眾色，在地者滅，於虛空中，玄黃可愛，倍復過常。爾時大象，以鼻繞樹。四象四邊，[樂]{欲}²拔此樹，不能傾動。復有四象，以鼻繞樹，亦不能動。

When he attains this contemplation, in each of the four directions there suddenly appears a black elephant. The black elephants howl and trample the myriad forms into nothingness. Those on the ground are destroyed, while [those forms] in the air [remain], twice as resplendent and lovely as normal.³ Then the black elephants wrap their trunks around the tree. From four sides the four elephants try to uproot the tree, but they are unable to budge it. There then appear four more elephants who [similarly] wrap their trunks around the tree. They too are unable to move it.

1.134

爾時行者，見此事已，出定之時，應於靜處，若在塚間，若在樹下，若阿練若處，覆身令密。應當靜寂，更求好藥，以補己身。如上修習補身藥法，復經三月。一心精進，如救頭然。心不放逸，於所受戒，不起犯心。晝夜六時，懺悔諸罪。

When the practitioner has seen these things, upon emerging from trance he should ensconce⁴ himself in a quiet place such as a graveyard, or beneath a tree, or in a hermitage.⁵ He must remain tranquil and must further seek good medicines with which to restore his body. For a further three months [he should] cultivate the healing method of bodily restoration as described above.⁶ [He must be] single-minded and ardent, as if putting out a fire burning on his head. He must not be heedless, and must not even think of violating any of the precepts that he has undertaken. At the six times throughout the day he is to repent his sins.

1 踰 N; 躅 Q

2 Following K, P, Q, Sgz, Kg. The Taishō is presumably a misprint.

3 Translation tentative.

4 Translation tentative. The meaning of 覆身令密 is not entirely clear to me, though the basic idea seems to be that the practitioner must isolate himself from others.

5 This is a standard list of suitable locations for meditation practice. In early usage *aranya* (阿練若) means “forest.” However the word *aranya* eventually comes to mean “monastery.” Indeed early Chinese lexicons do not give “forest” as the principal sense, but rather “a quiet place” (*Glossary of Indian Words*, T.2130:54.1041c24, where it is glossed as *ji jing* 寂靜, “tranquil”). This explanation is based on taking *raṇa* as “noise” (such that *aranya* means “free of noise”), and this pseudo-etymology was also used to translate the term into Tibetan (as *dgon pa*; see Harrison 2003, 132). In China the word usually denoted temples and monasteries not necessarily far from settlements, as can be seen from Zhanru’s 湛如 study of the Buddhist monasteries at Dunhuang (Zhanru 2003, 61–69), who builds on the work of Fujieda Akira 藤枝晃 (1959). Fujieda noted that in terms of their size and scope, the institutions at Dunhuang called *a lan ruo* 阿蘭若 were not significantly different from the so called “great temples” 大寺. Drawing on a wider range of documents Zhanru shows that many if not most of the *a lan ruo* 阿蘭若 in Dunhuang were located within the city itself, and in some cases these temples are known to have hosted, at least for certain ceremonies, several hundred monks. Although Zhanru considers this integration of such “hermitages” within society to be a peculiarity of the Buddhism of Dunhuang, there is no particular reason to assume this. A similar situation appears to have obtained in Tibet, where the word was used for even rather large monasteries (Harrison 2003, 132).

6 Referring presumably to section 1.129

1.135

復更思惟，身無我空。如前境界，一一諦觀，極令明了。此想¹成時，胸骨漸明，猶如神珠，內外映徹。心內毒蛇，復更踊身，騰住空中，口中有火。欲吸摩尼珠，了不能得，如前失捨，自撲於地，身心迷悶，望見四方。

Next he must further consider the emptiness and non-self of his body. The previous verificatory visions are to be contemplated in detail and made extremely clear.

When this meditation is complete, his chest bone becomes gradually brighter [until] it is like a transparent divine pearl. The poisonous snakes within his heart again leap up and fly into the air, their mouths breathing fire. They wish [again] to suck up the *maṇi* jewel, but in the end they cannot get hold of it and as before they fall and crash into the ground. Disoriented, they look off into the distance.²

1.136

爾時諸象，復更奔競，來至樹所。時諸夜叉、羅剎、惡獸、諸龍蛇等，俱時吐毒，與黑象戰。爾時黑象，以鼻繞樹，聲吼而挽³。象挽⁴樹時，諸龍夜叉，吐毒前戰，不肯休息。爾時地下，有一師子，兩眼明顯，似如金剛，忽然踊出，與諸龍戰。爾時諸龍，踊住⁵空中，象故挽⁶樹，終不休息，地漸漸動。

At this time the elephants again charge towards the tree. The various *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, evil beasts, dragons, and snakes all simultaneously spew forth poison and battle with the elephants. Then the black elephants wrap their trunks around the tree and pull, screaming loudly. When the elephants pull at the tree, the dragons and *yakṣas* spew poison and continue their battle, unwilling to desist.

Then, on the ground below [the tree] there is a lion, its eyes shining brightly like adamantite, which suddenly leaps up and battles with the dragons. The dragons then leap up into the air. Once again the elephants pull on the tree and continue without stopping until the earth gradually begins to shake.

1.137

是時行者，地動之時，當觀此地，從空而有，非堅實法，如此地者，如乾闥婆城，如野馬行，從虛妄出，何緣而動。

When the earth begins to shake the practitioner should contemplate [as follows]: “This earth comes into being out of emptiness, it is not a real, substantial *dharma*. This earth is like a city of the Gandharvas, like a mirage.⁷ It appears because of false [thinking]. For what reason then does it move?”

1 相 Sgz

2 It is possible to read 望見四方 with the next line (as does Satō 1931, 209), but usually 爾時 begins a new topic.

3 拋 S, P; 免 Y

4 拋 P, S, Q, Y

5 出 Sgz, Kg

6 拋 P, S, Q, Y

7 Literally, “like moving wild horses.” On this expression see appendix 2 p.*

1.138

作是思惟時，自[分]{見}¹己身胸骨乃至面骨，漸漸明淨。見諸世間一切所有，皆悉明了。得此觀時，如執明鏡自觀面像²。行者爾時，見諸身外一切眾色，及諸不淨，亦見身內一切不淨。

When he considers in this way he sees [the area of his] body between his chest bone and the bones of his face gradually become bright and pure. [Therein (?)] he clearly sees all things in the world. When he attains this contemplation, [he sees these things as clearly as if] beholding his own reflection in a clean mirror. At this time the practitioner sees all the myriad forms and all the impurities of [the world] external to his body, and he also sees all the impurities within his own body.

1.139

此想成時。名第十七身念處觀。佛告阿難，汝好受持此身念處灌頂章句，慎勿忘失。開甘露法門，為未來世一切眾生，當廣演³說。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

When this meditation is complete, it is known as the contemplation of the body as a base of mindfulness, [contemplation] number seventeen.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Carefully preserve these words of consecration⁴ concerning bodily mindfulness. Be sure not to forget them. They are to be preached for all sentient beings in the future age, thereby opening up the gate of ambrosia.”

1.140

佛告阿難：此想成已，復當更教，繫念思惟，諦觀面骨。自見面骨，如白⁵玉鏡，內外俱淨，淨如明鏡。漸漸廣大，見舉身骨，白如頗梨[鏡]⁶，內外俱淨。一切眾色，皆於中現。須臾見身，如白玉人。復見澄清，如毘琉璃，表裏俱空，一切眾色，皆於中現。復見己身，如白銀人，唯薄皮在，皮極微薄，薄於天劫貝，內外映徹。復見己身，如閻浮檀那

1 Following K, P, Q, Sgz, Kg. The Taishō is presumably a misprint.

2 象 Sgz

3 廣演 = 演廣 A, P, S, Q, Y

4 The term 灌頂章句, literally “consecration stanzas,” is both interesting and problematic. Nakamura (BGDJT, 193), with reference to the apocryphal *Consecration Scripture* (*Guan ding jing* 灌頂經), gives the meaning “words uttered at the time of consecration (*abhiṣeka*).” The only clearly authentic Chinese translation in which I have been able to find this term is Dharmakṣema’s translation of the *Suvarṇa-bhāsottama-sūtra* (a text from which other imagery in the *Chan Essentials* has been drawn), where it denotes a *dhāraṇī* (*Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經, T.663:16.345b14), and seems to translate the words *mūrdhābhiṣeka-dharmatā-mantrapadāḥ* (Nobel 1937, 117), which Emmerick renders into English as “magic words for lawful consecration of the head” (Emmerick 1970, 50). If Dharmakṣema’s translation of the *Suvarṇa-bhāsottama-sūtra* is indeed the source of the term in Chinese, it is taken up with fervor in the *Consecration Scripture* where it refers to lists of deity names invoked for protection or other benefits. It is also used in the *Invitation Sutra* (see appendix 2) to denote Avalokitasvara’s *dhāraṇī* (T.1043:20.35c1). Thus despite being in its origin the translation of a specific and rather obscure technical term, the word appears to have been used in Chinese compositions as a stylized way of referring to *dhāraṇī*. On the other hand here in the *Chan Essentials* we see a somewhat different meaning, and the point would seem to be to equate the teachings of the text itself with a holy spell.

5 如白 = 自如 Kg

6 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

金人，內外俱空。復見己身，如金剛人。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must further be instructed to concentrate this thoughts and ponder deeply, carefully contemplating the bones of his face.

He then sees the bones of his face as like a white jade mirror. Gradually expanding, he sees the bones of his entire body to be white like crystal, pure on the inside and the outside. All the myriad forms [of the world] appear therein. Soon thereafter he then sees his body as like a white jade person. He then sees [his body] to be clear and pure as if made of beryl, empty on the inside and outside, with all the myriad forms of the world appearing therein. He then sees his body as like a person made of white silver. Only the thin skin remains. This skin is extremely thin, thinner than heavenly cotton,¹ and is completely transparent. He further sees his own body as like a person made of *jambūnada* gold, empty on the inside and outside. He further sees his own body as like a person made of adamantine.

1.141

見此[地]{事}²時，黑象倍多，以鼻繞樹。盡己身力，不能令動。爾時眾象，吼聲震³烈，驚動大地，大地⁴動時，有金剛山，從下方地出，住行者前。爾時行者，見[己]{己}四邊，有金剛山。復見前地，猶如金剛。復見諸龍，尋樹上下，吐金剛珠。樹遂堅固，象不能動⁵。唯五色水，從樹{荑}⁶上出，仰流樹枝，從於樹端，下流葉間，乃至樹[莖]{荑}⁷。亦流金剛山間，布散彌漫，滿於大地，金剛地下，乃至金剛山。此五色水，放五色光，或上或下，遊行無常。爾時黑象，從金剛山出，欲吸此水。諸龍吐毒，與大象戰。爾時諸蛇，入龍耳中，并力作勢，共黑象戰。爾時黑象，盡力蹴掣，亦無奈何。

When he has seen these things, the black elephants double in number, and they [again] wrap their trunks around the tree. Though they use all their strength they are still unable to move it. The elephants then let out a piercing scream, which shakes the earth, and as it shakes an adamantine mountain emerges from the earth below and comes to rest before the practitioner. The practitioner then sees adamantine mountains on all four sides around him. He further sees the ground in front of him as like adamantine. He further sees the dragons going up and down the

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- 1 劫貝 is normally and frequently a transcription of *karpāsa*, cotton. The term 天劫貝 appears in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* to describe the softness of the Buddha's hands (T.643:15.648b23–24).
 - 2 Tentative emendation, suggested only by the frequency of the expression 見此事時, and the difficulty in making sense of the line otherwise.
 - 3 [震] Kg
 - 4 [大地] Sgz, Kg
 - 5 [動] Kg
 - 6 Following Sgz and Kg, which however both read 荑. This graph is quite similar in appearance to 荑, which appears in both Sgz and Kg in the next line, where the printed canons read 莖, as well as in all editions in the compound 樹荑 in later sections of the text. The character 荑 furthermore appears in the *Glosses on the Canon* commentary to this fascicle of the *Chan Essentials*, where it is said to mean 莖 (T.2128:54.674b14). Thus it seems likely to me that Sgz and Kg here preserve a copying error whereby 荑 was replaced with 荑, and that this character was then later removed from the editions leading to the printed canons. This accounts for the presence of 荑 in both Sgz and Kg, and also makes better sense of the otherwise obscure line.
 - 7 Following Sgz, Kg. See previous note.

tree, spewing forth pellets of diamond. The tree is thus made secure and the elephants are unable to move it. There is only the five-colored water which emerges from the trunk of the tree, flows up into its branches, and reaching top [of the tree] flows back down through the leaves, branches, and trunk. It spreads out among the adamantine mountains, and then fills the earth, from the adamantine ground below up to [the top of] the adamantine mountains. This five-colored water emits lights of five colors, some going upwards and some downwards, their direction and movements unfixed. The black elephants then emerge from the adamantine mountains and try to drink up the water, but the dragons spew forth poison and battle with them. The snakes then enter the dragons ears and join forces with the dragons to battle the black elephant. The black elephants charge forward with all their might, but they are unable to do anything.

1.142

見此事時，諸水光明，皆作伎樂，或有變化，狀如天女，歌詠作伎¹，甚可愛樂。此女端正，天上人間，無有比類。其所作樂，及妙音聲，忉利天上，亦無此比。如是化女，作諸技²術，數億千萬，不可具說。

When [the practitioner] sees these things, the waters becomes luminous and begin to play music. Or else they transform into heavenly maidens, who sing and play the most delightful music. These maidens are truly lovely, with no equal on earth or in the heavens. The music they play is truly sublime, with nothing to match it even in the heavens of the thirty-three [Trāyastriṃśa]. So many are the different kinds of arts and allurements displayed by these magical maidens that they cannot all be spoken of.

1.143

見此事時，慎勿隨著，應當繫心念前不淨。出定之時，應詣智者，問甚深空義。爾時智者，應為行者說無我空。

When [the practitioner] sees these things, he must be careful not to follow after and become attached to them.³ [To prevent this] he should fix his mind on the impurity [of what lies] before [him]. When he emerges from trance he should go see a wise person and inquire about the profound principle of emptiness.⁴ At this time the wise person should preach for the practitioner [the principles of] non-self and emptiness.

1.144

爾時行者，復應繫念如前，自觀⁵身骨。自見胸骨，明淨可愛，一切不淨，皆於中現。

At this time the practitioner should again fix his thoughts as before and contemplate the bones of his body. He sees the bones of his chest, bright, pure, and lovely, with all the impurities appearing within them.

1 姿 Sgz, Kg

2 伎 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

3 For other similar uses of the expression 隨著, see section 5.76. See also the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.215c2–5, where it concerns a meditator becoming attached to the pure forms created by the mind during the course of the third *vimokṣa*.

4 Here we see a sequence very similar to that given before in sections 1.103.

5 +自觀 P, S, Q, Y

1.145

見此事已，當自思惟。如我今者，髮是我耶，骨是我耶，爪是我耶，齒是我耶，色是我耶，受是我耶，想是我耶，{行是我耶}¹，識是我耶。一一諦觀。無明是我耶，行是我耶，識是我耶，名色是我耶，六入是我耶，觸是我耶，受是我耶，愛是我耶，取是我耶，有是我耶²，生是我耶，老死是我³耶。

When he has seen this, he should consider: “In this present body of mine, is the hair the self? The bones? The nails? The teeth? [Any of the five *skandhas* of] form, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations, or consciousness? Carefully contemplating, is the self [any of the twelve-links of dependent origination, namely] ignorance, volitional formations, consciousness, name-and-form, the six sense-doors, contact, feeling, attachment, grasping, becoming, birth, or old age and death?

1.146

若死是我者，諸蟲啖⁴食，散滅壞時，我是何處。若生是我者，念念不住，於此生中，無常住想，當知此生亦非是我。若頭是我，頭骨八段，[解解]{節節}各異，腦中生蟲。觀此頭中，而實無我。若眼⁵是我。眼中無實，地與水合，假火為明，假風動⁶轉⁷，散滅壞時，烏鵲等鳥，皆來食之，瘰蝨⁸諸蟲，所共啖⁹食。諦觀此眼，{亦復無主}¹⁰。

“Is the corpse the self?¹¹ But [the corpse] is eaten by worms, so how could it be the self? Nor can the living person be the self,¹² since [in life] thoughts continue without cease and in this life no mental state endures permanently.

“Perhaps the head is the self? But there are eight separate bones in the head, and within the brain there live various worms. When we look within the head there is no self there at all. Perhaps the eye is the self? But within the eye there is nothing substantial. Formed of water and

1 Following Kg, though this may be a later correction (see next note).

2 [愛是我耶，取是我耶，有是我耶] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz; in Kg these 12 characters are replaced by 乃至. The use of the expression 乃至 to replace only three items in a twelve item list is highly peculiar. Kg thus probably represents the correction of an editor to a version resembling P, S, Q, Y, and Sgz.

3 +所 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

4 嚼 Q, Sgz, Kg

5 言 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 種 Sgz, Kg. These readings may well be correct, as prior to and even during the early years of Kumārajīva’s translations 風種 was a common translation of the wind element, more normally given in the *Chan Essentials* as 風大. Taken together with the next variant, also found in Sgz and Kg, we might read “relying on the wind element [the eye] turns about and moves” (假風種轉動).

7 +動 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

8 疽 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

9 嚼 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

10 Following Kg, which preserves this line lacking in all other versions.

11 Translation tentative. The logic seems to follow from the final member of the previous list, “old-age and death”(老死).

12 Here I translate *sheng* 生 as “a living person” because of the contrast implied with *si* 死, here seeming to mean a corpse. We may speculate, however, that the terminology here ultimately derives from a discussion of *jīva*, “life principle,” or “soul,” something whose status as a self is frequently discussed (and negated) in Indian Buddhist discussions of *anātman*.

earth, it depends on fire for its perspicacity and wind for its movement. When it separates from the body it is eaten by crows and hawks and nibbled on by worms and maggots. Thus carefully contemplating the eye, it too is without a central power.

1.147

若心是我。風力所轉，無暫停時。亦有六龍，[舉]{居}¹此心中，有無量毒，心為根本。推此諸毒，及與心性，皆從空有，妄想名我²。如是諸法，地水火風，色香味觸，及十二緣，一一諦推，何處有我。觀身無我，云何有所[我所者]³？

“Perhaps the heart⁴ is the self? But [the heart] is stirred by the power of the wind element, never resting for even a moment. Further six dragons live within the heart, and the limitless poisons have the heart as their basis.⁵ When we analyze these poisons and the other dispositions of the heart [we realize that] they come into being from emptiness and are only falsely imagined to be the self. When we carefully analyze the *dharmas* of earth, water, fire, and wind, visible objects, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and the twelve links of conditionality, none of them turn out to be the self. Contemplating thus that the body lacks a self, how could any of it be what belongs to a self?”

1.148

為青色是我，黃色是我，赤色是我⁶，白色是我⁷，黑色是我。此五色者，從可愛有，隨縛著⁸生，欲水所⁹染，從老死河生，從恩¹⁰愛賊起，從癡惑¹¹見。如此眾色，實非是我。惑著眾生，橫言是我，虛見眾生，復稱我所。一切如幻，何處有我。於幻法中，豈有所。

“Is blue the self? Is yellow the self? Is red the self? Is white the self? Is black the self? These five colors exist because of delighting, are born based on attachment, are the stains of the river of desire, are born from the stream of old age and death, are produced by the bandits of affection and love, and are seen because of delusion. These many colors are in truth not the self, but deluded beings falsely think that they are the self, while those with false views claim that they are something that belongs to the self. Everything is like an illusion, so where could there be a self? Amongst illusory *dharmas*, what could belong to the self?”

1 Following Kg.

2 名我 = 我名 P, S, Q, Y

3 Emendation tentative.

4 Here “heart” is also “mind.”

5 Here “poison” (毒) being the usual word for the three fundamental defilements (*tri-doṣa*).

6 [赤色是我] Sgz, Kg

7 [是我] P, S, Q, Y

8 +眾 P, S, Q, Y

9 水所 = 求所 P, S, Q, Y; = 求 Sgz

10 思 Sgz

11 或 Sgz, Kg

1.149

作是思惟時，自見身骨，明淨可愛，一切世間，所希見事，皆於中現。復見己身，如毘琉璃人，內外俱空。如人戴琉璃幢，仰看空中，一切皆見，爾時行者，於自身內¹及與身外，以觀空故，學無我法，自見己身，兩足如琉璃筒，亦見下方，一切世間所希見²事。

When [the practitioner] considers in this way he suddenly sees the bones of his body to be bright, pure, and lovely, with all kinds of rarely seen things appearing within them. He further sees his own body to be as completely transparent as beryl. Just as a person looking up at the sky while carrying a beryl parasol can see everything [in the sky] clearly, at this time because the practitioner has contemplated emptiness and learned the teaching of non-self with respect to both the inside and outside of his body,³ he sees his two legs as like tubes of beryl, and [through them]⁴ sees in the downward direction all kinds of marvelous things.

1.150

此想成時，行者前地明淨可愛，如毘琉璃，極為映徹。持戒具⁵者，見地清淨如梵王宮。威儀不具，雖見淨地，猶如水精。

When this meditation is complete the ground before the practitioner [becomes] bright, pure, and lovely, exceedingly transparent like beryl. Those who have maintained the precepts fully will see the ground as pure like [the ground in] the palace of Brahmā. Those who do not fully keep to the dignified manners [of the precepts] will still see the pure ground, but it will [appear] only as like crystal [not like beryl].

1.151

此想成時，有無量百千無數夜叉羅刹，皆從地出，手執白羊角、龜甲、白石，打金剛山。復有諸鬼，手執鐵槌⁶，打金剛山。是時山上，有五鬼神，千頭千手，手執千劍，與羅刹戰。毒蛇毒龍，皆悉吐毒，圍繞此山。復有諸女，作妓⁷歌詠，作諸變動，護助此山。

When this meditation is complete innumerable hundreds of thousands of uncountable *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas* spring out of the ground holding white-sheep horns, tortoise shells, and white stones (?), with which they smash the adamantine mountains.⁸ There are further various demons who smash the adamantine mountains with iron hammers.

Atop the mountains there then [appear] five hundred demon spirits [each] with a thousand heads and a thousand hands holding a thousand swords. They fight with the *rākṣasas*.

1 身內 = 己身 P, S, Q, Y

2 有 = P, S, Q, Y

3 This seems to refer to the contemplation of non-self above.

4 The idea seems to be that the practitioner is seated, such that when his legs become transparent he sees the area beneath his body.

5 兒 Sgz, Kg

6 捉 Sgz

7 妓 = 𡗗 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

8 Though the meaning of “white rock” (白石) is unclear to me, the other two terms, “tortoise shell” (龜甲) and “white-sheep horns” (白羊角) are mentioned in various sources as the only two substances capable of damaging adamantine (*vajra*). See for example the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (T.374:12.418b9–13) and the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.290b6–8). In his translation of the later, Lamotte suggests the Sanskrit *kūrma-prṣṭha* and *hariṇa-śṛṅga* for these two terms (Lamotte 1944–1981, 2091).

Meanwhile the poisonous snakes and poisonous dragons encircle the mountain and spew forth poison. There are further various maidens who play music, sign songs, and transform in various ways, protecting and defending the mountain.

1.152

若見此事，當一心觀。諸女現時，當觀此女。猶如畫¹瓶，中盛臭處，不淨之器。從虛妄出，來無所²因，去亦無處。如此相貌，是我宿世惡業罪緣，故見此女。此女人者，是我妄想無數世時貪愛因緣，從虛妄見。應當至心觀無我法。我身無我，他身亦然。今此所見，屬諸因緣，我不願求。我觀此身，無常敗壞，亦無我所。何處有人及與眾生。

If [the meditator] sees these things he must single-mindedly contemplate. When the maidens appear he must contemplate [as follows]: “These women as impure vessels, jars filled with foulness that [appear pleasing because they are] painted. They are produced from emptiness, come without cause, and do not go anywhere. These appearances [to me while in trance] are caused by the sins of my evil karma from past lives. This is why I see these women. These women appear from emptiness as a result of my greed and attachment throughout countless lifetimes [based on] false imagination. I must must now intently contemplate the truth of non-self. My own body is without self, and so too the bodies of others. What I see now is dependent on various causes and conditions, and I should not yearn for [these women]. Contemplating this body [of mine,] it [too] is impermanent, decaying, and lacking anything belonging to a self. Where is there anywhere a person or a living being?”

1.153

作此思惟已，一心諦觀空無我法。觀無我時，[上]{下}³方琉璃地際，有四大鬼神，自然來至，[負]{破?}⁴金剛山。時諸夜叉羅剎，亦助此鬼，破金剛山。時金剛山，漸漸頽毀，經於多時，泓⁵然都盡，唯金剛地在。爾時諸象⁶，及諸惡鬼，并力挽⁷樹，樹堅難動。

When he has considered in this way, he must then single-mindedly contemplate the truth of emptiness and non-self. When he contemplates non-self, on the horizon of the beryl ground in the lower direction there [appear] four great demons who suddenly approach [the practitioner] and attack the adamantine mountains. At this time the *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas* help these demons attack the adamantine mountain. The adamantine mountain then gradually crumbles, and after a while disappears entirely leaving only the adamantine ground. Then the elephants and various evil demons join forces and pull at the tree, but the tree stands firm and will not be moved.

1 盡 = Sgz

2 無所 = 所無 Sgz, Kg

3 Following K, P, Q, Sgz, Kg. The Taishō appears to be a misprint.

4 Though all versions read 負, this does not seem to make sense, as the demons here are clearly trying to destroy the adamantine mountain.

5 弘 P, Q, Y

6 象 Sgz

7 拋 P, S, Q, Y

1.154

見此事已，復更歡喜懺悔諸罪。懺悔罪已，如前繫念，觀琉璃人。琉璃地上，於四方面，生四¹蓮華。其華金色，亦有千葉，金剛為臺。有一金像²，結加³趺坐，身相具足，光明無缺。在於東方，南西北方，亦復如是。

When he has seen these things [the practitioner must] further joyfully repent his sins. After repenting his sins, as before [he should] fix his thoughts and contemplate the beryl man [his own body]. On the beryl ground in the four directions there appear four lotus flowers. These flowers are golden in color, each with one thousand leaves and an adamantine calyx. On the eastern [lotus] sits a golden image in the meditation posture, fully endowed with the bodily marks [of a Buddha], with no gap between the rays of light [of its halo].⁴ So too [within the lotuses] in the south, west, and north.

1.155

復自見琉璃身，益更明淨，內外洞徹，無諸障⁵礙⁶。身內身外，滿中化佛。是諸化佛，各放光明，其光微妙，如億千日，顯赫端嚴，遍滿一切三千大千世界，滿中化佛。一一化佛，有三十二相八十種隨形好。一一相好，各放千光。其光[明]{大}⁷盛，如和合百千日月。一一光{明}⁸間，有無數佛。如是漸漸，復更增廣，數不可知，一一焰⁹間，復更倍有無數化佛。是諸化佛，迴旋宛¹⁰轉，入琉璃人身中。

[The practitioner] then further sees his own beryl body become even purer, more transparent, and free of opacity. [The space] inside and outside his body becomes filled with transformation-buddhas.¹¹ These many transformation-buddhas each radiate a miraculous light [as bright] as a billion suns. Gleaming and resplendent, [this light] fills the entire transformation-

1 化 P, S, Q, Y

2 象 Sgz

3 跏 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 Here 無缺 seems to mean not “unblemished” but “without interval.”

5 郭 Sgz, Kg

6 闕 Sgz, Kg

7 Following Sgz, Kg. P is missing the character 明. The expression 其光大盛 occurs several other times in the text which suggests that it may be the correct reading.

8 Tentatively following Kg.

9 炎 Sgz, Kg

10 婉 P, S, Sgz, Kg

11 The term *hua fo* 化佛, which for lack of a better alternative I translate with the calque “transformation-buddha,” does *not* here refer to the Buddha’s “transformation-body” (*hua shen* 化身; *nirmāṇakāya*), his physical, human embodiment in contrast to his “dharma-body” (*fa shen* 法身). This triple-body buddhology, though later standard in East Asia, had in the fifth century not yet been introduced to China. As used in the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing* “transformation-buddha” refers rather to magically created copies of the Buddha’s physical body, understood to emanate from another, original body. The *locus classicus* for this idea is the so-called Śrāvastī miracle, much depicted Central Asian Buddhist art, when the Buddha magically created thousands of copies of his body for all to see. The ontology here is still basically realist, with no suggestion that the Buddha’s actual body is a similar kind of magical creation. It is this realist ontology that informs the *Chan Essentials*, for though as the meditator advances the various “transformation-bodies” are dismissed as produced by the meditator’s own mind, this does *not* occur for the various real buddhas (the seven buddhas of the past) who remain after these transformation-buddhas have dissappeared.

buddha filled three-thousand thousand-fold worlds [of the universe]. Each of the transformation-buddhas has the thirty-two marks and eighty secondary characteristics. Each mark radiates a thousand rays of light, as bright as a hundred-thousand suns and moons. Within each ray of light there are innumerable buddhas. In this manner the [number of buddhas] gradually increases beyond reckoning, and within each of the flaming [lights of these buddhas] there further appear uncountably more transformation-buddhas. All these transformation-buddhas then twirl about and enter [the practitioner's] beryl body.

1.156

爾¹時自見己身，如七寶山，高顯可觀，復更嚴顯，如雜寶須彌山。山映顯在金剛地上，時金剛地，復更明顯，如焰²摩天紫紺摩尼珠。身轉復明淨，如無數諸佛光明。化成寶臺，亦入琉璃人頂。復見前地，在鐵圍山，滿中諸佛，結加³趺坐，處蓮華臺地及虛空，中間無缺。一一化佛，身滿世界。是諸化佛，不相妨礙。復見鐵圍諸山，淨如琉璃，無障⁴礙⁵ [想]{相}。見閻浮提，山河石壁，樹木荊棘，一切悉是諸妙化佛。心漸廣大，見三千大千世界，虛空及地，一切悉是微妙佛像⁶。

[The practitioner] then sees his own body, like a tall and stately mountain made of the seven precious substances, become even more majestic, like Mt. Sumeru with its numerous and diverse jewels. The reflection of this mountain appears on the adamant ground, which then becomes even brighter, like the purple *maṇi* jewel of the god Yama. [The practitioner's] body becomes even brighter and purer, like the radiance of innumerable buddhas . . . (?)⁷ transforms into a jeweled platform, which also enters the crown of the head of the [practitioner's] beryl body. He further sees the ground before him, within the encircling iron mountains,⁸ filled with buddhas sitting cross-legged atop lotus-flower pedestals on the ground and in the air, with no gap between them. Each transformation-buddha fills the entire world with its body, [yet] these many transformation-buddhas do not obstruct one another. [The practitioner] further sees the encircling iron mountains to be free of all opacity like pure beryl. He further sees all the mountains, rivers, stones, walls, trees, and thickets of Jambudvīpa [transform into] myriad wondrous transformation-buddhas. He allows his mind to expand gradually, until he sees every bit of the sky and earth of the three-thousand great thousand-fold worlds [of the universe] as sublime and wondrous buddha images.⁹

1 人 Kg

2 炎 Sgz, Kg

3 跏 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 諸 P, S, Q, Y; 鄣 Sgz, Kg

5 闕 Sgz, Kg

6 象 Sgz

7 Unclear. The text may be corrupt.

8 In the traditional Buddhist cosmology Mt. Sumeru (here embodied by the practitioner) sits at the center of the world with the iron encircling mountains forming the outer boundary.

9 It is worth noting how “buddha image” (佛像), which of course also refers to physical statues and icons, is here equated with the “transformation-buddhas.”

1.157

是時行者，但觀無我，慎勿起心隨逐佛像¹。復當思惟：我聞佛說，諸佛如來，有二種身，一者生身，二者法身。今我所見，既非法身，又非生身，是假想見，從虛妄起。諸佛不來，我亦不去，云何此處，忽生佛像²。

At this time the practitioner [is to] only contemplate non-self, and must not allow his mind to focus on the buddha images. He must further consider: “I have heard that the Buddha has said that all buddhas and tathāgatas have two kinds of bodies, a living body and a dharma body.³ What I now see is not the dharma body, nor is it the living body. It is [thus] something seen in dependence on my imagination, something that arises from emptiness. These buddhas do not come, nor do I go [to them]. How then is it possible that these buddha images suddenly appear?”

1.158

說是語時，但當自觀己身無我，慎勿隨逐諸化佛像⁴。復⁵當諦觀：今我此身，前時不淨。九孔膿流。筋纏血塗，生藏熟藏，大小便利，八[萬]{十}⁶戶蟲，一一蟲復有八十億小蟲以為眷屬。如此之身，當有何淨。作是思惟時，自見己身，猶如皮⁷囊。出定亦見，身內無骨，身皮如囊。亦觀他身⁸，猶如皮⁹囊。

As [the practitioner] says these words he must merely contemplate his own body as lacking in self, and must be careful not to follow after the transformation-buddha images.

He must further carefully contemplate: “This body of mine has since former times been impure. Pus flows from its nine openings. Bound by tendons and smeared with blood, [within it lies] undigested and digested food, urine, feces, and eighty thousand worms each accompanied by eight-hundred million smaller worms. What purity could there be in such a body?”

When he considers in this way, he sees his own body as like a sack of skin. When he emerges from trance he still sees the inside of his body devoid of bones and his skin like a sack.

1 象 Sgz

2 象 Sgz

3 The buddhology of the *Chan Essentials* seems to be identical to what we find in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*. As Michael Radich shows (2010), the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, as well the various versions of the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, follows neither the later three-body theories nor the putatively early two-body theory of *rūpakāya* versus *dharmakāya* (which, Radich suggest, may not be so early after all). Rather they posit a *dharmā* body and a “birth-body” (生身), a word that Radich argues may represent the term **sāmbhavikakāya*, the “body born of [mother and father].” Moreover the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, like the *Chan Essentials*, additionally contrasts this “birth-body” with various “transformation-bodies” (化身), that is to say magically created copies of the birth-body that the Buddha can produce or emit through his magical powers. As Radich points out though it might be possible to see the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* as developing proto-*trikāya* ideas, the relationship between the three kinds of “bodies” here is quite different than what develops in later *Yogācāra* sources.

4 象 Sgz

5 The underlined text here and throughout is that which appears on the Anyue inscription.

6 Following Kg.

7 排 Sgz, Kg

8 他身 = 化他 P

9 排 Sgz, Kg

1.159

見此事時，當詣智者，問諸苦法。聞苦法已，諦觀此身，屬諸因緣，當有生苦¹。既受生已，憂悲苦惱，恩愛別離，與怨憎會。如是²種種，是世間苦法。[今我]{我今}³此身，不久敗壞，在苦網中，屬生死種，風刀⁴諸賊，隨從我身。阿鼻地獄，猛火熾然，當焚燒我。駝驢猪狗，一切畜生，及諸禽獸，我悉當經受諸惡形。如此諸苦，名為外苦。

When he sees these things, he must go to his preceptor and inquire about the teaching of the truth of suffering. Having heard the teaching of the truth of suffering, he [should] carefully contemplate his body [as follows]: “[Arising] dependent on various causes and conditions, there is the suffering of birth. Having been born, there is sorrow and grief, [such as] separation from loved ones and proximity to those one hates. Such various instances are examples of the suffering of [existence in] the world. This body of mine will soon decay. It is [trapped in] the net of suffering, it tied to birth and death. The evil bandits [that are the] knife-like winds⁵ [that cause death] pursue this body of mine. [When they catch me,] the raging fires of the Avīci hell will burn me. I will then experience rebirth in all manners of horrible bodies, as all kinds of beasts and animals such as camels, donkeys, pigs, or dogs. This kind of suffering is called external suffering.

1.160

今我身內，自有四大毒龍無數毒蛇，一一蛇有九十九頭。羅剎惡鬼，及鳩槃荼，諸惡鬼等，集在我心。如此身心，極為不淨，是弊惡聚，三界種子，萌芽⁶不斷。云何我今於不淨中而生淨想，於虛妄物作金剛想。於無佛處，作佛像想。一切世間諸行性相⁷，悉皆無常，不久磨滅。如我此身，如彈指頃，亦當敗壞⁸。用此虛想，於不淨中，假偽⁹見淨。

“[As for internal suffering], within this body of mine there are the poisonous dragons and innumerable poisonous snakes of the four elements. Each snake has ninety-nine heads. Evil *rākṣasa*-demons and various evil *kumbhāṇḍa*-demons gather within my heart. A body and mind like this is extremely impure. It is an accumulation of evil, vile things. [Within it] the sprouts and seeds [leading to rebirth in] the three realms have not been eliminated. How then could I imagine what is impure as pure? [How could I] imagine this empty, false thing to be made of adamantite? [How could I] have imagined images of buddhas where there are no buddhas? The nature of all worldly formations is that they are impermanent, quickly worn away and destroyed. So too will this body of mine decay as quickly as one might snap one’s fingers. Only through empty imagining do I falsely see this impurity [that is the body] as pure.”

1 生苦 = 苦生 Sgz, Kg

2 [是] = P, S, Q, Y

3 Following Sgz, Kg.

4 力 Sgz

5 The “knife-winds” are the winds that arise in the body at the time of death and lead to its dissolution (*Zeng yi a han jing* 增壹阿含經, T.125:2.586b10).

6 邪 A, P, S; (工+刀) Kg

7 想 Sgz, Kg

8 敗壞 = 壞敗 Sgz

9 為 Sgz

1.161

作是思惟時，自見己身淨如琉璃皮¹囊諸相，自然變滅。觀身及我，了不能得。但見四方，有諸黑象，踐[踏]{蹋}²前地。前地金剛，一切摧碎。見地樹莖，乃至下方，眾莖³甚多，不可稱數。爾時黑象，如前以鼻繞樹。無量諸龍，及諸夜叉⁴，與黑象共⁵戰。狂象蹴⁶[踏]{蹋}⁷是諸⁸鬼神，悶絕⁹地。於虛空中，有諸鬼神，其數眾多。手捉刀輪，佐助黑象，欲拔此樹。如是多時，樹一根動。此樹動時，行者自見繩床¹⁰下地，自然震動。

When he considers in this way, all of the appearances of his body that he saw [previously], [such as its appearance] as pure like beryl or as like a sack of skin, suddenly disappear, and contemplating his body or his self he is entirely unable to apprehend [these things]. He only sees the various black elephants on all sides, who trample the adamant ground before [him] smashing it to pieces. [With the ground destroyed,] he sees the innumerable roots¹¹ of the tree extending downward. Then, the black elephants as before wrap their trunks around the tree, and the innumerable dragons as well as the *rākṣasas* battle with them. The wild black elephants trample these various demons, who fall to the ground in a daze. In the air [there appear] a great many other demons wielding wheel-shaped blades who help the black elephants in their effort to uproot the tree. Then, the tree shakes. When the tree shakes, the practitioner sees the ground beneath his meditation seat shake.

1.162

日日如是，滿九十日¹²，如是應當乞好美食及諸補藥，以補身體，安隱端坐。復如¹³前法，如前所見，從初境界，一一諦觀，往復反覆，經十六反，極令明淨。

[This continues] every day for ninety days. Then, he should beg for fine food and restorative medicines so as to heal his body, enabling him to sit comfortably. Then he [should] repeat the above procedure, and beginning with the first verificatory vision carefully contemplate everything that he sees in full detail, repeating this sixty times, making it extremely clear and pure.

1.163

既明淨已，復還繫念，觀身苦空無常無我，悉亦皆空。作是思惟時，觀身不見身，觀我不見我，觀心不見心。爾時忽然見此大地，山河石壁，一切悉無。出定之時，如癡醉人。

1 排 Sgz, Kg

2 Following K, P, Q, Sgz, Kg.

3 篠 P, S, Q, Y

4 +夜叉叉 P, S, Q, Y

5 [共] Sgz, Kg

6 踐 P, S, Q, Y

7 Following K, P, Q, Sgz, Kg.

8 [諸] Sgz

9 辟 Sgz

10 牀 Sgz, Kg

11 The *Glosses on the Canon* here explains 莖 as “the root of a plant” 草根 (T.2128:54.668b14).

12 月 Kg

13 尋 Sgz, Kg

When [his vision] is clear and pure he should again fix his thoughts and contemplate that the body is suffering, empty, impermanent, and not self, and that everything is empty.

When he considers in this way, contemplating his body he does not see a body, contemplating his self he does not see a self, contemplating his mind he does not see a mind. Then, he suddenly sees that the great earth, with its mountains, rivers, rocks, and cliffs, all entirely vanishes. When he emerges from trance, he is as if drunk or mad.

1.164

應當至心，修懺悔法，禮拜塗地，放捨此觀。禮拜¹之時，未舉頭頃，自然得見如來真影。以手摩頭讚言：法子，善哉善哉，汝今善觀諸佛空法。以見佛影，故心大歡喜，還得醒悟。

[The practitioner] must then devotedly cultivate repentance rituals, bowing and cleaning the ground, setting aside his contemplation practice. While he is bowing, even before he has raised his head [from the first bow] he will suddenly see the Tathāgata's true emanation.² [This Buddha] will place his hand on [the practitioner's] head and commend him: "Oh Dharma-child, well done, well done! You have today properly contemplated the teaching of emptiness [taught by] the buddhas"

Having seen the Buddha's emanation [the practitioner] will feel great joy and will be able to wake up [from his state of drunken madness].

1.165

爾時尊者摩訶賓頭盧，與五百阿羅漢，飛至其前，廣為宣說³甚深空法。以見五百聲聞比丘，故心大歡喜，頭頂懺悔。復見尊者舍利弗摩訶目犍羅夜那⁴，及千二百五十聲聞影。

Then the venerable Mahāpiṇḍola⁵ together with five hundred arhats fly before the practitioner and exhaustively expound the profound teaching of emptiness. Having seen these five hundred voice-hearers he will feel great joy, and [bowing his] head he repents. He further sees the emanations of the venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana⁶ and 1,250 [other] voice-hearers.

1.166

爾時復見釋迦牟尼佛影。見釋迦牟尼佛影已，復得⁷見過去六佛影。是時諸佛影，如頗梨鏡，明顯可觀，各伸右手，摩行者頂。諸佛如來，自說名字。第一佛言，我是毘婆尸。第二佛言，我是尸棄。第三佛言，我是毘舍。第四佛言，我是拘樓孫。第五佛言，我是迦那含牟尼。第六佛言，我是迦葉毘。第七佛言，我是釋迦牟尼[佛]⁸，是汝和上⁹，汝觀

1 禮拜 = 作禮 Sgz, Kg

2 On the meaning of "buddha emanation" (*fō ying* 佛影) see p.210n68.

3 訶 Sgz

4 目犍羅夜那 = 目犍連 Sgz, Kg

5 To my knowledge the monk Piṇḍola, often referred to as Piṇḍolabhāradvāja, is, apart from this text never given the honorary prefix "Mahā." Note that Piṇḍola also appears in the *Methods for Curing* (5.41,6.12).

6 On this unusual transcription, see above p.345n3.

7 [得] P, S, Q, Y

8 Following Sgz, Kg.

9 尚 P, S, Q, Y

空法，我來為汝作證，六佛世尊現前證知見。

Then [the practitioner] further sees the emanation of Śākayamuni Buddha.¹ Having seen the emanation of Śākayamuni Buddha, he further sees the emanations of the six buddhas of the past. The emanations of these buddhas, like crystal mirrors brightly shining and lovely to behold, each extend their right hand and touch the practitioner upon the crown of his head. Each of these buddha-tathāgathas announces his name.²

The first buddha says: I am Vipaśyin. The second buddha says: I am Śikhin. The third buddha says: I am Viśva[bhū]. The fourth buddha says: I am Krakucchanda. The fifth buddha says: I am Kanakamuni. The sixth buddha says: I am Kāśyapa.³ The seventh buddha says: I am Śākayamuni, your preceptor.⁴ I have come to witness and certify your contemplation of emptiness. Here, in the presence of the [other] six world-honored buddhas, I certify [your] knowledge and vision.

1.167

佛說是語⁵時，見佛色身，了了分明，亦見六佛，了了分明。爾時七佛，各放眉間白毫⁶大人相光，光明大盛，照娑婆世⁷界及琉璃身，皆令明顯。爾時諸佛，現此相時，身[諸]{身}⁸毛孔放大光明化佛無數，遍滿三千大千世界地及虛空，[純]{淳}⁹黃金色。是諸世尊，中有飛行者，中有作十八變者，中有經行者，中有入深禪¹⁰定者，中有默然安住¹¹者，中有放大光明者。

When [Śākayamuni] Buddha has spoken these words, [the practitioner] sees [this]

- 1 The text is written as if this is not the same as the “Tathātaga’s true emanation” (如來真影) from section 1.164.
- 2 The cult of the seven buddhas was widespread during the fifth and sixth centuries (Kuramoto 2008, 58–59).
- 3 This transcription of Kāśyapa as 迦葉毘 is otherwise unattested, and the final 毘 (implying an -i ending) is phonetically problematic. Indeed while these characters do appear elsewhere in Chinese Buddhist texts, it is as a rendering of Kāśyapīya, one of the traditional schools of Indian Buddhism (also transcribed as 迦葉維, or translated as “the light-drinkers sect” 飲光部). One possible explanation would be that 毘 here represents a Khotanese or other Central Asian pronunciation. Many authorities have noted that -i (or -e) endings for a-stem nouns in the nominative is a characteristic feature of Central Asian languages, and it occurs in Khotanese, Tocharian, and Sogdian (Mair 1993, 9–11). In his study of the *Scripture of the Wise and Foolish* (*Xian yu jing* 賢愚經), the Chinese translation of which was supposedly based on lectures delivered in Khotan during the first half of the fifth century, Victor Mair notes that the most distinctive phonological anomaly is the frequent occurrence of -a stem Sanskrit nouns transcribed with Chinese characters representing -i. As Mair notes these anomalies do not necessarily mean that the original text was actually written in Khotanese, but at the least it seems to imply that they were transcribed based on a style of pronunciation that would have been common in Khotan. It is certainly tempting to correlate this with the tales of Juqu Jingsheng’s 沮渠京聲 journeys to Khotan (see p.118).
- 4 On the significance of Śākayamuni here serving as the practitioner’s “preceptor” (*he shang* 和上; *upadhyāya*), see the notes to section 4.84.
- 5 證 Sgz
- 6 豪 Sgz, Kg
- 7 [世] Sgz
- 8 Following Sgz, Kg; [諸] P, S, Q, Y.
- 9 Following P, S, Q, Y, Kg, whose agreement in this section is otherwise rare; 停 Sgz, presumably an error for 淳.
- 10 深禪 = 禪深 P, S, Q, Y
- 11 坐 Sgz, Kg

buddha's material body clearly and distinctly, and also sees [the material bodies] of the six buddhas clearly and distinctly. Then each of the seven buddhas radiates light from the white tuft of hair between its eyebrows, one of the marks of a great man. The light shines brightly, illuminating the entire world as well as the beryl body [of the practitioner], making everything clearly visible. Then, when the buddhas have manifested this sign, they each emit from the pores of their bodies innumerable radiant transformation-buddhas that fill the earth and sky of the three thousand great thousand-fold worlds [of the universe] with their deeply golden forms. Among these world-honored ones [the transformation-buddhas (?)] some fly, some display the eighteen miraculous transformations, some are engaged in walking meditation, some have entered deep trance, some quietly stand still, and some radiate bright light.

1.168

唯大和上¹釋迦牟尼佛，為於行者，說四真諦，分別苦、空、無常、無我、諸法空義。過去六佛，亦復分別十二因緣，或復演說三十七道品，讚歎聖行。爾時行者，見佛聞法，心生歡喜。

The great preceptor Śākyamuni Buddha then preaches for the practitioner the four noble truths, and elucidates the principles of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, non-self, and the emptiness of all *dharmas*.² The six buddhas of the past also elucidate [for the practitioner] the twelve causal conditions or further expound the thirty-seven elements of the path and praise the holy practice. When the practitioner has seen the buddhas and heard their teachings he experiences great joy.

1.169

應[時]³自思惟：諸佛世尊，有二種身，今我所見，[見]⁴佛色身，不見如來解脫知見五分法身。

He should then consider: “All world-honored buddhas have two kinds of bodies. What I see here now are the buddhas' material bodies, but I have not yet seen their five-part dharma bodies [comprised] of their knowledge and vision of liberation [and the other pure *skandhas*].⁵

1 尚 P, S, Q, Y

2 I have not found any other examples of this peculiar list, in which the “emptiness of all dharmas” 諸法空義 is added to the standard list of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self.

3 Following Sgz, Kg.

4 Following Kg.

5 The “five part dharma body” 五分法身 usually refers to five pure aggregates (*anāsrava-skandha*) of a buddha: morality 戒, *samādhi* 定, wisdom 慧, liberation 解脫, and the knowledge and vision of liberation 解脫知見. These are presented as the pure counterparts to the five ordinary *skandha*. On the significance of this idea and its place in the development of Buddhist theories of corporeality, see Radich 2007, 744–745. According to Radich, the word “body” 身 in Chinese translations of this idea seems always to translate *skandha*.

1.170

作是思惟時，復更懺悔，慇懃不懈，晝夜六時，恒修三昧。應作是念：此色身，如幻，如夢，如焰¹，如旋火輪，如乾闥婆城，如呼²聲響³。是故⁴佛說一切有為法，如夢、幻、泡、影，如露亦如電。如是諸法等，我今一一應當諦觀，極令了了⁵。

Having considered in this way he [should] repent further. Diligent and unslacking, at the six times throughout the day and night he must constantly cultivate *samādhi*. He should think as follows: “The material bodies [of these buddhas] are like illusions, like dreams, like flames, like fire-wheels, like cities of the Gandharvas, like echoes. Thus does the Buddha preach that all fabricated⁶ *dharmas* are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows, dew, or lightning [in their transience]. I must now with utmost clarity carefully contemplate all *dharmas* in this manner.

1.171

作是觀時，化佛不現。若有少在，復更觀空。以觀空故，化佛即滅，唯七佛在。爾時七佛，與諸聲聞眷屬大眾，廣為行者說三十七助聖道法。聞此法已⁷，身心歡喜。

As he contemplates in this manner the transformation-buddhas disappear.⁸ If some still remain, he should further contemplate emptiness. Because of contemplating emptiness the transformation-buddhas then disappear [entirely], and only the seven buddhas remain. The seven buddhas, together with the assembly of attending voice-hearers, then extensively preach for the practitioner the thirty-seven factors that assist in the holy path.⁹ Hearing this teaching [the practitioner] experiences joy in body and mind.

1.172

復更諦觀苦空無常無我等法。作是觀時，狂象大吼，挽樹令動。樹初動時，見一房地，六變震動。復有夜叉，刺黑象殺。眾多黑象，死臥在地。不久爛潰，白膿、黑膿、青膿、黃膿、綠膿、紫膿、赤膿、赤血，流污在地。復有蜚蝗諸蟲，遊集其上。復有諸蟲，眼中出火，燒蜚蝗殺。爾時下方金剛地際，有五金剛輪，有五金剛人，在其輪間，右¹⁰手執金剛劍，左手執金剛杵。以杵擣地，以劍斫樹。

He then further contemplates the teachings of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. As he performs this contemplation the crazed elephants scream loudly, and pull at the tree making it shake. As the tree begins to shake [the practitioner] sees the ground [in an area the size of] his room shake in the six different ways.

1 炎 Kg; 火 Sgz

2 吁 Sgz

3 嚮 Sgz, Kg

4 如 Sgz

5 [了] Sgz

6 *you wei* 有為, often a translation of *saṃskṛta*, “constructed” or “conditioned.”

7 時 P, S, Q, Y

8 Note that the contemplation of the ultimate emptiness of the material bodies of the seven buddhas causes only the disappearance of the transformation-buddhas, not of the “emanations” (影) of the seven buddhas.

9 The thirty-seven *bodhipakṣikadharmāḥ*.

10 [右] Sgz

[But] then the *yakṣas* stab the black elephants, killing them.¹¹ Many black elephants then lie dead upon the ground. Before long they begin to rot, and white, black, blue, yellow, green, purple, and red pus, as well as red blood, flow out and stain the ground. Dung beetles swarm about [the carcasses]. Then other bugs with flaming eyes [come and] burn the dung beetles, killing them.

Below, at the “adamantine horizon” [which marks the lowest point in the world,]² there then appear five adamantine wheels between which are five adamantine beings, who hold adamantine swords in their right hands and adamantine clubs in their left hands. They beat the earth with the clubs and hack the tree with the swords.

1.173

見此事時，大地漸動，見{一}³城內地，六種震動。見一城已，復見二城，漸漸廣大，見一踰闍那⁴，見一⁵踰闍那⁶已，復更廣大普見三千大千⁷世界一切地動。動時⁸東踊⁹西沒，西踊東沒，南踊北沒，北踊南沒，中踊邊沒，邊踊中沒。

When [the practitioner] has seen these things the earth gradually begins to move, and he sees the earth within [an area the size of] a city shake in the six ways. Having seen [the earth of] one city [in this manner], he next sees two cities, and then gradually expanding [until] he sees [the earth in an area the size of a] *yojana*.¹⁰ Having seen one *yojana*, he further expands until he sees shake [all the earth of] the three-thousand great thousand-fold worlds [of the universe]. When it shakes, [it does so in the following six ways]: rising in the east it sinks in the west, rising in the west it sinks in the east, rising in the south it sinks in the north, rising in the north it sinks in the south, rising in the center it sinks on the outer areas, or rising in the outer areas it sinks in the center.

11 Here 殺 appears to serve as a verbal complement to 刺, with the direct object placed between. The same usage occurs below (see 4.60). When considering the relationship between the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* and the Contemplation Scriptures, it is interesting to observe that in the *Ocean-samādhi Scripture* we find a few examples of 殺 as a verbal complement, but placed directly after the verb and before the object (such as “killing these beings through cold” 凍殺眾生, T.643:15.670a5; “beating the sinners to death” 撲殺罪人, T.643:15.670c26–27). This pattern seems to more closely follow proper literary Chinese usage, while the examples from the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, in which the verb-complement pair is separated, seem to represent a more vernacular locution.

2 The “adamantine horizon” is mentioned elsewhere in the text and is also written 金剛際. From the other examples it is clear that the term refers to the bottom point of the physical universe (see below 1.174, 4.39). This cosmology is found in many Chinese Buddhist texts (see for example Buddhahadra’s translation of the *Hua yan jing* 華嚴經, T.278:9.440b16), and the word appears in Indic texts as either *kañcanacakra* or *kāñcanavajramāṇḍala* (Schlingloff 1964, 31n9).

3 Following Kg.

4 踰闍那 = 由旬 Y, Sgz, Kg

5 [一] P, S, Q, Y

6 踰闍那 = 由旬 Y, Sgz, Kg

7 [大千] P, S, Q, Y

8 [動時] Sgz, Kg

9 踊 P, S, Q, Y

10 This transcription of *yojana*, 踰闍那, is decidedly less common than the more usual 由旬 (seen elsewhere in the text).

1.174

此地動時，見大樹莖，乃至金剛際。時金剛人以刀斫之，令樹莖絕。樹莖絕時，諸龍諸¹蛇，皆悉吐焰²，尋樹而上。爾時復有眾多羅刹，積薪樹上。時金剛人，以金剛杵，擣樹枝³折。擣此樹時，一杵乃至八萬四千杵，樹枝方折。爾時杵端，自然出火，燒此樹盡，唯有樹心，如金剛錐，從三界頂，下至金剛際，不可傾動。

When the earth shakes [the practitioner] sees the roots of the great tree, extending down to the adamantine horizon. The adamantine beings then hack the roots with their swords, severing them. When the roots have been severed the various dragons and snakes all spew forth fire and climb up the tree. There then further appear numerous *rākṣasas* who gather in clumps (?) atop the tree⁴. The adamantine beings take their adamantine clubs and strike the branches of the tree until they break, though they must strike eighty-four thousand times before the branches finally break. Fire then shoots from the tips of the clubs, incinerating the tree. Only the heartwood remains, like an immovable adamantine spike reaching from the summit of the triple-world down to the adamantine horizon.

1.175

是時行者，得此觀時，出定安樂。出定入定，心恒靜寂，無憂喜想。復勤精進，晝夜不息，以精進故，世尊釋迦牟尼，與過去六佛，當現其前為說甚深空三昧、無願三昧、無作三昧。聞已歡喜，隨順佛教，諦觀空法，如大水流，不久當得阿羅漢道。

The practitioner, having attained this contemplation, feels joyful and at ease when he emerges from trance. Whether he is in trance or not his mind is always calm, free of both worry and delight. He must then make yet further diligent effort, without resting day or night. Because of his diligent effort the world-honored Śākyamuni together with the six buddhas of the past will appear before him and preach the profound *samādhis* of emptiness, wishlessness, and non-intention.⁵ Having heard them, he will feel joy, and carefully contemplating the truth of emptiness in accord with the buddhas' teaching [just as quickly as flows] a great current of water he will soon become an arhat.

1.176

佛告阿難：此不淨想⁶觀，是大甘露，滅貪婬欲，能除眾生結使心病。汝好受持，慎勿⁷忘失。若佛滅度後，比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，聞此甘露灌頂聖法，能攝諸根，至

1 [諸] Sgz, Kg

2 爛 P, S, Q, Y; 炎 Kg

3 樹 P

4 Translation tentative. I do not understand the meaning of 積薪樹上. We should perhaps emend to 積樹莖上, thus indicating that the demons themselves gather on the trunk of the tree. Or perhaps 薪 refers to the tree as firewood (since it is being hacked up and burned), yielding “they gather atop the soon-to-be incinerated tree.”

5 The three *samādhis* are supposed to be emptiness, signlessness (*animitta* 無相) and wishlessness (*apraṇihita*). In Chinese translations, *apraṇihita* is translated as both 無願 and 無作. Here we see that the author, working perhaps from memory, has included two translations of *apraṇihita*. and ignored *animitta*. This confusion is evident elsewhere in the text as well (see p.82 for further discussion).

6 [想] A

7 莫 Sgz, Kg

心繫念，諦觀身分，心不分散，斂心使住，經須臾間，此人命終，得生天上。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: This contemplation of impurity¹ is the great ambrosia that destroys craving, lust, and desire. It can remove the defilements, which for sentient beings are an illness of the mind. Carefully preserve it. Do not forget it. After the Buddha has passed into extinction, monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen who hear this holy method of ambrosial consecration² and who are able to restrain their sense faculties, resolutely fix their thoughts, and carefully contemplate the constituents of their bodies will, if their minds are undivided and they focus them and concentrate for even a short period of time, be reborn in heaven when their lives have ended.

1.177

若復有人，隨順佛教，繫念諦觀一爪一指，令心安住，當知此人，終不墮落三惡道中。

Further know that one who follows the buddhas' teaching, fixes his thoughts, carefully contemplates a single nail or single toe [bone,] and successfully concentrates his mind thereon will [as a result] never fall into the three evil realms [of rebirth].

1.178

若復有人，繫念諦觀，見³舉身白骨，此人命終，生兜率陀天，值遇一生補處菩薩。號曰彌勒。見彼天已，隨從受樂。彌勒成佛，最初聞法，得阿羅漢果，三明六通，具八解脫。

Further one who fixes his thoughts and carefully contemplates [impurity, reaching the stage in which he] sees his entire body as white bones, will at the end of his life be reborn in the Tuṣita heaven, where he will meet the bodhisattva named Maitreya, [known as] “he who in his next life will take the place [of the Buddha].” Having appeared in this heaven, [the practitioner] will experience great joy. When Maitreya [is reborn on earth] as a buddha [this person] will be [among] the first to hear the Dharma, [whereupon] he will attain the fruit of arhatship, the three knowledges and the six powers, and fully acquire the eight liberations.

1.179

若復有人，觀此不淨得具足者，於此身上，見佛真影，聞佛說法，得盡諸苦。

Further one who in contemplating impurity attains the entirety [of the practice] will, in this very life, see the true emanation of the Buddha, hear the Buddha preach the Dharma, and put an end to all suffering.

1 “Contemplation of impurity” seems to here refer to the totality of the first sutra.

2 The expression “ambrosial consecration” 甘露灌頂 is also mentioned in sections 4.83 and 5.74 where, as here, it seems to denote the meditation practices prescribed in the text. Possibly at play here is the frequent designation of the impurity contemplation together with *ānāpāna* as the two “gates of ambrosia” 甘露門 (*amṛtadvāra*, “gates to the deathless”).

3 身 P, S, Q, Y

1.180

爾時阿難，即從坐起，整衣服，為佛作禮，叉手長跪。白佛言：世尊，此法之要，云何受持，當¹何名此法。佛告阿難：此名觀身不淨雜穢想，亦名破我法，{名}²觀無我空。汝好受持，為未來世濁苦眾生貪婬多者，當廣分別。

At this time Ānanda got up from his seat, arranged his robes, bowed to the Buddha, and knelt with his hands folded. He said to the Buddha: “World-honored One, how should I remember this teaching? What is this teaching to be named?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “It is called the meditation on the miscellaneous impurities associated with the contemplation of the impure body. It is also called the method for destroying [attachment to the] self. It is also called the contemplation of non-self and emptiness. You must carefully preserve it, and must extensively explain it to defiled, suffering sentient beings of later ages in whom lust is prominent.”

1.181

佛說是語時，釋梵，護世，無數天子，持天曼陀羅華、摩訶曼陀羅華、曼殊沙華、摩訶曼殊沙華，而散佛上及諸大眾。頂禮佛足，讚歎佛言：如來出世，甚為希有，乃能降伏驕³慢邪見迦絺⁴羅難陀。亦為未來貪婬眾生，說甘露藥，增長天種，不斷三寶。善哉世尊，快說是法。龍神、夜叉、乾⁵闥婆等，亦同諸天，讚歎於佛。尊者阿難、迦絺羅難陀、及千比丘、無量諸天、八部之眾，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行，禮佛而退。

When the Buddha spoke these words, Indra, the world-protectors, and innumerable other gods scattered *mandāra* flowers, *mahāmandāra* flowers, *mañjūṣaka* flowers, and *mahāmañjūṣaka* flowers above the Buddha and the assembly. Bowing their heads to the Buddha's feet they praised the Buddha, saying: “The appearance of a Tathāgata in the world is most rare, and he has been able to bring to submission the arrogant, deluded Kauṣṭhīlananda. [You] have further, for the sake of lustful sentient beings in the future, spoken the medicine of sweet-dew, thereby increasing the ranks of those who will be reborn as gods, and insuring that the three jewels will not be cut off [in the future]. Most excellent, oh World-honored One, has been your rapid preaching of this teaching!”

[Then] the dragons, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas* and others praised the Buddha just as had the gods. When the venerables Ānanda and Kauṣṭhīlananda, the remainder of the one thousand monks, the innumerable gods, and the host of divine beings had heard the Buddha's preaching, they joyfully undertook to carry it out. Making obeisance to the Buddha, they then retired.

1 云 P, S, Q, Y

2 Following Kg.

3 伏驕 = 化橋 Sgz, Kg

4 郝 Kg

5 捷 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

1.182

得此觀者，名十色不淨，亦名分別諸蟲境界。是最初不淨門，有十八方便。諸境界性，不可具說。入三昧時，當自然¹得。此第十八²一門觀竟。

When this contemplation has been attained it is called “the ten forms³ of impurity,” and is also called the verificatory vision in which the worms are discerned. This is the first [contemplation method], the method of [the contemplation of] impurity,⁴ within which there are the eighteen methods [enumerated above]. The natures of the various verificatory visions cannot be fully explained. When [the practitioner] enters *samādhi* he will naturally understand [them]. This is the completion of contemplation number eighteen [and also the completion of] the first gate, [the contemplation of impurity.]

1 +證 P, S, Q, Y

2 九 Kg

3 Unclear. Perhaps referring to the ten stages of the decaying corpse?

4 Although this passage is unclear in many respects, I do not think that 是最初不淨門 means “this is the first gate of the contemplation of impurity,” but rather refers to the contemplation of impurity as first meditation method. The passage would hardly make sense otherwise, as there are no further explanations of subsequent methods of the impurity contemplation of which this could be the first. Moreover it is clearly stated that the contemplation of impurity is comprised of eighteen parts (有十八方便), and this must refer to the entirety of the first sutra.

2.1

如是我聞。一時佛住舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。爾時世尊，與千二百五十比丘俱。是¹時會中有一比丘，名禪難提²，於深禪定，久已通達，成阿羅漢，三明六通，具八解脫。

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling in the country of Śrāvastī in the park [given to the Buddha by the laymen Sudatta] “He Who Gives to the Poor” located in the forest of [prince] Jeta, accompanied by 1,250 monks. At this time within the assembly there was a monk named “Nandika the Meditator,” who had long since attained realization while in deep trance and had become an arhat, endowed with the three wisdoms and the six powers, fully possessed of the eight liberations.³

2.2

即從坐起，正衣服，叉手長跪，而白佛言：如來今者，現在世間，利安一切。佛滅度後，佛不現在⁴，諸四部眾，有業障{多}⁵者，若繫念時，境界不現在前⁶。如是煩惱，及一切罪，犯突吉羅乃至重罪⁷，欲懺悔者，當云何⁸滅是諸⁹罪相¹⁰。若復有人殺生、邪見，欲修正念，當云何滅邪見殺生惡、煩惱障。

[Nandika] arose from his seat, arranged his robes, and clasping his hands together knelt on both knees and said to the Buddha: “Today the Tathāgatha has appeared in the world and brings peace and benefit to all. But after the Buddha has passed into extinction and is no longer present, when those among the four groups of followers who have many karmic obstructions fix their thoughts [the corresponding] verificatory vision will not appear to them. How should those who wish to repent these afflictions and sins ranging from the violation of the *duṣkṛta* [offenses]¹¹ up to the grave sins proceed so as to extinguish the signs of their sins?¹²

Further how should [those who have committed the ten evil deeds ranging from] killing

1 Portions of the subsequent passages are cited in the middle fascicle of Fazhao’s 法照 (fl. 8th century) *Jing tu wu hui nian fo song jing guan jing yi* 淨土五會念佛誦經觀行儀, Pelliot number 2066. This manuscript is undated, but is written on the same sheet as a monk’s passport in a similar hand bearing the date 866. (On Fazhao and his works, see Tsukamoto 1974–1975, 4:383–404.) It does not appear to be a direct citation, but rather a selective extract. Still, it is not without text-critical value at times. Variants from this passage will be cited as Jt (for 淨土), based on the edition in volume 85 of the Taishō (T.2827:85.1255a4–27).

2 有一比丘名禪難提 = 有禪難提比丘 Jt

3 Note that below Nandika is declared to become an arhat after hearing the Buddha’s preaching. It is not clear how we are to explain this contradiction.

4 前 P, S, Q, Y

5 Following Jt.

6 現在前 = 得現前 Jt

7 突吉羅乃至重罪 = 於小罪乃至重罪殺生邪見之罪 Jt, seeming to incorporate some of the text from below.

8 +除 Jt

9 [諸] Jt

10 [相] Jt

11 The *duṣkṛta* offenses are the lowest grade of transgression for monks and nuns, and according to the *vinaya* they can be expiated through simple confession, either to a single person or even to oneself.

12 Here “signs of their sins” may refer simply to the practitioner’s state of impurity (see for example *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T.643:15.655b15–20), but may also perhaps denote the particular “signs” that appear during meditation to those with transgressions (the word is used this way, for example, by Zhiyi in his ritual manual *Fa hua san mei chan yi* 法華三昧懺儀, T.1941:46.954c23–27).

living beings [up to] having false views¹ who wish to cultivate right mindfulness proceed so as to extinguish the obstructions of their defilements and the evil deeds of killing living beings [up to] having false views?”

2.3

作²是語已，如³大⁴山崩，五體投地，頂禮佛足，復白佛言⁵：唯⁶願世尊⁷，為我解說，令⁸未來世一切⁹眾生，恒得正念，不離賢聖。

Having said these words [Nandika] fell to the ground like a great mountain collapsing. Touching his head to the Buddha's feet he then further said: “May the World-honored One explain it for me so that sentient beings of the future might always attain correct mindfulness and might never part from the sages and worthies.”

2.4

爾時世尊，猶¹⁰如慈父安慰¹¹其子，告言：善哉善哉，善¹²男子。汝行慈心，與慈俱生。今¹³具大悲，無漏根力覺道成就，汝於今日，為未來世一切眾生，問除罪法¹⁴。諦聽諦聽¹⁵，善思念之。

At this time as a loving father would console his child the World-honored One said [to Nandika]: “Excellent, excellent! Oh child of good family, you indeed have cultivated a loving mind, and are replete with love.¹⁶ Today, possessed of great compassion and having fully attained the pure factors of awakening such as the faculties and powers,¹⁷ for the sake of all sentient beings of the future you ask about the method for removing sins! Listen carefully, listen carefully, and consider it well.”

1 This presumably refers to the “ten courses of evil action” (*akuśalakarmapāṭha*), as the first at and last of these are mentioned here (see also the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.589a7–8, where these are similarly referred to as 殺生乃至邪見).

2 [作] Sgz; 說 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

3 [如] Jt

4 太 Jt

5 [復白佛言] Jt

6 惟 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

7 [世尊] Jt

8 令 = 為 Jt

9 [一切] Jt

10 由 Jt

11 安慰 = 慰喻 Jt

12 [善] Kg

13 今 P, S, Q, Y

14 +善哉 Jt

15 +當為汝說 Jt

16 Translation tentative.

17 The expression 無漏根力覺道 appears in Chinese Buddhist texts with some frequency describing the state of a fully liberated being. In Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, where the prefix 無漏 does not appear, it would appear to correspond to *indriyabalabodhyāṅga*. This suggests that the meaning is “the *bodhyāṅga* consisting of the *indriya*, *bala*, etc.”

2.5

爾時世尊即放頂光，此光金色，有五百化佛。繞佛七匝，照祇陀林，亦作金色。現此相已，還從佛枕¹骨入。爾時世尊²告禪難提及勅阿難：汝等當³教未來眾生罪業多者，為除罪故，教使⁴念佛。以念佛故⁵，除諸業障、報障、煩惱障。

The World-honored One then emitted a light from the crown of his head. Within this golden light were five hundred transformation-buddhas. [The light] circled the Buddha seven times and bathed the forest of prince Jeta in a golden light. Having made this display it then reentered the Buddha through the bone on the back of his head.⁶

The World-honored One then spoke to Nandika the Meditator and commanded Ānanda: “You two must teach sentient beings of the future in whom sinful deeds are numerous to bring to mind the Buddha so as to eliminate their sins. Bringing to mind the Buddha will remove the obstructions caused by deeds, retribution, and the defilements.”⁷

2.6

念佛者，當先端坐，叉手閉{眼}{目}⁸，舉舌向齶，一心⁹繫念，心心相注，使不分散。心既定已，先當觀像。

To bring to mind the Buddha [the practitioner] must first sit up straight, then clasp his hands together, close his eyes, and press his tongue against the roof of his mouth. He should concentrate his mind and fix his thoughts, remaining continuously focused. When his mind is fixed, he should then first contemplate an image [of the Buddha].¹⁰

1 頂 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

2 世尊 = 佛 Jt

3 [當] Jt

4 使 = 令 Jt

5 Here Jt continues with 初見一佛，乃至十佛，見佛已，心轉明利，三十二相，皆使分明, which seems to be a summary of the ensuing passages, though only the last twelve characters are a precise match for anything in the received texts. Jt picks up again in section 2.23.

6 *Zhen gu* 枕骨, literally “pillow bone,” refers to the bone on the back of the skull. This unusual term appears frequently in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*.

7 The so-called three obstructions (*āvaraṇa*). Most sources agree in defining the “obstruction of deeds” (業障 *karmāvaraṇa*) as the five sins of immediate retribution (五無間罪), usually killing one’s mother, father, an arhat, splitting the *saṅgha*, or spilling the blood of a Buddha. The “obstruction of retribution” (報障 *vipākāvaraṇa*) is usually defined as rebirths from which one cannot attain the path (chiefly the lower realms, the continent of Uttarakuru, or the *asaṃjñā* heaven). The “obstruction of the defilements” meanwhile refers simply to the presence, in the present life, of defiled mental tendencies. See for example the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.100a10–11. On the novel interpretation given to these three by later Chinese commentators such as Zhiyi, and the possible connections that such interpretations may have with the basic assumptions of the *Chan Essentials*, see p.201.

8 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

9 切 Kg

10 “Contemplation of the image” (觀像) is mentioned in a number of fifth-century Chinese meditation text, most importantly the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.690–693; Ōminami 2001). In general the idea sees to be that the meditator will first contemplate a statue or other image of the Buddha, and then follow a procedure similar to the corpse or *kaśiṇa* contemplations. In the version here in the *Chan Essentials*, however, the point seems to be somewhat different, and there does not appear to be an external image.

2.7

觀像者，當起想念。觀於前地，極使白淨。取相¹長短，[壁]{辟}²方³二丈。益使明淨，猶如明鏡。見前地已，見左邊地，亦使明淨。見右邊地，亦使明淨，及見後地，亦使明淨。使四方地，悉平如掌。其一一方，各作二丈地想，極使明淨。

To contemplate the image he must use his imagination. [He] should contemplate the ground before him, making it extremely white and pure. [He should] grasp the attributes of its size as being fifteen feet⁴ in circumference. He then makes it yet even more clear and pure, as if it were a clear mirror. Having seen the ground in front of him [in this manner], he should see the ground to his left as well, making it too clear and pure. He should then see the ground to his right, making it too clear and pure, and finally see the ground behind him, making it too clear and pure. He should thus make the ground all around him as flat as the palm of his hand. [In this manner] in each direction he should imagine a fifteen-foot [by fifteen-foot square of] of earth, making it clear and pure.

2.8

地既明已，還當攝心，觀於前地，作蓮華想⁵，其華千葉，七寶莊嚴。復當⁶作一丈六金像想，令此金像結加趺坐，坐蓮華上。見此像已，應當諦觀頂上肉髻。見頂上肉髻，髮紺青色，一一髮舒，長丈三，還放之時右旋宛⁷轉。有琉璃光。住佛頂上，如是一一孔，一毛旋生。觀八萬四千毛⁸，皆使了了。

When the ground is clear he must again grasp his mind firmly and contemplate the ground in front of him, imagining a lotus flower with a thousand petals, adorned with the seven precious substances. He should then further imagine a golden image of the sixteen-foot [buddha], and then make this golden image sit with legs crossed atop the lotus flower. Having seen this image, he should carefully contemplate the protuberance on its head. He then sees the hairs on the protuberance, violet in color. Each twelve-foot hair is curled up.⁹ When they are extended they unroll clockwise. They shine like beryl. Within each of the pores atop the crown of buddha's head there grows a single¹⁰ curly hair. [The practitioner should] contemplate [each of the] eighty-four thousand hairs, making them all clear.

1 想 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

2 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz.

3 万 Sgz

4 Two *zhang* 丈, each *zhang* being approximately 2.5 meters.

5 相 P, S, Q, Y

6 常 P

7 婉 Sgz, P, S, Y, Kg

8 +孔 Sgz, P, S, Q, Y

9 The *Ocean-samādhī-sea Contemplation* also discusses the length of the Buddha's head hairs (T.643:15.649a26–27), though a different figure is given.

10 One of the so-called marks of a great man (*mahapuruṣalakṣaṇa*) is that from each hair pore there grows only a single hair.

2.9

見此事已，次觀像面。像面圓滿，如十五日月，威光益顯，分齊分明。復觀額廣平正，眉間毫¹相，白如珂雪，如頗梨珠²，右旋宛³轉。復觀像鼻，如鑄金鋌⁴，似鷹王嘴，當于面門。復觀像口，脣色赤好，如頻婆羅菓。次觀像齒，口四十齒，方白齊平，齒上有印，印中出光。[如白]{白如}⁵真珠，{顯發金顏}，齒間紅色，流出紅光。次觀像頸，如琉璃筒，[顯發金顏]。次觀像胸德字萬字。眾相印中，極令分明，印印出光，五色具足。

When he has seen these things, [the practitioner] should next contemplate the face of the image. The face of the image is as round and full as the moon on the fifteenth day of the month, its magnificent light ever so bright, [each feature] distinct and apparent (?).⁶ He should further contemplate the forehead, broad, flat, and straight, with the tuft of hair between the eyebrows as white as jade or snow, like a crystal pearl, curled up in a clockwise fashion. He should further contemplate the image's nose, like a cast-gold spike, like the beak of an eagle king,⁷ square within the middle of the face. He should further contemplate the mouth of the image, its lips red and beautiful, like a *bimbara* fruit.⁸ Next he should contemplate the teeth of the image. Within the mouth are forty teeth, square, white, and even. On the teeth there are markings (?) that radiate light.⁹ White like pearls [the teeth] appear brilliantly [in the center of] the golden face.¹⁰ [The space] between the teeth glows red. Next he should contemplate the neck of the image, like a beryl tube.¹¹ Next he should contemplate the auspicious swastika on the chest of the image.¹² He should make all the marks¹³ very clear [in his mind]. Each mark radiates light of five colors.

2.10

次觀[佛]¹⁴像臂，如象¹⁵王鼻，柔軟可愛¹⁶。次觀像手，十指參差，不失其所。手內外握，

1 豪 Sgz, Kg

2 [珠] Sgz, P

3 婉 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 鋌 Sgz, Kg; 挺 P

5 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

6 Many of these descriptions appear to have been drawn from the *Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經, Dharmakṣema's early fifth-century translation of the *Survarṇa-bhāsottama-sūtra* (see in particular T.663:16.339a14–25)

7 Many of these unusual images are also found in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.656c20–22).

8 See *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T.643:15.648a13–15.

9 See *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T. 643:15.648a16–17.

10 The four characters 顯發金顏 appear in a description of the Buddha's teeth from the *Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經 passage that appears to have been the source of much of these descriptions (T.663:16.339a14–25), where they seem to mean “appear brilliantly [in the middle] of his golden face.” The same phrase, as well as the adjacent one, also appears in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.659c8–10). As written I see no way of making sense of the *Chan Essentials*. Since in the other cases where images have been borrowed from the *Jin guang ming jing* they at least are used to refer to the same part of the body, I have here assumed that these four characters have been displaced seventeen characters, one standard column.

11 See *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T. 643:15.648a21–22.

12 The symbol 卍.

13 Translation tentative. I here take 相印 as referring simply to a given distinguishing feature of the image.

14 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

15 象 Sgz

16 受 Kg

手上生毛¹，如琉璃光，毛悉上靡。如赤銅爪²，爪上金色，爪內紅色，如赤銅山與紫金合。次觀合曼掌，猶如鵝王，舒時則現，似真珠網，攝手不見³。

Next he should contemplate the image's arm, like an elephant's trunk, soft and lovely.⁴ Next he should contemplate the image's hands, the ten fingers each of different lengths and therefore clearly distinct. Its wrists are double-jointed.⁵ The hair growing on the back of the hand are like beryl light beams, each pointing outward. The nails are like red copper. The tips are gold and the center is red, [like] a red copper mountain with streaks of purple gold. Next he should contemplate the seamless palms,⁶ like those of goose king, which when the [hand] is opened are like nets of pearls but which cannot be seen when the fists are closed.

2.11

觀像手已，次觀像身，方坐安隱，如真金山，不前不却，中坐得所。復觀像脛，如鹿王臄膊⁷，傭直圓滿。次觀足趺，平滿安庠，足下蓮華，千輻具足，足上生毛，如紺琉璃，毛皆上靡。脚指齊整，參差得中，爪色赤銅，於脚指端，亦⁸有千輻相輪。脚指網間，猶如羅文，似鴈王脚。

Having contemplated the image's hands, next he should contemplate the body of the image. It sits squarely and stably, like a mountain of pure gold. Leaning neither forward nor backwards, it sits upright in its place. Next he should contemplate the image's legs, like the thighs of a deer king, full and straight (?). Next he should contemplate the soles of the feet, flat and supple (?). On the bottom of the feet are the [marks of] the lotus flower and the complete one-thousand spokes [of the wheel.] On the tops of the feet there are hairs like purple beryl, all pointing up [the leg]. The toes are even and regularly staggered. The nails are the color of red copper, and on the tips of the toes there are also thousand-spoked wheels. The toes have nets between them like loose woven silk, resembling the feet of a goose-king.⁹

2.12

如是諸事，及與身光圓¹⁰光[項]{頂}¹¹光。光有化佛諸大¹²比丘眾、化菩薩。如是化人，如

1 色 Sgz, Kg

2 分 Sgz

3 現 Sgz, P, S, Q, Y

4 See the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T.643:15.648b8–9.

5 Literally “can grasp objects inwardly and outwardly.” The exact wording 手內外握 also occurs in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.648b24). This is also one of the eighty secondary marks of buddhas listed in Kumārajīva's *Meditation Scripture* where, interestingly, the expression 手內外握 is listed as the “old” translation of this term (T.614:15.276b28).

6 This refers to webbed hands and feet.

7 膊 Sgz, P, Q

8 上 P, S, Q, Y

9 Toes “like those of a goose-king (*hamsa-rāja*)” is a standard way of describing webbed toes, another one of the traditional marks of a buddha (*Zhong a han jing* 中阿含經, T.26:1.493c27).

10 員 Sgz (Incorrectly noted by the Taishō editors as 真), Kg

11 Following Sgz, P, S, Q, Y.

12 天 Sgz, P

旋火輪旋逐[光]¹走。

[He contemplates (?)] all these things, as well as the radiance of [the image's] body, the round circle of light [of main body (?)] and the halo around the head. Within these lights there are transformation-buddhas [accompanied by] great assemblies of monks and transformation-bodhisattvas. These transformation-beings circle [the main image], like spinning wheels of fire.

2.13

如是逆觀者，從足逆觀，乃至頂髻。順觀者，從頂至足。如²是觀像。使心分明，專見一[佛]³像。

For the reverse contemplation, he should contemplate in reverse starting with the feet and proceeding to the protuberance on the crown of the head. For the forward contemplation, he should start from the crown of the head going down to the feet. In this manner [should he] contemplate the image [of the buddha]. Making the mind clear, he sees only this single image.

2.14

見一像已，復當更觀，得見二像。見二佛像時，使⁴佛像身成瑠璃，出眾色⁵光，焰⁶焰⁷相次，如燒金山，化像無數。見二像已，復見三像。見三像已，復見四像。見四像已，復見五像。見五像已，乃至見⁸十像。見十像已，心轉明利，見閻浮提，齊四海內。凡夫心狹，不得令廣。若[廣]⁹大者，攝心令還，齊四海內，以鐵圍山為界。見此海內，滿中佛像，三十二相，八十隨形好，皆使分明。一一相好，有無數光。

Having seen one image, he must further contemplate until he sees two images. When he sees these two images he should make the body of the buddha images become beryl, radiating various kinds of light, the flames [of their halos burning] continuously like golden mountains immersed in flames, [surrounded by] innumerable transformation-buddhas.

Having seen two images, he next sees three images. Having seen three images, he next sees four images. Having seen four images, he next sees five images. Having seen five images, [he should continue in this way] until he sees ten images. Having seen ten images, his mind having become increasingly clear and sharp he [then] sees the entire continent of Jambudvīpa within the four oceans [filled with buddha images]. Ordinary beings have narrow minds, and thus cannot cause [their vision of the buddha images] to expand. If [on the other hand the vision is made] larger [than specified here], then [the practitioner] should gather up the mind and bring it back to the area within the four oceans, bounded by the iron encircling mountains. He sees [everywhere] within the oceans filled with buddha images. He makes [each of their] thirty-two [major] and eighty minor marks clear [in his mind]. Each of the marks [gives off] innumerable

1 Following Kg. Sgz and P read 毛.

2 [如] Sgz, P

3 Following P, Q, Sgz, Kg.

4 [使] Kg

5 瑠璃出眾色 = 流出像 Sgz, Kg

6 炎 P, Kg

7 炎 P; Kg

8 [見] Sgz, P, S, Q, Y

9 Following Kg.

lights.

2.15

若於眾光，見[一一]{二}¹境界，雜穢不淨，從罪報得。復應更起，掃兜婆塗地，造作淨籌，謙卑²下下，修諸懺悔。復當安心，正念一處，如前觀像。不緣餘事，諦觀像眉間。觀像³眉間已，次第觀其餘諸相，一一相好，皆使分明。

If within these lights he sees a different vision [such as] various impurities,⁴ this is retribution for [past] sin. [In such a case he] must get up [from meditation,] sweep clean the sanctuary,⁵ wash its floors, make “purity sticks” [for the toilet,]⁶ humble himself, and cultivate various repentance practices. Then, he must again settle his mind, steady his thoughts in a single place, and as before contemplate the image. Not taking anything else as the object [of his mind], he must carefully contemplate the space between the eyebrows of the image. Having carefully contemplated the space between the eyebrows of the image, he must next contemplate the other marks, making each mark clear and distinct [in his mind].

2.16

若不明，更復⁷懺悔作諸苦役。然後攝心，如前觀像。見諸佛像，身色端嚴，三十二相，皆悉具足，滿四海內，皆坐華上。

If they are not clear and distinct he must repent again and perform various menial tasks. Then he should restrain his mind and as before contemplate the image. [Having successfully repented he will now] see various buddha-images seated on lotus flowers filling [the whole world] within the four oceans, their august bodies fully endowed with the thirty-two marks.

2.17

見坐像已，復更作念：世尊在世，執鉢⁸持錫，入里乞食，處處遊化，以福度⁹眾生。我於今日，但見坐像，不見行像，宿有何罪。

When [the practitioner] has seen these seated images he should consider further: “When the World-honored One was in the world he carried his bowl and staff, entered villages to beg for food, traveled everywhere to teach so as to bring blessings and salvation to living beings. Today I

1 Tentatively following Sgz, Kg.

2 昇 Sgz

3 [像] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 Translation tentative.

5 Here “sanctuary” translates *shuai po* 兜婆, a transcription of the word *stūpa*. Precisely what kind of stupa is envisioned here is not clear, but as becomes evident later in the text it was understood to be a place where one could find an image of the Buddha. Although not entirely dismissing the possibility that this could refer to a large, outdoor stupa, the more likely image is probably the central-pillar cave shrines found throughout Central Asia. Accordingly I will translate the word throughout as “sanctuary,” which serves well to convey a broad range of possible cultic sites.

6 Here “purity sticks” (*jing chou* 淨籌) or perhaps simply “clean sticks” refers to the pieces of wood that were the Chinese equivalent of toilet paper. See p.266n68.

7 更復 = 復當 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg; 復更 Q

8 盞 P

9 [度] P, Sgz, Kg

have seen only the image [of the Buddha while] seated, I have not seen the image [of the Buddha while] walking.¹ What sin did I commit in a past life [such that this is the case]?”

2.18

作是念已，復更懺悔。既懺悔已，如前攝心，繫念觀像。觀像時，見諸坐像，一切皆起。巨²身丈六。方正不傾。身相光明。皆悉具足。見像立已。復見像行。執鉢³持錫⁴。威儀庠序。諸天人⁵眾。皆亦圍繞。復有眾像。飛騰虛空放金色光。滿虛空中。猶如金雲。復似金山。相好無比。復見眾像。於虛空中⁶。作十八變。身上出水。身下出火。或現大身。滿虛空中。大復現小。如芥子許。履地如水。履水如地。於虛空中。東踊⁷西沒。西踊⁸東沒⁹。南踊¹⁰北沒。北踊¹¹南沒。中踊邊沒。邊踊中沒。上踊下沒。下踊上沒¹²。行住坐臥。隨意自在。

When he has considered in this way he must repent further. Having repented, he must as before restrain his mind, fix his thoughts, and contemplate the image. When he contemplates the image he sees that the seated images [seen before] all stand up, their large bodies sixteen feet tall, standing straight up without leaning to one side or the other. When he has seen the images stand up, [the practitioner] will further see the images walking, carrying alms-bowls and holding staffs, perfectly embodying the noble bearing [of a monk], surrounded by various assemblies of gods and humans. Further there are [buddha] images which fly through the air radiating golden light. [The images] fill the sky, appearing like golden clouds or like mountains of gold, beautiful beyond compare. [The practitioner] further sees various [buddha] images in the sky performing the eighteen miraculous bodily transformations—they emit water from the upper part of their bodies and fire from the lower part; they manifest enormous bodies that fill the sky, and then become as small as mustard seeds; they walk on the earth as if it were water, and on water as if it were earth; [flying] in the sky they rise up in the east and disappear in the west; they rise up in

1 The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* also has a long section devoted to seeing the “walking image” (行像). Tsukamoto has suggested that this should be understood in conjunction with the annual rites of “processing the image” (行像) mentioned in Faxian’s 法顯 diary as key rituals in the oasis cities of the Tarim basin, eventually taken up in China (Tsukamoto 1974–1975, 3:306–308). However both the *Chan Essentials* and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* speak of an image of the walking Buddha, not a process of “walking” the Buddha. The reference here thus seems to be to images that depict the Buddha while walking, examples of which were cast in China as early as the late Eastern Jin (*Forest of Pearls from the Garden of Dharma*, T.2122:53.406b17–18). The *Records of the Canon* also mentions a collection of inscriptions to “walking images” from the Song dynasty (T.2145:55.92b29–c1).

2 具 P, S, Q, Y; 臣 Kg

3 蓋 P

4 杖 P, Sgz, Kg

5 大 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 [中] Sgz, P, S, Q, Y

7 涌 Q, Y

8 涌 P, S, Q, Y

9 [西踊東沒] Kg

10 涌 P, S, Q, Y

11 涌 P, S, Q, Y

12 中踊邊沒邊踊中沒上踊下沒下踊上沒 = 中踊上沒上踊下沒下踊邊沒邊踊中沒 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

the west and disappear in the east; they rise up from the south and disappear in the north; they rise up in the north and disappear in the south; the rise up in the center and disappear in the outer regions; they rise up in the outer regions and disappear in the center; rising up above they disappear below (?); rising up below they disappear above (?); they walk, stand, sit, and lie down [while in the air] just as they so desire.

2.19

見此事已，復當作念：世尊在世，教諸比丘，右脇而臥。我今亦當觀諸像臥。

When he has seen these things [the practitioner] must further consider: “When the World-honored One was present in the world and instructing the monks he would sleep on his right side. I thus now must also contemplate the various reclining images.”

2.20

尋見諸像，牒¹僧伽梨，枕²右肘，右脇而臥。脇下自然生金色床，金光栴檀。種種雜色，眾妙蓮華，以為敷具。上有寶帳，垂諸瓔珞。佛放大光，滿寶帳內，猶如金華，復似星月。無量寶光，猶如團雲，處空明顯。中有化佛，彌滿虛空。

He then sees the images fold their *samghāṭi* [outer robes] and placing their heads on their right forearms lie down on their right sides. Beneath their right sides golden beds [made of] radiant golden sandalwood spontaneously appear,³ with variously-colored wondrous lotus flowers for the bedding. Above there is a jeweled canopy from which various garlands hang. The Buddha radiates a great light filling the interior of the jeweled canopy, like a golden flower, the moon, or a bright star. Innumerable jewel-like lights appear brightly in the sky like masses of clouds. Within them are transformation-buddhas that fill the sky.

2.21

見臥像已，復當作念：過去有佛，名釋迦牟尼，唯⁴獨一身，教化眾生，住在此世，四十九年，入大涅槃而般涅槃，猶如薪盡火滅，永滅無餘。我今心想，以想心故，見是多像。此多像者，來無所從{來}⁵，去無所⁶至⁷，從我心想，妄見此耳。

Having seen the reclining images [the practitioner] should next consider: “In the past there was a buddha named Śākyamuni who for his entire life instructed sentient beings. After forty-nine years in this world he entered final *nirvāṇa*,⁸ just as when fire is extinguished owing to

1 疊 Q, Y

2 脫 P

3 We might also read 金光栴檀 together with 種種雜色 as a description of the lotus flowers (Satō 1931, 221).

4 惟 P, S, Q, Y

5 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

6 [所] Kg

7 止 Sgz, Kg

8 Literally “entered *nirvāṇa* by *nirvāṇa*-ing.” It is difficult to construe this line as Chinese, but in the background seems to be the well known phrase “to *nirvāṇa*-ize into *nirvāṇa* without remainder” (*nirupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvāsyanti*), an expression rendered by Kumārajīva in his translation of the larger *Prajñāpāramitā* scripture as 於無餘涅槃而般涅槃 (T.223:8.262b28–29, corresponding to Takayasu 1986-2009, 2:122). In Kumārajīva’s translation the locative *nirvāṇadhātau* is rendered with 於. The *Chan Essentials*, which for this purpose uses 入, “enter,” may be an attempt to make more sense of this in Chinese, but this gives the

the fuel being spent it is forever extinguished without remainder. Today I use my mind and imagine, and by imagining I see these many images. These many images in arriving do not arrive from somewhere, and when going do not go anywhere. I falsely see them only through the imagination of my mind.

2.22

作是念時，漸漸消¹滅。眾像皆盡，唯²見一像，獨坐華臺，結加趺坐。諦觀此像，三十二相，八十種好，皆使明了。見此像已，名觀像法。

When he considers in this way [the images] gradually disappear. When the images have vanished [the practitioner] sees only a single image sitting with legs crossed atop a lotus flower. He carefully contemplates this image, making its thirty-two major and eighty minor marks clear and distinct. When he has seen this image, it is known as the attainment of the contemplation of the image.

2.23

佛告³禪難提，及勅阿難：佛滅度後，若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷⁴，欲懺悔者，欲滅罪者，佛雖不在，繫念諦觀形像者⁵，諸惡罪業⁶，速得清淨。

The Buddha said to Nandika and commanded Ānanda: After I have passed into extinction, even though the Buddha is no longer present in the world monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who wish to repent and destroy their sins can quickly purify all evil, sinful karma by fixing their thoughts and carefully contemplating a physical image [of the Buddha].

2.24

觀此像已，復當更觀。從像⁷臍中，便⁸放⁹一光，其光金色，分為¹⁰五支。一光照左，一光照右，一光照前，一光照後，一光照上。如是五光，光光之上，皆有化¹¹佛。佛相次第¹²，滿虛空中。見此相時，極使明了。

[When the practitioner] has contemplated this image [once], he must then contemplate it again. The navel of the image emits light. Golden in color, it splits into five beams, one of which shines to the left, one to the right, one to the front, one behind, and one upwards. In each of these

final 而般涅槃, which is actually supposed to represent the verb, a somewhat unclear relationship to the rest of the phrase.

1 清 Sgz

2 惟 P, S, Q, Y

3 普 Sgz

4 若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷 = 諸四部眾 Jt

5 繫念諦觀形像者 = 教正念觀像者 Jt

6 業 = 鄣 Jt

7 復當更觀從像 = 又教觀像 Jt

8 使 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg; 請 Jt. The variant in Jt suggests a quite different understanding of this process.

9 於 P

10 為 = 作 Jt

11 [化] Jt

12 佛相次第 = 佛佛相次 Jt

light beams there are transformation-buddhas. One following upon the next they fill the sky. When [he] sees these signs, he must make them clear and distinct.

2.25

復見化佛，上至梵世。彌滿三千大千世界，於三千大千世界中，見金色光，如紫金山，內外無妨。見此事時，心意快然，見前坐像，如佛真影。

Next, [the practitioner] sees the transformation-buddhas ascend to the world of Brahmā. They fill the entire three-thousand great thousand-fold worlds [of the universe], and like mountains of purple gold they manifest a golden light that shines everywhere unobstructed.

When he sees these things his mind becomes happy, and he sees the seated image before him as like a true emanation of the Buddha.

2.26

見佛影已，復當作念：此是影耳，世尊威力智慧自在，現作此事¹。我今應當諦觀真佛²。

When he has seen this emanation of the Buddha he should consider: “This is but an emanation. It is something manifested by the august power, wisdom, and mastery of the World-honored One.³ What I should now carefully contemplate is the Buddha’s true body.”

2.27

爾時尋見佛{真?}身，微妙如淨琉璃，內有金剛，於金剛內，有紫⁴金光，共相映發，成眾相好。三十二相，八十種好，猶如印文，炳然明顯。微妙清淨，不可具說。手執澡瓶，住立空中。瓶內盛水，狀如甘露。其水五色，五光清淨，如琉璃珠。柔軟細滑。灌行者頂，滿於身中。自見身內，水所觸處，八十⁵戶蟲，漸漸萎落。蟲既萎已，身體柔軟，心意悅樂。

He then sees the true (?)⁶ body of the Buddha, marvelous like pure beryl within which

1 此事 = 事已 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz; 事以 Kg. The most likely evolution seems to be 此事 → 事此 → 事以 → 事已.

2 End of Sgz scroll 3.

3 Thus while the practitioner does attempt to go beyond the “emanation” (影), unlike the transformation-buddhas described in previous passages the emanation is not negated as the product of the practitioners imagination (想), false or otherwise. Indeed, as stated here, it is “manifested by the august power” of the Buddha. Still, it does seem that there is some difference between the first sutra and the second, for at the end of the first sutra the final goal was to meet the “true emanation” (真影), while here the practitioner eventually meets the “true body” (真身). These differences might be resolved by taking seriously the final lines of 2.25, where what is seen is said to be “like the true emanation” (如真影). This suggests that we interpret the words 此是影耳 in 2.26 as “this is but an emanation,” in other words not *the* “true emanation” (真影) from the first sutra, which is perhaps what the second sutra calls the “true body” (真身).

4 此 Sgz

5 萬 P, S, Q, Y. In P the graph is actually 万, and it is probably on the basis of this form that there was confusion between 万 and 十. That the correct number is indeed eighty is suggested by the reference to eighty “families” of worms in the first sutra (1.12 and 1.13).

6 Following the logic of the passage we would expect this to now be the “true body” (真身). Even if we do not actually emend the text as I have proposed, this seems to be the meaning.

lies adamantine.¹ Within the adamantine there is a purple-gold radiance that shines through (?) turning into the special marks. The thirty-two major and eighty minor marks appear, blazing like branded characters. The marvelous purity [of the buddha] is indescribable. Holding a pitcher of water in his hand he stands in the air. The pitcher is filled with water, like ambrosia in appearance. The water is [formed] of five colors each with its own pure radiance, [like that of] beryl pearls. [The water] is soft and smooth, and [the Buddha] pours it on the practitioner's head [from where] it fills the inside of his body. [The practitioner] then sees that within his body wherever the water touches the eighty families of worms gradually shrivel up. When they have shriveled up [and died] his body feels relaxed and he becomes happy in mind.

2.28

當自念言：如來慈父，以此法水上味甘露，而灌我頂。此灌頂法，必定不虛。爾時復當更起想念：唯願世尊，為我說法。

He must then think as follows: “The Tathāgatha, the compassionate father, has consecrated my head with this water of the Dharma, which is ambrosia of the most excellent flavor. [My] attainment of this consecration is certain beyond doubt.”²

Then he must wish as follows: “May the World-honored One preach for me the Dharma!”

2.29

罪業除者，聞佛說法。佛說法者，說四念處，說四正勤，說³四如意足，{說⁴五根，{說⁵五力，說覺{分⁶，說八聖道。此三十七法，一一分別，為行者說。說此法已，復教觀⁷苦、空、無常、無我。教此法已，以見佛故，得聞妙法，心意開解，如水順流，不久亦成阿羅漢道。

Those whose sinful karma has been removed will then hear the Buddha preach the Dharma. When the Buddha preaches the Dharma, he preaches the four bases of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of magic power, the five roots, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, and the eight-fold holy path. He analyzes each of these thirty-seven things and explains them to the practitioner. When he has explained these things he further teaches the contemplations of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. When [the practitioner] has been taught these things, because he has seen the Buddha and heard the marvelous Dharma he will suddenly understand, and as surely as water follows its course in a short time he will attain the path of arhatship.

1 Thus in contrast to the body of a woman, described as an intentionally obfuscating, painted vase filled with impurity, the Buddha's body is transparent and filled with indestructible *vajra*.

2 Translation tentative.

3 [說] A

4 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

5 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

6 Tentatively following A.

7 +身 A

2.30

業障重者。見佛動口。不聞說法。猶如聾¹人。無所聞知。爾時復當更行懺悔。既懺悔已。五體投地。對佛啼泣。經歷多時。修諸功德。然後方聞佛所²說法。雖聞說法。於義不了。

However [if the practitioner] has heavy karmic obstructions he will see the Buddha's mouth move but will not hear the preaching of the Dharma. Like a deaf person he will hear nothing.³ At this time he must again practice rites of repentance. Having repented, [he should] throw his body upon the floor and facing the Buddha should sob and cry. After doing this for a long time and cultivating all kinds of merit, he will then be able to hear the Buddha's preaching. However though he hears the preaching of the Dharma he does not understand its meaning.

2.31

復見世尊，以澡瓶水，灌行者頂，水色變異，純⁴金剛色。從頂上入，其色各異，青黃赤白，眾穢雜相，亦於中現。水從頂[上]⁵入，直⁶下身中，從足跟出，流入地中。其地即時變為光明，大如丈⁷許。下入地中，如是漸⁸深，直到水際。到水際已，復當作意，隨此光去。

The practitioner then further sees the World-honored One pour the pitcher of water over his head. The color of the water is extraordinary, like pure adamantine. Entering through the crown of his head its colors each become distinct—green, yellow, red, and white, and the various impurities [that it collects]⁹ also appear therein. Entering through his head, the water moves downward into the middle of the body before coming out through his feet and flowing onto the ground, which in a fifteen square-foot area transforms into pure light. [The water] then enters the ground, proceeding gradually deeper until it reaches the “horizon of water.”¹⁰ When it has reached the horizon of water [the practitioner] must direct his mind towards following the light [of the water] as it departs.

2.32

復觀此水，水下淳空。復更當觀。空下有紺琉璃地，琉璃地下有金色地，金色地下有金剛地，金剛地下復見虛空。見此虛空，豁然大空，都無所有。

He should further contemplate the water. Beneath the water is pure emptiness. He must further contemplate. Beneath the emptiness is a ground of purple beryl, beneath the beryl ground

1 銅 P, Sgz, Kg

2 佛所 = 聞佛 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

3 The Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* compares *icchantikas* (those for whom awakening is impossible) to the deaf—though they hear the Dharma they gain no benefit thereby (T.374:12.420b7–14).

4 淳 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

5 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

6 真 Sgz

7 杖 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

8 +漸 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

9 Translation tentative.

10 The term *shui ji* 水際 appears in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* where it translates *apskandha* (*Wei mo jie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, T.475:14.555b27; VN, 454). This term would appear to be equivalent to the *apmaṇḍala* (“water-circle”), a cosmological term found in other sources as one of the three “wheels” of earth, water, and wind upon which world rests (Schlingloff 1964a, 32n1).

is a golden colored ground, beneath the golden ground is an adamantine ground. Beneath the adamantine ground he further sees empty space. He sees this empty space, a vast emptiness devoid of anything.

2.33

見此事已，復還攝心，如前觀一佛像。爾時彼佛光明益顯，不可具說。復持澡瓶水，灌行者頂，水相光明，亦如上說。如是七遍。

When he has seen this, he must again restrain his mind and as before contemplate a single buddha image. The brightness of this buddha is now even more manifest, and cannot be fully described. [The buddha] again consecrates the practitioner's head with a pitcher of water. The water appears radiant as described above. [It is to be done] like this seven times.

2.34

佛告禪¹難提：此名觀像²三昧，亦名念佛定，復³名除罪業，次⁴名救破戒，令毀禁⁵戒者，不失禪定。佛告阿難：汝好受持此觀佛三昧灌頂之法，為未來世一切⁶眾生，當廣分別⁷。

The Buddha said to Nandika: “This is called the *samādhi* of the contemplation of the image. It is also called the trance of bringing to mind the Buddha. It is also called [the procedure for] removing sinful karma, or for rescuing precept-breakers. It allows those who have violated the prohibitory precepts to avoid losing their [powers of] trance.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve this method of consecration by the *samādhi* of the contemplation of the Buddha, and you must extensively expound it for all sentient beings of the future.”

2.35

佛說是語時，尊者禪難提，及諸天眾，千二百五十比丘，皆作是言：如來世尊，於⁸今日為諸眾生亂心多⁹者，說除罪法。唯願世尊，更開甘露，令諸眾生，於佛滅後，得涅槃道。

When the Buddha spoke these words, the venerable Nandika the Meditator, as well as the many assemblies of gods and the 1,250 monks, all [together] said: “The World-honored Tathāgata has today preached this method of removing sins for the sake of those sentient beings whose minds are extremely distracted. May the World-honored One now further reveal the ambrosial teachings that will make it possible for sentient beings in the time after the Buddha's extinction to attain the path of *nirvāṇa!*”¹⁰

1 [禪] (法)

2 像 = 佛 Jt

3 復 = 亦 Jt

4 次 = 亦 Jt

5 [禁] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 [世一切] Jt

7 Jt then concludes with the lines 在於密處，使心不散，如前觀佛，drawn from the text below.

8 [於] A

9 名 Sgz

10 Something seems wrong here as this section (2.35) does not logically fit with what follows. Indeed we can detect here some kind of fissure in the compilation process, for in section 2.36 Nandika “becomes an arhat” (戒阿羅漢),

2.36

禪難提比丘，聞佛說此觀佛三昧，身¹心²歡喜，應時即得無量三昧門，豁然意解，成阿羅漢，三明³六通，皆悉具足。

When the monk Nandika the Meditator had heard the Buddha explain this *samādhi* of the contemplation of the Buddha, he felt joy in body and mind, and he immediately entered into innumerable *samādhis*. His mind was suddenly liberated, and he became an arhat, fully endowed with the three wisdoms and the six powers.

2.37

佛告阿難：此想成者，名第十九⁴觀佛三昧，亦名灌頂法⁵。汝好受持，慎⁶勿忘失，為未來世一切眾生，分別廣說。佛說此語時，諸比丘眾，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “When this meditation is complete it is called the *samādhi* of the contemplation of the Buddha, [contemplation] number nineteen. It is also called the method of consecration. You must carefully preserve it. Do not forget it. Explain it in detail for all sentient beings of the future.” When the Buddha had spoken these words, the assembly of monks, having heard what the Buddha said, joyfully undertook to carry it out.

2.38

佛告阿難：貪婬多者，雖得如此觀佛三昧，於事無益，不能獲得賢聖道果。次當更教自觀己身，令如前法，還作骨人，使皎然大白，猶如雪山。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: One with excessive lust, however, will gain no benefit even if he obtains this *samādhi* of the contemplation of the Buddha. He will still be unable to attain any of the fruits of the holy path.⁷ [Accordingly] he must next be taught to contemplate his own

while in 2.1 it was said that Nandika was already an arhat. It would thus seem that there may have originally been two different versions, or even two different texts, that were here joined together. This resulted in both the lack of transition between sections 2.35 and 2.36, and also in the narrative contradiction about Nandika’s status as an arhat. We may also note that 2.35 speaks as if the previous method for “removing sin” was something that would now need to be supplemented with a method for “attaining *nirvāṇa*.” However in the previous section we saw that the attainment of arhatship was already pronounced, and indeed in 2.36 Nandika uses this method to achieve full liberation. Similarly in 2.38 it is said that the ensuing method will only be needed for those “with excessive lust,” who are unable to fully benefit from the previous method of contemplating the Buddha. It would thus seem that paragraph 2.35 presupposes that “contemplating the Buddha” is a *preliminary* method for removing sin that will be followed by another method for “attaining *nirvāṇa*,” while other portions of the narrative assume a different relationship between the two halves of the sutra.

1 [身] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

2 +生 P, S, Q, Y

3 昧 Kg

4 十九 = 卅 Kg

5 +謂 Sgz

6 定 Sgz

7 The expression 賢聖道, “path of the worthies and sages,” is a standard term in pre-Kumārajīva translations for *āryamārga*, particularly for the so-called eight-fold path of the noble ones (*āryāṣṭāṅga-mārga*). This translation was eventually replaced, and it seems to appear in almost no post-Kumārajīva translations, though it shows up twice in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.171c3; 291c15), a text that often conserves terminology different from the rest of Kumārajīva’s translations.

body in the manner given previously and again create a skeleton, making it brilliantly white like a snow-covered mountain.

2.39

復當繫念住意在臍中，或在腰中。隨息出入。一數二隨，或二數三隨，或三數四隨，或四數五隨，或五數六隨，或六數七隨，或七數八隨，或八數九隨，或九數十隨，終而復始。隨息往¹反至十，復捨數而止。爾時心²意，恬靜無為。自見身皮，猶如練囊。見此事已，不見身骨，不知心處。

He should then fix this thoughts and concentrate his mind on his navel, or between his hips, and follow the breath as it goes in and out, counting one breath and following two breaths.³ Or else counting two and following three. Or else counting three and following four. Or else counting four and following five. Or else counting five and following six. Or else counting six and following seven. Or else counting seven and following eight. Or else counting eight and following nine. Or else counting nine and following ten. Having finished, he should begin again, following the breath as it goes in and out until reaching ten. Then he should put aside counting and [practice] stopping [the mind].⁴ At this time his mind [becomes] calm and still. He then sees the skin of his body as like a white silk bag. When he has seen this, he then no longer sees his bones, and knows not where his heart lies.⁵

2.40

爾時復當更教起想，還使身內心意，身體支節，如白玉人。既見此已，復當⁶繫念在腰中脊⁷骨大節上，令心不散。爾時復當自然見身上。有一明相，大如錢許，漸漸廣大，如摩伽大魚[耳]{目?}⁸。周遍雲集，復似白雲，於白雲內，有白光明，如頗梨鏡。光明漸盛，舉體明顯。復有白光。團圓正等，猶如車輪。內外俱明，明過於日。

He must then be instructed to further arouse his imagination and make his heart within his body [and (?)]⁹ the limbs of his body like a white jade person. When he has seen this, he must again fix his thoughts between his hips on his coccyx,¹⁰ and prevent his mind from wandering.

1 林 Sgz; 休 Kg

2 止 Sgz; [心] P

3 The meaning of this entire section is unclear to me.

4 This may also mean “he should put aside counting [the breath] and stop.” However “stopping,” (止) here more likely refers to the third stage of breath meditation, after “counting” (數) and “following” (隨). On these stages in Chinese meditation texts, see Deleau 1992.

5 Earlier the various poisonous dragons had been seen “in the place of the heart” (1.109), and later too the meditator sees raging fires there (3.46).

6 +起念 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

7 脊 Q, Y

8 Tentative emendation. Here 耳 might also be a sentence-ending particle, but the eye of the *makara* fish is occasionally compared to the sun, so perhaps this is the meaning.

9 Translation tentative. That the meditator would make his heart / mind (心意) like a white-jade person seems somewhat strange, and there may be missing text between 心意 and 身體. Alternatively the characters 心意 may be a mistake, or may have been displaced from elsewhere.

10 Here “coccyx” translates “great bone of the spine” (脊骨大節). In the next passage (2.41) this same location is denoted by the expression “great bone within the hips” (腰中大節). Remarkably we seem to have here some

He will then suddenly see above his body a light roughly the size of a coin, which gradually grows larger until [it is like the] eye of the giant *makara* fish. [The light] encircles [his body] like gathering clouds. It is like white clouds, within which there is a white light, like that of a crystal mirror. The brightness keeps increasing, until his entire body is radiant. There is yet a further white light [around his body (?)], perfectly spherical, like a cart wheel, bright both within and without, brighter than the sun.

2.41

見此事時，復更如前，一數二隨，或二數三隨，或三數四隨，或四數五隨，或五數六隨，或六數七隨，或七數八隨，或八數九隨，或九數十隨，或單或複，修¹短隨意。如是繫²念，在於密處，使心不散。復當繫念，如前更觀腰中大節，觀大節時，定³心不動。

When [the practitioner] sees these things, he must as before [contemplate the breath]: counting one breath and following two breaths. Or else counting two and following three. Or else counting three and following four. Or else counting four and following five. Or else counting five and following six. Or else counting six and following seven. Or else counting seven and following eight. Or else counting eight and following nine. Or else counting nine and following ten. Either singly or doubly,⁴ long or short as his wishes. In this manner he should concentrate his thoughts on the secret place,⁵ not allowing his mind to scatter. Next he must concentrate his thoughts and again contemplate the great joint within the hips. Contemplating the great joint, he settles his mind and keeps it still.

2.42

復自見身，更益明盛，勝前數倍，如大錢許。倍復精進，遂更見身，明倍增長，如澡罐⁶口。世間明物，無以為譬。見此明已，倍勤精進，心不懈退。復見此明，當於胸前，如明鏡許。見此明時，當勤精進，如救頭然，慙慙不止。遂見此明，益更增盛，諸天寶珠，無以為譬。其明清淨，無諸瑕穢。有七種色光，光七寶色，從胸而出，入於明中。此相現時，遂大歡喜，自然悅樂。心極安隱，無物可譬。

He then sees his body become even brighter than before. [First, the light appears] roughly

vague awareness of one of the Indian systems of vital energy centers within the body. Thus below in passage 2.47, the practitioner first sees light at the crown of his head (頂), which then flows to his throat/neck (頸/項), his chest (胸), his navel (臍) and finally to his coccyx (脊骨大節).

- 1 +長 A. This seems likely to have been an interlinear gloss on the character 修, whose meaning as “long” is unusual enough to merit comment.
- 2 數 Sgz
- 3 [定] Kg
- 4 Translation tentative.
- 5 Presumably this refers to the navel, the place where the meditator was told to concentrate his mind during breath meditation.
- 6 瓶 Sgz; 灌 P, S, Q, Y. Here Kg has a character composed of 彡 and 盟. The word 澡罐, seemingly also written as 澡灌 or 澡罐, appears in several other places in the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing* and the reading of the second character differs both across editions and across different instances in the same edition. In all cases it seems to mean a pitcher of water, albeit of the kind wielded by the gods, and it appears to be equivalent to 澡瓶, which also sometimes appears. For the sake of consistency I have followed the reading 澡罐 whenever it is attested.

the size of a large coin. Redoubling his efforts, he eventually sees [the light of his] body become brighter and grow as big as the mouth of a water pitcher. It is brighter than all of the bright things in the world. When he has seen this light, he redoubles his striving and does not allow his mind to slacken. He then sees this light [appear] before his chest, roughly the size of a mirror. When he has seen this light he must strive vigorously as if putting out a fire on his head, exerting himself without cease. He then sees the light become even more intense, brighter even than the various heavenly jewels. This light is very pure, devoid of any imperfections. Seven kinds of light, which shine like the seven precious substances, then emerge from [the practitioner's] chest and enter into the light.

When these signs have appeared, the practitioner becomes extremely happy and spontaneously joyful. His mind feels incomparably peaceful.

2.43

復更精進，心不懈息，見光如雲，繞身七匝。其一一光，化成光輪，於光輪中，自然當見十二因緣根本相貌¹。若不精進，懈怠懶惰犯於輕戒乃至突吉羅罪，見光即黑，猶如牆壁。或見此光，猶如灰炭。復見此光，似敗故衲²。由意縱逸輕小罪故，障蔽賢聖無漏光明。

He must then make further effort and not allow his mind to slacken. He will then see a cloud-like light encircle his body seven times. Each [circle of] light transforms into a wheel of light within which he will spontaneously see the fundamental signs of the twelve [links of the chain of] conditions.

If, however, he is not zealous in his practice, and giving way to indulgence has violated [any of the] minor precepts even including the *duṣkṛta* sins, then the light will appear black, like a wall, or ash-colored. Or else he will see this light as like an old torn monk's robe.³ Having given free reign to his mind and taken lightly the minor sins,⁴ the light of undefiled sanctity is therefore obscured.

2.44

佛告阿難：此不淨觀灌頂法門，諸賢聖種。勅諸比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，若有欲修諸賢聖法⁵，諦觀諸法苦、空、無常、無我、因緣{合成}⁶。如學數息，使心不亂⁷。當

1 根 Kg

2 衲 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

3 Presumably the torn robe is symbolic of the impure state brought about by violation of the precepts, and this image is also mentioned in Zhiyi's description of the visions attesting to "karmic obstructions" (see p.202).

4 This is reminiscent of a famous passage from the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*, one much cited by later Chinese Buddhist authors: "Do not think lightly of small offenses, imagining them to be blameless. However small the drops of water, they eventually fill the bowl." 莫輕小罪，以為無殃，水滲雖微，漸盈大器 (T.374:12.451c24–25).

5 諸賢聖法 = 聖諦法者 A

6 Following A.

7 散 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

勤持戒，一心攝持，於小罪中，應生¹慙²重，慚愧懺悔，乃至小罪，慎勿³覆藏。若覆藏罪，見諸光明，如朽⁴敗木。見此事時，即知犯戒。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: This method of consecration by means of the contemplation of impurity belongs to the lineage of all the sages and worthies. If there is a monk, nun, layman, or laywoman who wishes to cultivate this holy method, then I command him to contemplate that all *dharmas* are suffering, empty, impermanent, non-self, and an assemblage of causes and conditions. As when practicing breath-counting, [he should] focus his mind. He must diligently maintain the precepts, upholding them single-mindedly. He must take even minor violations very seriously, remorsefully repenting them, and being careful not to conceal even tiny violations. If he conceals such a violation, then [in his meditation] he will see the various radiant lights as like rotten wood. When he sees this it can be known that he has violated the precepts.

2.45

復更⁵慚愧，懺悔自責，掃兜婆，塗地，作諸苦役。復當供養恭敬師長、父母。於師、父母，視如佛想，極生恭敬。復從師、父母，求弘誓願，而作是言：我今供養師長、父母，以此功德，願我世世，恒得解脫。如是慚愧，修功德已，如前數息，還見此光，明顯可愛，如前無異。

[In such a case] he must then further arouse shame and remorse, repent, and rebuke himself. [He must] sweep the sanctuary, clean the floors, and perform various menial chores. Further he must make offerings and do reverence to his teachers and parents.⁶ He must look upon his teachers and his parents as if they were the Buddha, giving rise to deep reverence. Further, regarding⁷ his teachers and parents he should make the following vow: “Today I make offerings to my teachers and parents. May the merit obtained thereby lead to liberation in every lifetime.”⁸ Having remorsefully cultivated merit in this manner, he should count his breaths as before. [Thereupon] he will again see the light, lovely and radiant, just as it was before [he violated the precepts].

1 [生] A.

2 慙 Kg

3 忽 Sgz

4 腐 Sgz; 來 Kg

5 [更] A.

6 Or possibly “teachers, elders, and parents.” The idea here, repeated elsewhere in the text, that making offerings to one’s parents and teachers is a first step in the cultivation of merit, is also found in the *Upāsikaśīla-sūtra* translated by Dharmakṣema in the early fifth century, a text from which other technical terms related to the precepts and their transgression have also been borrowed (see the notes to section 4.76). The *Upāsikaśīla-sūtra* explains that there are three different “fields of merit” for a bodhisattva, in other words three things to which one may make meritorious donations—parents and teachers, enlightened beings (the Buddha, here understood as the stupa), and the poor (T.1488:24.1051c5–6).

7 The syntax is unclear. We would expect 從 . . . 求 to mean that one requests something of someone. But that does not seem to be the meaning here.

8 Translation tentative. It is not clear if this means that the practitioner dedicates his own merit to help his teachers and parents obtain awakening, or if he hopes this merit will lead to his own awakening.

2.46

復當更繫念，諦觀腰中大節，[念]{令}¹心安定，無分散意。設有亂心，復當自責慚愧懺悔。既懺悔已，復見²臍光，七色具足，猶如七寶。當令此光，合³為一光，鮮白可愛。

He must then further fix his thoughts and carefully contemplate his coccyx, making the mind settle on it without wandering off even slightly. If, however, his mind becomes distracted, he must again rebuke himself and remorsefully repent. Having repented, he will see the light in his navel complete in seven colors, like the [light of the] seven precious substances. He must then cause these [seven] lights to merge into a single light, gleaming white and lovely.

2.47

見此事已，如前還教繫念思惟，觀白骨⁴人，白如珂雪。既見白骨人已，復當更教繫念住意，在骨人頂。見骨人頂，自然放光，其光大⁵盛，似如火色，長短麤細，正共稍等，從其頂上，顛倒下垂，入頂骨中。從頂骨出，入頸⁶骨中。從頸⁷骨出，入胸骨中。從胸骨出，還入臍中。從臍中出，即入脊骨大節中。入大節中已，光明即滅。

When he has seen this then he must again be taught to fix his thoughts and meditate as before, contemplating his white skeleton, white like *ke*-jade or snow. When he has seen the white skeleton he must further be instructed to fix his thoughts and concentrate his mind on the crown of the skeleton's head.

He then sees a great bright light radiate forth from the crown of the skeleton's head. It looks like a flame and in length and thickness is exactly the same as a spear.⁸ [This spear-like light] emerges from the crown of his head and then turns upside-down so that it is pointing downward. It then enters the bone at the crown of the head. Emerging from the bone at the crown of the head, it enters the neck bone. Emerging from the neck bone, it enters the chest bone. Emerging from the chest bone, it enters the navel. Emerging from the navel it enters the coccyx. Having entered the coccyx, the light then disappears.

2.48

光明滅已，應時即{自然}有一[自然]⁹大光明雲，眾寶莊嚴，寶華清淨，色中上者。中有一

1 Following P, S, Q, Y.

2 已 Sgz

3 令 Kg

4 白骨 = 骨白 Sgz

5 火 Kg

6 項 P, S, Y, Sgz; 頂 Q, Kg

7 項 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

8 Translation tentative. Satō does not even attempt to translate this phrase, leaving it as a string of characters (Satō 1931, 226). I base my interpretation in part on the slightly clearer presentation of the same image below (2.50)

9 I tentatively emend the text because I cannot fathom how 自然 could be used simply to describe the “great cloud of light.” Throughout the text we find 自然 used to describe the sudden or spontaneous appearance of the visions, so that usage would fit well here.

佛，名釋¹迦牟尼，光相²具足，三十二相，八十種³隨形好。一一相好，放千光明。此光大⁴盛，如億千萬日，明赫⁵炎炎⁶。彼佛亦說四真諦法。光相炳然，住行者前，以手摩頭。

When this light has disappeared a great cloud of light spontaneously appears, adorned with various jewels, [covered in (?)] pure jewel-trees that are the most exquisite of all material forms.⁷ Within [the cloud of light] there is a buddha named Śākyamuni, replete in radiance, endowed with the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks. Each mark radiates a thousand lights. These lights are extremely bright, blazing forth like a hundred thousand million suns. This buddha preaches [for the practitioner] the teaching of the four truths. His light dazzling, he stands before the practitioner and lays his hand upon [the practitioner's] head.

2.49

[化]{此}⁸佛復教言：汝前身時，貪欲、瞋恚、愚癡因緣，隨逐諸惡，無明覆故，令汝世世受生死身。汝今應當觀汝身內諸萎悴事，身外諸[火]{大}⁹，一切變滅。

This buddha then instructs [the practitioner], saying: “In a former life owing to greed, hatred, and confusion, you committed various evil deeds. The obstruction of ignorance has thus caused you for lifetime upon lifetime to receive a body [within the cycle of] birth and death. You must now contemplate that [all the impure things] within your body shrivel up, [and that] all the great elements [of earth, water, fire, and wind] outside your body also become extinguished.

2.50

作是語¹⁰已，如前還教不淨觀法。觀身諸蟲，一切萎落。見此事已，復當起火，燒諸蟲殺。蟲既不死，復自見身，如白頗梨，自然鮮白。見白骨已，從頭出光，其光大小，麤細如稍，令長丈五。

When [this buddha] has said these things, as before [the practitioner] must be instructed in the method of the contemplation of impurity. When he contemplates the various worms within his body, they all shrivel up. When he has seen this, he must [imaginatively] generate fire to burn the worms to death. If the worms do not die, [he must] again see his body as like white crystal, gleaming white. When he has seen these white bones a light emerges from his head the size and thickness of a spear, which he must make fifteen feet long.

1 精 Sgz

2 明 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg (the Taishō incorrectly records the Sgz variant)

3 [種] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 火 Kg

5 赤 Kg

6 [炎] P, S, Q, Y

7 The unusual expression “most exquisite of material forms” 色中上者, as well as the similar expression 色中上色, appears in the *Samantabhadra Contemplation* (T.277:9.390c12), the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (T.365:12.342b12), and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.647a9–10).

8 Although there are no variant readings, 化 must be a mistake. There has been no discussion here of transformation-buddhas (化佛), and indeed it was explicitly said that there was only a single buddha.

9 Following Kg. Kg frequently reads 火 where all other editions read 大, and while in those cases it is not clear which reading is superior, here the Kg reading of 大 in place of 火 seems to fit the context better.

10 諸 Kg

2.51

復當作念，使頭却向。復當作意，使[頭]{頸}¹却向，令身皆倒，以頭拄²脊骨，對臍大節。

Arousing his thoughts he must then further make the head [of the skeleton] go backwards. Arousing his mind he must then further make the neck go backwards, causing the entire body to collapse so that the skull rests against the vertebrae at the height of the navel.

2.52

見此事已，復當諦觀，使白骨人，與光同色³。既同色已，見其光端，有種種色菓。見是菓已，復見眾光。從菓頭出。有白色光，其光大盛，如白寶雲。是諸骨人，其色鮮白，與光無異。復見諸骨，摧折墮落。或有頭落地者，或有骨節各各分散，或有全⁴身白骨猶如猛風吹於雨雪，聚散不定，譬如掣電，隨現隨⁵滅。

When he has seen these things he must further carefully contemplate and make the white skeleton become the same color as the light. When he has done so, he sees that at the edges of the light there are various fruits. When he has seen the fruits he further sees various lights emerge from the tips (?) of the fruits. [Among them] is a white light, shining very bright, which appears like a cloud of white jewels. The skeletons too are gleaming white, exactly the same as the light. He then sees the bones fall apart and collapse, their heads fallen to the ground, or else split into individual bones; or else he sees entire skeletons [reduced to bits] and alternately brought together in clumps or scattered about just as when a strong wind blows rain and snow, quickly appearing and disappearing like flashes of lightning.

2.53

此諸骨⁶人，墮地成聚，猶如堆阜，似腐木屑，集聚一處。行者自觀，見於阜⁷上，有自然氣出，至於虛空。猶如烟雲，其色鮮白，彌滿虛空，右旋宛⁸轉。復還雲集，併⁹在一處。

These various skeletons, having collapsed to the ground in a heap, are like a small hill, as if rotten sawdust were collected into a mass. The practitioner then contemplates this [heap] and sees a stream of vapor rise from above the mound reaching into the sky. Like a cloud of smoke, it is gleaming white, and it fills the entire sky curling clockwise. It then again coalesces and gathers together in one place.

1 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

2 跬 Sgz, Kg

3 使白骨人與光同色 = 白骨人與先同色 Kg

4 令 Kg

5 [隨] Kg

6 [骨] Sgz

7 堆 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

8 婉 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

9 并 Sgz

2.54

見此事時，復當教作一骨人想。見此骨人，身有九色，九畫¹分明，一一畫²中，有九色骨人，其色鮮明，不可具說。一一骨人，復當皆使身體具足，映顯³前骨人中，使不妨礙。作是觀已，復當自觀，一一色中，猶如琉璃，無諸障蔽。於其色中，九十九色，一一色復有九色眾多骨人。是諸骨人，有種種相。其性不同，不相妨礙。見此⁴事已，應勤精進，滅一切惡。

When he has seen these things, he must further be instructed to imagine a skeleton. He sees this skeleton with nine different colors in nine different clearly divided areas on its surface.⁵ Within each area there is [another] vividly colored nine-colored skeleton. This cannot be fully described.

Each skeleton must be made fully intact, and each one is reflected without obstruction in the skeleton in front of it. When he has finished this contemplation he must further contemplate within each color (?). They are like beryl, totally transparent, and within each color [there are] ninety-nine colors, each of which has within it many nine-colored skeletons. These skeletons have various attributes. Each is different, yet they do not obstruct one another. When [the practitioner] has seen these things he must strive diligently to eliminate all evil.⁶

2.55

見此事已，前聚光明雲，猶如坏器，來入其身。從臍中入，既入臍已，入脊骨中。入脊骨已，自見己身，與本無異，平復如故。出定入定，以數息故，恒見上事。見此事時，復當還教，繫心住意，在[本]{其}臍光中，不令心散。爾時心意，極大安隱。既安隱已，復當自學審諦分別諸聖解脫。

When he has seen these things, the previously [seen] cloud of congealed light, which is like a cup [in shape (?)], enters the practitioner's body. It enters through the navel, and then it enters the spine. Having entered the spine, the practitioner sees his body restored to its original state exactly as it was before. Whether he is in trance or not because of [his successful practice of] counting the breath he constantly sees the things [described] above.

When he has seen these things, he must again be instructed to fix his thoughts and concentrate his mind on the light within his navel, not allowing himself to become distracted. At this time his mind becomes extremely peaceful, and once it is peaceful he must apply himself to careful investigation and discernment of the liberation of the sages.⁷

2.56

爾時復當見過去七佛，為其說法。說法者，說四真諦，說五受陰空無我所。是時諸佛，與諸賢聖，恒至行者前，教種種法，亦教觀空、無我、無作、無願三昧。

1 畫 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

2 畫 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

3 現 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 是 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

5 Translation tentative.

6 Here “strive to eliminate all evil” might refer to further repentance rituals.

7 Translation tentative. I here translate *xue* 學 somewhat loosely as “apply himself.”

At this time he will again see the seven buddhas of the past, who preach for him the Dharma, that is to say they preach the four truths, they preach that the five dark elements to which one clings [as being the self]¹ are [in truth] empty and devoid self. These buddhas, together with the various sages and worthies, always come before the practitioner and teach him many teachings, and also teach him to contemplate the *samādhis* of emptiness, non-self, non-doing, and non-wishing.

2.57

{佛}²告言：法子，汝今應當諦觀。色、聲、香、味、觸，皆悉無常，不得久立³，恍忽如電，即時變滅，亦復如幻，猶如野馬，如⁴熱時焰⁵，如乾闥婆城，如夢所見，覺不知處，如鑿石見光須臾變⁶滅⁷，如鳥飛空跡不可尋，如呼聲響無有應者。汝今亦當作如是⁸觀：三界如幻，亦如變化。

These buddhas say [to the practitioner]: “Oh Dharma-child, you must now carefully contemplate: ‘Visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, and objects of touch are all impermanent, not destined to endure, flashing in and out of existence like a bolt of lightning, passing away instantaneously, like an illusion, like ‘wild horses’ [a mirage], like shimmering air when it is hot, like a city of the *gandhārvas*, like things seen in a dream which are perceived but are not a basis for knowledge,⁹ like the sparks seen when chiseling rock which vanish as soon as they appear, like birds flying in the sky leaving no footprints, like an echo which occurs without there being a person who responds.’

You must now further contemplate as follows: ‘The triple-world is like an illusion, like a magical creation.’”

2.58

於此即見一切身內，及與身外，空無所有，如鳥飛空無所依止，心超¹⁰三界。觀諸世間，須彌巨海，皆不久停，亦如幻化。自觀¹¹己身，不見身相。

1 五受陰 is a standard translation of *upādāna-skandha*, “the five aggregates as objects of clinging,” in other words psycho-physical existence for a non-enlightened person.

2 Following A.

3 不得久立 = 不可久停 A

4 [如] A

5 炎 A, Kg

6 復 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

7 [須臾變滅] A

8 +見 A

9 Translation tentative. The exact phrase 如夢所見覺不知處 appears in several translations attributed to Zhu Fonian 竺佛念, active in the late fourth century (see for example *Dang lai bian jing* 當來變經, T.395:12.1118b27; *Da fang deng ding wang jing* 大方等頂王經, T.477:14.592a8–9). Dream objects are among the examples adduced in Abhidharma debates about the possibility of perceiving non-existent objects. In such debates, that dream objects are not a valid basis for knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is taken by some schools as evidence that these objects do not exist at all (Cox 1988).

10 起 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz; Kg is unclear and could be either 起 or 超.

11 見 A

Thereupon he then sees¹² everything both within and outside his body as empty and devoid of anything. Like a bird flying in the sky without resting upon anything, the mind goes beyond the triple-world.¹³ He contemplates that nothing in the world will long endure, not even Mount Sumeru or the vast ocean, and that everything in [the world] is like a magically created illusion. Contemplating his own body, he sees no attribute of a body.¹⁴

2.59

便作是念：世界無常，三界不安，一切都空，何處有身。及眼所對。此諸色欲，及諸女⁴人，從顛倒起，橫見可愛，實是速朽敗⁵壞之法。夫女色者，猶如枷鎖，勞人識神，愚夫戀⁶著，不知⁷厭足，不能自拔，不免桎械，不絕枷鎖⁸。行者既識⁹法相，知法空寂，此諸色欲，猶如怨賊，何可戀¹⁰惜。復似牢獄，堅密難捨。我今觀空，厭離三界，觀見世間，如水上泡，斯須磨¹¹滅。心無眾想，得¹²知世法是重患¹³累。凡夫迷惑，至死不覺。不知眾苦，戀著難免。[縱]{從}¹⁴情狂惑，無所不至。

He then should consider as follows: “The world is impermanent. Nowhere in the triple-world is secure. Everything is empty, so where could there be a body or a visible object for my eye to see? These various material objects of desire¹⁵ and the various women [I see] arise from confusion, and are wrongly seen to be lovely. In truth they are of the nature to quickly rot and decay.¹⁶ Further the female form is like a cangue that oppresses a man’s spirit. Fools delight therein, insatiable, unable to extricate themselves¹⁷ from this cangue and shackles. But a practitioner realizes the nature of phenomena. He knows they are empty and quiescent, and that objects of desire are like bandits, not to be pined for. Further they are like a prison, well secured

12 It is not entirely clear where the instructions given by the buddhas ends.

13 The phrase “the mind goes beyond the triple-world” 心超三界 is found in Kumārajīva’s commentary to the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* as a description of a mind that has given rise to *bodhi-citta* (*Zhu we m jie jing* 注維摩詰經, T.1775:38.358c24–25).

14 Thus both the external world and the body of the practitioner himself are seen to be insubstantial.

4 如 Kg

5 毀 A

6 變 Kg

7 如 Sgz

8 鎖 A

9 議 Sgz

10 變 Kg

11 摩 Kg

12 深 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

13 Kg’s reading of 悉 is corrected to 患 in the margin.

14 Tentatively following Sgz, Kg.

15 *Yu* 欲 can refer both to desire and the object of desire (as can *kāma*, which it often translates).

16 The term *su xiu* 速朽, “quickly rotting,” has a long history in China, and was used in Han and pre-Han times by those advocating so-called frugal burial (薄葬), who hoped that avoiding the sumptuous trappings of normal burial would thereby allow their bodies to “quickly rot” in the ground. Although it is not clear if there is any direct connection, it is interesting to observe that this term is also used in other Buddhist translations to denote the impermanence of the body (*Wei mo jie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, T.475:14.539b13–14; *Chan Scripture of Dharmatrāta*, T.618:15.321a26).

17 Cf. *Pu sa he se yu fa jing* 菩薩訶色欲法經 (T.615:15.286a19–20), attributed to Kumārajīva.

and difficult to escape from. Today I contemplate emptiness, and turn away from the triple-world. I contemplate the world as like foam on the water that quickly fades away. When the mind is devoid of imagination then one knows that the things of the world are but bondage and sickness. Ordinary beings are entranced by them, and live their entire lives without realizing this. Not knowing what is suffering, inevitably they yearn [for these things]. They follow the deceiving passions to the point that there is nothing they will not do.

2.60

我今觀此狂惑女色，如呼聲響，亦似鏡像，求覓叵得。觀此女色，為在何處。妄見衰害。欺諸凡夫，為害¹滋多。今觀此色，猶如狂華，隨風零落，出無所從，去亦無所至²。幻惑無實，愚夫樂著。今觀此色，一切無常，如癩病人，良醫³治差⁴。我今觀苦、空、無常，見此色相，皆無堅實。念諸凡夫，甚可愍傷，愛著此色，敬重無厭，耽⁵愚⁶惑著，甘樂⁷無窮，為諸恩⁸愛，而作奴僕。欲稍刺己，痛徹心髓⁹。恩愛枷鎖，檢繫其身。

“Today I contemplate these deceptive female forms. They are like echoes or like reflected images. Searching to find [their substance,] nothing is obtained. I contemplate these females forms, [asking] where are they [really]? They are but false appearances that cause [one] harm. They cheat the ordinary person, causing him much harm. Today I contemplate these forms as like ‘mad flowers’¹⁰ that fall when blown by the wind, appearing from nowhere and disappearing into nothing. Illusory and lacking any substance, foolish people delight in and cling to them. Like a formerly paralyzed invalid cured by a skillful physician, I now contemplate these forms as entirely impermanent. Today I contemplate suffering, emptiness, and impermanence, and [thus] I

1 言 Sgz

2 [至] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

3 賢 Kg

4 着 Sgz; 瘥 P, S, Q, Y

5 邪 P, S, Q, Y

6 患 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

7 露 Kg

8 愚 Kg

9 體 P, Sgz, Kg

10 The expression “mad flowers” has two possible referents. Firstly, this word is used for hallucinations seen by people with defective eyes, an analogy frequently employed in Indian texts to indicate deluded perceptions. Although this image is well known, “mad flowers” (狂華) is not the usual translation of this idea. Nevertheless we do see it in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.674c23–27). On the other hand the same expression is used to describe an unusual kind of flower that bears no fruit. In the *Stages of the Path of Practice*, a meditator who sits in stillness but is unable to concentrate his mind is compared to a “mad flower” (狂華) that, despite being a flower, does not produce fruit (T.606:15.195c26–29). The idea here seems to be that such meditators appear to be succeeding (they keep their bodies still), but do not gain the true fruit (the still mind), just like these unusual flowers. Such “mad flowers” are also mentioned in a putative citation from the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* preserved in the *Compendium of Scriptural Essentials*, a sixth-century encyclopedia (T.2123:54.90c25–26), though I have been unable to find this passage in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* itself. Even earlier we find this image in Dharmarakṣa’s 法護 early fourth-century translation of the *Chu yao jing* 出曜經, a commentary to the *Dharmapada* (T.212:4.613c26–27). The usage here in the *Chan Essentials*, however, seems to accord with the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, such that “mad flowers” refers to visual hallucinations or illusions.

see these forms as all lacking any substantial reality. How deeply sad to think of the ordinary beings who hanker for these forms and thus never tire of adoring them; who, sunken in stupidity, mistakenly cling to them and thus enjoy them to no end; who become slaves to the objects of their affection. Pierced by the spear of desire, the pain penetrates to the heart and marrow. The cangue of affection binds them.”

2.61

如是念已，復觀一切，都皆空寂。此諸婬欲，諸色情態，皆從五陰、四大而生。五陰無主¹，四大無我，性相俱空，何由而有。

Having considered thus, [the practitioner] further contemplates that everything is entirely empty and quiescent. These various [objects of] sexual desire, [as well as] all material forms,² arise from the five dark elements [*skandha*] and four great elements. Yet the five dark elements have no essence, and the four great elements too lack any individual self-nature.³ Empty of both nature and characteristics, from where could they [truly] arise?

2.62

作是觀時，智慧明顯，見身大明，如摩尼珠，無有妨礙，似金剛精，[青]{清}白明顯。如鹿突圍，得免獵師危害之苦。觀於五陰，性相⁴皆淨。觀六大，如鳥高翔，身無所寄。以吞色鉤，俛仰得度，離諸女色，更不起情，自然超⁵出諸婬欲海。一切結使，猶如眾魚，競走隨逐，墮黑闇⁶坑。無明老死，為智慧火之所焚燒。觀色雜穢，陋⁷惡不淨，猶如⁸幻⁹惑，無有暫停。永離色染¹⁰，不為色縛。

When he contemplates like this his wisdom [becomes] clear and he sees his body [become] very bright, like a *mani* jewel, free of any obscurations, or like the essence of adamant, pure white and shining. [He feels] like a deer who having been suddenly surrounded nonetheless manages to escape from the clutches of the hunters. Contemplating the five dark elements, [he sees that] they are entirely pure. Contemplating the six great elements,¹¹ they are like a bird soaring high with no place to perch.

1 生 Sgz

2 The term 情態 can mean “thing” in general” (like modern Mandarin *shiqing* 事情), but it can also refer to the emotions of affection and love. Both uses are found in early Chinese Buddhist translations (for the former, see *Tai zi rui ying ben qi jing* 太子瑞應本起經, T.185:3.478c1–2; for the later, *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.156c25–27).

3 As in the first sutra (e.g. 1.106), we see here a two-step process. First the object is seen to be empty by means of a traditional, *dharmā*-based analysis, following which the individual constituents (here the *skandha* and the *mahābhūta*) too are explained as lacking any individual essence.

4 性相 = 相性 Sgz, Kg

5 起 Sgz, Kg

6 暗 P, S, Q, Y

7 隨 Kg

8 猶如 = 如色 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

9 +幻 P, Sgz, Kg

10 深 Sgz, Kg

11 Here we switch unexpectedly from the four elements scheme to the six elements.

Having swallowed the hook of lust¹² he longs for liberation. Turning away from the female form, he no longer gives rise to feelings and naturally crosses over the sea of sexual desire. All the defilements are driven away, like a school of fish chased into the depths. Ignorance, aging, and death have been burned away by the fire of wisdom. He contemplates material forms to be dirty, vile, and impure. [They] are like illusions . . . without cease.¹³ Forever parting from the stain of lust he is no longer ensnared by material forms.¹⁴

2.63

佛告阿難：若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，貪婬多者，先教觀佛，令離諸罪，然後方當更教繫念，令心不散。心不散者，所謂數息。此數息法，是貪婬藥，無上法王之所行處。汝好受持，慎勿忘⁴失。此想成者，名第二⁵數息觀竟。爾時尊者阿難，及禪難提，并諸比丘，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen in whom there is excessive lust must first be instructed to contemplate the Buddha so as to eliminate sin. Only after this should they be further instructed to fix their thoughts and focus the mind. To focus the mind means counting the breath. This method of counting the breath is the antidote for lust. It is the practice carried out by the supreme kings of the Dharma [the buddhas].⁶ You must carefully preserve [this teaching]. Do not forget it.”

When this meditation is complete, it is the completion of the breath-counting contemplation, [contemplation] number twenty.

When Ānanda, Nandika the Meditator, and all the other monks had heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

12 Or “the hook of material form,” the Chinese character *se* 色 denoting both matter (*rūpa*) in general and objects of sexual desire in particular.

13 I am not able to make sense of the connection between these passages. Perhaps there is missing text.

14 Again “lust” 色 and “material form” 色 are here the same word.

4 妄 Kg

5 廿一 Kg

6 This may be referring to the traditions according to which the Buddha practiced *ānāpāna* on the night of his awakening.

3.1

如是我聞。一時佛在舍衛國，遊行教化，至多羅聚落。至聚落已，與千二百五十比丘，入村乞食。乞食[還已]{已還}¹，止於樹下。洗足訖，收衣鉢，敷尼師壇²，結加趺坐。

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling in Śrāvastī. While on a preaching round he arrive at the village of Tāla, which he entered together with 1,250 monks to beg for alms. Having begged for alms, he left and stopped beneath a tree. Having washed his feet, he gathered up his robes and bowl, spread out his sitting cloth, and sat with legs crossed.

3.2

爾時眾中有一比丘，名迦梅³延，有一弟子，名槃⁴直迦。出家多時，經八百日，讀誦一偈，不能通利。晝夜六時，恒誦此言：止惡行善⁵，修不放逸。但誦此語，終不能得。爾時尊者迦梅延，盡其道力，教授弟子，不能令得。即至佛所，為佛作禮，繞佛三匝，而白佛言：如來出世。多所利益。利安⁶天人，普度一切。唯我弟子，獨⁷未⁸蒙潤。唯願天⁹尊，為我開悟¹⁰，令得解脫。

At this time in the assembly there was a monk named Kātyāyana. He had a disciple named Panthaka who¹¹ had been a monk for a long time. For eight hundred days Panthaka had been reciting a single verse but had been unable to memorize it. Throughout the day and night he chanted these words: “cease evil, practice good, and cultivate heedfulness.” He chanted only these words but had not been able to grasp [their meaning].¹² The venerable Kātyāyana exerted all his skill to instruct his disciple but was unable to get him to understand.

He then went to the Buddha and made reverence, circled him three times, and then addressed him as follows: “The Tathāgata’s appearance in the world has been of benefit to many beings. You have brought benefit and peace to gods and humans, and have universally liberated everyone. Only my disciple has yet to receive your blessings. May you, honored by the gods, enlighten [him] for me and cause him to attain liberation.”

1 Following A.

2 檀 A

3 旃 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

4 盤 Sgz

5 [善] Sgz; 行善 = 善行 Kg

6 利安 = 安樂 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

7 猶 Kg

8 不 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

9 [天] Kg

10 寤 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

11 This section of A is not legible.

12 In the original story of Panthaka (see appendix 1), Panthaka is unable to memorize a short verse given to him by his preceptor (his elder brother). In this version, however, the point also seems to be that Panthaka is somehow unable to “get” (得) the meaning of the verse.

3.3

佛告迦旃延¹：諦聽諦聽，善思念之。如來今者，當為汝說往昔因緣。迦旃延白言：世尊，願樂欲聞。佛告迦旃延²：乃往過去九十一劫，有佛世尊，名毘婆尸、如來、應供、正遍知、明行足、善逝、世間解、無上士、調御丈夫、天人師、佛、世尊。彼佛出世，教化眾生，度人周訖³，於般涅槃而取滅度。佛滅度後，有一比丘，聰明多智，讀誦三藏，自恃憍慢，散亂放逸。有從學者，不肯教授，專愚貢⁴高，不修正念。命終之後，墮黑闇地獄，經九十劫，恒在闇處，愚蒙⁵無智⁶。由前出家功德力故，從地獄出，得生天上。雖生天上，天宮光明，及諸供具，一切黑闇，卑於諸天。誦三藏故，天上命終，生閻浮提，得值佛世。因前貢⁷高，雖遇於佛，不解法相。我今當為說諸方便，教繫念法。

The Buddha said to Kātyāyana: “Listen carefully, listen carefully. Ponder this well. I, the Tathāgata, will now tell you of what happened long in the past.” Kātyāyana said: “World-honored one, I do so wish to hear.”

The Buddha said to Kātyāyana: “Ninety-one *kalpas* ago there was a Buddha, a World-honored One, named Vipāśyin, [styled] Tathāgata, Worthy of Offerings, Of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Wisdom and Conduct, Well-Farer, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed One, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods of Humans, World-honored Buddha. This Buddha appeared in the world, and when he had finished teaching beings and liberating people passed into extinction at the time of his *parinirvāṇa*. After he had passed into extinction there was a certain monk who was intelligent, knowledgeable, and able to chant the Three Baskets [of Buddhist texts]. But he was proud and haughty, indulgent and heedless. He had students, but he was unwilling to teach them. He was thus stubbornly arrogant and failed to practice regulation of the mind. After death he fell into a dark, black hell. For ninety *kalpas* he remained perpetually in that dark place, [where he remained] ignorant and without knowledge. But because of the merit of having become a monk in the past he was [eventually] able to escape from hell and be reborn in heaven. Though he was born in heaven the radiance of the heavenly palaces and objects [used by those in that heaven (?)] were all blackened and obscured, [so that it was] inferior to all other heavens. [Because of the merit of] reciting the Three Baskets [in a past life], when his life in heaven ended he was reborn [now] on Jambudvīpa during the age of a Buddha. But because of having been arrogant in the past, though he has been able to encounter the Buddha he is unable to understand the teaching. I will now preach for him a skillful method for fixing his thoughts.”

1 旃 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

2 旃 P, S, Q, Y; 施 Sgz

3 說 Sgz, Kg

4 攻 Kg

5 蒙 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 知 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

7 攻 Kg

3.4

爾時迦梅¹延白佛言：世尊，唯願如來為此愚癡槃直迦比丘，及未來世一切愚²癡亂想³眾生，說正觀法。佛告槃直迦：汝從今日，常止⁴靜處，一心端坐，叉手閉目，攝身口意。慎勿⁵放逸。汝因放逸，多劫之中，久受勤苦。汝隨我語，諦觀諸法。時槃直迦，隨順佛語，端坐繫心。

At this time Kātyāyāna said to the Buddha: “World-honored One, for the sake of this foolish monk Panthaka as well as for all foolish sentient beings of the future whose minds are agitated, please teach the method of correct contemplation.”

The Buddha said to Panthaka: “From today onward you must always dwell in a quiet place, concentrate your mind, sit upright, fold your hands and close your eyes, and keep control over your body, speech, and mind. Do not be heedless. Because of having been heedless [in the past] you suffered bitter torment for many *kalpas*. Follow my words and correctly contemplate all *dharmas*.”

Panthaka did what the Buddha said, sitting upright with his mind concentrated.

3.5

佛告槃直迦：汝今應當⁶諦觀脚大指節，令心不移。使指節上，漸漸癩⁷起。復令腫脹。復當以意，令此腫脹。漸大如豆。[彼]{復}⁸當以意，使腫脹爛壞，皮肉兩披，黃膿流出。於黃膿間，血流滂滂⁹。一節之上，肌膚¹⁰爛盡，唯見右脚指節，白如珂雪。見一節已，從右脚漸漸廣大，乃至半身，腫脹爛壞，黃膿流¹¹血。令半身肌¹²皮，皆兩向披，唯半身骨，皎然大白。見半身已，復見全¹³身，一切腫脹，都已爛壞，膿血¹⁴可惡。見諸[雄]{雜}¹⁵蟲，遊戲其中。如是種種，亦如上者¹⁶。

The Buddha said to Panthaka: Without becoming distracted, you should now carefully contemplate the bone of the large toe of your foot. Make a swelling gradually appear on top of the bone. Then further cause it to swell up. Next use your mind to make this swelling become gradually bigger until it is the size of a bean. Next use your mind to make the swelling rot away,

1 旃 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz

2 遇 Kg

3 相 Kg

4 心 Sgz, Kg; 在 A

5 莫 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 應當 = 當應 A

7 癩 P, S, Q,

8 Following K, P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg, A (the Taishō is presumably a misprint).

9 洋 P; [滂] Kg

10 肌膚 = 皮肉 A

11 +出 P, S, Q, Y

12 亂 Sgz, Kg

13 令 Kg

14 而 Kg

15 Following P, Q, Sgz, Kg.

16 說 A

such that the flesh splits open¹ and yellow pus flows out. Within the yellow pus blood flows profusely. When the flesh has entirely rotted away from atop the single bone you will see only the bone of the right toe, white like *ke*-jade or snow.

Having seen a single bone in this manner, gradually expand from the right foot until half the body swells up and then rots away, with yellow pus and flowing blood [coming out]. Make the skin and flesh of half the body split apart, with only the pure, shining white bones remaining. Having seen half the body [in this way], next see the entire body swell up and rot away, [leaking] horrible pus and blood. You will see various worms romping and playing within. The various things of this sort are as has been described earlier.²

3.6

觀見一已，復見³二。見二已，復見三。見三已，復見四。見四已，復見五。見五已，乃至見十。見十已，心漸廣大，見一房中。見一房中⁴已，乃至見一天下。見一天下已，若廣者，復攝令還，如前觀一。觀已，復當移想，繫念諦觀鼻頭。觀鼻頭已，心不分散。若不分散，如前觀骨。

Having contemplated [and] seen one [skeleton], [you must] next see two. Having seen two, next see three. Having seen three, next seen four. Having seen four, next see five. Having seen five, continue until you see ten. Having seen ten, the mind gradually expands, and you see a roomful. Having seen a roomful, continue until you see the entire world [filled with skeletons].

Having seen the entire world [filled with skeletons], if it expands [too] widely (?) gather it back and contemplate a single [skeleton] as before.⁵ Having done so, change your meditation. Fix your thoughts and carefully contemplate the tip of your nose. Having contemplated the tip of your nose, the mind will become focused. When it is focused, then contemplate the bones as before.

3.7

復當自想身肉肌皮，皆父母和合，不淨精氣，所共合成。如此身者，種子不淨。

Next you must imagine that the flesh and skin of your body was created by the conjoining of impure essential fluids [when] your father and mother coupled. A body such as this is “impure by way of its origins.”⁶

3.8

復當次教繫念觀齒。人身中，唯此齒白，我此身骨，白如此齒。心想利故，見齒長大，猶如[身]{我}⁷體。

1 Here 兩披 would appear to be similar in meaning to 兩向 seen above (1.11).

2 This would appear to refer to back to the first sutra, and would therefore seem to show that despite being divided into separate scriptures the *Chan Essentials* is aware of itself as a single entity.

3 +於 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 [中] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

5 Translation tentative. The section I have here grouped as the final paragraph appears to represent some corrective measure should the mind become distracted, which is then followed by returning to the beginning of the exercise.

6 On “impure by way of its seed” 種子不淨, see p369n4.

7 Tentatively following Kg.

Next you must be taught to fix your thoughts and contemplate your teeth [as follows]: “Within the human body, only the teeth are [visibly] white. My bones are white like these teeth.” When your power of imagination is sharp, you will see your teeth grow as large as your body.

3.9

爾時復當移想，更觀額上，使額上¹白骨，白如珂雪。若不白者，復當易²觀，教作九想，廣說如九想觀法。作此觀時，若³鈍根者，過⁴一月已，至九十日，諦觀此事，然後方見。若利根者，一念即見。

Then you must change your meditation and again contemplate your forehead, making the bone of your forehead white like *ke*-jade or snow. If it does not become white, you must perform the inverse contemplation and be taught the “nine meditations [on the decaying corpse].” This is explained in detail [in the section on] method for the contemplation of the nine [stages of the decaying corpse].⁵ When performing this contemplation⁶ those of dull faculties will require between one and three months of careful contemplation before they are able to see it. Those of sharp faculties will see it having thought of it just once.

3.10

見此事已，復更教觀腰中大節白骨。見已，即⁷如前應觀種種色骨人。此法不成，復當教慈心觀。慈心觀者，廣說如慈三昧。教慈心已，復教更觀白骨。

When you have seen these things, you must be further instructed to contemplate the coccyx. Having seen this, then as before you must contemplate the multicolored skeletons.⁸ If this does not work, however, you should again be instructed in the cultivation of love. The cultivation of love is explained in detail [in the section concerning] the *samādhi* of love. Having learned the [cultivation] of love, you must be instructed to again contemplate the white bones.

3.11

若見餘事，慎勿隨逐，但令此心，了了分明，見白骨人，如白雪山。若見餘物，起心滅除，當作是⁹念：如來世尊，教我觀骨，云何乃有餘想境界。我今應當一心觀骨。見¹⁰白骨已，令¹¹心澄靜，無諸外想。普見三千大千世界，滿中骨人。見此骨人已，一一皆滅，如

1 [使額上] Sgz, Kg

2 Kg shows a character composed of three 刀.

3 [若] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 骨 Sgz; 遇 Kg

5 Here and below (3.10) we see what appears to be either a reference to other sections of the text that are not extant, or else to known procedures for following these methods.

6 It is unclear if “this” refers to the inverse contemplation, to the contemplation of the nine kinds of corpses, or even to the previous passage.

7 [即] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

8 This would appear to refer back to portions of the second sutra.

9 此 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

10 觀 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

11 念 Sgz

前觀[苦]{骨}¹。

If however you see other things, under no circumstances should you follow after them [with your mind]. Merely make the mind clear, so that you see your white skeleton, like a snow-covered mountain.

If you do see other things rouse your mind and eliminate them, thinking: “The Buddha has instructed me to contemplate the bones. Why do there appear these visions [produced by] the imagination of other [things]?² I must now single-mindedly contemplate the bones.”

Having seen the white bones, make the mind clear and calm, free of thoughts of external things. [You will then] see the entire universe filled with skeletons. Having seen these skeletons they disappear one by one.³ Then contemplate [your own] skeleton as before.

3.12

爾時槃直迦比丘，聞佛說此語，一一諦觀，心不分散，了了分明，應時即得阿羅漢道，三明⁴六通，具⁵八解脫。自念宿命，所習三藏，了了分明，亦無錯謬。爾時世尊，因此愚癡貢高槃直迦比丘，制此清淨觀白骨法。

When Panthaka heard what the Buddha said, he carefully contemplated [as instructed]. His mind clear and free of distraction, he immediately became an arhat, [possessed of] the three knowledges and six powers, fully endowed with the eight liberations. He was able to perfectly recollect, without any mistakes, the scriptures he had memorized in his past life.

Thus it was that at this time, because of the foolish, puffed-up monk Panthaka, the World-honored One instituted this pure method for the contemplation of the white bones.⁶

3.13

佛告迦梅延：此槃直迦愚癡比丘，尚⁷以繫⁸念成阿羅漢。何況智者而不修禪。爾時世尊，見此⁹事已，為¹⁰說偈言：

禪為甘露法 定心滅諸惡 慧殺諸愚癡 永不受後有
愚癡槃直迦 尚以定心得 何況諸智者 不勤修繫念。

The Buddha then said to Katyāyāna: “Even this foolish monk Panthaka has been able to

1 “As before contemplate suffering” (如前觀苦) does not seem to fit the context. If we emended 苦 to 骨, then the passage here follows the usual pattern seen elsewhere in the text of beginning with the contemplation of one’s own skeleton, proceeding to imagine an increasing number of skeletons externally, and then finally returning to the original skeleton (the meditator’s own).

2 Thus what produces “visions” (境界), literally “meditative objects,” is the generation of particular kinds of “imagination” (想). This accords with the description of the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* from Pāli sources, said to be “born of *sañña*” (*saññaja*; see Vism, 126).

3 Translation tentative.

4 昧 Kg

5 見 Kg

6 The language here again invokes the institution of rules in the *vinaya*, and the text seems to be saying that this was the first time the Buddha had preached this particular method of meditation (for a similar passage, see 1.20).

7 常 P, Kg

8 轉 Sgz, Kg

9 [此] Kg

10 而 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

become an arhat by concentrating his thoughts. How much easier will it be for the wise [to become arhats] through the cultivation of trance!” The World-honored One, having seen [Panthaka’s attainment of arhatship], then spoke the following verse:

Trance is the ambrosial method / the concentrated mind destroys all evil.
When wisdom exterminates stupidity, / one is never reborn again.
Even the foolish Panthaka, / was by concentration able to attain [this].
All the more then should the wise / diligently fix their thoughts!

3.14

爾時世尊，告迦梅延，及勅阿難：汝今應當受持佛語，以此妙法，普濟¹群生。若有後世愚癡眾生，憍慢貢高，邪²惡眾生，欲坐禪者，從初迦絺羅難陀觀法，及禪難提觀像之法，復當³學此槃直迦比丘所觀之法。

The World-honored One then said to Kātyāyana and commanded Ānanda: You must now preserve these words of mine, and use this wondrous teaching to universally save all beings.⁴ If in future ages there are foolish, haughty, arrogant, evil sentient beings who wish to practice Buddhist meditation, they must begin with the contemplation method [given to] Kauṣṭhīlananda, then proceed to the method of contemplating the image [given to] Nandika the Meditator, and finally they must learn this contemplation method used by the monk Panthaka.

3.15

然後自觀己身，見諸白骨，白如珂雪。時{諸}⁵骨人還來入身，悉見白骨流光散滅。見此事已，行者自然心意⁶和悅，恬靜⁷無為。出定之時，頂上溫暖，身毛孔中，恒出諸香。出定入定，恒聞妙法。

Then [the practitioner]⁸ should contemplate his body and see the white bones, white like *ke*-jade or snow. The skeletons then reenter his body, and the glowing light of the white bones entirely disappears.

Having seen this, the practitioner suddenly feels joyous and serene. When he emerges from trance the top of his head feels warm, and the pores of his body constantly emit a pleasant scent. Whether in trance or not he constantly hears the wondrous Dharma.

1 [濟] Kg

2 耶 Sgz, Kg

3 [當] P, Kg

4 The wording here is similar to a passage from Kumārajīva’s *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (T.475:14.537c21).

5 Following P, Kg.

6 竟 Kg

7 泊 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

8 The instructions now continue even though Panthaka no longer figures in the narrative, and I accordingly change the implied pronoun to the third rather than second person.

3.16

續復自[見]{觀?}¹。身體溫暖，悅豫快樂，顏貌熙怡，恒少睡眠，身無苦患。得此暖法，恒自覺知心下溫暖，心常安樂。若後世人，欲學禪者，從初不淨，乃至此法。得此觀者，名和暖法。

Continuing his contemplation his body becomes warm and he feels joyful and happy. His countenance appears serene, he needs but little sleep, and his body is free of all pain or trouble. Having attained this stage of “heat,” he constantly feels a warmth below his heart, and he is perpetually joyfully.

People in later ages who wish to learn Buddhist meditation [should] begin with the contemplation of impurity and then proceed to this method. When this contemplation has been obtained it is called the stage of “heat.”

3.17

佛告阿難：佛滅度後，若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，於濁世中，欲學正受思惟者，從初繫念觀²於不淨，乃至此法。是名暖法。若³得此法，名第二十一⁴暖法觀竟。佛告阿難：汝今持此迦梅延子所問暖法，慎勿忘失。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “After I have passed into extinction, monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen during the defiled age who wish to learn meditative absorption should begin by fixing their thoughts and contemplating impurity and then proceed to this method. This is called the stage of heat.”

When one obtains this stage, it is called the completion of the contemplation [leading to] the stage of heat, [contemplation] number twenty-one.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve this [practice leading to] the stage of heat that Kātyāyana has inquired about. Do not forget it.”

3.18

爾時阿難白佛⁵言：世尊，後世眾生，若有能受持是⁶三昧者，一心安隱，得於暖法，此人云何當自覺知。佛告阿難：若有諦觀諸結使相，從初不淨，乃至此法，自覺身心，皆悉溫暖。心心相續，無諸惱患，顏色和悅。此名暖法。

Ānanda then said to the Buddha: “World-honored One, in the future, how can those sentient beings who uphold this *samādhi* know for themselves that they are firmly established in

1 The parallel passage in the *Five Gates* reads: 教令續觀。見煖覺已安隱和悅者，此是煖法。(T.619:15.327c29). This leads me to suspect that 續復自見 here in the *Chan Essentials* should perhaps read 續復自觀. Alternatively we might translate 續復自見 as “continuing he will then see that,” but this would require understanding that the practitioner “sees” that his body becomes warm. Although in the corresponding *Five Gates* passage the word *jian* 見 does indeed appear to be used this way, in the *Chan Essentials* this word almost always takes a clearly “visual” scene as its object. On the question of the parallel passages between the *Chan Essentials* and *Five Gates*, see p.86–96.

2 + 佛法 S, Q, Y

3 名 Sgz

4 二十一 = 廿二 Kg

5 [佛] Sgz, Kg

6 此 Sgz

mental concentration and have attained the stage of heat?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: One who carefully contemplates all the signs of the defilements, from the initial [contemplation] of impurity down to this method here, will sense a warmth throughout his body and mind. Each thought will follow upon the next without there being any mental vexation. His countenance will be peaceful and happy. This is known as the stage of heat.

3.19

復次阿難：若有行者，得暖法已，次當更教繫念在諸白骨間，皆有白光。見白光時，白骨散滅。若餘境界現在前者，復當攝心還觀白光。見諸白光，炎炎相次，遍滿世界。自觀己身，復更明淨，頗梨雪山，不得為比。自見骨人，各各雜散。作此觀時，定心令久，心既久已，當自見頂上，有大光明，猶¹如火光，從腦處出。

Further, Ānanda, when the practitioner has attained the stage of heat he must next be taught to fix his thoughts between each of his white bones, where a white light appears. When he sees this white light the white bones scatter and disappear [leaving only the white light]. If other visions appear he must restrain his mind and return it to the contemplation of the white light. He sees these many white lights grow gradually larger, filling the world. Contemplating his own bod, it becomes even brighter and purer, more so even than crystal or a snow-covered mountain. He sees the [other] skeletons scatter about in disarray.

When he performs his contemplation he must keep his mind in trance for a long time. When the mind [is in trance] for a long time, he will then see a bright light on top of his head, like a flame emerging from his brain.

3.20

佛告阿難：若見²此事，便當更教，從頭至足，反覆往復，凡十四遍。作此觀已，出定入定，恒見頂上火出，如真金光。身毛孔中，亦出金光，如散粟金。身心安樂。如紫金光明，還從頂入。此名頂法。若有行者，得此觀時，能得頂觀。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: If [the practitioner] sees these things he must be further instructed to review his body from head to foot and back fourteen times. When he has finished this contemplation, whether in trance or not he will always see fire emerging from the crown of his head, like the light of pure gold. The pores of his body will also emit a golden light, like gold dust. His body and mind will feel peaceful and happy. The purple-gold light then reenters [his body] through the crown of his head. This is the stage of “summit.” A practitioner who attains this contemplation will have attained the [the stage of] summit.

3.21

佛告阿難：汝好受持是頂[觀法]{法觀}³，廣為未來一切眾生說。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。得此觀者，名第二十二⁴觀頂法竟。

1 狀 S, Q, Y

2 有 Sgz

3 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

4 二十二 = 卅三 Kg

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve this contemplation of the stage of ‘summit’ and preach it extensively for all sentient beings in the future.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

When one attains this contemplation it is called the completion of the stage of summit, contemplation number twenty-two.¹

3.22

佛告阿難：此想²成已，復當更教繫念觀諸白骨。令諸散骨，如風吹雪，聚在一處，自然成積，白如雪山。若見此事，得道不難。若有先身犯戒者，今身犯戒者，見散骨積，猶如灰土，或於其上，見諸黑³物。復當懺悔，向於智者，自⁴說已過。既懺悔已，見骨積上，有大白光，乃至無色界。出定入定，恒得安樂。本所愛樂，漸漸微薄。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When this meditation is complete, [the practitioner] must be further instructed to fix his thoughts and contemplate the white bones. He must make the scattered bones collect in one place forming a pile like wind-blown snow, white like a snow-covered mountain.

When he has seen this, he is not far from attaining the path. However if he has violated the precepts in either this life or a past life, the pile of bones will appear like ash or dirt. Or else on the surface of the pile he will see various black things. In this case he must repent by confessing his transgressions to his preceptor. Having repented, he will see an intensely white light surrounding the bones and reaching up to the formless realms. Whether in trance or not he will feel constant ease and happiness, his former desires gradually diminishing.⁵

1 The previous section was called the 暖法觀, which seemed to mean “contemplation [leading to] the stage of heat.” Here the word *guan* 觀 occurs in a different place, before the main word 頂法, and thus cannot mean “contemplation [leading to].” I have accordingly imagined that we should parse as 第二十二觀，頂法. The same understanding may also apply to number 23 below.

2 相 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

3 異 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

4 白 Kg

5 It is instructive to compare this passage with the corresponding passage in the *Five Gates*:

Next instruct [the practitioner] to focus his mind, and after causing the bones to become white and pure, [to make them] scatter float to the ground. On the ground, they are like snow. Or, they may be like rotting earth. Above them, there may be white light, or there may be various strange creatures. Instruct [the practitioner] to continue contemplating [the bones]. If he says: “I continue to see them like this, and within my body I feel happiness,” then you must say [to him]: “Try to imagine having having sex with your former lover.” Having contemplated this, [the practitioner] says: “When I imagine seeing this person, she transforms into impure pus and blood, and is horrible to behold.”

次教注意，令骨白淨已，分散飄落。在地如雪。在地或如爛土。其上或有白光種種異物。教更觀之。若言續見如是，身中快樂，當語：汝本時所愛人，試憶念與作世事。彼觀已言：我憶念人見之，但變作膿血不淨，甚可惡見。(T.619:15.328a6–10)

We can thus see that “his former desires” 本所愛樂 from the *Chan Essentials* corresponds to “your former lover” 本時所愛人 in the *Five Gates*. Although my reading is perhaps open to question, the *Five Gates* appears to be suggesting that the practitioner attempt to imagine sexual intercourse with a former lover. In any event the *Chan Essentials* version is somewhat problematic grammatically. We would like 本所愛樂 to be a noun: “that for which one formerly felt affection.” But in this case the next line, 漸漸微薄, seems nonsensical. We must thus take this to denote his former feelings of love and affections, which are now weakened.

3.23

復當更觀，如前覆尋，九孔膿流¹不淨之物。皆令了了，心無疑悔。復當如上骨間生火，燒諸不淨。不淨已盡，金光流出，還入於頂。此光入頂時，身體快樂，無以為譬。

Next he must again contemplate and repeat the previous [contemplation of]² pus leaking from the nine orifices and the impure things [within the body]. He must make all this very clear, with no doubt or regret in his mind.

Then as before flames will arise from the between his bones, burning away all the impurities. When the impurities are gone, a golden radiance flows forth [from his body] and then reenters through through the crown of his head. When this light enters his head he feels an incomparable rapture.

3.24

得此觀者，名第二十三³觀助頂法方便竟。

When this contemplation has been obtained it is called the completion of the methods for the attainment of the stage “accessory to the summits,”⁴ contemplation number twenty-three.

3.25

復當更教繫念住意，自觀己身，猶如草束⁵。出定之時，亦見己身，猶如芭蕉，皮皮相裹。復當自觀眾芭蕉葉，猶如皮囊，身內如氣，亦不見骨。出定入定，恒見此事。

Next he must again be instructed to fix his thoughts, concentrate his mind, and contemplate his own body as like a bundle of grass. Even when he emerges from trance he sees his body as like [the trunk of] a plantain tree, layer upon layer of skin [with no substantial core]. He must next contemplate this assemblage of plantain leaves [that is his body], and like a skin sack filled with air he sees no bones within. Whether or not he is in trance he constantly sees this.

3.26

身體羸劣，復當更教令⁶自觀身，還聚成一，如⁷乾草束⁸，見身堅強。既見堅強，復當服酥⁹，飲食調適。然後觀身，還似空囊，有火從內燒此身盡。燒身盡已，入定之時，恒見火光。

[If] his body becomes weak [as a result of this contemplation] he must next be instructed to again contemplate his body and cause it to bunch together like a bundle of dry straw. He thus sees his body to be firm and strong. Having seen it to be firm and strong he must next take butter [as medicine,] and eat and drink sufficiently. After this, when he contemplates his body it again

1 +血 P, S, Q, Y

2 See section 3.75 for similar use of the expression 覆尋.

3 二十三 = 卅四 Kg

4 Although I am not certain if this level of “accessory to the summits” (助頂) corresponds to any traditional category, the Vaibhāṣikas did divide the four *nirvedhabhāgīyas* into various levels (Buswell 1997, 594).

5 木 Kg

6 [令] Kg

7 一如 = 如一 S, Y

8 來 Kg

9 蘇 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

resembles an empty sack. A fire arises inside and burns it up entirely. After his body has been completely consumed when he enters trance he constantly sees the light of this fire.

3.27

觀見火¹已，見於四方一切火起。出定入定，身熱如火。見此火大²從支節起，一切毛孔，火從中出。出定之時，亦自見身，如大火聚，身體蒸³熱，不能自持。爾時四方，有大火山⁴，皆來合集，在行者前。自見己身，與眾火合。此名火想⁵。

Having contemplated and seen this fire, he sees many fires appear all around. Whether in trance or not his body feels as hot as fire. He sees the fire element emerge from his joints, and fire also emerges from his pores. When he emerges from meditation he sees his own body as like a great mass of fire, and his body becomes unbearably hot. In the four directions there then appear great mountains of fire that join together before the practitioner. He sees his own body merge with this fire. This is called the meditation on fire.

3.28

復當令火燒身都盡。火既燒已，入定之時，觀身無身。見身悉為火所燒盡。火燒盡已，自然得知身中無我，一切結使，皆悉[同]{洞?}然。不可具說。

Next he must make the fire entirely incinerate his body. When the fire has incinerated [his body], when he enters trance and contemplates his body [he finds that] there is no body. He sees his body entirely incinerated by the fire. When the fire has entirely burned up [his body] he suddenly knows that there is no self within the body, and all the defilements similarly burn away.⁶ [What he sees] cannot all be explained here.⁷

3.29

此名火想，真實火大，第二十四⁸火大觀竟。佛告阿難：汝好受持是火大無我觀。此火大觀，名智慧火燒諸煩惱。汝好受持，為未來世一切眾生，當廣敷演。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

This is called the completion of the meditation on the true fire element, the contemplation of the fire element, [contemplation] number twenty-four.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve this contemplation of the fire-element and non-self. This contemplation of the fire element is called the fire of wisdom that burns up the afflictions. You must preserve it well and preach it widely for all sentient beings of the future.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1 見火 = 火光 P, S, Q, Y, Kg; = 火 Sgz

2 火大 = 大火 P, S, Q, Y

3 蒸 P, S, Q, Y; 蒸(?) Kg

4 出 Sgz, Kg

5 相 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 Translation tentative and based partially on the next passage, where this meditation is said to be one that “incinerates the afflictions” (燒諸煩惱).

7 Translation tentative. See above (1.182) and below (3.68) where the text similarly says that the full extent of the visions (境界) cannot be fully explained.

8 二十四 = 卅五 Kg

3.30

佛告阿難：若有行者，得火大¹觀已，復當更教繫念思惟，令繫念鼻端。更觀此火。從何處起？觀此火時，自觀己身，悉無有我，既[無有]{見無}²我，火自然滅。

復當作念：我身無我，四大無主。此諸結使及使根本，從顛倒起，顛倒亦空，云何於此空法之中橫見身火？作是觀時，火及與我，求覓無所。此名火大無我觀。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: If the practitioner has obtained the contemplation of the fire element he must next again be instructed to fix his thoughts and meditate. He must fix his thoughts on the tip of his nose. He must again contemplate this fire. From where does it arise? When contemplating this fire he contemplates that his own body is entirely without self, and seeing that there is no self the fire spontaneously goes out.

He should further consider: My body is without self, and the four elements have no master. These various defilements and their roots arise because of error, and this error too is empty. How then in the midst of empty *dharmas* could I falsely see the fire of the body? Contemplating in this way he is unable to find either the fire or the self. This is called the contemplation of the non-self of the fire element.³

3.31

佛告阿難：汝好受持此火大觀，為未來世一切眾生，當廣分別敷演解說。{爾時}⁴阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。是名第二十五⁵觀竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve this contemplation of the fire element, and preach it widely for all sentient beings of the future.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

This is called the completion of contemplation number twenty-five.⁶

3.32

佛告阿難：我見火滅時，先從鼻滅。然後身體一時俱滅。身內心火，八十八結，亦俱得滅，身中清涼，調和得所。深自覺悟，了了分明，決定無我。出定入定，恒知身中無有吾我。此名滅無我觀竟。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: I see⁷ that when the fire goes out it goes out beginning from the tip of the nose. Then the rest of the body all goes out all at once. Internally, the heart-fire and the eighty-eight defilements are also all extinguished, and [the practitioner’s] body feels cool and fresh, balanced and at ease.⁸ He deeply realizes and clearly sees that there definitely is no self.

1 [大] P, Q, Sgz, Kg

2 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

3 Or perhaps the “contemplation of the fire element [in which is realized] non-self.”

4 Following Kg.

5 二十五 = 廿六 Kg

6 This is the first numbered contemplation in which a name is not also given.

7 As discussed in chapter two, we seem to see here traces a more primitive form of the text in which most of what is now framed as the Buddha’s words were first-person statements by the practitioner indicating the things that he sees.

8 The destruction of the eighty-eight defilements indicates the attainment of the first fruit, the stage of “stream-enterer” *śrotāpanna*. This is made explicit below (3.59), and the number 88 corresponds with the Sarvāstivāda understanding in which becoming a *śrotāpanna* involves severing 88 of the 98 *anuśaya* (see *Jñānaprasthāna*, 阿

Whether or not he is in trance he always knows that within the body there is no self.

This is called the completion of the contemplation of the extinction [of fire], of non-self.¹

3.33

佛告阿難：復當更教觀灌頂法。觀灌頂者，自見己身，如琉璃光，超出三界。見有真佛，以澡瓶水，從頂而灌，彌滿身中。身彌滿已，支節亦滿，從臍中流，出在於前地。佛常灌水。爾時世尊灌頂已，即滅不現。臍中水出，猶如琉璃，其色如紺琉璃光，光氣遍滿三千大千世界。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: [The practitioner] must next further be instructed in the method of meditative consecration. In order to be meditatively consecrated the [practitioner must] see his own body as like a beam of beryl light that transcends the triple-world. He [then] sees a real buddha² appear and pour a pitcher of water into his head, filling the inside of his body. When his body is filled, the bones³ too are filled, and the water then flows out through his navel onto the ground, while the buddha continues to pour water [over his head].⁴ Having finished pouring water over [the practitioner's] head the buddha disappears. The water that emerges from [the practitioner's] navel is like beryl, its color like the glow of purple beryl. The cloud of its light fills the entire cosmos.

3.34

水出盡已，復當更教繫念：願佛世尊，更為我灌頂。爾⁵時自然見身如氣，龐大甚廣，超出三界。見水從頂入，見身龐大，與水正等，滿於水中。

When all the water has come out [the practitioner] should next be instructed to fix his thoughts [and make the following wish]: “May the World-honored Buddha again anoint my head!” He then suddenly sees his own body become ethereal, expanding until it passes beyond the limits of the triple-world. He sees water enter through the crown of his head. He sees his body become very large, equal to the water, filling the water.⁶

毘曇八捷度論, T.1543:26.811a2–3). Other sources of Sarvāstivāda affiliation attribute this position to the “Abhidharma,” presumably referring to the above passage from the *Jñānaprasthāna* (see for example *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.300c25–27).

1 Translation tentative. There may be text missing, and I wonder if we should not read 滅{火}無我觀. As written the text would appear to say “the contemplation of the extinction of non-self,” or the “extinction of the contemplation of non-self.” To make this meaning plausible would require reading into the passage a Mahāyāna- or Prajñāpāramitā-type logic that is in general absent from the text.

2 Again we may note that the buddha(s) the practitioner eventually encounters are “real” (真), and unlike the visions of the transformation-buddhas are never said to be produced by the practitioner’s own mind (想). See also above sections 1.179 and 2.26.

3 Or perhaps “body” 身 here means “core of the body” and 支節 refers to the limbs?

4 How this sentences connects to the surrounding ones is not entirely clear.

5 令 Sgz

6 Translation tentative. Here “water” perhaps refers to the cloud of water from the previous passage.

3.35

復自見臍，猶如蓮華，涌泉流出，彌滿其身，繞身如池。有諸蓮華，一一蓮華，七色光明，其光演說苦、空、無常、無我等法，聲如梵音，悅可¹耳²根。

He next sees his navel as like a lotus flower, from which a bubbling spring flows forth, overflowing from his body and encircling it like a pond. [Within the pond] are various lotus flowers, each shining with a light of seven colors. In a pleasing voice like that of Brahmā himself³ each light preaches the teachings of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self.

3.36

此相現時，復當更教，叉手閉目，一心端坐。從於頂上，自觀身內，不見骨[想]{相}。出定入定，自見己身，如琉璃甕⁴。

When these signs have appeared, [the practitioner] must next be again instructed to fold his hands and close his eyes, sitting upright with a concentrated mind. Beginning from the top of the head, he contemplates the inside of his body, and sees no bones. Whether in trance or not he sees his own body as like a beryl jar.

3.37

復當起念，[使]{作}⁵自己心四大毒龍想。見己心內，如毛孔開⁶，有六種龍，一一龍有六頭，其頭吐毒，猶如風火⁷，彌漫池中。在蓮華上，一一華光，流入龍頂。光入頂時，龍毒自歇，唯有大水，滿其身內。此想成時，名觀七覺華。雖見此[想]{相}，於深禪定猶未通達。

Next he must arouse his thoughts and imagine the poisonous dragons of the four elements [within] his heart. As if peering through an expanded pore of his body he sees within his heart, where there are six dragons.⁸ Each dragon has six heads, and each head spews poison of wind or fire that fills the pool [surrounding the practitioner]. The light from atop each of the lotus flowers flows into the dragons' heads. When the light enters the dragons' heads their poison dissipates and their bodies fill with water.

When this meditation is complete, it is called the contemplation of the flowers of the seven [limbs of] awakening.⁹ Though he sees these signs, [the practitioner] has still not fully

1 悅可 = 可悅 P, S, Q, Y

2 可 Kg

3 A “Brahmā-like voice” 梵音 is one of the secondary marks of the Buddha.

4 甕 P, S, Q, Sgz

5 The text does not seem to make sense as it stands. I emend 使 to 作 based on the frequent occurrence of the pattern 作 . . . 想, meaning “imagine.”

6 間 Sgz

7 +流 P, S, Q, Y

8 Here we see some confusion over whether there are four dragons (four elements) or six dragons (six elements).

9 The so-called seven limbs of awakening (*sapta-bodhyaṅga*) are often compared to flowers. See for example the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (T.376:12.870b7–10), and the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* (*Shi zhu pi po sha lun* 十住毘婆沙論, T.1521:26.91b13–15), which in explaining a passage from the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* (the text to which this is a commentary) cites an anonymous sutra explaining that “seven flowers” (七華) is a metaphor for the seven *bodhyaṅga*.

reached the deep levels of trance.

3.38

復當更教¹，如上數息，使心安隱，恬然無念。此想成時，名四大相應觀。

He must then again be instructed to count his breaths as described above, making his mind balanced, serene, and free of thought. When this meditation is complete, it is called the contemplation of the equilibrium of the four elements.

3.39

佛告阿難：汝好受持是七覺意四大相應觀，慎莫忘失，普為未來一切眾生²，當廣分別，為諸四眾，敷演解說。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve this contemplation of the seven thoughts of awakening³ and the equilibrium of the four great elements. Do not forget it. Explain it extensively for all sentient beings of the future. Widely expound it to the four groups [of Buddhist followers].” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha had said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

3.40

復當更教繫念住意，諦觀水大⁴，從毛孔出，瀰漫⁵其身。出定入定，見身如池，其水綠色。如此綠水，似山頂泉，從頂而出，從頂而入。見有七華，純⁶金剛色，放金色光。其金色光中，有金剛人。手執利劍，斬前六龍。

Next [the practitioner] should be again instructed to fix his thoughts, concentrate his mind, and carefully contemplate the water element, appearing from his pores, overflowing from his body. [Having done this] whether or not in trance he sees his body as like a pond of green water [as pure as] an uncontaminated mountain spring.⁷ He sees seven flowers, the color of pure adamantine. They radiate a golden light, within which is an adamantine man holding a sharp sword who beheads the six dragons.

3.41

復見眾火，從龍口出。遍身火然，眾水枯竭，火即滅盡。水火滅⁸盡已，自見己身，漸漸大白，猶如金剛。出定入定，心意快樂，猶如酥⁹灌。如服醍醐，身心安樂。

[The practitioner] then sees fire emerge from the mouths of the dragons. This fire burns throughout [the practitioner's] body, drying up all the water and then going out. When the fire

1 發 Sgz

2 [生] Kg

3 七覺意 is the standard pre-Kumārajīva translation of *sapta-bodyaṅga*, almost entirely abandoned in translated texts after the early fifth century.

4 火 Kg

5 滿 P, S, Q, Y

6 淳 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

7 Literally: “that enters and exits [the mountain] on the summit.”

8 [滅] P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

9 蘇 P, S, Y, Sgz, Kg

and water have both disappeared he sees his own body become gradually whiter until it is [as white as] adamantine. Whether or not he is in trance his mind feels happy and joyful, as one does when anointed with butter. His body and mind feel joyously peaceful, as when eating pure ghee.

3.42

復當更教繫念觀他¹。觀外²境界，以外想故，自然見有一樹，生奇甘菓。其菓四色，四光具足。如此³菓⁴樹，如琉璃樹，彌漫一切。見此樹已，普見一切四生眾生，飢火所逼，一切來乞。見已歡喜，生憐愍心，即起慈心。見⁵此乞者，如己父母受大苦惱。我今云何當救拔之？作是念已，即自觀身，如前還為膿血。復為肉段⁶，持施飢者。是諸餓鬼，爭取食之，食之既飽，四散馳走。

Next he must again be instructed to fix his thoughts and contemplate [the bodies of] others. Contemplating external objects,⁷ because of having directed his imagination outwards, he suddenly sees a tree on which grow unusual sweet fruits. These fruits have four colors, endowed with four kinds of light. This fruit tree, like a tree of beryl, covers everything. When he has seen this tree he sees all sentient beings of the four kinds of birth, [born of egg, womb, moisture, or transformation,] come begging [for food], oppressed by the fires of hunger.

Seeing this he rejoices and takes pity on them, generating the mind of love. Seeing these beings who beg from him [is like seeing] his own parents undergo great torment, [and he wonders:] “How can I save them?” Having thought thus he contemplates his own body and as before it becomes pus and blood. He further turns it into chunks of meat, which he gives to the hungry beings. These hungry spirits rush forth madly to eat [the food]. Having eaten it they are satisfied and then disperse.

3.43

爾時復當自觀己身及以他身：我身他身，從顛倒起，實無我所。若有我者，云何忽然見此餓鬼來在我邊？

Then he must next contemplate his own body and the bodies of others:⁸ “My own body and the bodies of others arise from error. In truth they are not the locus of a self or selves. If either [myself or others] possessed a self, how would it be possible for me to suddenly see these hungry ghosts come before me?”⁹

1 [觀他] Kg

2 水 Sgz

3 是 P, S, Q, Y

4 果 Q

5 視 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg

6 搏 Sgz

7 Here we must take *jing jie* 境界 in its basic sense of “object,” or “sphere.”

8 The text here appears to follow the format of the canonical *smṛtyupasthāna* sutras, as the practitioner first contemplates his own body, then the bodies of others, then both together.

9 I do not fully understand the logic here.

3.44

爾時復見無量餓鬼，其身長大。無量無邊，頭如太¹山，咽如絲髮。飢火所逼，叫喚求食。見此事已，當起慈心以身施鬼。餓鬼得已，嚼食其體，即便飽滿。

[Having considered thus] he then sees innumerable hungry ghosts, their bodies extremely large. Uncountably many, their heads are like giant mountains,² and their throats [as thin] as a thread of silk or a strand of hair. Oppressed by the fires of hunger they cry out begging for food.

When he sees this, he should give rise to a loving mind and feed his body to these ghosts, who consume it and are satisfied.

3.45

見是事已，復當更教觀眾多餓鬼。見諸餓鬼，繞身四匝，如前以³身食諸餓鬼。見此事已，復教攝身使心不散。自觀己身是不淨聚。作是觀時，尋自見身，膿血諸肉，皆段段壞，聚在前地。見諸眾生，爭取食之。

When he has seen this [the practitioner] should again be instructed to contemplate the many hungry ghosts. He sees the hungry ghosts surrounding his body on all sides. As before he feeds his body to these hungry ghosts. When he has seen this he is again to be instructed to settle his body and concentrate his mind. He is to contemplate his own body as a heap of impurities. When he does this contemplation he sees the bloody, pus-filed flesh of his body rot away piece by piece forming a pile on the ground before him. He sees the various beings [the hungry ghosts] rush forward and eat it.

3.46

既見此事，復當自觀其身，從諸苦生，從諸苦有，是敗壞法，不久磨⁴滅，餓鬼所食。作是[相]{想}⁵時，忽見身內心處有猛火。燒前池上，一切⁶蓮華及諸餓鬼眾惡醜形及與池水，泓然都盡。

When he has seen this he must again contemplate that his own body is born out of

1 大 P, Kg

2 “Hungry ghosts” (*preta*) are typically described as having large bellies and thin necks. The image of their giant head, particularly “like a giant mountain,” is less common (for one example from an Indian text, see SUS, 5.1.4.4). In the Chinese Buddhist tradition this image becomes quite popular, and is found in a number of apocryphal texts. See for example the *Da fang deng hua yan shi e pin jing* 大方廣華嚴十惡品經 (T.2875:85.1360b28–c1) and the *Zhai fa qing jing* 齋法清淨經 (T.2900:85.1431c9–10). Both of these texts, recovered from Dunhuang, appear to be associated with fast-day (齋) rites, and they describe at length the punishments that will result from breaking the fast-day precepts. The *Zhai fa qing jing* 齋法清淨經 passage here was later cited Zongmi’s 宗密 ninth-century commentary to the famous *Yu lan ben jing* 盂蘭盆經, and it was evidently a popular reference for the description of hungry ghosts (see *Yu lan ben jing shu* 盂蘭盆經疏, T.1792:39.509a3–4). The *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* cites a very similar description from the lost *Wu dao jing* 五道經 (T.2122:53.313b17–20). None of these sources are necessarily earlier than the *Chan Essentials*, but they show the extent to which many of the unusual images in the *Chan Essentials* would eventually be incorporated into broadly popular liturgical traditions.

3 [以] Kg

4 摩 P, S, Q, Y

5 Following Kg.

6 地 P, S; 池 Q, Y

suffering, that from it all suffering arises,¹ that it is of the nature to perish, and will soon decay away and be eaten by hungry ghosts.

When he imagines in this way he suddenly sees a blazing fire appear within his heart. Igniting the surface of the pond, it entirely destroys the lotus flowers, the hungry ghosts in their multitude of horrific forms, and the water of the pond itself.

3.47

見此事已，復當更教諦觀己身，如前完具身體平復。復當更觀己身。一切毛孔，以慈心故，血變成乳，從毛孔出，在地如池，眾乳盈滿。復見眾多餓鬼，至此池上，以宿罪故，不得乳飲²。爾時慈心視鬼如子，欲令飲乳。以鬼罪故，乳變成膿，斯須之間。

When he has seen these things, he should again be instructed to carefully contemplate his own body. It is completely restored to its former, intact state.³ Next he should again contemplate his body. Within each of his pores, because of his loving mind, the blood transforms into milk and flows out the pores onto the ground forming a pond of milk. He next sees the hungry ghosts come to the edge of this pond, but because of their sins from previous lives they are unable to drink the milk.

Then, his mind full of love, he looks upon these ghosts as his children, and wishes that they might drink the milk. [But] because of their sins the milk instantly transforms into pus.⁴

3.48

復更慈心，以慈心故，身毛孔中，一切乳出，勝前數倍。念諸餓鬼，飢苦所逼，何不來飲⁵。爾時餓鬼。其形長大。數十由旬。舉足下足。如五百乘車聲。來至行者前。唱言飢飢⁶。爾時行者。即以慈心，施乳令飲⁷，餓鬼飲時，至口變化為膿。雖復為膿，以行者⁸慈心故⁹。即得飽滿。

He should again [give rise to] a loving mind and by [the power] of his loving mind milk gushes forth from his pores, several times more than before. He invites the various hungry ghosts, oppressed by the pain of hunger, to come forward and drink. The hungry ghosts then come before the practitioner moaning “Hungry! Hungry!” Their enormous bodies are dozens of *yojana* tall, and their footsteps resound like five hundred charoits.

1 Alternatively we may read 從諸苦有 as “it comes into existence from suffering,” thus expressing the same idea as the previous clause.

2 乳飲 = 乳餓 Kg. This also plausible, in which case we might translate as “they [feel] the hunger of being unable to get milk.”

3 Cf. the corresponding passage in the *Five Gates*: “I see that the sentient beings, the water of the pool, and my own body are all restored to their former state” 我見眾生及池中水已身悉平復如故 (T.619:15.328b6).

4 My reading of the line 以鬼罪故，乳變成膿，斯須之間 is influenced by the corresponding passage in the *Five Gates*: “Instruct [the practitioner] in the cultivation of love. [The practitioner] says “Instantly my milk transforms into pus, and the beings, oppressed by hunger, then consume it” 教以慈心觀。若言：我須臾之間，乳化為膿，眾生飢急便食之 (T.619:15.328b8–10).

5 餓 Kg

6 餓 Kg

7 [飲] Kg

8 [者] Kg

9 飲 S, Q, Y

The practitioner, his mind full of love, then gives them milk to drink. When the hungry ghosts drink it, it transforms into pus as soon as it touches their lips. But though it is pus, owing to the [power of] the practitioner's loving mind, they are immediately satisfied.

3.49

見鬼飽已，復自觀身。即自見身，足下火¹出，燒前眾生及以諸樹，泓然都盡。爾時若見眾多異類，復還繫念諦觀己身，使²心不動，寂寞³無念。既無念想，當⁴發誓願，願後[世]{不}⁵生，不受⁶後有，不樂世間。

When he has seen the ghosts become satisfied, he next contemplates his own body. He immediately sees fire shoot out from the soles of his feet, completely incinerating the beings [the hungry ghosts] and the various trees. If at this time he sees various strange things, he must again fix his thoughts and contemplate his body, making his mind unmoving, tranquil, and free of thoughts. When he is free of thoughts he should make the following vow: “May I not be reborn again! May I not undergo any future existence! May I take no pleasure in the world!”

3.50

作此誓已，尋見前地猶如琉璃。見琉璃下，有金色水。自見己身，與地正等，與水色同。其水溫暖⁷，水中生樹，如七寶樹。枝葉蓊鬱，上有四菓，菓⁸聲如鈴，演說苦、空、無常、無我。聞此聲已，自見己身，沒於水中往趣⁹樹所。諦自觀身，頂上水出，彌漫琉璃池中。

When he has made this vow he sees the ground before him to be like beryl. He sees golden water beneath the beryl ground. He sees his own body as equally [beryl like the] ground, and the same color as the water.¹⁰ The water is warm, and within it grows a tree, like a tree of the seven treasures. Its branches and leaves give cooling shade, and on the tree are four fruits that chime forth sermons on suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. When [the practitioner] hears these sounds he suddenly sees himself sink into the water and move towards the tree. Carefully contemplating his body, [he sees] water emerge from the crown of his head and fill the beryl pool.

1 大 Sgz

2 便 Kg

3 莫 Kg

4 常 P, S, Y

5 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

6 愛 Sgz

7 煥 Sgz, Kg

8 [菓] Kg

9 取 Sgz, Kg

10 The unusual grammatical pattern 與 . . . 正等 occurs frequently in the Contemplation Scriptures. See for example the *Samantabhadra Contemplation* (T.277:9.390a3–4), and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.657c5–6; 663a27).

3.51

忽然之頃，復有火起，火中生風，猶如琉璃。復見頂上[從頂]堅強，{從頂}¹至乎脚足，猶如金剛。復有火起，燒金剛盡，溫²水枯涸。尋更觀身：我前見身內³池中，忽然有樹，枝葉具⁴足。樹端有菓，其聲如鈴，演說苦、空、無常、無我清淨之法。如此妙菓，有好音聲，香味具足，我今宜食。

Then suddenly fire appears again, within which is a beryl-like wind. He further sees the top of his head. It is hard and strong. From the top of his head down to his feet [is hard] like adamant. Fire appears again, entirely burning up this adamant and evaporating the water.

He then again contemplates his body: “Before me I see the pool [of water] from within my body. In it there suddenly appeared a tree, complete with branches and leaves. On the tree is fruit that chimes forth the pure teachings of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. These wondrous fruits have this beautiful sound, and they are replete with fragrance and taste. I should thus now eat them.”

3.52

作此想已，即仰攀樹，取菓食之。[纔]{裁}⁵得一菓，其味甘美，無物可譬。既食菓已，見樹乾枯，其餘三菓，尚有光明。食菓之後，身心恬澹，無憂喜想。

Having imagined it thus, he then climbs up the tree in order to take the fruit and eat it. He [first] picks one fruit. Its flavor is incomparably sweet and delicious. When he has eaten the fruit he sees the tree wither, but the other three fruits still shine brightly. When he has eaten [the first] fruit his body and mind become tranquil, and he becomes free of any thoughts of pleasure or happiness.

3.53

自觀心識，是敗壞法，從諸苦有，諸苦根本，識為因緣。今觀此識，如水上泡，無有暫停。四大無主⁶，身無有我，識無依止，如是諸⁷法。復七七⁸四十九遍，諦觀心識是敗壞法。

He contemplates that his own consciousness is impermanent, and that from it there arises suffering, for it is the fundamental cause of suffering. He now contemplates consciousness as like foam on the water, never fixed even for an instant. The four elements have no master, the body is without a self, consciousness has no fixed abode, and all *dharma*s are like this. Seven times seven, that is to say forty-nine times he is to carefully contemplate the impermanence of consciousness [in this manner].

1 I am unable to make sense of the text as it stands and have provisionally emended as seen here.

2 池 Kg

3 肉 Sgz

4 見 S, Q, Y

5 Tentatively following Sgz, Kg.

6 住 Kg

7 [諸] Sgz, Kg

8 十 Sgz

3.54

爾時自見己身，白如珂雪，節節相¹柱²。復當更教，自以右手，摩³觸此身。見身如塵，骨[末]{抹}如粉，如粉塵地。尋復更教，觀身如氣，從數息有，身如氣囊，無有暫停。

The practitioner then sees his own body to be white like *ke*-jade or snow, all the bones connected together. Next he must again be instructed to take his right hand and rub his body. His body is like dirt, and the bones crumble into powder upon the ground.⁴ Next he must again be instructed to contemplate his body as like air, existing from the in- and out-breath,⁵ like a sack of air, never ceasing for an instant (?).⁶

3.55

復當更教，尋自觀身，如前還為一白⁷骨人。見骨人已⁸，自觀己身，如前還散，猶如微塵，如人以粉用塗於地。尋見地上，有青色骨人。復如前觀，末此青色骨人，以用塗地。復更觀身，如青微塵，塵變成骨人，其骨盡黑。復當如前以末塗地⁹。復自觀身，猶如黑地。見黑地中，有四黑蛇，眼赤如火。蛇來逼身，吐毒欲害。不能為害，即變為火，自燒己身。

Next he must again be instructed to further contemplate his own body, and as before transform it into a white skeleton. Having seen the white skeleton, as before he contemplates his body falling apart into tiny specks of dirt, as if someone were to rub the ground with powder. He next sees blue skeletons on the ground, and as before he contemplates crumbling these blue skeletons into the ground. Next he again contemplates his body as if made of blue dirt. The dirt transforms into a skeleton, entirely black in color. He should again rub this skeleton into the ground as before.

Next he contemplates his body as like black earth. He sees that on this black earth there are four black snakes, their eyes red like fire. The snakes draw near the practitioner, spewing deadly poison. But [the poison] is unable to harm him, and rather transforms into fire, burning [the snakes] themselves.,

3.56

爾時空中有自然聲，恒說苦、空、無常、無我等法。見此事時，一一毒蛇，八十八頭，為火所焚。見此事時，空中自然有水，灑毒蛇身，眾火盡滅，八十八頭，一切都¹⁰消。出

1 節節相 = 節 Kg

2 跬 Sgz, Kg

3 磨 Kg

4 Translation tentative. The corresponding passage from the *Five Gates* is similar, and also not fully clear (T.619:15.328b20–22).

5 This passage is unclear. The expression 數息 is often a translation of *ānāpāna*, which literally does not mean “counting the breath,” as the Chinese would have it, but simply “in-breath and out-breath.” Perhaps this is the meaning.

6 Unclear.

7 一白 = 百 Kg

8 [復] Kg

9 以末 = 末; 末以 Kg

10 教 Kg

定之時，覺身安樂恬怕無為。

Then from the sky there suddenly comes a voice, bellowing out the teachings of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. When [the practitioner] sees this, each of the poisonous snakes with their eighty-eight heads¹ is consumed by the fire.² When [the practitioner] sees this water suddenly appears from the sky and rains upon the bodies of the poisonous snakes, extinguishing the fires, whereupon the eighty-eight headed [snakes] all entirely vanish. When [the practitioner] emerges from trance, he feels peaceful, happy, tranquil, and serene.

3.57

復當更教，自觀己身，[無]{起}³高大想。尋復見身，自然高大，明顯可觀，如七寶山⁴。自見己心，如摩尼珠。爾時復當如上觀空。作觀空時，自覺己身，和悅柔軟，快樂無比。前蓮華上七寶色光，流入己心。在摩尼珠中，滿足十過，七⁵支七色，皆悉具足。自觀身空，亦無眾[想]{相}⁶。

Next he should be again instructed to contemplate his body and imagine it to be very large. He then sees his body suddenly become very large, shining brightly, awesome like a mountain of the seven treasures. He sees his own heart as like a *maṇi* jewel. Then as above he must next contemplate emptiness. Contemplating emptiness, he suddenly feels a joyful ease within his body, an incomparable bliss. The seven-treasure light of the previously [mentioned] lotus flowers flows into his heart. It fills the inside of the *maṇi* jewel ten times (?), which fills with the seven colors of the seven limbs [of awakening (?)]. Contemplating his body as empty, it is devoid of any distinguishing marks.

3.58

爾時頂上有自然光，似金色雲，亦如寶蓋，色復似銀。從頂上入，覆摩尼珠光上。出定入定，恒見此事。見此事者，自然不殺、不盜、不邪淫、不妄語、不飲酒。

At this time above his head there suddenly appears a light, like a golden cloud, or like a jeweled canopy, or like silver. It enters [the practitioner's] body through the top of the head and then covers over the light of the *maṇi* jewel [in the practitioner's heart]. Whether or not he is in trance he always sees this. Having seen these things he will naturally refrain from killing, stealing, fornication, wrong speech, or the drinking of liquor.

1 Or perhaps simply “eighty-eight snakes,” with *tou* 頭 serving as a measure word. The notion that we have a fewer number of snakes each with eighty-eight heads makes sense in that the previous passage already mentions four snakes (representing the four elements).
2 As mentioned above (p472n8), eighty-eight here represents the eighty-eight defilements that, according to Sarvāstivādin path-theory are destroyed upon attainment of the first fruit.
3 I here assume that 起 was misread as 无 (無). The expression 起 . . . 想 occurs frequently in the text.
4 上 Sgz
5 + S, Q, Y
6 Tentatively following Sgz.

3.59

佛告阿難，佛滅度後，四部弟子，比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，作此觀者，名第二十六正觀，亦名得須陀洹道。若得¹此觀，要當審實。使²身自然離五種惡，合修多羅，不違毘尼，隨順阿毘曇，此名須陀洹果相。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: After I have passed into extinction, when the four groups of disciples, that is to say monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen, perform this contemplation, it is to be known as correct contemplation, [contemplation] number twenty-six. It is also called “attaining the path of the *śrotāpanna*.” [However] if one attains this contemplation its veracity must still be investigated. If one naturally keeps apart from the five evils,³ accords with the *sūtras*, does not go against the *vinaya*, and conforms with the *abhidharma*, then these are the signs of the fruit of *śrotāpanna*.

When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

3.60

佛告阿難：若有行者，得此觀者，宜當密藏，勿妄宣傳。但當一心，勤行精進。勤⁴行精進已，復當更教諦觀地大。地大觀法，亦如上說。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Practitioners who obtain this contemplation must keep it a secret, and must not wantonly transmit it to others.⁵ They must simply single-mindedly continue their own diligent practice. Having practiced diligently [the practitioner] must next again be instructed to contemplate the earth element. The contemplation method for the earth element is as explained above.

3.61

觀地大已，次教觀水大。觀水大者，自觀己身，[身]{見}中諸水，身如琉璃，剛強難壞。

Having contemplated the earth element, [the practitioner] must next be instructed to contemplate the water element.⁶ To contemplate the water element, he should contemplate his body. He sees the various waters within, while the body itself is hard and indestructible like beryl.

3.62

若見自身，悉皆是水，當教易觀。若復見身，盡成琉璃，亦教易觀。觀於地大，使琉璃身猶如微氣。見水從眼中現。若見此事，名細微四大觀。

If [however] he sees his entire body as water, he must be taught an inverse contemplation. If he sees his entire body become beryl he must similarly be taught an inverse contemplation [as follows]. He [must] contemplate the earth element [of his body] and thereby make his beryl body [become] like a fine vapor.⁷ He will then see water appear in his eyes. If he sees these things, it is

1 復 [Kg]

2 便 Kg

3 This presumably refers to the five precepts mentioned above (3.58).

4 [勤] Kg

5 Cf. Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, T.262:9.15b9.

6 Passages 3.61–3.66 are particularly close the corresponding sections of the *Five Gates* (T.619:15.328c6–21).

7 I have read this as one sentence detailing the inverse contemplation in the case where the meditator sees his body

called the “contemplation of the refinement of the four elements.”

3.63

復當更教，從[頭]{頸}¹已上，使水滿中。見水從眼中出，亦不墮地。自見己眼，如水上沫²，亦滿水中。若見此事，頭水不溫不冷，調和得所。水若溫者，是假偽³觀。水色澄清，不溫不涼。

He should further be instructed to make his body fill with water from the neck up. He [then] sees water emerge from his eyes, but it does not fall to the ground. He sees his eyes to be like bubbles filled with water.⁴

When he sees these things, the water within his head [should be] neither warm nor cool, but perfectly balanced between. If the water is warm, then his contemplation is false, for the material substance of the water element is clear and pure, neither warm nor cool.⁵

3.64

次當更教，觀腰已上，水不溫不冷。復觀咽喉，如琉璃筒。水入胸中，次下⁶至腹，乃至⁷髀膝。莫令入臂。使⁸水澄清，如頗梨精色。若覺水溫，乃是真觀。

He should further be instructed to contemplate [his body] from the waist upwards; the water [therein] is neither warm nor cool. Next he should contemplate his throat, like a beryl tube. The water enters his chest, continues down into his stomach, then reaches his thighs and knees. [He] should not allow the water to go into his arms. [He should] make the water clear and pure, like crystal in appearance. Only if he senses the water to be warm is his contemplation true.

3.65

此想成已，復教通徹四支諸節，水皆滿中，如琉璃器，持⁹用盛水。漸漸廣大，見滿一牀，外人亦見。若見此水清冷，乃是真水。若見餘相，不名真實入水光三昧。

When this meditation has been completed he should next be instructed to [make (?)] the

as entirely made of beryl. The meditator then “softens” this overly hard body by making the earth element within it (which gives it its solidity) more water-like. It also seems possible that this sentence comprises two separate instructions, such that “contemplate the earth element” is the inverse contemplation for the first problematic scenario (where the meditator sees his body as entirely water), and “make his beryl body become like a fine vapor” is the inverse contemplation for the second scenario (in which the meditator sees his entire body as made of beryl).

1 Tentative emendation.

2 法 Kg

3 為 Sgz

4 Though “bubble” 水上沫 here may be used with no other meaning in mind, it is worth noting that this is one of the standard images used to express the idea of impermanence or insubstantiality. Indeed we have seen several other passages where normally abstract metaphors (such as the trunk of a plantain tree) are presented as concrete objects within the practitioner’s visions.

5 The idea seems to be that any attribute of temperature does not belong to the *dharma* of water.

6 不 P, S, Y, Q

7 乃至 = 及乃 P, S, Q, Y, Sgz; 乃及 Kg

8 [使] Kg

9 時 Kg

water entirely fill all his four limbs,¹ like a beryl vessel filled with water. [The water] then gradually expands until he sees his meditation cot [filled with water]. Other people will see this as well. Only if he sees this water to be clear and cool is it truly the water element. If he sees it to be any other way then he has not truly entered the water-radiance *samādhi*.

3.66

漸漸廣大，滿一室²內，水皆澄清，如琉璃氣。漸漸廣大，遍滿三千大千世界。見此事時，當於靜處一心安坐。勅諸同學，皆使清淨，不令攪鬧。

[The water] then gradually expands until the entire room is filled with pure, clear water, like beryl vapor. It gradually expands until it fills all the three-thousand great thousand-fold worlds [of the universe]. When he has seen this, he must [go to] a quiet place and focus his mind. His fellow practitioners must be instructed to keep everything pure and free of commotion.³

3.67

爾時復當見水上紫焰⁴起。當自憶想：此水從何處起？云何當盡？若言我是水者，我身無我，前已觀無我。今從無法中，水從何起？作是念時，水性如氣，漸漸從頂上沒。水稍稍盡，唯身皮在。自見己身⁵，極為微薄，無物可譬，如微塵草束⁶。復見身內，忽然有火。燒身都盡，觀身無所，永無有我，我及眾生，一切都無。爾時行者，心意恬怕⁷，極為微細，無物可譬。

At this time he will further see a purple flame appear from the water. He must then consider: “From where does this water arise? When will it perish?⁸ Perhaps the water is my self? But within my body there is no self, as previously [I] have already contemplated [this fact of] non-self. How then does this water now arise out of nothing?”

Having considered in this way the water becomes like vapor, and gradually evaporates away out the top of [the practitioner’s] head. The water gradually disappears, leaving only the body’s skin. He sees his body [made of skin], incomparably thin and delicate, like tiny particles of dust, [or like] a bundle of grass. He then sees a fire suddenly appear within his body. When the fire has entirely incinerated his body, contemplating his body [he finds] there is nothing there, that there is and never has been a self, and that both he and other beings are entirely non-existent.

At this time the practitioner’s mind becomes incomparably peaceful and serene.⁹

1 Here the point seems to be that even the arms (and feet), excluded in the previous section, now fill with water. This is explicit in the corresponding passage from the *Five Gates* (T.619:15.328c15).

2 空 Sgz

3 Translation tentative. This may refer to the idea, see elsewhere, that advanced states of meditation make one sensitive to noise (see for example sections 1.110 and 5.2)

4 炎 Sgz, Kg

5 己身 = 身己 Kg

6 來 Kg

7 憺 P, S, Q, Y

8 This sequence is very similar to the one above involving fire (3.30; 3.32). See also the corresponding passage from the *Five Gates* (T.619:15.328c18–20).

9 Here I translated *wei xi* 微細 as “serene.” The point may also be, however, that the mind is literally becoming more “subtle” and thus entering the higher planes of existence that correspond to the states of *dhyāna*.

3.68

此想成時，名第二十七¹真無我觀，亦名滅水大²想³，亦名向斯陀含。其餘微細賢聖[法]{境}⁴界，微妙難勝，不可具說。行者坐時，修諸三昧，得無我三昧時，當自然見[佛]⁵。佛告阿難：汝今好受持是真實水大微妙境界，廣為未來一切眾生，敷演廣說。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

When this meditation is complete it is called the true contemplation of non-self, [contemplation] number twenty-seven. It is also called the perception of the extinction of the water element. It is also called [attaining the stage of] candidate⁶ for the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin* [once-returned]. As for the verificatory visions of the remaining stages of sainthood, they are marvelously subtle beyond compare, and cannot be fully explained. If the practitioner sits in meditation cultivating the various *samādhis*, when he attains the *samādhi* of non-self he will naturally see [them].⁷

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve [this exposition of] the subtle and marvelous verificatory vision of true water element, and broadly expound it for all sentient beings of the future.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

3.69

佛告阿難，得此觀已，復當更教水大觀法。此水大觀，極為微細。使此水大與火大合。見身如⁸氣，如琉璃影。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: When [the practitioner] has attained this contemplation, he must next again be instructed in the method for the contemplation of the water element. This contemplation of the water element is extremely subtle, and he must cause the water element to merge with the fire element. [He will then] see his body as like vapor, as like a ray of beryl.

3.70

觀臍⁹四邊，火焰俱起。見於火焰，猶如日映。若見臍上有火光起，或有從鼻中出，或有從口中出，耳、眼，隨¹⁰意出入¹¹。若見此事，見一切火，從毛孔出。火¹²出之後，有淥¹³

1 七 = 八 Kg

2 火 Sgz

3 相 Sgz

4 Emendation tentative.

5 Following P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg.

6 The word *xiang* 向 is often used in technical discussions of the Buddhist path as a translation of *pratipannaka*, “candidate,” which is added to each of the four fruits to make a total of eight possible levels of attainment (see for example *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.224a13–15).

7 A similar statement occurs below following the contemplation of the wind element (3.82).

8 齊 Kg

9 [臍] Kg

10 從 Sgz

11 [入] Sgz, Kg

12 犬 Kg

13 淥 Kg

色水，尋從火後。自見身中，水上火¹下，火上水下。[觀身無身]²。

He contemplates the area around his navel, where flames arise. Looking upon them is like gazing into the sun. He may either see flames arise from his navel, or else emerge from his nose, or else from his mouth, ears, or eyes,³ going in and out [of these openings] as he so wills it.

If he sees this⁴ . . . he will see fire emerge from all his pores. After it has emerged, clear⁵ water follows behind it. Within his body he sees either water going up and fire going down, or fire going up and water going down.⁶

3.71

此想成時，見身水火，不溫不冷。身心寂爾，{觀身無身?}⁷，安住無礙⁸。此名斯陀含果，亦名境界實相。見此事時，出定入定，恒不見身。入定⁹之時，外人亦¹⁰見水火從毛孔出，從毛孔入。

When this meditation is complete, he sees the water and fire within his body to be neither warm nor cool. His body and mind are serene, and contemplating his body [he finds that] there is no body.¹¹ He abides at ease, free of obstruction. This is called the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin* [once-returner]. It is also called the verificatory visions [of] the true nature [of phenomena].¹²

After he has seen these things, whether or not he is immersed in trance he will never see his body [to truly exist]. When he enters trance other people too will see fire and water going in and out through his pores.

3.72

貪婬多者，見火從頂¹³上入，從身根出，然後遍滿身體。水亦復然。復當自觀頭上火，如閻浮檀那金光雲蓋。或見身下，如七寶華。心中恬靜，安隱快樂，世間樂事，無以為譬。出定之時，身亦安樂，令外眾生，見已禪定三昧安隱，金光金色。帝釋諸天，恭敬禮拜

1 犬 Kg

2 These four characters seem out of place. I have tentatively relocated them one line (16–18 characters) below.

3 The passage is considerably clearer in the *Five Gates*: 次觀火大。教令觀齊四邊，何處有火。若言我見齊上火起，或言從鼻中出，或言從口中出，或言眼耳中出者。(T.619:15.328c22–24).

4 There is perhaps missing text here.

5 Or perhaps “green” 綠 water following Kg.

6 In Chinese translations of Buddhist texts we frequently find these expressions in descriptions of the so-called “twin miracle” (*yamaka-pratihārya*), one of the displays of magical power characteristic of arhats or Buddhas in which they emit fire and water from their bodies. Here, however, the meaning seems to be that the meditator will see the elements of fire and water moving this way within his body, though there does also seem to be some connection to the notion of the *yamaka-partihārya*, since in some passages (such as 3.72) the fire and water becomes visible to others.

7 These four characters are tentatively relocated from above.

8 闕 P, Q, Kg

9 +時

10 +亦 Kg

11 Compare above with 3.28 and 3.67 where we find similar expressions. The meaning seems similar to 1.163 where we had “contemplating his body he does not see a body” 觀身不見身.

12 Translation tentative. The point is perhaps that now the meditator sees the true nature (實相) of the *dharmas* in question (in this case the water element).

13 頭 Sgz

竝言：大德，汝今苦盡，必定當成斯陀含¹果。

One with excessive lust [however] will see fire entering through the crown of his head, going out through his penis,² and then filling his body. So too for water.

[Such a person] must further contemplate the fire above his head, like a canopy of clouds of *jambūnada* gold. He may then see underneath his body what looks like a flower made of the seven treasures. He becomes serene in mind, peaceful and happy. It is beyond comparison with any worldly pleasures. Even when he exits from trance he still feels bodily delight, such that even other people see [that he possesses] the bliss of meditation and a golden-hued complexion. Śākra and the other gods make reverence him, saying in unison: “Oh great worthy one! Now your suffering has ended, you will definitely accomplish the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin*.”

3.73

聞已歡喜。修身禪定，心無繫礙³，安隱快樂，遊戲無我三昧中，亦漸入空三昧門、無願無作諸三昧等，悉現在前。

Hearing this he rejoices. His body cultivated in trance,⁴ his mind free of obstacles, peaceful and joyous he roams freely in the *samādhi* of non-self, and also gradually enters the gate of the *samādhi* of emptiness and the *samādhis* of wishlessness and non-intention, [which] all appear before him.

3.74

如此微妙善勝境界，行者坐時，於禪定中，自然分別。若鈍根者，大師世尊現前為說，以見佛故，聞法歡⁵喜，應時即得斯陀含道。

When the practitioner sits, within his meditation he will naturally discern all these subtle, marvelous, and wonderful verificatory visions. [But] for those of dull faculties, the World-honored One, the great teacher, will appear and describe them. Because of seeing the Buddha and rejoicing upon hearing the Dharma [even a dull practitioner] will [at this point] instantly attain the path of the *sakṛdāgāmin*.

3.75

復⁶當至心覆尋前觀，經二十五反，極令明利。

Next [the practitioner] must apply his mind and repeat the above contemplation twenty-five times so that he becomes extremely proficient in it.

1 令 Kg

2 The *Five Gates* here reads: “[The practitioner says:] I see fire emerge from my head. Or else he says: it emerges from the penis.” 我見火從頂上出。或言從下道出。(T.619:15.328c26–27).

3 闕 Kg

4 Or perhaps simply “having cultivated *himself* through trance,” but the contrast with mind (心) in the next line suggests that this refers specifically to the body.

5 觀 Sgz

6 覆 Sgz

3.76

佛告阿難：汝好持此第二十九水大觀。慎勿忘¹失²。得此觀者，亦名斯陀含，亦名善往³來。往宿世善根業因緣故，遇善知識，清淨法行，汝乃當得此斯陀含道。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: You must preserve this contemplation of the water element, [contemplation] number twenty-nine. Do not lose it. One who attains this contemplation is called a *sakṛdāgāmin*, and is also called “one of auspicious past.” [For] it is only on account of deeds from a previous life that produced good roots that he⁴ has now encountered a good teacher, made pure his practice of the teachings, and attained this path of the *sakṛdāgāmin*.

When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

3.77

佛告阿難：若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，若得此微妙水大觀已，復當更教安隱微妙最勝奇特⁵火大觀法。作此觀時，自見臍中⁶微妙火⁷光，[床]{狀}⁸如蓮華，其色光明，如和合百千萬億閻浮檀那金。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who attain this subtle and marvelous contemplation of the water element must next be instructed in the method for the peaceful, marvelous, sublime, and extraordinary contemplation of the fire element. Performing this contemplation he sees a marvelous fire within his navel, like a shining lotus flower, like a mass of hundreds of thousands of millions of [pieces] of *jambūnada* gold.

3.78

見此事已，復當更教觀身內火。觀內火時，自見心火，常有光明，過於百千萬億明月神珠，心光清淨，亦復如是。出定入定，如人持明火珠行，慮恐他見，唯自心中，明了如是，他人不見。漸漸大明，見身猶如頗梨明鏡，見心亦如明月⁹神珠。慮他人見，他人其實不見此事。

When he has seen this, he must again be instructed to contemplate the fire within his body. When he contemplates the internal fire he sees the fire of his heart, which glows perpetually with a purity and radiance surpassing [that of] a hundred thousand million billion magic moon-jewels. Whether or not he is immersed in trance [he sees it] as if he were carrying a bright fire-jewel, [so bright that] he wonders if others can see it. But this brightness is only within his own heart, such that others do not see it. It gradually becomes brighter, and he sees his

1 妄 Sgz

2 告 Kg

3 住 Sgz

4 Literally “you” (汝). There is a clearly a problem here as the Buddha is addressing Ānanda, the only person to whom 汝 could refer. Most likely we see here another case where the original dialog format has been reworked, unsuccessfully, into the monologue of the sutra narrative (see my discussion of this in chapter 2, p.93–94).

5 物 Sgz

6 +見 P, S, Q, Y; +有 Sgz, Kg

7 大 Sgz

8 Following K, P, S, Q, Y, Sgz, Kg. The Taishō editors have seemingly misread 狀 as 牀, then printed as 床.

9 [月] Sgz, Kg

body to be like a bright crystal mirror, and his heart to be like a magic moon-jewel. [It is so bright] that he wonders if others can see it, but in truth they are not able to see these things.

3.79

入定之時，以心明故，見三千大千世界麤相¹，見閻浮提須彌山及大海水，悉皆了了。復見大海水中摩尼珠王。其摩尼珠王，焰²出諸火。

When he enters trance his heart [mind] is so illuminating that he sees, in rough detail, all the three-thousand great thousand-fold worlds [of the universe]. He clearly sees [the continent] of Jambudvīpa, Mount Sumeru, and the waters of the great ocean, within which he sees a royal *maṇi* jewel burning brightly.³

3.80

見此事已...爾時見佛，為其廣說九次第定。九次第定者，九無閼。八解脫。如此等觀，不須豫⁴受，佛現前故，佛自為說。

When he has seen these things⁵... he then sees the Buddha, who describes to him in detail the “nine successive absorptions” (the “nine successive absorptions” refer to the “nine uninterrupted moments of the path”⁶) and the “eight liberations.” These contemplations do not need to be received [from one’s teacher (?)] ahead of time, for the Buddha will appear and explain them himself.

3.81

其利根者，聞佛說法，九無礙道中，應⁷時即得阿羅漢道，超越阿那含地，如好白[疊*毛]⁸，

1 想 Sgz

2 焰 = 火大 Kg (likely a corruption of 炎)

3 “Royal *maṇi* jewels” are mentioned in the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (T.365:12.342c28).

4 預 P, S, Q, Y

5 To follow 見此事已 with 爾時 seems peculiar, as 爾時 usually begins a new section. It is possible that there is missing text.

6 The characters 九次第定者九無閼 seem to be an interlinear gloss, now incorporated into the text, explaining the meaning of 九次第定. A very similar passage occurs in the *Methods for Curing* (5.114), which also describes the teachings that the practitioner will receive from the buddhas during meditation. In the *Methods for Curing*, however, we find only 九無礙 (閼 and 礙 are interchangeable), not 九次第定. Without the “help” of the interlinear commentary, we would expect 九次第定八解脫 to denote the “nine sequential attainments” (*navānupūrva-samāpattayah*) and the eight “liberations” (*vimokṣa*) respectively. These two groupings of meditative attainments appear together frequently in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, among other sources. However I have not been able to find any such list in which these two appear in this order or even directly adjacent to one another. On the other hand the gloss here of 九次第定 as 九無閼 points to a different meaning. In Sarvāstivādin path theory the 九無礙 and 九解脫 refer to the eighteen mental moments (nine moments of the *anantarya-marga* and nine of the *vimukti-marga*) through which a meditator becomes liberated from a given sphere of existence. In the nine *anantarya-marga* moments the nine categories of defilements proper to that sphere are cut off, and in the nine *vimukti-marga* moments the practitioner gains possession (*prapti*) of the stage in question. The gloss here seems to draw from the ensuing passage, where the *anantarya-marga* is clearly mentioned (九無礙道中).

7 摩 Kg

8 疊 Sgz, Kg

易染為色。若鈍根者，復當更教風大觀法。

Those of sharp faculties will, upon hearing the Buddha preach, immediately attain arhatship from within the ninth moment of the uninterrupted path, thereby skipping the stage of *anāgamin* [non-returner], [and becoming an arhat] just as [easily as] a pure white cloth takes a dye.¹ Those of dull faculties, however, must yet further be instructed in the contemplation of the wind element.

3.82

風大觀法者，見一切風，極為微細。細中細者，可以心眼見，而不可具說。風復雜火，火復雜風，水入火中，風入水中，火入風中。風火水等，各²隨毛孔，如意自在。或復有風，十色具足，如十寶光，從身毛孔出，從頂上入，從臍中出，從足下入，一切身分中出，從眉間入，從眉間出，從一切身分入。

In the method of contemplating the wind element [the practitioner] sees all instances of the wind element, [even those that are] extremely subtle and minute. Those [instances of the wind element] that are infinitesimally minute can be seen with the mind's eye, but they cannot be described [in words].

[There is] wind that is mixed with fire, the fire mixed again with wind, within which fire is water, within which is wind.³ [This mixture of] wind, fire, and water [goes in and out] through the pores [of the practitioner's body] just as he so wills it. There is another wind [that the practitioner sees] comprised of ten colors, like the light of ten jewels. [This wind] emerges from the pores of his body, enters back through the crown of his head, exits through his navel, and then enters again through his feet. It then exits through all parts of his body together and reenters between his eyebrows, finally exiting again from between his eyebrows and then reentering through all parts of his body.

3.83

如此，種種無量境界，賢聖光明，賢聖種子，諸賢聖法，皆從此風大中起，從此風大中入。此風大觀具足相貌⁴微妙境界，唯阿羅漢能廣分別，不可具說。行者坐時，當自然見。

Then⁵ innumerable verificatory visions, which are the light of sanctity, the seeds of

1 This traditional image also appears in conjunction with the attainment of arhatship in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.674a1–3). In early Buddhist sutras it is more commonly associated with the arising of the Dharma-eye (*dharmā-cakṣuḥ*), usually associated with the attainment of the first fruit (*śrotāpanna*). See for example the *Brahmāyu-sutta* (MN, 2.145, *seyyathāpi nāma suddhaṃ vatthaṃ apagatakāḷakaṃ sammadeva rajanaṃ paṭiggaṇheyya*; Chinese parallel at *Zhong a han jing* 中阿含經, T.26:1.689b23). The image continues to be used in later Buddhism, where it often takes a different meaning. Thus, for example, in Tantric sources we see it conveying the idea that the mind, being inherently pure by nature, can accordingly be transformed into whatever one wishes through the power of cultivation (*Sarvatathāgatha-tattva-saṃgraha*, T.865:18.207c23; “The mind, good child, is possessed of an innate purity. Accordingly, as it is cultivated, so will it become, just as the staining of a white cloth with dye.” *prakṛti-prabhāsvarāma idaṃ kulaputra cittam. tadyathā parikarṣyate tat tathaiva bhavati, tadyathā ‘pi nāma śveta-vastra-rāga-rañjanam iti*).

2 久 Kg

3 Translation tentative. I read this as a description of one of the kinds of wind that the practitioner sees. This is suggested by the next passage, which seems to similarly describe a different kind of wind.

4 猥 Sgz

5 It is also possible that 如此 here means “in this manner,” such that “innumerable verificatory visions” refers back

sanctity, and the attainment of sanctity, all appear from the wind element and then enter back into the wind element. Only arhats can fully discern the complete features of the subtle and marvelous verificatory vision of this contemplation of the wind element.¹ It is not something that can be described fully in words. When the practitioner sits [in meditation] he will naturally see it.

3.84

若見此事，練諸煩惱，成阿那含。此風大觀，名第三十阿那含相應境界相。佛告阿難，汝好受持是阿那含相應最勝境界風大觀法，慎勿忘失。爾時阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

If [the practitioner] sees these things, [this means he has] purified all his defilements and has become an *anāgamin* [non-returner]. This contemplation of the wind-element is called [contemplation] number thirty, the verificatory vision that corresponds with [the attainment of the stage of] *anāgamin*.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must preserve this method for the contemplation method of the wind element, the supreme verificatory vision that corresponds to [the attainment of the level of an] *anāgamin*. Do not forget it.” When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

to what was described in the previous section.

1 The point would seem to be that the previous description of the various forms of the wind element are but a small sample of what will be seen by arhats.

4.1

如是我聞。一時佛在舍衛國，祇樹給孤獨園，與千二百五十比丘俱。

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling in Śrāvastī together with 250 monks, in the park of [Sudatta] “He Who Gives to the Poor” in the forest of [prince] Jeta.

4.2

爾時尊者摩訶迦葉，有一弟子，是王舍大城苦得¹尼捷子兒，名阿祇達多。求尊者摩訶迦葉，出家學道。修行苦行，具十二頭陀。經歷五年，得阿那含果，不能增進成阿羅漢。即從坐起，至迦葉所，整²衣服，叉手合掌，頂禮摩訶迦葉白言：和上³，我隨和上⁴，勤修⁵精進，如救頭然，已經⁶五年。今得住於阿那含果⁷。身心疲懈，不能增進無上解脫。唯願和上⁸，為我速說。

At that time the venerable Mahākāśyapa had a disciple named Agnidatta, an ascetic Nigrantha's son⁹ from the city of Rājagṛha. He had ordained as a monk and was pursuing the path [to liberation] under the venerable Mahākāśyapa, cultivating the ascetic practices and following the twelve *dhūtas*. After five years he had attained the fruit of *anāgamin*, but was unable to advance further and become an arhat. [Agnidatta] arose from his seat and went to [Mahā]kāśyapa. He arranged his robes, placed his hands together, and bowed to Mahākāśyapa, saying: “Preceptor! I have followed you and cultivated diligently for five years, as if putting out a fire on my head, and I have now become an *anāgamin*. But now my body and mind are exhausted, and I am unable to advance further to unsurpassed liberation. Please, oh preceptor, quickly tell me [what to do]!”

4.3

爾時摩訶迦葉，即入三昧，觀比丘心，知此比丘不盡諸漏，從此命終，生阿那含天。從三昧起，告言：法子，我今身心一切自在，入自在三昧觀汝宿世所有業報。於此身上，無緣得成羅漢道。

Mahākāśyapa then entered *samādhi* and contemplated Agnidatta's mind. He discerned that [Agnidatta] had not yet eliminated his impurities, and that at the end of his life he would be reborn in the heaven of the *anāgamins*.

[Mahākāśyapa] emerged from *samādhi* and said: “Oh disciple, with my perfect mastery of body and mind I have now entered the “*samādhi* of mastery” and have examined the fate that awaits you owing to your deeds in past lives. In your present life it will be impossible for you to become an *arhat*.”

1 行 S, Q, Y; Though 行 may seem preferable, we elsewhere find the expression 苦得 used in this same manner (*Da ban nie pan jing* 大般涅槃經, T.374:12.561.b6–7).

2 懃 Kg

3 和上 = 和尚 P, S, Q, Y

4 和上 = 和尚 P, S, Q, Y

5 [修] Kg

6 逕 Sgz, Kg

7 患 P, S, Q, Y

8 和上 = 和尚 P, S, Q, Y

9 There are some problems here. See p.83.

4.4

阿祇達多聞此語已，悲泣兩淚白言：和上¹，如我今者，不樂生天。如困²病人求無常[力]{刀?}，我畏生死，亦³復如是。爾時迦葉告言：法子，善哉善哉，善男子。夫生死惡⁴，猶如猛火，燒滅⁵一切。甚可厭患。我觀汝根，不得明審。又復世尊，與諸比丘，在祇陀林。我今與汝，俱往佛所。

When Agnidatta heard these words, sorrowful tears rained down his face and he said: “Oh preceptor! I do not desire birth in heaven. My aversion to rebirth is like that of a terminally ill person who seeks “the knife of impermanence” [and commits suicide].”⁶

Mahākāśyapa then said: “Oh disciple, well said, well said! For indeed rebirth is dreadful, like a raging fire which incinerates everything in its path. It is truly detestable. Though I have today inspected your faculties, I have not been able to see them entirely clearly. Moreover the World-honored One is now in the grove of [Prince] Jeta together with his monks. We should go to him.”

4.5

時彼比丘，著衣持鉢，隨迦葉後，詣⁷祇陀林，到於佛所。見佛世尊，身如金山，處大眾中，威德自在，三十二相，八十種好，皆悉備足。為佛作禮，繞佛七匝，却住一面。

Thereupon Agnidatta put on his robe and took his bowl, and followed behind Mahākāśyapa to the grove of [Prince] Jeta where the Buddha was staying. There they saw the World-honored Buddha, his body like a mountain of gold in the midst of the assembly, endowed with majestic virtue and carriage, possessing fully the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks. They made reverence to the Buddha, circled him seven times, and then stood to one side.

4.6

胡跪合掌白言：世尊，我此弟子阿祇達多，隨從我後，修十二頭陀，住深禪定，至阿那含。不能增進竭煩惱海。唯願天⁸尊，為說甚深灌頂甘露淨解脫行⁹。

[Mahākāśyapa] then knelt, placed his hands together, and said: “Oh World-honored One, this disciple of mine who follows behind me, Agnidatta, cultivates the twelve *dhūtas*, dwells in profound trance, and has arrived at the stage of the *anāgamin*. But he is unable to advance further and completely exhaust the ocean of defilements. May the World-honored One preach for him the profound ambrosial consecration, the practice of pure liberation.”

1 和上 = 和尚 P, S, Q, Y

2 固 Kg

3 久 Kg

4 怨 Sgz

5 [滅] Sgz; 燒滅 = 焚燒

6 Translation tentative. The expression “the knife of impermanence” (無常刀) appears in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.660c5), though only as a generic description of impermanence. To “take the knife” is the usual expression in the early sutras for suicide, and I have translated as if this were the meaning.

7 諸 Kg

8 大 Kg

9 門 Q

4.7

爾時世尊¹，告阿祇達言：善哉善哉，阿祇達，快問是事。吾當為汝分別解[脫]{說}。諦聽善思。乃往過去無央²數世，彼世有佛，名大光明如來、應供、正遍知、明行足、善逝、世間解、無上士、調御丈³夫、天人師、佛、世尊。彼佛出世，三種示現，教化眾生。度人周訖，於像法中，有一大國，名波羅奈，王名梵摩達多。王有太子，名忍辱鎧，堅發甚深阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心，求一切種智。自誓不殺，修十善業，於六波羅蜜，無疲厭心。

The World-honored One then addressed Agnidatta: It is good, Agnidatta, that you have asked about this matter. I will now explain it for you. Listen well and consider carefully!⁴

Innumerable generations in the past there was a buddha named Great Radiance, a Thus-come One, Worthy of Offerings, Of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Conduct and Wisdom, Well-gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed One, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World-honored One.⁵ When this buddha appeared in the world he taught living beings using the three modes of instruction.⁶ When his work of liberating beings was finished, in the age of the semblance teachings there was a country named Vārāṇasī, whose king was named Brahmadata. This king had a son named Guarded by Forbearance, who had resolutely aroused the aspiration for unsurpassed awakening and omniscience. He made a vow to refrain from killing, cultivated the ten wholesome actions, and was tireless [in his practice of] the six *pāramitās*.

4.8

時彼國中有一長者，名日月音，自在無量。唯有一子，忽遇熱病，風大入心。狂亂無智，手執利劍，走入⁷巷陌，殺害眾生。時彼長者，愛念子故，手擎香爐，至四城門外，燒香散華，發大誓願而作是言：世間若有神仙、聖人、醫師、呪⁸師，能救我子狂亂病者，一切所有。悉用奉施。

In that country there was at this time a prominent man named Moon Sound, who enjoyed a life of limitless ease. One day his only son was suddenly beset by a fever. The wind element entered his heart, driving him mad, such that he went into the streets of town killing people with a sharp sword. Because this prominent man loved and cared for his son he took a portable incense burner out beyond each of the four gates of the city, and burning incense and scattering

1 +世 Kg

2 鞅 Sgz, Kg

3 大 Sgz, Kg

4 As Yamabe has pointed out the following story bears some resemblance to a story in the *Da fang bian fo bao en jing* 大方便佛報恩經 (beginning at T.156:3.137c18), a story collection often considered to be a Chinese composition, or at the very least to have been compiled in China (Yamabe 1999, 105n87). The story there is of a prince named Forbearance 忍辱 (similar to Armor of Forbearance 忍辱鎧 who appears here). However the plot is somewhat different in that the prince sacrifices his life for a medicine to save his own father.

5 These are the standard epithets of a buddha.

6 The so-called *trīṇi prātihāryāni* (also translated in Chinese texts as 三教化). These refer to instruction by way of body (miraculous display), speech (instruction), and mind (reading a disciple's mind).

7 八 Kg

8 [呪] Sgz

flowers made the following sacred oath: “I will give all that I possess to any sage, doctor, or master of spells who can cure my son of his madness!”

4.9

爾時太子，出城遊戲。見大長者，修於慈心，為子求願。心生歡喜，而作¹是言：此大長者，勤修慈心，普為一切。而長者子，遇大重病。願諸神仙，必興慈悲，來至此處，救長者子。

Right at that moment the prince [Guarded by Forbearance] was strolling outside the city. He saw this prominent man who out of love [for his son] was praying for help. [The prince] was delighted and declared: “This prominent man diligently cultivates the mind of love for the sake of everyone.² His son has contracted this serious illness. May all the sages arouse their compassion and come to this spot so as to save this man’s son!”

4.10

語頃³即有一大仙人，從於雪山，騰虛而至，名曰光味，至長者所，告長者言：汝子所患，從熱病起。因⁴熱病故，生大瞋恚。心脈悉開，風大入心，是故發狂。如此病者，如仙經說，風大動者，當須無瞋善男子心血，以用塗身。須善人髓⁵，服如大豆，可得除愈。

No sooner had [the prince] said these words than a great sage named Savor of Radiance arrived before the prominent man, flying through the air from the Snowy Mountains.⁶ [The sage] said to the prominent man: “Your son’s misfortune is a result of his fever. Because of this fever he gave rise to anger. This caused the channel leading to the heart to open, whereupon the wind element entered, and for this reason he has gone mad.⁷ It is said in the scriptures of the sages that one stricken ill because of a stirring of the wind element needs blood from the heart of a young man of good family [in whom] there is no anger. [The patient] can be cured by smearing his body with this blood and then feeding him a bean-sized piece of the marrow of that young man of good family [who is free of anger].

4.11

爾時長者，聞仙人說，即於路中，頂禮太子白言：[地]{此?}天大仙人，說我子所患，當用慈心無瞋人血及以骨髓，乃可得差。我今正欲自刺我身，出血食子，破骨出髓，持與令服。唯願太子，聽許此事。

Hearing what this sage said [the prominent man] right there in the middle of the street bowed down before the prince and said: “This god-like great sage has said that my son’s illness can only be cured with the blood and marrow of one whose mind is full of love and free of anger. I thus now wish to stab myself so as to draw forth my blood to give my son to drink, and to

1 非 Kg

2 It is not clear to me why the prince says that the man cultivates love “for the sake of everyone,” when it would seem from the narrative that he was simply praying for the recovery of his son.

3 語頃 = 諸須 Kg

4 固 Kg

5 體 Kg

6 Here “snowy mountains” seems to be a proper name, that is to say the Hīmalaya (“abode of snow”) mountains.

7 See section 5.11 in the *Methods for Curing* where wind entering the heart channel similarly causes madness.

shatter my bones so as to extract the marrow and feed it to him. Please, oh prince, give me your permission to do this!”

4.12

爾時太子告言：長者，我聞佛說，若有眾生苦惱父母，墮大地獄，無有出期。云¹何長者，自破身體，欲令子差。且忍須臾，當為長者作大方便。爾時長者聞太子勅，心大歡喜，禮太子足，還至家中。象負其子，送²與太子。太子見已，醍醐灌之。

The prince then said: “Oh good sir, I have heard that the Buddha has said that children who give trouble to their parents will [after death] fall into a deep hell, never to escape. How then could you wish to destroy your own body so as to heal your son!³ Wait for a moment and I will devise some solution to this problem.”

Hearing the prince’s command the prominent man was pleased. He bowed to the prince’s feet and then returned home. He loaded his son onto an elephant and sent him to the prince. When the prince saw [the son] he poured pure ghee over his head [in an attempt to cure him].

4.13

爾時仙人，告太子言：設以此藥，灌此男子，經⁴九十日，終不可差。要得慈心無瞋人血。爾時太子，內自思惟：除我身外，其餘眾生，皆當起瞋。我今為此救諸病苦，濟生死命。誓求佛道，於未來世，若得成佛，亦當施此法身常⁵命。

The sage [Savor of Radiance] then said to the prince: “Even if you were to pour this medicine over his head for ninety days he would still not be cured. What he requires is the blood of a person whose heart is full of love and free of all anger.”

The prince then thought deeply: “Apart from myself, all other living beings would give rise to anger [upon having their blood drawn for this purpose]. Thus I myself will now rescue him from the suffering of this illness and save his life.⁶ I now vow to seek the path to buddhahood, and when in a future life I become a buddha, [at that time too] I will give away my immortal dharma body.”⁷

4.14

作此誓已，即{自}⁸刺身，以血塗彼大長者子。破骨出髓，與之令服。長者子服已，病得除愈。

Having made this vow the prince pierced his body and smeared the prominent man’s son

1 六 Kg

2 達 Kg

3 The implication seems to be that if the man were forced to harm himself in this way to save his son, the son would become guilty of causing harm to his father and would thus incur rebirth in hell.

4 逕 Sgz, Kg

5 當 Kg

6 Translation tentative.

7 Presumably this means that even after he becomes a buddha he will “give away” his body in some manner. While the trope of renouncing the body as a means of generating the merit needed for pursuing the bodhisattva path is well known (Ohnuma 2007), I am not familiar with the extension of this idea, even metaphorically as is perhaps meant here, to those who are already buddhas.

8 Following Kg.

with his blood. He then smashed his bones, extracted the marrow, and fed it to him. When the prominent man's son had eaten it, his illness was cured.

4.15

是時太子，以破骨故，迷悶躄地。爾時天¹地六種震動，釋梵護世，無數天子，僉然俱下，到太子所。告太子言：汝今以身濟²病眾生，欲求何等？為求帝釋、魔王、梵天、轉輪聖王？三界之中，欲求何等？爾時太子白帝釋言：我今所求，亦不欲三界之中尊榮豪貴。我所³求者，乃願欲成阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。

The prince, his bones broken, fainted and collapsed to the ground. The heavens and the earth then shook in the six ways, and Śākra, Brahmā, the World-protectors, and innumerable gods all descended [from the heavens] beside the prince.

They said to the prince: “What do you seek such that you use your own body to cure another person's illness? Do you seek thereby [to become a god such as] king Śākra, or king Māra, or Brahmā, or a wheel-turning monarch? What [station of rebirth] within the three realms do you seek?”

The prince then said to king Śākra: “I do not seek for any noble position within the three worlds. What I seek is to attain unsurpassed perfect awakening.”

4.16

爾時帝釋聞此語已，告太子言：汝今刺身，破骨出髓，身體戰掉⁴，有慨恨不？爾時太子即立誓願：我從始刺身體，乃至於今，若無慨恨，大如毛髮，令我身體平復如故。作此誓已，身體平復，如前無異。

When king Śākra heard these words he said to the prince: “You have now pierced your body, broken your bones to extract the marrow, and your body now trembles and shakes [with pain]. Do you feel any regret?”

The prince then made an oath: “If it is truly the case [as I claim] that I have not had even an atom of regret at any point from when I first pierced my body up until now, then may my body be restored to its former state!” As soon as he uttered this oath, his body was restored exactly as it was before.

4.17

爾時帝釋，見此事已，白太子言：太子威德，奇特無比。有強大志，必得成佛。太子成佛時，願先⁵度我。作此誓時，太子默⁶然，而說偈言：

願我成佛時 普度諸天人 身心無罣礙 普慈愛一切
亦度於汝等 令諸眾生類 皆住大涅槃 永受於快樂。

When king Śākra saw this he said to the prince: “Oh prince, your awesome virtue is truly

1 太 Sgz
2 病 Kg
3 [所] P, S, Q, Y
4 卍+爭 Kg
5 光 Kg
6 (口+黑) Kg

beyond compare! Your will is strong, and you will definitely become a buddha. When you do, I pray that you will liberate me first.” When [Śākra] had uttered this prayer, the prince remained silent [expressing his assent, and then] spoke the following verse:

May it be that when I become a Buddha, / I universally liberate gods and men,
my body and mind unobstructed, / universally bestowing love on all,
and may I also liberate you. / I will cause all classes of living beings,
to dwell happily forever / in great *nirvāṇa*.

4.18

爾時太子，說此偈已，諸天雨華，持以供養。復雨無量百千珍¹寶，積滿宮²牆。太子得已，持用布施，布施不止，修諸波羅蜜，皆悉滿足，得成為佛。佛告迦葉：爾時波羅奈³國王者，今我父王閼頭檀是。爾時月音長者，今汝摩訶迦葉是。爾時長者子，今阿祇達比丘是。爾時忍辱鎧太子者，今我釋迦牟尼佛是。爾時帝釋者，今舍利弗⁴是。

When the prince had spoken these verses, all the gods rained flowers down upon him as an offering, and further rained innumerable hundreds of thousands of precious jewels, filling his palace. The prince then used them to practice giving, and giving ceaselessly,⁵ he fully cultivated all the *pāramitās* and [eventually] became a buddha.

The Buddha said to Mahākāśyapa: The king of Vārāṇasī at that time is now my father king Śuddhodana. The prominent man Moon Sound is now you, Mahākāśyapa. The son of that prominent man is now Agnidatta. The prince Guarded by Forbearance is now I, Śākyamuni Buddha. And king Śākra is now Śāriputra.

4.19

佛告迦葉：此阿祇發比丘，乃往過去，風大動故，發狂無知⁶。是故今者入四大定，於風定中，心疑不行。設⁷使此人，入風大定，觀四大者，頭破七分，心裂而死。當教此人修於慈心。

The Buddha said to Mahākāśyapa: In a past life this monk Agnidatta went mad owing to a disturbance of the wind element, and for this reason when he [now] enters the trance of the four elements he hesitates as concerns the trance of the wind element and does not enter it.⁸ Indeed were he to enter the trance of the wind element, when contemplating the four elements his head would split into seven pieces, his heart would rip in half, and he would die. [Accordingly] he must [instead] be taught to cultivate love.

1 除 Kg

2 呂 Sgz

3 (木+奈) Kg

4 Following Kg

5 Or perhaps “and not stopping at only the *pāramitā* of giving,” though this seems to do some violence to the grammar.

6 智 Kg

7 說 Q

8 Translation tentative.

4.20

爾時世尊告阿祇達：汝今¹當觀，一切眾生，悉為五苦之所逼切。汝今應當生大慈心，欲²免眾苦，觀色受想³行識，悉皆無常苦空無我。

The World-honored One then said to Agnidatta: You must now contemplate all sentient beings, oppressed by the five kinds of suffering. You should arouse great love [for them], and wish that they escape from suffering and contemplate the impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and non-self of [the five *skandhas* of] material form, sensations, perceptions, formations, and consciousness.

4.21

阿祇達聞佛說此，豁⁴然意解，應時即得阿羅漢道，三明六通，具八解脫。即於佛前，躡身空中，作十八變。作十八變已，從空中下，頂禮佛足。

When Agnidatta heard what the Buddha had said, his mind was suddenly liberated, and he immediately became an arhat, possessed of the three knowledges and six powers, endowed with the eight liberations. Right in front of the Buddha he leapt into the air and performed the eighteen displays of magic power. Descending to the ground, he bowed his head to the Buddha's feet.

4.22

白言：世尊，如來今者為我宣說往昔因緣，及說慈心，廣演四諦。我因佛力，尋時即破三界結業，成⁵阿羅漢。唯願天尊，為未來世濁惡⁶眾生，惡業罪⁷故，生五濁世。如此眾生，若修頭陀行諸禪定，得阿那含，如我心疑停⁸住不行，當修何法得離苦際？

[Agnidatta] said: “World-honored One! The Tathāgata has now explained the details of my past lives, has explained [the cultivation of] love, and has thoroughly expounded the four noble truths. [Hearing these things,] by the Buddha's power I have immediately shattered the karma that entangled me⁹ in the triple world and have become an arhat.

1 +應 Kg

2 [欲] Sgz; 欲免眾苦 = 勉眾苦患 Kg

3 相 Sgz

4 欲 Kg

5 我 Kg

6 怨 Sgz

7 羅 Kg

8 佛 Kg

9 The word 結業 occurs frequently in Chinese Buddhist exegetical texts, and is an important term whose exact meaning is not always clear. On the surface it seems to be a combination of the terms for *kleśa* (結使) and *karma* (業). Nakamura hence defines the term as “the karma (業) created on the basis of the defilements (煩惱)” (BGDJT, 318). Actual examples of the word, however, are not always clear. The earliest example may be the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* where it seems to be used exclusively to describe the body of rebirth voluntarily taken on by a bodhisattva (T.1509:25.106b21–22; 146a28–29). Interestingly, the same term is used in the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture* to describe the impure human body, “born from defiled karma” (T.618:15.315c17–18). In the present passage it would appear to have a meaning close to that given by Nakamura. Indeed in a passage below (4.35) the term is mentioned again where it is paired with the 98 *anuśaya* (九十八使), which would suggest that it refers to the karma produced on their basis. This is also the meaning that seems to become standard in the later

Oh you, honored by the gods, [please now teach] for the sake of the evil, impure sentient beings in future ages who because of the sins of their evil karma will be reborn in the age of the five corruptions.¹ What method should these beings cultivate to so as to leave behind all suffering if, like me, they have cultivated the ascetic practices, practiced the trances, attained the stage of the *anagamin*, and yet are then overcome with hesitation and do not progress further?”

4.23

佛告阿祇達：諦聽諦聽²，當善思之。如來今者因汝阿祇達，普為未來世一切眾生，廣說從阿那含至阿羅漢。於其中間，所有微細，一切境界，當自分別。

The Buddha said to Agnidatta: Listen carefully, listen carefully, and consider [what I say] well. Inspired by you, Agnidatta, for the sake of all living beings of the future I will now thoroughly explain how an *anāgamin* can become an arhat. I will make clear all of the subtleties [of this process] and all the verificatory visions [that accompany it].³

4.24

若風病多者，入風大定時，因風大故，喜發狂病。當教觀佛。教觀佛者，教觀如來十力、四無所畏、十八不共法、大慈、大悲、三念處法。

For one in whom there is an abundance of wind-element sickness, entering the trance of the wind element is likely to cause madness born of the wind element.⁴ [Instead, such a person] must be taught to contemplate the Buddha.⁵ As for how he should be instructed to contemplate the Buddha, he must be instructed to contemplate the Buddha’s ten powers, four kinds of fearlessness, eighteen unique qualities, great compassion and great love, and three bases of mindfulness.⁶

Chinese exegetical tradition. For example a passage from Jizang’s commentary to the *Lotus Sutra* explains that “defiled karma is produced on the basis of the six kinds of *kleśa* (煩惱), and as a result one is unable to escape rebirth” (以起此六種煩惱故起結業不得離生老; T.1721:34.632b22–23).

- 1 The age of the “five corruptions” (*wu zhuo* 五濁) traditionally referred to the increasingly inhospitable conditions of the world at the end of a cosmic cycle. Abhidharma texts state that during such times buddhas do not appear in the world. Mahāyāna texts often use this idea as a more generic term for human existence, and they specifically say that buddhas *do* appear during such times. The term also appears—and this is how it is used here—in accounts of the eventual decline and disappearance of Buddhism, the implication being that the time when Buddhism disappears will be similar in its awfulness to the period at the end of the *kalpa*. For a discussion of these various meanings, see Chappell 1980, 139–143.
- 2 [諦聽] Sgz, Kg
- 3 The wording here is peculiar, and I would be inclined to think that the meaning should be “all of the subtle verificatory visions,” but grammatically this does not seem possible.
- 4 The curious expression “is likely to cause madness” 喜發狂病 is also found below in *Methods for Curing*, within the section that describes how to cure problems that arise when entering the trance of the earth element (5.102). A similar expression occurs in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* where it describes what will happen if a practitioner allows his mind to become distracted during meditation (T.643:15.691c24–25).
- 5 Note that this instruction is different than the advice given to Agnidatta himself in the course of the story above, where he is told to cultivate love (*maitrī*), though as we see below (4.29) the practice here of contemplating the Buddha does eventually segue into the cultivation of love.
- 6 These qualities are among the standard items invoked when contemplating the dharma-body (法身) of the Buddha, in contrast to his material body (色身), which is invoked according to the 32 marks. Such, for example, is the distinction seen in Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* (T.614:15.281b8–9). Such a contrast seems to be

4.25

觀此法時，自然得見無量色身，微細¹妙相好。或有諸佛，飛騰空中，作十八變。或有諸佛，一一相好，普現²無量百千變化。見此事時，當起恭敬供養之心，作香華想，普散諸佛。

When he contemplates these things³ he will suddenly see the material bodies of innumerable buddhas, each adorned with the marvelous marks. Some fly through the air, performing the eighteen displays of miraculous power. There are some that within each of their bodily marks display innumerable hundreds of thousands of miracles.⁴ When [the practitioner] has seen these things he must, with a mind of reverence and devotion, imagine scattering fragrant flowers atop these buddhas

4.26

然⁵後復當自思惟言：我今身中五陰、四大，皆悉無常⁶，生滅不住。結使枝條，及使根本，皆悉無常。我所念者，念佛十力、四無所畏、十八不共{法}⁷、大慈、大悲。如是功德莊嚴色身，猶如寶瓶盛如意寶珠，寶珠⁸力故，映飾此瓶。珠無我所，瓶亦無住，但為眾生。佛亦如是，無有色性及與色像，解脫清淨。云何我今諦觀如來十力、是處非處力、乃至漏盡力、十八不共法、大慈、大悲，云何更見無量色像？

Then he must consider as follows: “The five dark elements (*skandha*) and four great elements (*mahābhūta*) within my body are all impermanent, perishing, not enduring. Both the branches and the roots of the defilements are also all impermanent. I now bring to mind the Buddha’s ten powers, four kinds of fearlessness, eighteen unique qualities, great compassion, and great love. A material body ornamented with virtues such as these may be compared to a precious vase filled with magic gems, which through their power splendidly illuminate the vase. But the gems have no self, and the vase itself is without a controlling power; [the gems shine (?)] only for the sake of sentient beings. The Buddha too is like this. He lacks the nature of materiality, and has no material image, his liberation being complete.⁹ Why then when I contemplate the Buddha’s ten powers, which range from the power [to know] what is proper and improper up to the power [consisting in] the knowledge of the destruction of the defilements, [as well as the Buddha’s] eighteen unique qualities, great compassion and great love, do I see these innumerable material images [of the Buddha]?”

implied here as well, as is made explicit below (4.26–27).

1 [細] Kg

2 見 P, S, Q, Y; 觀 Kg

3 Literally “these *dharmas*,” referring it would seem to the qualities of the Buddha mentioned above.

4 It is not entirely clear what it means to display “transformations” (*bian* 變), translated here as “miracles,” *within* each of the bodily marks.

5 亦 Kg

6 皆悉無常 = 皆常無悉 Kg

7 Following P, S, Q, Y.

8 [寶珠] Sgz

9 I am uncertain how best to interpret the four characters 解脫清淨. Presumably these refer to the Buddha, but it would seem possible to construe them either as saying that the Buddha is both “liberated” and “pure,” or that his liberation is of a particularly “pure” kind. Either way this seems to be an attempt to explain why it is that the Buddha lacks any “materiality” (色) and has no material image (色像).

4.27

作此想已，見真金像，滿娑婆世界。行、住、坐、臥四威儀中，皆說苦、空、無常、無我。雖見此事，復當起意想：是諸佛，皆是戒、定、慧、解脫、解脫知見、十力、四無所畏、十八不共法、大慈、大悲、三念處，如此功德所共合成，云何有色。

When he has considered thus¹ he then sees pure gold [buddha]-images filling the entire universe. In the four noble postures of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down they preach of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self. Though he sees these [amazing] things, he must yet further consider as follows: “These various buddhas are [in actuality] formed through the coming together of virtues, namely precepts, concentration, wisdom, liberation, knowledge and vision of liberation,² the ten powers, four kinds of fearlessness, eighteen unique qualities, great compassion, great love, and three bases of mindfulness. How then could they have material form [such as I see them now]?”³

4.28

作此想時，一一諦觀，令⁴一切佛身心無礙，亦無色[想]{相}。自見己身，如空中雲。觀五受陰，無諸性相，豁⁵然歡喜。復還見身，如蓮華聚，周匝遍滿三千大千世界。見諸坐佛，坐己華上，為說甚深空、無我、無願、無作、聖賢十四境界門。

When he has considered thus, he then carefully contemplates, and causes the bodies and minds of all the buddhas [that he sees] to become transparent and immaterial.⁶ He further sees his own body to be [immaterial] like clouds in the sky. Contemplating the five clung-to dark elements [of his own body],⁷ [he sees that] they lack any innate nature, and he suddenly feels a great happiness. He then sees his body to be like a mass of lotus flowers filling the cosmos in all directions. He sees various buddhas sitting atop lotus flowers preaching the profound teachings of emptiness, non-self, wishlessness, non-intention, and the fourteen stages⁸ of sainthood.⁹

1 Here we find *xiang* 想, normally translated as “imagine,” use in a way that is indistinguishable from many of the other words for thinking used throughout the text.

2 The five pure *skandhas*. See above passage 1.169.

3 Section 4.27 seems to repeat nearly exactly the contents of 4.26, the only difference now being that the buddhas the practitioner sees are described as taking the four postures of walking, sitting, standing and lying down.

4 命 Kg

5 欲 Kg

6 Translation tentative. In the original reading perhaps 亦無色想 applies to the practitioner: “and such that he has no conception of materiality [in regards the buddhas].” Either way the idea seems to be the same.

7 On *shou yin* 受陰 see above p.455n1.

8 Here I translate *jing jie* 境界 not as “verificatory vision” but as “stage.”

9 Satō suggests that 聖賢十四境界 here refers to the “fourteen kinds of miraculous transformations (變化) effectuated by buddhas and bodhisattvas once they have attained the magical powers” (Satō 1931, 249), but I have found nothing to support this interpretation (he is perhaps confusing this with the *eighteen* transformations). Rather, it appears to refer a theory of the Buddhist path. In China different version of a 14-staged path were know, and these are discussed extensively by late sixth-century Chinese exegetes. Some of these arrangements attempted to incorporated Mahāyāna path theories by including the bodhisattva stages. Thus according to Jizang 吉藏, for example, the “fourteen kinds of sages and worthies” (十四賢聖) refers to the stages of “the outer [non-buddhist] ordinary being (*pṛthagjana*)” (外凡), the three kinds of “inner [Buddhist] ordinary being” 內凡, and the ten bodhisattva stages (十地). See *Fa hua yi shu* 法華義, T.1721:34.461b19–20. However writing around the same time as Jizang, Huiyuan the younger also refers to a 14-level path theory using this title. Though he does

4.29

佛告阿祇達：若有行者，見此事已，當教慈心。教慈心者，[敬]{教}¹觀地獄。爾時行者，即見十八地獄，火車鑪²炭，刀山劍樹。受苦眾生，皆是己前身父母、宗親、眷屬，或是師、徒、諸善知識。見一人，阿鼻地獄猛火燒身。或復有人，節節火然，或上劍樹，或踏³刀山，或投⁴鑊湯，或入灰河，或飲沸屎，或噉⁵熱鐵丸，或飲融⁶銅，或臥鐵牀，或抱銅柱，或入劍林碎身無數，或挑⁷眼[無數]⁸，持熱銅丸安眼眶⁹中。

The Buddha said to Agnidatta: A practitioner who sees these things must then be instructed [in the cultivation of] love. One being instructed in the [cultivation of] love should be instructed to contemplate the hells. When [he does so] he immediately sees the eighteen hells, with their chariots of fire, their burning coals, their blade-mountains and sword-trees.¹⁰ [He imagines] the being suffering there as his parents, extended family, associates, teachers, or

not list the stages in detail, he claims that it reflects the opinions of the “Abhidharma,” making it unlikely to have included the ten bodhisattva stages (*Da cheng yi zhang* 大乘義章, T.1851:44.656c29). Huiyuan may be referring to the same theory mentioned by Zhiyi, who also claims that the “Abhidharma” speaks of “seven stages of the worthy (賢) and seven stages of the sage (聖)” (*The Great Calming and Contemplation*, T.1911:46.30c28–29). Even Zhiyi, however, does not say precisely what these 14 stages are, but from the use of these two expressions in other sources we may infer. The “seven stages of the worthy” are thus explained in many Chinese commentaries as a division of the stages of the path that occur prior to the attainment of the fruits. According to the most normal explanation, these are i) the stage of the five preliminary meditation methods (五停心觀), ii) the *smṛtyupasthāna* focusing on the own-character (*sva-lakṣana*) of objects (別相念處), iii) the *smṛtyupasthāna* focusing on the universal-character (*samanyalakṣana*) of objects (總相念處), and iv)–vii) the four “aids to penetration” (*nirvedhabhāgiyā*) of “heat,” “summit,” “acceptance,” and “highest worldly *dharma*s” (see for example Jizang’s *Ren wang bo re jing shu* 仁王般若經疏, T.1707:33.319c2–5). The “seven stages of the sage” (七聖), on the other hand, refer to a classification of the different kinds of saints (those at the level of *śrotāpanna* and above) found in Sarvāstivādin sources (*A pi da mo ju she lun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論, T.1558:29.131b16–19). As far as I can determine, however, Indian Abhidharma texts available in Chinese translation do not explicitly combine these two lists of seven into a single group. The only potentially Indian source in China in which such a 14-fold list appears seems to be the **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* which, in a passage noting that those who violate celibacy will not be able to attain any of the four fruits, says that such people “will not be counted among the fourteen kinds of persons” 不入十四人數 (T.1440:23.515b18). Given the context, this would appear to refer to a 14-fold division of attainments, but since there is no further discussion it is impossible to be certain.

1 Following K, P, Q, Sgz, Kg (the Taishō is presumably a misprint)

2 Replacing the Taishō’s printing of 爐 with the character as it actually appears in K and all other editions.

3 磴 Kg

4 提 Kg

5 嚴 Kg

6 鎔 P, S, Q, Y

7 桃 Sgz, Kg

8 The two characters 無數 seem to have been accidentally copied again from the previous sentence.

9 匡 P; (走+主) Kg

10 These stereotypical features of the hell are found in many sources available in Chinese in the early fifth century (see for example *Zeng yi a han jing* 增壹阿含經, T.125:2.767a11–12). In the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* the cultivation of love (慈心; *maitrī*) also involves imagining the beings of hell as ones parents or relatives, and uses very similar language (T.643:15.674c7–12).

disciples from past lives. He sees each of them, their bodies burned by the raging fires of the Avīci hell. Some are burning all over their bodies. Some are [made to] climb sword-trees. Some are [made to] walk upon blade-mountains. Some are thrown into cauldrons of boiling liquid. Some are made to enter rivers of ash. Some are made to drink boiling shit. Some are made to swallow red-hot iron balls. Some are made to drink molten copper. Some are made to lie on beds of nails. Some are tied to copper pillars. Some are made to enter forests of swords, their bodies sliced into innumerable pieces. Some have their eyes ripped out and hot iron balls pressed into their eye-sockets.

4.30

或見餓¹鬼，身形長大，數十由旬，噉火噉炭。或飲膿血，變成融²銅，舉體火起，足跟銅流。或見闇冥鐵圍山間，滿中眾生，狀³如羅刹，更相食噉。見諸夜叉，裸形黑瘦，雙牙⁴上出，頭上火然，首如牛頭，角端兩血⁵。復見世間虎、狼、師子諸惡禽獸，更相噉食。復見一切諸畜生苦。或見阿修羅，割⁶截耳鼻，受諸苦事。

Or he sees [beings in the realm of] the hungry ghosts,⁷ their bodies tens of *yojanas* tall, eating fire and burning coals. Some drink pus and blood, which transforms into molten copper [as they drink it], their bodies igniting in flames and molten copper flowing [from the] soles of their feet.⁸ Or else he see the beings [living] in the dark iron-encircling mountains. They look like *rākṣasa*-demons and feed on one another. He also sees various *yakṣa*-demons, their naked bodies black and thin. Each with two fangs, fire shoots from the top of their bull-heads, and blood rains from their horns. He further sees all the various evil beasts of the world—tigers, wolves, lions, and so forth. They too devour each other. He further sees all the suffering⁹ of domesticated animals.¹⁰ Or else he sees the *asuras*. who with severed ears and noses experience various sufferings.

4.31

復見三界一切眾生，為欲¹¹所使，悉受苦惱。觀無想天，猶如電幻，不久當墮大地獄中。舉要言之，三界二十五有一切眾生，皆有三塗苦惱之業。

He further sees all beings in the three worlds who, driven by desire, experience painful suffering. He contemplates that [even the] gods free from thinking¹² [have lives] that are brief

1 鐵 Sgz

2 鎔 P, S, Q, Y

3 伏 Sgz

4 功 Kg

5 無 Kg

6 剖 Kg

7 As is now clear the meditator moves from hell to the remaining realms of rebirth.

8 My translation of 足跟銅流 as “molten copper flowing [from the] soles of their feet” is tentative.

9 The syntax here is peculiar and my translation is tentative.

10 Here 畜生 seems to mean not simply “animal,” as it often does in Buddhist texts, but its more proper Chinese sense of “domesticated animal.”

11 +使 Sgz, Kg

12 Known in Indian sources as the “thoughtless ones” (*asaṃjñi-sattva*), these beings are variously described in traditional sources but are in any case thought to live in a very high heaven accessible only to those who cultivate

and impermanent] like a flash of lightning, or an illusion, and will before long be reborn in hells. In short, all beings, wherever they may be in the twenty-five states of existence¹ of the three worlds, have karma [leading to] the three painful, agonizing realms of rebirth.²

4.32

爾時行者，觀見三界受苦眾生，其心明了，如觀掌中。深起慈悲，生憐愍心。見諸眾生，宿行惡業，故受惡報。見此事已，悲泣兩淚，欲生救護，盡其心力，不能救濟。爾時心中極生憐愍，厭患生死，不願久處。心生驚怖，如人捉³刀欲來害己。見此事已，更起慈悲，欲拔苦者，無奈之何。

When the practitioner sees the beings in the three worlds who are experiencing suffering, he sees them clearly, as if gazing at something in the palm of his hand. He then gives rise to deep love and compassion, and arouses pity in his mind. He sees that these beings are now experiencing this terrible retribution as a result of their evil actions in previous lives. When he has seen this, tears of compassion pour forth and he wishes to save them. But though he exerts his mind to the utmost he is unable to save them.

Then, his mind full of pity, he feels revulsion towards [the cycle of] birth and death, and does not wish to remain long [within it]. He becomes afraid, as if someone were attacking him with a knife. When he has seen this, he again arouses love and compassion. But though he desires to save those who are suffering there is nothing he can do.

4.33

爾時行者，內自思惟：是諸眾生，因於無明。無明緣行，行緣識，識緣名色，名色緣六入，六入緣觸，觸緣受，受緣愛，愛緣取，取緣有，有緣生，生緣老、死、憂、悲、苦、惱。

At this time the practitioner should consider: “These various beings [experience suffering] because of ignorance, [for]⁴ ignorance is the cause of the formations, formations are the cause of consciousness, consciousness is the cause of mentality and materiality, mentality and materiality is the cause of the six sense spheres, the six sense spheres are the cause of sense contact, sense contact is the cause of sensation, sensation is the cause attachment, attachment is the cause of grasping, grasping is the cause of coming into being, coming into being is the cause of birth, and birth is the cause of old age, death, sorrow, grief, suffering, and despair.”

the trance of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*). Unlike the other heavens into which those who master high levels of trance are reborn, it is often said that it is not possible to attain liberation from this heaven, so that being reborn there is not particularly desirable. In this passage, however, none of these connotations seem to be active, and the heaven is given simply as the heaven with the longest lifespan.

- 1 The twenty-five states (二十五有) is a particular classification of the possible realms of rebirth that, in Chinese Buddhism, is usually associated with the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, and indeed this expression is rare in other translated Indian texts (BGDJT, 1045; *Mochizuki*, 4032).
- 2 Presumably this means to the three realms of hell, the hungry ghosts, and the animal realm.
- 3 提 Kg
- 4 The text here now proceeds through the twelve links of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*).

4.34

爾時行者，內自思惟。此無明者，從何處來，孚乳產生，遍滿三界。觀此無明，假於地大，而得成長。依於風大，而得動搖。因於地大，體堅不壞。火大照育，水成眾性... 如是動作。風性不住。水性隨流。火性炎[盛]{上}¹。地性堅韌²。此四大性，二上二下，諸方亦二。東方者，成色陰性。南方者，成受陰性。西方者，成想陰性。北方者，成行陰性。上方者，成識陰性。

The practitioner then considers: “From where does this ignorance come? [How does it] grow and develop such that it fills the three world? Contemplating this ignorance, [I see that] it grows in dependence upon the earth element, moves relying on the wind element. From the earth element it gets its fixity. The fire element nurtures it. Water completes its natures (?) . . . in this way it moves (?).³ The nature of the wind element is constant motion. The nature of the water element is to follow along with the current. The nature of the fire element is to blaze upwards. The nature of the earth element is solidity. Thus of the four elements two have the nature of going upwards [wind and fire], while two have the nature of going downwards [earth and water], and by two also in each of the directions (?).⁴ The eastern direction conforms with (?)⁵ the nature of the material form.⁶ The southern direction conforms with the nature of sensations. The western direction conforms with the nature of conceptions. The northern direction conforms with the nature of the volitional formations. The upper direction conforms with the nature of consciousness.

4.35

此五受陰，依無明有。從觸受生，樂觸因緣，生於諸受。受因緣生愛取有，有因緣故生於三界。九十八使，及諸結業，纏縛眾生，無有出期。如是諸業，從無明有，依癡愛生。

These five clung-to *skandhas* depend on ignorance for their existence.⁷ From sensory contact, sensation arises. [This means that] because of pleasant contact the various kinds of sensation arise. And with sensation as the condition there arises attachment, clinging, and

1 Tentatively following Kg.

2 (革+卯) Sgz; 勒 Kg

3 The text seems corrupt. Initially we see an enumeration of earth and fire elements and their distinctive contributions to the growth of ignorance. We here see water, but then following this the cycle is reversed (wind, water, fire, earth). We would thus expect another mention of wind at the end of the first list, and indeed the presence of wind would explain the four characters “in this way it moves” 如是動作, for the initial list gives the distinctive contribution of each element to the growth of beings, and movement is what we would expect from wind. Something thus seems to have been dropped from the text.

4 The wording here draws from the *Jin guang ming jing* 金光明經, Dharmakṣema’s translation of the *Survārṇa-bhāsottama-sūtra*, and we saw these exacts terms used to describe the four elements and their natures above (see 1.181; these expressions are discussed in chapter 2 p.83–84). Here, however, it is very difficult to make sense of the phrase 諸方亦二, and one gets the feeling that this description of the elements has simply been copied from the *Jin guang ming jing* without a clear understanding of what it means. How precisely this then connects to the next passage which aligns the five directions with the five *skandha* is also not evident.

5 The meaning of 成 here is unclear.

6 Here now follow the five *skandha*.

7 Here we now return to *pratītyasamutpāda*, though in an abbreviated form that leaves out the intermediate links between ignorance and the five *skandha* (usually taken as equivalent to the fourth link, “mentality and materiality,” *ming se* 名色; *nāma-rūpa*).

coming-into-being. With coming-into-being as the condition, [a person is] born somewhere within the triple-world. The ninety-eight defilements and the various entangling karma [produced on their basis]¹ bind these living beings, and there is no hope of escape. All such karma arises from ignorance and depends on deluded attachment² for its existence.

4.36

此無明者，本相所出，從何而生，遍布三界，於諸眾生為大纏縛？我今應觀³無明[識]{實?}⁴相，從何處起。此無明者，為是地大，為離地大，為與地合，為從地生，為從地滅。地性本空。[推]⁵{此?}地無主，云何無明。起癡愛想，緣行而有。而此諸行，及愛、取、有，為從風起，為從水生，為火所照⁶。

Yet when we consider the true character of ignorance,⁷ from where does it arise such that it then spreads throughout the triple-world, becoming a great snare for living beings? I must now contemplate the true character of ignorance.⁸ From where does it arise? Is ignorance the earth element? Is it separate from the earth element? Is it contained within the earth element? Does it arise from the earth element? Is it destroyed by the earth element? The nature of the earth element is that it is originally empty. Since the earth element thus lacks a controlling principle,

1 On the term 結業, see above section 4.22, note 9.

2 The term 癡愛 is usually understood to mean “ignorance and attachment” (BGDJIT, 952), and there are many examples in both Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist texts and native Chinese Buddhist commentaries where this is the meaning. However occasionally this word is used as a single term referring to attachment (*trṣṇā*) in contrast to ignorance (*avidyā*). Zhiyi, for example, regularly takes the word in this meaning: “Ignorance is the father, deluded attachment is the mother, and together they produce the defilements as their children” 無明為父，癡愛為母，出生煩惱之子孫 (*Miao fa lian hua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義, T.1716:33.757c29–758a1). By itself 癡 is the regular translation of *moha* (in the triad *taṇhā* 貪, *dveṣa* 嗔, *moha* 癡), and this word is generally synonymous with ignorance (*avidyā*) as it appears in the formula for *pratīyasamutpāda*. In Chinese, however, the more basic meaning of 癡 is something like “infatuation,” and carries the sense of both confusion and greed or lustful desire. Perhaps for this reason 癡愛 was often interpreted by Chinese authors as a single concept in contrast to ignorance (無明).

3 親 Sgz

4 See note 9 below.

5 惟 Kg

6 明 Sgz

7 Translation tentative. In particular the meaning of 本相所出 is not clear to me.

8 Translation and emendation tentative. “Consciousness” (識) here seems potentially out of place, as the entire discussion has been about ignorance. However since consciousness (*viññāna*) is the third link in the series of *pratīyasamutpāda*, it is not entirely implausible that it would be discussed here in conjunction with ignorance, especially as the question concerns how ignorance can “spread through the triple-world” (遍布三界), which thus seems to point to the idea of the transmigration of consciousness through successive rebirths. Nonetheless, I think it is marginally more likely that *shi* 識 (“consciousness”) is here a mistake for the homophone *shi* 實, “true.” Indeed the expression “true character of consciousness” (無明實相) appears in Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Chi shi jing* 持世經 (T.482:14.656a1), a text that was a key source for his compilation of the bodhisattva meditation methods in the *Meditation Scripture*. Sengrui’s preface to Kumārajīva’s text indeed notes that it was in particular in regards to the meditation on *pratīyasamutpāda* that Kumārajīva drew from the *Chi shi jing* (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.65b5–6), and the context there for the expression “true character of consciousness” (無明實相) is, as here in the *Chan Essentials*, the contemplation of the ultimate emptiness of ignorance itself.

how much more so ignorance [itself].

As for the arising of imagination [rooted in] deluded attachment,¹ this comes about in dependence on volitional formations. Yet these volitional formations, as well as craving, clinging, and coming-into-being, are stirred into motion by the wind element, are born from the water element, and nurtured by the fire element.”²

4.37

如此四大，一一諦觀。此諸大者，實無性相，同如實際。云何牽諸眾生，纏在三界，為大煩惱之所燒然？作此³思惟已，怖畏生死，患生天樂。觀諸天宮，如夢，如幻，如露，如電，如呼聲響。普見一切三界眾生，猶如環旋，受苦無窮。

[The practitioner must] then carefully contemplate each of these four elements. These four elements in truth have no inherent characteristics, and they are equal to [emptiness,] which is the ultimate limit of reality.⁴ [Being empty,] how could they lead living beings about, binding them to the triple-world and causing them to be burned by the afflictions?

Having considered in this manner, [the practitioner] becomes afraid of birth and death, and recoils from rebirth in the blissful heavens. He contemplates the heavenly palaces to be [as transient] as dreams, illusions, dew, lightning, or echoes. He sees the living beings of the triple world as [experiencing endless rebirth] like a spinning wheel, undergoing limitless suffering.

4.38

見此事已，愁憂不樂世間。如駛水流，求涅槃道，剎那剎那頃，欲求解脫。爾時復當更教數息。一數二隨，二數三隨，三數四隨，四數五隨，五數六隨，六數七隨，七數八隨，八數九隨，九數十隨，十數百隨，百數千隨。隨⁵息多少，攝氣令住。

When he has seen this he becomes despondent and takes no delight in the world. He

1 Or perhaps we should emend 癡愛想 to 癡愛相?

2 The categorization given here seems to be based on the same division found in Sarvāstivādin sources, where the links of *pratīyasamutpāda* are divided into “action” *karma*, “defilements” *kleśa*, and “bases” *vastu* (sometimes this final category is given as “suffering,” *duḥkha*). *Vastu* refers to the fruit of past karma, and as such describes the entirety of one’s sensory experience in the present or future, namely consciousness, name-and-form, the six sense bases, contact, sensation (the present life), as well as birth, and old-age-and-death (the future life). “Actions” (*karma*) refer to volitional formations (*saṃskāra*), for the past life, and *bhāva* (“coming into being”), for the present life. The remainder of the terms, ignorance, attachment, and grasping, refer to “defilements” (on the details of this classification in Sarvāstivādin sources, see Dhammajoti 2009, 418–423). It is surely not a coincidence that the items from *pratīyasamutpāda* mentioned here are precisely those categorized as *karma* or *kleśa*. What is truly remarkable, however, is that these quintessentially *mental* phenomena are here explained in material terms, as deriving from the actions of the four great elements (*mahābhūta*). There also seems here to be some attempt to distribute the four elements over the various terms, and in the previous passage earth is linked to ignorance, while here wind, fire, and water are associated with the various other links.

3 是 Sgz

4 The expression “reality-limit” (*shi ji* 實際) is found in Chinese translations of Prajñāpāramitā and Prajñāpāramitā-inspired Mahāyāna texts, usually as a translation of the term *bhūtakoti*. Literally translatable as “the limit of reality,” the term is used to denote emptiness as the ultimate ground (or non-ground) of all reality (though in early Mahāyāna texts it actually seems to have had a negative meaning of the *nirvāṇa* aspired to by arhats—see Sharf 2002, 229–230).

5 [隨] Sgz

[rather] seeks to obtain *nirvāṇa* as quickly as [one would follow the course of a] fast flowing stream, and he strives for liberation in each moment. At this time he must again be instructed to count his breath:¹ counting one breath and following two breaths, counting two and following three, counting three and following four, counting four and following five, counting five and following six, counting six and following seven, counting seven and following eight, counting eight and following nine, counting nine and following ten, counting ten and following one hundred, counting one hundred and following one thousand. Having followed however many breaths, he then holds his breath firmly [and does not breathe].²

4.39

爾時自見己身，如百千萬億蓮華一切萎脆³。四面風來，吹去萎華，變成琉璃。如琉璃器，自見其心，如大華樹，從⁴下方金剛際，乃至三界頂上。有四菓。其菓微妙，如如意珠。有六種光，遍照三千大千世界。

He then sees his own body as like a hundred thousand million billion withered lotus flowers. A wind then blows from all directions scattering the withered flowers and transforming [his body] into beryl. [His body transparent] like a beryl vessel, he sees his heart [within] like a giant flowering tree stretching from the adamantine extremity below up to the summit of the triple world. [On the tree] are four marvelous fruits, like magic jewels, each glowing with six kinds of light that illuminate the entire cosmos.

4.40

行者見此事時，見金剛地際乃至上方三界之頂，滿中諸佛，與大弟子眷屬圍繞。或有諸佛，飛騰虛空，身上出水，身下出火，身下出水，身上出火，東踊⁵西沒，西踊⁶東沒，南踊⁷北沒，北踊⁸南沒，中踊⁹邊沒，邊踊¹⁰中沒，或現大身滿虛空中，大復現小如芥子許。變現自在，隨意無礙。或見¹¹諸聲聞，入四大定，身如火聚，諸火焰¹²端。猶如金筒，盛眾色水。復見己身，如彼入定。

When the practitioner sees this he [then] sees buddhas, [each] surrounded by their retinue of great disciples, filling [the universe] from the adamantine extremity [below] up to the summit of the triple world above. Some of these buddhas fly through the air emitting water from the upper part of their bodies and fire from the lower part; [some] rise up in the east and disappear in

1 A very similar description of breath meditation appeared above (2.39–2.41), and like there, the correct interpretation of the passage is not clear.

2 See also below (4.58) where there is a similar injunction to “seal the breath within” (閉氣).

3 脆 Sgz; (𠄎+包) Kg

4 [從] Kg

5 涌 P, S, Q, Y

6 涌 P, S, Q, Y

7 涌 P, S, Q, Y

8 涌 P, S, Q, Y

9 涌 P, S, Q, Y

10 涌 P, S, Q, Y

11 現 Sgz

12 炎 Sgz, Kg

the west; [some] rise up in the west and disappear in the east; [some] rise up from the south and disappear in the north; [some] rise up in the north and disappear in the south; [some] rise up in the center and disappear in the outer regions; [some] rise up in the outer regions and disappear in the center; [some] manifest enormous bodies that fill the sky and then become as small as mustard seeds. Just as they desire, without any hindrance, they freely manifest such powers. Or else [the practitioner] sees various voice-hearers immersed in the trance of the four great elements. Their bodies become like masses of fire burning brightly, [or] like golden vessels filled with water of various colors. [The practitioner] then further sees himself to be immersed in these trances just like the voice-hearers.

4.41

爾時當教行者而作是言：汝所見者，雖是多佛及諸聲聞，汝今應觀此諸世尊，是無相身，是大解脫，是無學果。應當善攝汝心，如前數息。此數息¹法，有十六科，不可具說²。爾時行者，既數息已，心意恬怕³，寂然無⁴見。

At this time the practitioner must be instructed as follows: “Though you see these many buddhas and voice-hearers you must now contemplate that [the real body of the] World-honored One is the formless body, [which is] great liberation, the fruit of the one beyond study. You must concentrate your mind and as before count the breath.”

The method of breath counting has sixteen parts. These will not be explained here.⁵ Then, having counted his breath [as instructed], the practitioner’s mind becomes calm and tranquil and he does not see any [of the buddhas].

4.42

復⁶當更教觀心蓮華，猶如華樹。[樹]⁷上有{四}⁸菓，如摩尼珠，現六種光。其光明顯，從三界頂，照於下方金剛地際。見心華樹，菱垂⁹欲絕，然深無量。

Next [the practitioner] must again be instructed to contemplate his lotus-flower heart, a flowering tree on which there are four fruits, like *maṇi* jewels, radiating six kinds of light. This light is very bright, illuminating everywhere [in the universe] from the summit of the triple world down to the adamantine extremity. He then sees the flowering tree that is his heart as bending, as if about to break. Yet it is unfathomably thick [and so does not].

1 +此 Sgz

2 Here ends Sgz fascicle five.

3 憺 P, S, Q, Y

4 [無] P, Q, S, Y

5 These refer no doubt to the sixteen modes (*śoḍaśākāra*) of breath contemplation (for references to different presentations of these sixteen, see Demiéville 1954, 415n1).

6 覆 P

7 Following P, Q, S, Y, Kg.

8 Following Kg.

9 菱垂 = (**+死) 棄 Kg

4.43

爾時當觀諸佛法身。諸佛法身者，因色身有。色身者，譬如金瓶。法身者，如摩尼珠。應當諦觀色身之內，十力、四無所畏、十八不共法、大慈、大悲、無礙¹解脫、神智無量。絕妙境界，非眼所見，非心所念。一切諸法，無來無去，不住不壞，同如實際。凡夫愚癡，為老死大賊之所追逐，妄見顛倒，以顛倒故，墮落三塗。愛欲河中，為駛水所漂，沒溺三界。我今云何同凡夫行，妄想見佛？

At this time [the practitioner] should contemplate the dharma body of the buddhas [as follows]: “The dharma body of the buddhas relies on the material body for its existence. The material body is like a golden vase. The dharma body is like the *maṇi* jewel [within the vase]. [I] must carefully contemplate that within the material body there is [the dharma body comprised of] the ten powers, four kinds of fearlessness, eighteen unique qualities, great compassion and great love, unobstructed liberation, and limitless spiritual knowledge. But a vision of such things cannot be had by the eyes or known by the mind. All things neither come nor go, do not abide and do not decay, and are equal to the ultimate limit of reality. Foolish common people are hounded by the bandits of old age and death, [have] false, perverted views, and because of these perverted [views] are reborn in the three [unhappy] realms [of hell, the hungry ghosts, and the animals]. They are swept about by the fast moving waters of the river of attachment and desire, and they drown in the triple world [of rebirth]. How then could I now act the same as these common people and see the buddha through false imagination?”

4.44

我大和上釋迦牟尼佛，往昔之時，頭目髓腦，國城妻子，持用布施，百千苦行，求解脫法。今者，已得超越生死，住大涅槃，寂滅究竟，更不復生。如過去佛法，住常樂處，亦無去來，現在諸智。身心不動，恬怕²無為。如此智慧所成就身，當有何想？云何變動？我今見者，從妄想現，屬諸因緣，故是顛倒色相之法。作是思惟時，一切諸佛及諸賢聖，寂然隱身，更不復現。唯一佛在，有四大弟子以為侍者。

Long ago my great preceptor, Śākyamuni Buddha, gave away his head, eyes, marrow, brains, kingdom, and family, and [undertook] hundreds of thousands of austerities in his pursuit of liberation. He has now transcended birth and death and abides in great *nirvāṇa*, which is ultimately tranquil, and from which there is no further rebirth. Just as do the buddhas of the past, he abides in that place of eternal happiness. He neither comes nor goes, and [in this way] manifests all wisdom (?).³ His body and mind unmoving, he is peaceful and without activity. How could one imagine in any way a body such as this, formed of wisdom as it is? How could it transform or move in any way [and thereby appear to me]? What I now see appears because of imagination, and is based on causes and conditions, and is therefore merely a profane, material, thing.”

When he ponders in this way, all the buddhas and all the sages and worthies [that had appeared to the practitioner] vanish, appearing no more. Only the single buddha [Śākyamuni]

1 闕 P, Q, Kg

2 憺 P, S, Q, Y

3 Translation tentative. The point seems to be that precisely by not “leaving” *nirvāṇa* and appearing in world the Buddha manifests wisdom.

remains, attended by his four great disciples.

4.45

爾時釋迦牟尼世尊，為於行者，更說四大清淨觀法，告言：法子，過去三世諸賢聖等，觀此行時¹，自然皆觀風大觀法。

At this time the world-honored Śākyamuni preaches for the practitioner the contemplation method for the purification of the four great elements. He says: “Oh dharmachild! In the past (?)² all the worthies and sages who cultivated³ this⁴ practice naturally [were able] to cultivate the contemplation of the wind element.⁵

4.46

觀風大者，先觀身內。從心華樹，生一微風，如是微⁶風，漸漸增長，遍滿身體。滿身體已，從毛孔出，滿一房內。滿一房⁷已，見此微風，滿一庭內。滿一庭已，復見漸漸，滿一頃地。滿一頃已，復更增廣，滿一由旬 . . . 滿十由旬，微風纔⁸動，漸漸廣大，遍滿三千大千世界，上⁹至於頂，下至¹⁰金剛際。遍此諸處已，還從頂入，令其心樹一切華葉漸漸萎落。自見己身，如頗梨¹¹鏡，表裏映徹。

To contemplate the wind element first contemplate within your body. From the flowering tree that is your heart there arises a small amount of wind, which gradually grows larger until it fills your entire body. Having filled your body, it exits through the pores and then fills the room. Having filled one room, you will see this slight wind fill the entire building. Having filled the building, you will see it gradually fill an entire acre. Having filled an acre it will further increase until it fills one *yojana* . . . [up to]¹² . . . ten *yojana*. As soon as the [originally] small amount of wind moves it begins to gradually expand until it fills the entire cosmos, up to the summit [of the triple world] and down to the adamantite extremity.

Having pervaded these places, it returns and reenters through the crown of your head,

1 者 Kg

2 The meaning of 過去三世 is unclear. Usually 三世 refers to the past, present, and future, but that does not work here.

3 Here we find the word *guan* 觀 used very generically, close to how a word such as *bhāvanā* is used in Indian texts. Although I have tried to maintain consistency by translating *guan* 觀 as “contemplate,” in this passage intelligible English seems possible only by deviating from this slightly and rendering it with a more generic “cultivate.”

4 Here presumably “this practice” (此行) refers to the just mentioned “contemplation method for the purification of the four elements” (四大清淨觀法).

5 As will become clear in what follows the order of the contemplation of the elements is the reverse of the usual one, proceeding from wind → water → fire → earth.

6 [微] Kg

7 号 Kg

8 裁 Kg

9 [上] Kg

10 [至] P, S, Q, Y

11 利 Kg

12 The text here repeats the identical wording for all the numbers up to ten.

making all the flowers of the heart-tree gradually wither and fall.¹ You will now see your body to be [a pure] crystal mirror, completely transparent.”²

4.47

爾時復當教觀水大。觀水大者，先觀身內。心華樹端，出一微水，如琉璃氣。漸漸增廣，似白色雲，遍滿身內。滿身內已，從六根出，頂上涌³出。繞身七匝，如白雲行，滴滴雨水。其水柔軟。盈滿一床。滿一床已，漸漸廣大，滿一房內。滿一房已，滿一庭中。滿一庭已，滿一城中。滿一城已，滿[十]{一}⁴頃地。滿[十]{一}⁵頃已，滿百頃地⁶。滿百頃已，滿一由旬，水色正白，如白琉璃光。其氣微細，過於凡夫眼根⁷境界。

At this time [the practitioner] must again be instructed to contemplate the water element. To contemplate the water element, [he must] first contemplate within his body. From the tips of the flowering heart-tree there emerges a slight stream of water, like gaseous beryl. It gradually grows until it is like a white cloud filling the interior of his body. Having filled his body it emerges through the six organs⁸ and bubbles out through the crown of his head. It then circles his body seven times, like a flowing white cloud raining soft drops of water.

[The water] fills his meditation cot, and having filled this one meditation cot it gradually becomes larger until it fills the room. Having filled the room, it then fills the building. Having filled the building, it fills the city. Having filled the city, it fills one *qing* of land. Having one *qing*, it fills one hundred *qing*. Having filled one hundred *qing*, one *yojana* becomes filled with this pure white water, which is like the light of white beryl. This vapor-like [water] is very subtle, and a vision of it cannot be had by those with the eyes of ordinary beings.

4.48

漸漸廣大，滿二由旬 . . . 滿百由旬。滿百由旬已，漸漸廣大，滿一閻浮提。滿一閻浮提已，漸漸廣大，遍滿三千大千世界，上至三界頂，下至金剛際，如是水相，其氣如雲，還從頂入。

[The water] gradually grows larger until it fills two *yojanas* . . . one hundred *yojanas*. Having filled one hundred *yojanas* it gradually expands until it fills all of Jambudvīpa. Having

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- 1 The sequence here mirrors that from above in passage 4.39, where a wind causes the practitioner's body to transform from flowers into a purer substance.
 - 2 As in many of these passages the framing here becomes a problem, and there is no obvious end to the instructions delivered by the Buddha who appears to the practitioner. I have chosen here as an appropriate moment to switch back again to a third-person description, which in the larger frame of the text are the Buddha's instructions to Agnidatta and Ānanda concerning how a generic practitioner should be instructed.
 - 3 踊 Kg
 - 4 Following Kg.
 - 5 Following Kg.
 - 6 城 Kg
 - 7 相 P, S, Q, Y, Kg
 - 8 Translation tentative. The word *liu gen* 六根 usually refers to the six sensory organs including the mind, and it is difficult to see how this could be the correct image in this case. A more appropriate image might be the six openings in the head (two ears, two eyes, mouth and nose), but as far as I know the word 六根 normally does not carry this meaning. Given the ubiquity of the expression 六根, however, a textual corruption might also be possible.

filled Jambudvīpa it gradually expands until it fills the entire cosmos up to the summit of the triple world and down to the adamantine extremity. This water, gaseous like a cloud, then returns and reenters through the crown of his head.

4.49

見此事已，復更教觀¹火大。觀火大者，自觀身內。心華樹端，諸華葉間，有微細火，猶如金光。從心端出，遍滿身內。從毛孔出，漸漸廣大，遍滿一床...滿一由旬。火色變白，如真珠光，更復²鮮白，頗梨雪山，不得為比。紅光照錯，以成文章。漸漸廣大，滿二由旬...滿閻浮提。滿閻浮提已，漸漸廣大，遍滿三千大千世界，上至三界頂，下至金剛際，還從頂入。

When he has seen these things [he] must further be instructed to contemplate the fire element. To contemplate the fire element he first contemplates within his body. Among the leaves of his flowering heart-tree there is a faint fire, like the gleam of gold. It emerges from the tip of his heart and fills his body. It then exits through his pores, gradually expanding until it fills his meditation cot... [up to] one *yojana*. The fire then becomes white, brighter than a pearl and whiter than even crystal or a snow-covered mountain. Interspersed with red light, it forms various patterns. [The fire] gradually expands until it fills two *yojanas*... [and then] all of Jambudvīpa. Having filled Jambudvīpa it gradually expands until it fills the entire cosmos up to the summit of the triple world and down to the adamantine extremity. It then returns and reenters through the crown of his head.

4.50

見此事已，復當更教觀於地大。觀地大者，自見身內，心樹諸華，漸漸廣大，如金剛雲，遍滿身內。滿身內已，復滿一床...滿一由旬。滿一由旬已，其色變青。漸漸廣大...滿閻浮提。滿閻浮提已，漸漸廣大，遍滿三千大千世界，上至三界頂，下至金剛際。還從頂入。

When [he] has seen this he must next be further instructed to contemplate the earth element. When he contemplates the earth element he sees the flowering heart-tree within his body become gradually larger, until it is like a cloud of adamantine filling the inside of his body. Having filled the inside of his body, it then fills his meditation cot... [and then] one *yojana*. Having filled one *yojana*, it changes color, becoming blue. It gradually grows larger... until it fills all of Jambudvīpa. Having filled Jambudvīpa it gradually expands until it fills the entire cosmos, reaching up to the summit of the triple world and down to the adamantine extremity. It then returns and reenters through the crown of his head.

4.51

見此事已，復當更教還觀地大。觀此地大，如金剛雲，難可摧碎，當云何滅？作此觀時³，見佛世尊釋迦牟尼坐金剛座，與尊弟子眷屬五百。坐行者前，異口同音，讚歎滅諦。聞此語已，當觀地大從因緣起，無明所持。無明無性，癡愛無主。虛偽因緣，假名無明，

1 [觀] P, S, Q, Y, Kg

2 須 Kg

3 持 Kg

愛取有等，皆屬此相。

When he has seen this he must be instructed to contemplate the earth element again. When he contemplates the earth element it is like an adamantine cloud, so difficult to shatter that it seems impossible that it would ever perish.

When he performs this contemplation he sees the world-honored buddha Śākyamuni sitting upon an adamantine throne, accompanied by a retinue of five hundred disciples. [They all sit before the practitioner and in unison they praise the noble truth of cessation.¹ When [the practitioner] hears these words, he must contemplate that the earth element is produced through causes and conditions, and that [this earth element] is what supports ignorance.² [Maintained by something that depends on causes and conditions,] ignorance itself thus has no essential nature, and deluded attachment [which comes from ignorance] also has no controlling power. Only in empty dependence on causes and conditions do we provisionally give the name “ignorance,” and this is also true for attachment, grasping, and coming-into-being.³

4.52

作此思惟時，見自心內，眾華樹端，漸漸火起，燒金剛雲。一一雲於諸葉間，與火合體，遍滿身⁴內。滿身內已，地火俱動，遍滿一床... 遍滿閻浮提。地火二大，其性各異，更相鼓動，遍滿三千大千世界，上至三界頂，下至金剛際。還從頂入。

When he considers in this way he sees that from tip of the flowering tree within his heart a fire gradually appears, igniting the adamantine cloud [of the earth element]. Every bit of this cloud within the folds of the leaves [of the heart-tree] merges with the fire and fills the inside of the practitioner’s body. Having filled his body [this cloud of] earth and fire, moving together, fills his meditation cot... [and expands until it] fills Jambudvīpa. Owing to their different natures earth and fire mutually stimulate each other, [expanding until] they fill the entire cosmos up to the summit of the triple world and down to the adamantine extremity. They then return and reenter through the crown of his head.

4.53

見此事已，復當更教觀於風大。觀風⁵大者，自觀身內，心華樹間，出紫色風。水大隨入，滅此風色，同為水色。風動水涌⁶，遍滿⁷身內，漸漸廣大，遍滿一床... 漸漸廣大，遍滿一由旬 [滿一由旬已]。風水二性，其性各異。風吹此水，如琉璃沫，其色焰⁸熾。更相鼓動，遍滿二由旬... 遍滿三千大千世界，上至三界頂。下至金剛際。

1 “Cessation” here being *mie* 滅, the same word that above is applied to the earth element when it is said that it seems that it will never “perish.”

2 Grammatically one might be tempted to read 無明所持 to mean that the earth element is maintained by ignorance. But given what has come before I do not think this can be the meaning.

3 Note that here too as above we find not the entire chain of *pratīyasamutpāda* but only those factors classified as *karma* or *kleśa* (see above p.509n2).

4 耳 P

5 [風] Kg

6 法 P, S, Q, Y; 流 Kg

7 +滿 Kg

8 炎 Kg

When he has seen these things, [the practitioner] must be instructed to again contemplate the wind element. To contemplate the wind element, he contemplates within his body. [He sees] a purple colored wind appear within the flowering heart-tree. Then water enters [the tree] and washes away the wind's [purple] color, making it instead the same color as the water. The wind moves [causing] the water to gush and fill the inside of his body. Gradually growing larger, [this mixture of wind and water] fills his meditation cot . . . gradually growing larger until it fills one *yojana*. The essential natures of water and wind differ. When the wind blows upon the water, the water becomes like a beryl foam, sparkling and gleaming. [The wind] continues to stimulate [the water such that they together] expand, filling two *yojanas* . . . until they fill the entire cosmos up to the summit of the triple world and down to the adamantite extremity.

4.54

見此事已，自見己身，身諸毛孔一切火起。此火光炎¹，遍滿三界。出三界外²，如真金華。華上有葉，葉葉³相次，彼⁴葉光中，演說四諦及十二因緣度生死法。

When [the practitioner] has seen these things, he sees fire emerge from all the pores of his body. This fire burns brightly, filling the triple-world. It then passes beyond the triple-world, becoming like a flower of pure gold. Within the flower are fruits interspersed among the petals, and from within the radiance of these fruits [comes forth] preaching of the teachings of the four noble truths and the twelve-fold chain of conditioned arising, [teachings] that lead to the transcendence of rebirth.

4.55

復見身內，一切水起。其水溫潤，從毛孔出，流布三界，無不遍滿。水色出光，照三界頂，入火光葉中。復見身內，一切風起。遍滿身內，從毛孔出，漸漸廣大。駛速飄疾，遍滿三界。化為金雲，入火光葉中。復有地氣，極為微薄，彌滿四大。

[The practitioner] further sees all kinds of water appearing within his body. The water is warm and slippery, and it flows out of his pores spreading everywhere throughout the entire triple world. The water emits light, shining upwards towards the summit of the triple world where it enters into the fruits that appear within the light of the fire.⁵ He further sees all kinds of wind appear within his body. Having filled the inside of his body, [these winds] emerge from his pores and gradually expand. They race about, filling the triple world. [Reaching the summit of the triple world] they transform into golden clouds which enter into the fruits within the light of the fire. There is also an extremely fine and subtle “earth *qi*” that pervades the [other] four elements.⁶

1 [炎] P, S, Q, Y

2 水 Kg

3 [葉] P; 葉 Kg.

4 [彼] P

5 Or perhaps simply “the fruits that have the radiance of fire.”

6 What is meant by “earth *qi*” 地氣 is not clear, this term appears below in the *Methods for Curing* (5.70).

4.56

見此事已，復當更教諦觀五陰。觀於色陰：此色陰者，依地大有，地大不定。從無明生，無明因緣，妄[見]{現}名色。觀此色相，虛偽不真，亦無生處，假因緣現。因緣性空，色陰亦然。受、想、行、識，性相皆空，中無堅實。觀此五陰，實無因緣，亦無受有。如此四大，云¹何增長遍滿三界。

When [the practitioner] has seen these things he must next be instructed to contemplate the five dark elements (*skandha*). [First] he contemplates the dark element “matter” (*rūpa*): Matter depends on the earth element for its existence, and yet the earth element itself is not fixed. [Further matter] arises from ignorance for, [as declared in the formula for *pratītyasamutpāda*,] with ignorance as a condition there is the dependent arising of mentality and materiality.² Contemplating the character of materiality, [one thus sees that] it is empty, constructed, and not ultimately real, as it lacks any [ultimate] place of origin, appearing only provisionally through causes and conditions. But that which is dependently originated is empty of essential nature, and thus is the dark element (*skandha*) “matter.” [As for the remaining *skandhas* of] sensation, perception, formations and consciousness, their nature is also empty, and they lack any solid core of existence. Contemplating these five dark elements (*skandha*), they lack any true causes and conditions [for their existence] and they do not [in fact] come into existence [in the form of a person]. [In the absence of a truly existing person,] how could the four elements [truly] expand and fill the triple world [as I have seen]?

4.57

作此思惟時，見一切火，從一切毛孔出，遍滿三界，還從一切毛孔入。復見一切地大。猶如金剛雲，從一切毛孔出³，遍滿三界，還從一切毛孔入。復見水大。猶如微塵，從一切毛孔出，遍滿三界，還從一切毛孔入。復見風大。其勢羸劣，從一切毛孔出，遍滿三界，還從一切毛孔入。如是四大，從毛孔出，從毛孔入，往復反覆，經⁴八百遍。

When [the practitioner] has considered in this way he sees fire emerge through his pores, fill the triple world, and then reenter his body through his pores. He further sees the earth element. Like an adamant cloud it emerges through his pores, fills the triple world, and then returns into his body through his pores. He further sees the water element. Like fine dust it emerges through his pores, fills the triple world, and then returns into his body through his pores. He further sees the wind element. Its force now very weak, it emerges through his pores, fills the triple world, and then returns into his body through his pores. In this manner the four elements emerge from and then reenter through his pores eight hundred times.

1 六 Kg

2 Strictly speaking in *pratītyasamutpāda* one proceeds not directly from ignorance to mentality and materiality (*nāma-rūpa*), but first to volitional formations (*samskāra*) and consciousness (*vijñāna*).

3 [出} P, S, Q, Y

4 逕 Kg

4.58

見此事已，如前數息已，閉氣而住，經¹一七日。爾時自然見此大地漸漸空。見一床下漸漸空... 見須彌山、四大海水、山、河、石、壁、四天下中一切所有見堅韌物，一切悉皆漸漸空。見四天下已²，心遂廣大，遍滿三千大千世界，諸堅韌物，大地、山、河、石、壁，一切悉空，心無所寄。

When he has seen these things he must as before count his breath. He must then seal his breath³ within his body for a period of seven days. He will then suddenly see the earth element become gradually more insubstantial. He then sees the ground beneath his meditation cot become gradually insubstantial . . . [and so on]⁴ until he sees Mount Sumeru, the waters of the four oceans, the mountains, rivers, rocks, walls, and all solid things beneath the four heavens all gradually become insubstantial. Having seen [everything] beneath the four heavens [become insubstantial], his mind continues to expand until all solid things throughout the entire cosmos—the great earth, mountains, rivers, rocks and walls—all become entirely insubstantial, such that there is nothing for the mind to grasp.

4.59

爾時自然見金剛際，有十四金剛輪。從金剛輪下，自然上踊⁵，更相振⁶觸，至行者前。爾時心樹諸妙花端，自然火起，燒諸華葉。樹⁷上四果，墮行者頂，從頂而入，住於心中。爾時此心，豁然明了，見障外事。

At this time he suddenly sees fourteen adamantine wheels at the adamantine extremity.⁸ Surging upwards from beneath the adamantine extremity they knock against each other and arrive before the practitioner.⁹ Then, fire suddenly appears on the tips of the various marvelous flowers of the heart-tree, burning up the leaves of the tree. The four fruits fall onto the practitioner's head, enter his body, and come to rest in his heart. His heart [mind] then becomes clear and lucid, and he is able to see through walls.¹⁰

1 逕 Kg

2 Kg skips the next 17 characters, one full manuscript line [已心遂廣大遍滿三千大千世界諸堅韌物].

3 The term “seal the breath” (閉氣) has overtones of Chinese breathing practices. The term itself almost never appears in this meaning in other Chinese Buddhist texts. It should be noted as well that though Buddhist descriptions of the fourth *dhyāna* sometimes say that in this state the breath will cease, directions to hold the breath as a means of attaining higher states of meditation are not usually associated with Buddhist meditation practices. We do find reference to such practices in descriptions of the Buddha's austerities, where they are described as if they represented the practices of other ascetic groups (see Bronkhorst 1986). While such practices are thus contraindicated in canonical sources, we cannot neglect the possibility that this is precisely because they did in fact continue to be practiced by Buddhists.

4 Here the expansion continues with even more detail than before, including the other continents of Uttarakuru, etc., which I omit here.

5 涌 P, Q (and presumably the other Song canons)

6 振 P, S, Q, Y; 崇 Kg

7 [樹] Kg

8 On the possible significance of the number fourteen, see above section 4.28.

9 A passage with similar language occurs below in the *Methods for Curing* (5.114).

10 Translation tentative. But see for example the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*: “The ordinary human eye cannot see beyond walls, nor can it see extremely far, and for this reason one seeks the divine eye” 肉眼不能見障外事，又不能遠見，是故求天眼 (T.1509:25.348a2–3). This expression also appears in the *Samantabhadra*

4.60

復有六象，其[正色]{色正}¹黑。踏大地壞，吸飲²諸水，風吹³象殺。象耳出火，燒象都盡。四大毒蛇，走上樹端。見有一人，似大力士，拔此大樹，下至金剛際，上至三界頂，令樹動搖。行者心中，四明珠果，復出大火，燒樹蕞絕，是時大樹，散如微塵。

Six elephants then appear, pitch black in color. They trample the earth to pieces and suck up all the water. Wind then blows bitterly⁴ upon the elephant, [and stimulated by the wind] fire emerges from their ears, burning them into nothing. The poisonous snakes of the four elements then climb to the top of the tree [to safety].⁵ [The practitioner] then sees a man appear who looks like a mighty warrior. He attempts to uproot the great tree, and from the adamantite extremity below up to the summit of the triple world the tree begins to shake, and the four bright, jewel-like fruits within the practitioner's heart unleash a great fire that burns the tree until it withers and is then blow away like a cloud of dust.

4.61

行者見已... 我今觀於[水]{外}⁶火風[等]{地}⁷及與水大，一切無常，須臾變滅。當自觀我身內四大，火起無窮，地水風等亦復如是。此無明相，空無所有，假偽顛倒，猶如霜炎，屬於三界，

When the practitioner sees this⁸ [he must contemplate as follows]: “The elements of fire, wind, earth, and water that I now contemplate externally are indeed impermanent and quickly perishing. I must contemplate that the four elements within my body, fire, earth, water, and wind that arise continuously, are also like this. [Accordingly] this ignorance⁹ is empty and devoid of being. It is false, constructed, profane, [as unreal as] frost and flame [that coexist],¹⁰ and belongs to the triple-world.

Contemplation (T.277:9.389c7–9).

1 Following K, P, Q, Kg. The Taishō is presumably a misprint.

2 [飲] Kg

3 次 Kg

4 On 殺 as a verbal complement positioned after the direct object, see also 1.172 and 2.50.

5 To the extent that we can decode the narrative here, it would appear that the elephants, who in the similar narrative in the first sutra attempt to tear down the tree within which hide the snakes of the four elements, here achieve a partial victory over the elements by destroying the earth and drinking the water, but are thwarted by the wind and the fire before then can destroy the tree. The adamantite warrior who then appears will ultimately finish what the elephants were unable to do.

6 Following Kg.

7 Tentative emendation, suggested because otherwise there would be no mention of earth.

8 Something appears to be missing here.

9 Above (4.51) it was stated that the earth element is what supports ignorance, and this seems to continue these ideas.

10 On “frost and flame” 霜炎 as an image denoting two things that cannot coexist (and hence implying contradiction), see the fifth-century monk Sengliang's 僧亮 comments collected in *Da ban nie pan jing ji jie* 大般涅槃經集解, T.1763:37.419c27–28. In some Indian Buddhist texts, on the other hand, we find the image of fire destroying snow as a metaphor of complete annihilation (SUS, 4.2.6; I thank Dan Stuart for this reference).

4.62

緣於癡愛，三十三億念生法，九百九十轉，次第念麤相。結使九十有八，枝條種子，彌覆三界。為¹是眾結，受生無數。或墮地獄，猛火焚身。或為餓鬼，吞飲融銅，噉熱鐵丸²，百千世中，不聞水穀。或為畜生，駝驢、猪、狗，數不可知，人中受苦，眾難³非一。如是眾多，從癡愛得。今觀癡⁴愛，性無所有。

“Depending on deluded attachment, the thirty-three billion thoughts [that arise in a person each day] give rise to *dharmas* (?), and the [mind in its] 990 turnings [each second] one after the other takes the coarse attributes [of these *dharmas*] as its object (?).⁵ [As a result] the seeds and branches of the ninety-eight defilements fill the triple world, and on account of these defilements one undergoes limitless rebirths, either in hell, where raging fires scorch one’s body; or as a hungry ghost, [forced to] drink molten copper and swallow hot iron balls, not knowing food or water for hundreds of thousands of years;⁶ or as various kinds of animals, such as camels, donkeys, pigs, or dogs, who at the hands of men undergo much suffering and hardship. These many [kinds of unhappy rebirth] result from deluded attachment. Today, however, [I] contemplate this deluded attachment as having no essential nature.”

4.63

作是思惟時，釋迦牟尼佛，放金色光，與諸聲聞眷屬圍繞。告行者言：汝今知不，色相虛寂，受、想、行、識，亦復如是。汝今應當諦觀空、無相、無作、無願三昧。

When [the practitioner] considers in this way, Śākyamuni Buddha, surrounded by his retinue of disciples, emits a golden light. He then says to the practitioner:⁷ “Do you now see? The [true] nature of matter is vacant and quiescent. And this is also true of [the remaining *skandhas* of] sensation, perception, formations, and consciousness. You must now carefully cultivate the *samādhis* of emptiness, signlessness, non-action, and wishlessness.⁸

4.64

空三昧⁹者，觀色，色¹⁰性，及一切諸法，空無所有。如是眾空，名空三昧。無願三昧者，觀涅槃性，寂滅無相。觀生死相，悉同如實際。作此觀時，不[願]{厭?}生死，不樂涅槃。

1 為是眾結受生無數 = 為是眾生結受無數 Kg

2 九 Kg

3 觀 Kg

4 [癡] Kg

5 The entire passage is problematic, but the basic point is clear: because of deluded attachment (癡愛), which it will be recalled from above is paired with “ignorance” as the root of suffering (see the notes to 4.35), the mind produces unwanted thoughts that cause or allow the “defilements” (結使) to spread their tentacles within the person (or even perhaps literally throughout the world), thereby driving the cycle of rebirth.

6 The punishment of swallowing hot iron balls is usually associated with rebirth in hell, not the *preta* (hungry ghost) realm.

7 The entire text from passage 4.45 until now has, in principle been the teachings given by this Śākyamuni to the practitioner.

8 Here as elsewhere, the Chinese author has included “non-action” (無作) and “wishlessness” (無願), both nominally translations of the same Indic word (see my discussion on p.96).

9 空 P, S, Q, Y

10 [色] P, S, Q, Y

觀生死本際空寂，觀涅槃性相皆同入空，無有和合。是名無願三昧。無作三昧者，不見心，不見身及諸威儀有所修作。不見涅槃有起性相。但見滅諦，通達空無所有。

“[To cultivate] the *samādhi* of emptiness one contemplates matter, [and realizes that] matter and all *dharmas* have utter emptiness as their nature. [The state in which one understands] these various kinds of emptiness is called the *samādhi* of emptiness.

“[To cultivate] the *samādhi* of wishlessness,¹ one contemplates that *nirvāṇa* has the nature of formless quiescence. One contemplates that birth and death is the same as ultimate truth. When one contemplates them like this one does not turn away from² birth and death and does not long for *nirvāṇa*. One contemplates that the ultimate point of genesis³ of birth and death is empty tranquility.⁴ One contemplates that the nature of *nirvāṇa* is entirely subsumed within emptiness, there being no need to combine them [since they are fundamentally equal]. This is called the *samādhi* of wishlessness.

“In the *samādhi* of non-action one does not see anything to cultivate as regards mind or body in any of its postures.⁵ One does not see *nirvāṇa* to be something that arises. One sees only the noble truth of cessation, and one profoundly realizes utter emptiness.”

4.65

爾時行者，聞佛世尊說是空、無相、無願三昧，身心靜寂。遊三空門，猶如壯士屈申臂頃，應聲即得，超越九十億生死洞然之結⁶，成阿羅漢，不受後有，梵行已立，知如道真，豁然意解，無復餘習。漏盡慧通，自然而得。其餘五通，要假修得。六通義廣，說如阿毘曇。

When the practitioner hears the World-honored Buddha explain these *samādhis* of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness,⁷ his body and mind become calm and tranquil. As soon as he hears [the Buddha’s preaching] he understands, and roaming freely through these three gates of emptiness, just as quickly as a strong man might bend and stretch his arm he transcends the ninety billion mountain-like defilements⁸ of birth and death and becomes an arhat,

1 No explanation is given for the *samādhi* of “signlessness” (無相).

2 Given the tenor of the passage 願 is almost certainly a mistake, and 厭 makes much more sense.

3 The term *ben ji* 本祭 is, in translated Buddhist scriptures, another rendering of the term *bhūtakoṭi*, also translated as *shi ji* 實際 (seen above section 4.37). As Robert Sharf notes in his detailed study of the term *ben ji* in medieval Chinese Buddhist and Daoist sources, though this word was used as the translation of *bhūtakoṭi* and other technical terms referring to emptiness as the ultimate ground (or non-ground) of reality, it was also used widely in Daoist sources to refer to a more Chinese-style “point of genesis” for the origin of the cosmos itself (as opposed to the more properly Buddhist idea of beginningless *saṃsāra*). See Sharf 2002, 228–238.

4 Here “empty tranquility” (空寂) seems to be more or less a synonym of *nirvāṇa*.

5 Translation tentative.

6 [結] Kg

7 Here the text strangely switches back to the proper list of three (rather than four) *samādhis*.

8 The term 洞然之結 (with occasional variants for the first character) also occurs in the *Methods for Curing* (5.15, 5.113), and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.652a18; 662c6). In those cases it points specifically to the defilements destroyed by the attainment of the stage of *śrotāpanna*. Apart from these three texts, the expression also appears in the so-called shorter Chinese translation of the *Samyuktāgama* (*Bie yi za a han jing* 別譯雜阿含經; on this text, see Bingenheimer 2006). This text, whose translator is uncertain but which appeared in China in the late fourth or early fifth century, contains a short sutra in which the layman Sudatta becomes a *śrotāpanna*, at which time he “severed the eighty million pervading defilements and became a *śrotāpanna*.” 斷八

free of future rebirth, his purity fully established, possessing true knowledge, his mind completely and wholly liberated, free of any residue [of the defilements].¹ He naturally obtains the supernatural power [that is the] knowledge of the destruction of the outflows. As for the other five supernatural powers he must use [other methods of] cultivation to obtain them.² The full explanation of these six powers is given more in the Abhidharma.

4.66

爾時世尊，為阿祇達說是賢聖空相應心境界，分別十一切入相已，默然安隱，入無諍三昧，放眾色光，普照世[尊]{界}。是時會中，二³百五十比丘，心意開解，成阿羅漢。五

十億洞然之結，得須陀洹。(T.100:2.441a15–17). Interestingly the known parallels to this sutra, both in the complete Chinese *Samyuktāgama* translation (*Za a han jing* 雜阿含經, T.99:2.157b18) and in the Pāli *Samyuttanikāya* (SN, 1.210), are missing this scene. Thus while the usage in the *Methods for Curing* and the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* seem to parallel this example, in the present passage from the *Chan Essentials* it concerns the attainment of arhatship, not the stage of *śrotāpanna*.

What this expression means, however, is not entirely clear. The notion that the attainment of the four fruits corresponds to the elimination of specific defilements (*kleśa* or *anuśaya*) is, of course, a standard element of the formalized Buddhist soteriology found in Abhidharma treatises. Usually, however, the possible number of such defilements is much more limited. It should be noted, moreover, that a very similar expression appears in the *Scripture of the Wise and the Foolish*, where it again denotes becoming a *śrotāpanna*. In this text, however, the phrase is “pervading evils” 洞然之惡 (T.202:4.384c17–18; 396c6–7), a wording also found in what I have hypothesized as the lost *Avalokitasvara Contemplation* (see appendix 2, section 7). Moreover in this case we can reconstruct a plausible Indic original, as this story has a parallel in the *Divyāvadāna*, where 二十億洞然之惡 corresponds to *viṃśatisikharasamudgataṃ satkāyadr̥ṣṭisailaṃ*, “the mountain of the false view of self that has twenty rising peaks” (cited in Yamabe 1999b, 192–193). There is here the problem of the number—while the *Scripture of the Wise and the Foolish* speaks of twenty *yi* 億 (often *koṭi*, a very large number), the *Divyāvadāna* clear says only twenty. But perhaps most interesting is that the *Divyāvadāna* parallel suggests that the meaning of 洞然 is “mountain-like,” an unexpected but not entirely implausible reading (this helps show that the reading 炯 seen in the *Methods for Curing* is likely a mistake).

As for the meaning of the expression as a whole, little more can be said. We may note that it seems to reflect an idea, current in some circles from at least the end of the fourth century (the date of the translation of the *Bie yi za a han jing*), that attaining the fruit of *śrotāpanna* involved severing an extremely large number of defilements. In this light it is interesting to consider the possible connection between this idea and the phrase “sins [leading to] birth and death” 生死之罪 (and indeed here in passage 4.65 we even see that the word 生死 is used to modify 洞然之結). The other Contemplation Scriptures frequently use this expression, and claim their practices will lead to the elimination of uncountably many of these. The meaning of this term has also long puzzled scholars, as it does not appear to have a precise Indic correlate (Unebe 1981).

- 1 A similarly worded version of this standard description of the attainment of arhatship is found in section 1.18. There, as here, the exact meaning of 知如道真 is not completely clear.
- 2 This refers to the six supernatural powers or “super-knowledges” (*abhijñā*). The first five pertain to more “mundane” powers such as the ability to fly, and these are held to be accessible to all those who practice *dhyāna*, even non-Buddhists. But to these five the Buddhists add a sixth, the destruction of the defilements and hence liberation. The expression 要假修得 here is quite interesting. Although the meaning may well be, as I have translated, simply that one must rely on other methods of cultivation to obtain the remaining powers, there may also be the implication here that obtaining such powers through “cultivation” (修) is somehow thought to be different in character than the present attainment, depicted as occurring relatively spontaneously upon hearing of the Buddha’s preaching.
- 3 三 P

十¹優婆塞，破二十億洞然結，成須陀洹²。天人大眾，聞佛所說，皆大歡喜。

When the World-honored One had thus explained to Agnidatta this vision [attesting to sainthood, in which the mind corresponds to emptiness, and had [further] explained the characteristics of the eleven universal-entrances,³ he became silent, composed himself, and entered the “*samādhi* of non-dispute,” emitting various colored lights that illuminated the entire world. At this time the minds of 250 monks in the assembly were liberated and they became arhats. Fifty laymen shattered the twenty billion mountain-like defilements and became *śrotāpannas*. And the host of gods, having heard the Buddha’s teaching, was greatly delighted.

4.67

爾時長老阿難，即從坐起，白佛言：世尊，如來初為迦絺羅難陀，說不淨門。為禪難提比丘，說數息法。為阿祇達，說四大觀。如是眾多微妙法門，云何受持？當以何名宣示後世？佛告阿難：此經名禪法祕要，亦名白骨觀門，亦名次第九想，亦名雜想觀法，亦名阿那般那方便，亦名次第四果想⁴，亦名分別境界。如是受持，慎勿忘⁵失。

At this time the venerable Ānanda arose from his seat and said to the Buddha: “World-honored One, first you preached the method of the contemplation of impurity for Kauṣṭhīlananda. Then you preached the method of breath-counting for Nandika the Meditator. Finally, you have preached the contemplation of the four elements for Agnidatta.⁶ By what designation should I preserve these many subtle and wondrous teachings? Under what name should they be preached to later generations?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: This scripture is to be named the *Secret Essentials of Meditation*.⁷ It is also named the “method of the white-bone contemplation,” the “successively [contemplated] nine meditations [on the decaying corpse],” the “method for the contemplation of filth,” the “procedure for *ānāpāna*,” the “the meditation on the successive [attainment] of the four fruits,” and the “elucidation of the verificatory visions.” Using these names you must preserve [this teaching]. Do not forget it!”

4.68

佛告阿難：我滅度後，若有⁸比丘、比丘尼、式叉摩⁹尼、沙彌、沙彌尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，若有欲學三世佛法，斷生死種，度煩惱河，竭生死海，免¹⁰愛種子，斷諸使流，厭五欲樂，

1 億 P, S, Q, Y

2 須 Kg

3 The “universal-entrances” are what in Sanskrit and Pāli sources are called the *kṛtṣṇāyatana* (or *kaṣiṇa* in Pāli). I am uncertain why they are mentioned here.

4 相 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

5 妄 Kg

6 It is interesting that there is no mention here of Panthaka, the protagonist of the third sutra.

7 I here translate this title in line with the title of the text as it has been transmitted, but the text actually here reads *Chan fa mi yao* 禪法祕要, not *Chan mi yao fa* 禪祕法要. Note further that this slightly variant title is listed in some catalogs, and actually appears on the first fascicle of the Nara manuscript Sgz, which as discussed in chapter two is from a different recension of the text than the remaining fascicles of that version.

8 [有] Kg

9 羅 Kg

10 滅 P, S, Q, Y; 勉 Kg

Appendix 3: Translations and Chinese editions of the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing*

樂涅槃者，{當}¹學是觀。此觀功德，如須彌山，流出眾光，照²四天下，行此觀者，具沙門果，亦復如是。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: After my death, this contemplation should be studied by monks, nuns, nuns in training,³ novice monks, novice nuns, laymen, or laywomen who wish to learn the teaching of the buddhas of the three times, who wish to cut off the seeds of birth and death, to cross over the river of the afflictions, to dry out the ocean of rebirth, to dispose of the seeds of attachment, cut off the flow the defilements, and to turn away from the five desires and delight in *nirvāṇa*. This contemplation is so meritorious that whoever practices it will attain the holy fruits⁴ [and be a light for the world] just as Mount Sumeru, which shines forth various lights and illuminates all under the four heavens.

4.69

佛告阿難：佛滅度後，若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，欲學此法者，當離四種惡⁵，何等為四。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: After my death, monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who wish to study this teaching must separate themselves from four evil things. What are the four?

4.70

一者，淨持禁戒，威儀不犯。於五眾戒，若有所犯，應當至心懺悔清淨。戒清淨已，名莊嚴梵行。二者，遠離憤鬧，獨處閑靜，繫念一處，樂少語法，修行甚⁶深十二頭陀，心無疲厭，如救頭然。三者，掃偷⁷婆塗地，施楊枝、淨籌，及諸苦役，以除障罪[四者]⁸，晝⁹夜六時，常坐不臥，不樂睡眠，身{不}¹⁰倚側。{四}¹¹者，[樂常¹²]{常樂}¹³塚間、樹下、阿練若處，食若鹿食，死若鹿死。

1 Following P, S, Q, Y, Kg.

2 然 Kg

3 The expected term here is *śikṣamāṇā* (P. *sikkhamāṇā*), a special class of probationary nuns in between novices and fully ordained nun. The transcription here, however, suggests a feminine *-ī* stem (**śikṣamāṇī*), a term that as far as I know is not attested in extant Indic texts. Nevertheless this same transcription (式叉摩尼) is found in numerous other *vinaya* texts translated into Chinese the early fifth century. Despite its prevalence Tsukinowa cites this transcription from the *Chan Essentials* as problematic, and proposed that the putative Chinese author of the text incorrectly added the character *ni* 尼, meaning “nun” (Tsukinowa 1971, 106–109). As Yamabe points out, Tsukinowa’s argument is unnecessary given the ubiquity of the word (Yamabe 1999b, 191). It remains unclear why this otherwise unknown form occurs in these Chinese translations. It seems likely, however, that *śikṣamāṇī* was in fact once used as equivalent to *śikṣamāṇā*.

4 “Fruits of the *śrāmaṇa*” (沙門果) presumably refers to what is elsewhere called the “four fruits of the *śrāmaṇa*” (四沙門果).

5 要 Kg

6 其 Kg

7 榆 Kg

8 Following Kg.

9 盡 Kg

10 Following Kg.

11 Following P.

12 當 Q, Y

13 Following Kg.

First, they must perfectly keep the prohibitory precepts and must not violate any of the minor rules governing proper deportment. If they have violated any of the five classes of precepts, they must wholeheartedly confess and repent [so as to regain] purity.¹ When one’s precepts are pure, one is said to be “adorned by purity.”²

Second, they must stay far away from noisy commotion, dwell alone in peaceful tranquility, concentrate their thoughts, delight in the practice silence, and as if putting out a fire upon their heads tirelessly cultivate the profound [practice of] the twelve austerities (*dhūtas*).

Third, they must sweep the sanctuary,³ wash the floors, distribute the willow twigs and purity sticks,⁴ and perform various menial chores so as to remove their obstructing sins. Throughout⁵ the night and day they must sit [in meditation], never lying down, and not allowing their bodies to lean on anything.

Fourth, they must always delight in dwelling in graveyards, beneath trees, or in a forest hermitage (*araṇya*),⁶ sustaining themselves as do deer, and dying like them as well.⁷

1 The “five classes of precepts” (五眾戒) presumably refers to what in the eventually standard technical terminology of Chinese *vinaya* translations was called the *wu pian* 五篇, the five major divisions of the *prātimokṣa*—the *pārājika*, *saṅghādisēṣa*, *pāyattika*, *pratideśanīya*, and *duṣkṛta* offenses (sometimes these are further subdivided to make seven). Though 五眾戒 is extremely rare in this meaning, we do find it in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.226a2–3).

2 Here “purity” being a loose translation of *fan xing* 梵行, usually a translation of *brahma-carya*.

3 A different transcription of the word *stūpa* (兜婆) was used above (2.13; 2.45).

4 On “purity sticks” see above section 2.15.

5 This section presents some rather complicate textual problems, as there is considerable difference between the extant versions. The main problem is the placement of 四者 to mark the fourth paragraph. When comparing K and Kg, we see that 四者 has migrated exactly one seventeen-character manuscript column. P provides a crucial piece of evidence because it seems to retain both readings. Aligning the columns as they appear in the woodblock of P itself (which, unlike K, preserves the seventeen-character column length of manuscripts), this section appears as follows:

役以除障罪四者晝夜六時常坐不臥不樂

睡眠身倚側四者樂常塚間樹下阿練若處

Thus P, while following K in reading 四者 in the first line, also includes 四者 in the second line, which matches Kg. It is conceivable that P was prepared on the basis of two texts, one reading 四者 in the first line, like Kg, and one reading it in the second line, like K. But in this case we must assume that the editor of P made the conscious choice to include both readings, which would be odd given that doing so clearly introduces a redundancy. The following scenario thus seems more likely. Namely, that Kg’s reading is the oldest. At some point a copying error introduced a second 四者 exactly one line after the first occurrence. This error was then “corrected” in all other lineages by removing the second 四, but in P this correction had not yet been made (which makes sense given that it is our earliest witness to the southern Song canons). That this is the likely solution is further confirmed in that even K has the 者 in the second line, which can plausibly be read with the previous word, and was perhaps kept for this reason.

6 On the meanings of the word *araṇya*, see the notes to section 1.134.

7 The forest-dwelling ascetic as “deer-like” is a well-worn trope in Indian literature. Concerning the specific idea of actually “eating like a deer,” in Dharmakṣema’s translation of the *Buddhacarita* (a biography of the Buddha) there is a description of some ascetics who imitate animals, including those who “eat grass as do the deer” 隨鹿食草 (*Fo suo xing zan* 佛所行讚, T.192:4.13a2). The corresponding passage in the extant Sanskrit reads: *trṇāni ke cin mrgavac caranti*, “some, like the deer, subsist on grass” (Olivelle 2007, 193). In the present passage, however, eating like a deer seems rather to mean living by foraging, which in the Chinese tradition is a frequent mark of the life of a hermit.

4.71

若有四眾行此四法者，當知此人，是苦行人。如此苦行，不久必得四沙門果。

Anyone among the four classes of disciples who practices these four things is to be known as a practitioner of austerities. One who in this manner practices austerities will, in a short time, definitely attain the four holy fruits.

4.72

佛告阿難：若有四眾，修繫念法，乃至觀見腳指端、手指端、一節少分白骨相，極令明了，若見一指，若見一爪，一切諸白骨，當知此人，以心利故，命終之後，必定得生兜率陀天，滅三惡道一切苦患。雖未解脫，不墮惡道。當知此人，功德不減，已得免離三塗苦難。何況具足諸白骨人。見此骨人者，雖未解脫無漏¹功德，當知此人，已免一切三塗八難苦厄之患。當知此人，世所生，不離見佛。於未來世，值遇彌勒，龍華初會，必先聞法，得證解脫。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: There may be those² among the four classes of disciples who cultivate mental concentration, contemplating with utmost clarity the image of the white bones with respect to even a single small portion of their bodies, such as the tip of the toe or the tip of the finger. If [as a result] they see a single finger [bone], a single nail, or any of the other bones,³ then know that such people, because of the sharpness of their minds, will definitely be reborn in the Tuṣita heaven, and that they have put an end to all the suffering of the three evil realms of rebirth. Though such people are not yet [fully] liberated, they will never again be reborn in the unhappy realms.⁴ Know that such people possess merit that will not decay, and that they have escaped forever the miseries of the three [lower] paths of rebirth. How much greater, then, [is the merit of one able to see] the complete skeleton! Those who see the [complete] skeleton, though not yet liberated and not possessing the undefiled merit [of advanced meditative practice]⁵ have nonetheless escaped from the painful torments of the three lower rebirths and the eight difficult situations. Know that these people will always be reborn where they can see the buddhas. In a future lifetime they will meet Maitreya at the first dragon-flower assembly, and will there be [among the] first [group] to hear the Dharma and attain liberation.⁶

1 滿 Kg

2 To help resolve the long conditional clause into readable English, I have broken the sentence into two parts.

3 Since below these attainments are contrasted with those of one who sees the entire skeleton, I here interpret 一切諸白骨 to mean not “all the bones” but “any of the bones.”

4 This passage seems to contradict the earlier statement (1.178) that rebirth in Tuṣita requires seeing the entire skeleton.

5 “Undefiled merit” (**anāsrava-puṇya*) likely refers to attainments of either the lower three of the four fruits, or of advanced meditative attainments such as the *nirvedha-bhāgīya-dharmas*.

6 Here “dragon-flower” (*long hua* 龍華) refers to the name of the tree beneath which the future buddha Maitreya will achieve awakening. According to the understanding common throughout China during the fifth and sixth centuries, upon becoming a buddha Maitreya will hold three assemblies beneath this tree, and all those present to hear the teaching given at this time will achieve awakening. The *Chan Essentials* here thus promises that the practitioner will eventually be reborn during the age of Maitreya, and will moreover attend the first of these three assemblies. Based on inscriptions on images and stele from north China, praying for rebirth at the “dragon-flower” assemblies was a common aspiration during the fifth and sixth centuries (Hou 1998, 196–204; Hou 2010, 1111–1117). Interestingly Hou’s analysis of the inscriptions reveals that in the earlier part of this period the first of the three assemblies was not signaled out, and prayers and dedications reveal simply a wish to “meet

4.73

佛¹告阿難：若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷²，於佛法中，為利養故，貪³求無厭。為⁴好名聞，而假偽作惡，實不坐禪，身口放逸。行放逸行，貪利養故，自言坐禪。如此比丘，犯偷蘭遮。過時不說，不自⁵改悔，經⁶須臾間，即犯十三僧殘。若經一日，至於二日，當知此比丘，是天人中賊，羅剎魁膾，必墮惡道，犯大重罪。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: There may be monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who, while within the Buddhist fold, ceaselessly covet personal gain.⁷ Out of desire for fame they dissemble and perform evil, not practicing meditation and being heedless in acting and speaking.⁸ Living a life of heedlessness, out of greed for personal gain they claim to practice meditation.

A monk [such as this] violates a *sthūlātyaya* [transgression].⁹ If he does not immediately confess and repent, after but a short time he will have violated a *saṅghādiśeṣa* [transgression]. If an entire day goes by [without confession,] then when the second day is reached know that this monk is a thief among men and gods¹⁰, a murderous *rākṣasa*-demon, someone destined to fall into the evil realms, a violator of the grave sins.¹¹

Maitreya” (值遇, the same verb found here in the *Chan Essentials*) at the time of the three dragon-flower assemblies. But in the early sixth century the inscriptions change and prayers expressing the wish to be present at the “first assembly” (often 初會, again the same language here) become the norm.

1 Paragraphs 4.73 and 4.75 are cited in both the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fa yuan zhu lin* 法苑珠林; T.2122:53.853a14–29) and the *Compendium of Scriptural Essentials* (*Zhu jing yao ji* 諸經要集; T.2123:54.135b20–c5). Variants from these citations are recorded below as F and Z respectively, with further letters noting when the variant appears only in a specific edition of these texts. Thus F(S) means that the variant appears only in the Song (宋) edition of the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (as cited by the Taishō editors).

2 比丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆夷 = 四眾 F, Z

3 會 Kg

4 [為] F(P)

5 不自 = 自不 F

6 逕 Kg. Kg follows this reading throughout.

7 Here “personal gain” is a loose translation of “profit and offerings” (利養).

8 “Heedless” (*fāng yi* 放逸) here having a strong connotation of transgression of the precepts, a point reinforced by the reference here to “body” (身) and “speech” (口).

9 Etymologically *sthūlātyaya* (Pāli, *thullaccaya*; also attested in Sanskrit as *sthūlaccaya*, *thūlātyaya*, and *thūlaccaya*) means a “serious” offense, and it is the third category of *vinaya* offenses (after *pārājika*, sins requiring expulsion, and *saṅghādiśeṣa* offenses, requiring temporary expulsion). A lengthy treatment of the position of the *sthūlātyaya* offenses with *vinaya* literature can be found in Durt 1979. In the present context the point is simply that the transgression begins at the lowest level, and then proceeds upwards in severity if confession is not immediate (increasing severity of punishment owing to failure to promptly confess is another standard feature of *vinaya* rules).

10 Note that in the *vinaya* accounts of the fourth *pārājika* the word “thief” 賊 is used to describe those monks who make claims to advanced attainments for the sake of gaining offerings (Hirakawa 1993–1994, 1:305–306). The language here thus seems to be drawing from such descriptions, and the point would seem to be that once a single day has passed the (false) claim to be a practitioner of meditation becomes a false claim to sanctity equivalent to a transgression of the fourth *pārājika*.

11 In short the transgression has now progressed up the scale from *sthūlātyaya*, to *saṅghādiśeṣa*, and now finally to

4.74

若比丘尼，妖冶邪¹媚，欲求利養，如貓伺鼠，貪求無厭。實不坐禪，自言坐禪。身口放逸，行放逸行，貪利養故，自言坐禪。如此比丘尼，犯偷蘭遮。過時不說，不自改悔，經須臾間，即犯十三僧殘。若經一日，至於²二日，當知此比丘尼，是³天人中賊，羅刹魁膾，必墮惡道，犯大重罪。

There may be nuns who put on charms because they desire personal gain, insatiably greedy like a cat stalking a mouse, greedily seeking without respite. In truth not practicing meditation, they claim to practice meditation. Heedless in body and speech, living a life heedlessness, out of greed for offerings they [nonetheless] claim to practice meditation.

A nun [such as this] violates a *sthūlātyaya* [transgression]. If she does not immediately confess and repent, then after but a short time she will have violated a *saṅghādiṣeṣa* [transgression]. If an entire day goes by [without confession,] when the second day is reached know that this nun is a thief among men and gods, a murderous *rākṣasa*-demon, someone destined to fall into the evil realms, a violator of the grave sins.

4.75

若比丘、比丘尼，實不見白骨，自言⁴見白骨，乃至阿那般那，是比丘、比丘尼，誑惑諸天龍鬼神等，欺世間人⁵。此惡人輩，是⁶波旬種。為妄語故，自說言我得不淨觀，乃至頂法。此妄語人，命終之後，疾於[電]{暴}雨⁷，必定當墮阿鼻地獄，壽命一劫。從地獄出，

the highest level of transgression. Since the language has hitherto been technical *vinaya* terminology, we would expect this to be the continuing frame, such that “grave sins” would here mean the *pārājika* violations. On the other hand the reference to an assured rebirth in hell recalls the “sins of immediate retribution” (五逆 *pañcānantarya*). However as discussed in chapter five, we do often find the idea that *pārājika* transgressions similarly carry a necessary karmic fruit of rebirth in hell, something that blurs the distinction between monastic discipline and karma in a particularly clear way. In any event in Chinese Buddhist texts the expression 大重罪 or 重罪 often simply seems to conflate all of the various possible serious transgressions into a single category. Notable in this regard is the formulations of the bodhisattva precepts, which are usually divided into two classes, “grave” (重; literally “heavy”) and “light” (輕). We find the expression 重罪 in this meaning in some of the earliest texts associated with the bodhisattva precept tradition in China, such as the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts* (*You po sai jie jing* 優婆塞戒經). By the time of the *Brahmā Net Scripture* (*Fan wan jing* 梵網經), the Chinese-authored text that contains the eventually standard version of the bodhisattva precepts, the ten serious transgressions are called the “ten grave *pārājika*” (T.1484:24.1004b11). Presentations of the bodhisattva precepts thus explicitly use the term *pārājika* in an extended sense. In later Chinese texts “grave sins” 重罪 becomes a generic reference to the kinds of sins that can only be expiated using “Mahāyāna” methods (*Da cheng yi zhang* 大乘義章, T.1851:44.662c3; such statements are ubiquitous in Chinese discussions of repentance).

1 耶 A, Kg

2 [於] A

3 [是] A

4 +我 A

5 [欺世間人] F

6 +魔 Z

7 電雨 = 電光 A; 電雨 F, Z, Kg. My emendation is tentative, based on a passage in the *Samantabhadra Contemplation* that speaks of falling into the Avīci hell faster than a downpour (T.277:9.394a21–23).

墮餓鬼中，八¹千歲中²，噉熱鐵丸。從餓鬼出，墮畜生中，生恒³負重，死復剝皮⁴。經五百身⁵，還生人中，聾盲瘡癩，癘⁶殘百病，以為衣服。如是經苦，不可具說。

If a monk or nun who has not in fact seen the white bones claims to have seen them and similarly [concerning the verificatory visions associated with] *ānāpāna*, then this monk or nun deceives the gods, dragons, demons, and spirits, and cheats the people of the world. Such evil people are the children of demons. Speaking falsely, they say that they have attained the contemplation of impurity [and the other contemplations] up to the stage of “summit.”⁷ But at the end of their lives these liars will definitely fall into the Avīci hell faster than a torrent of rain, where they will live for an entire eon. Exiting hell, for eight thousand years they will be reborn among the hungry ghosts, where they will [be forced to] swallow hot iron balls. Exiting from the realm of the hungry ghosts they will be reborn among the animals, where for their entire lives they will carry heavy burdens and after death will be skinned. After five hundred such lifetimes they will again be reborn as human beings, but they will be deaf, blind, mute, dumb, lame, or afflicted with many illnesses. Such will be their fate [while reborn as in the human realm].⁸ The suffering like this that such a person will undergo cannot be fully described.

4.76

若優婆塞，實不坐禪，自言坐禪，實不梵行，自言梵行，是優婆塞，得失意罪，不淨有作，不起⁹墮落，臭旃陀羅，與惡¹⁰為伴，是朽敗種，不生善芽¹¹。貪利養故，多求無厭，經於一日乃至五日，犯大妄語。此大惡人，波¹²旬所使，是旃陀羅，屠兒羅刹同類。必定當墮三惡道中。此優婆塞，欲命終時，十八地獄，火車鑪炭，變化惡事，一時迎之。必定當墮三惡趣中，無有疑也。

A layman incurs a “sin of inattention”¹³ if he claims to practice meditation when he does

1 八 = 百 A

2 時 F, Z

3 常 F(K), Z

4 [皮] Kg

5 [身] F(P); 身=生 F(S), F(Y), Z

6 (病-丙+祭) Kg

7 It will be recalled that in the body of the text above the stage of “summit” (*murdhān*), second of the four *nirvedha-bhāgīya-dharmas*, is the highest attainment prior to the level of *śrotāpanna* (1.111, 3.20).

8 Here “fate” is literally “clothing” (衣), an image perhaps derived from a passage in Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Lotus Sutra*: “Those who slander this scripture will acquire sins such as this. If they are reborn as human beings, they will carry the mark of being deaf, blind, mute, dumb, poor, or destitute. As their ‘clothing,’ they will suffer from the illnesses of bloating, rashes (?), paralysis, or pustules.” 謗斯經故，獲罪如是。若得為人，聾盲瘡癩、貧窮諸衰，以自莊嚴。水腫乾癩、疥癩癰疽、如是等病，以為衣服。(T.262:9.16a2–5). The image of bodily ailments resulting from past sin as a kind of “clothing” also appears in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.671c12–13), which may also draw from this passage of the *Lotus Sutra*.

9 越 Kg

10 亞 Kg

11 牙 S, P; 旬 Kg

12 彼 Kg

13 “Sin of inattention” 失意罪 seems to derive from two texts that in China had great importance in the formation of the bodhisattva precepts. First is the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts*, translated by Dharmakṣema in the

not in fact practice meditation, or claims to be pure¹ when he is in fact not pure. [In this case] an impure thing has been done, he cannot arise, he is fallen, a foul *caṇḍala*,² a companion of the wicked, a rotten seed which will not produce sprouts of goodness.

If he covets personal gain without respite [and thus does not confess], when the fifth day is reached he will have committed the great [sin of] false speech. Such a greatly evil person is a slave to demons, on par with *caṇḍalas*, butchers, and *rākṣasa* demons. It is certain that [after death] he will fall into the three evil realms. When such a layman is about to die he will be greeted by a vision of various evil things—the eighteen hells, fire chariots and ovens of ash. [Seeing these he will know] beyond doubt that he is certain to fall into the three evil realms.

early fifth century. Contained in this text is a formal rite for receiving an expanded version of the lay precepts that most scholars see as a precursor to the full-fledged bodhisattva precepts. This expanded list contains six “grave” 重 precepts, which are the five lay precepts of killing, stealing, lying, fornication, and the selling of liquor, plus a new precept forbidding “speaking of the sins of other monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen.” Breaking any of these precepts will, the text declares, make it impossible to attain the fruits ranging from stream-enterer to non-returner (which are the attainments promised to those who uphold these precepts). Following this is a list of “minor” (輕) precepts. These are worded as follows: “If a layman who has received the precepts does not serve his parents, teachers, and elders, then he is guilty of sin of inattention (失意罪), he cannot arise, he is fallen, an impure thing has been done.” 若優婆塞受持戒已，不能供養父母、師、長，是優婆塞，得失意罪，不起墮落，不淨有作。(T.1488:24.1049c1–3). The basic contrast here between “grave” and “minor” precepts is thus an attempt to mirror the *vinaya*, in which violations are graded in severity (something that is not a part of the traditional lay precepts). However the precise meaning of the terms 失意罪, 不起墮落, and 不淨有作 is not entirely clear. It is possible that they are attempts to translate certain technical *vinaya* terms that the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts* might be using to categorize the different lay precepts (much as later Chinese bodhisattva-precept texts use the word *pārājika* to describe the grave precepts; see for example the *Brahmā’s Net Scripture*, T.1484:24.1004b11). The term 墮落 thus might perhaps translate *pāyattikā* (the second member of the third class of *vinaya* rules), a term translated in Chinese *vinaya* texts as 單墮, or 墮 (Funayama 1998, 258). Similarly 不淨有作 might perhaps represent *duṣkṛta* (the lowest *vinaya* transgression), often translated as 惡作. What might lie behind “sin of inattention” (失意罪), on the other hand, is not clear. In any event it can be seen that these terms from the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts* are the exact ones that appear here in the *Chan Essentials* (even in the same order), so there is little doubt that, directly or indirectly, the *Chan Essentials* was making use of this text or a tradition deriving from it.

Finally we should note that similar terminology is used in a genuine bodhisattva-precept text, that translated by Guṇavarman in south China in the 420s, the so-called *Bodhisattva Precept Scripture* (*Pu sa shan jie jing* 菩薩善戒經). Here, violation of one of the minor bodhisattva precepts is said to be 得失意罪，墮落不起，有所作，有疑不淨 (T.1583:30.1016a25). The underlying Indic text here must be the same or nearly the same as that in the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts*. Yet the *Chan Essentials* clearly uses the wording of the later, not the former.

- 1 *Fan xing* 梵行, which in Chinese Buddhist texts usually translates *brahma-carya*, can also mean celibacy, either life-long or for a period of time. It is possible that this more specific sense is intended, but a vaguer “purity” probably better captures the sense. Indeed above (4.70) it was said that having confessed and repented any transgressions, one is called “adorned by purity” 莊嚴梵行. This may suggest that the *Chan Essentials* is largely using the word *fan xing* 梵行 to refer to those who are pure with respect to the precepts, which concretely seems to mean those who have had confirmation of this through a sign of some kind.
- 2 The language here again draws from the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts* and (to a lesser extent) other bodhisattva precept texts (see the notes to 4.76) In the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts* violation of a “grave” precept is described as follows: “Such a person loses the *upāsika* precepts. This person will be unable to obtain even the stage of the heat (*uṣmagata*), let alone become a *śrotāpanna* or other fruits up to *anāgamin*. He is

4.77

若優婆塞，實不得不淨觀乃至暖¹法，於大眾中，起增上慢，唱如是言：我得不淨觀乃至暖²法。當知此優婆塞，是天人中賊，欺誑世間，天龍八部。此優婆塞，命終之後，疾於[雹]{暴}³雨，必定當墮阿鼻地獄，滿一大劫。地獄壽盡，生餓鬼中，經八千歲，噉⁴熱鐵丸。從餓鬼出，墮畜生中，生恒負重，死復剝皮。經五百身，還生人中，聾、盲、瘖、瘂、癱殘百病，以為衣服。如是經苦⁵，不可具說。

There may be a layman who has not in fact obtained the contemplation of impurity [or other meditative attainments] up to the stage of “heat” and yet who, out of overestimating pride,⁶ proclaims to the great assembly⁷ “I have attained the contemplation of impurity” [or other meditative attainments] up to the stage of “heat.” Know that a layman who does this is a thief among gods and men,⁸ one who cheats humans, gods, dragons, and [the rest of the] eight groups [of non-humans]. Such a layman, upon death, will fall straight into the Avīci hell faster than a downpour of rain, where he will stay for the length of a long kalpa. When his life in hell is over for eight thousand years he will be born among the hungry ghosts, where he will be [forced to] swallow hot iron balls. Exiting from the realm of the hungry ghosts he will be reborn among the animals, where for his entire life he will carry heavy burdens and after death be skinned. After five hundred such lifetimes he will again be reborn as a human being, but he will be deaf, blind, mute, dumb, lame, or afflicted with many illnesses. Such will be his fate [while reborn in the human realm]. The suffering like this that such a person will undergo cannot be fully described.

4.78

若優婆夷，顯異惑眾，實非坐禪，謂言坐禪，此優婆夷，得失意罪。垢結不淨，不起墮落，不淨有作，臭旃陀羅。此優婆夷，與惡為伴，是魔眷屬，必定當墮三惡趣中。是優

known as an *upāsika* who has broken the precepts, a stinking *caṇḍala* of an *upāsika* who is tied up with impurity.” 是人即失優婆塞戒，是人尚不能得煖法，況須陀洹至阿那含。是名破戒優婆塞，臭旃陀羅垢結優婆塞。(T.1488:24.1049b5–8). Similar language occurs in Guṇavarman’s *Bodhisattva Precept Scripture* (T.1583:30.1015a18–21), but the *Chan Essentials* is again closer to the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts*.

1 煖 Kg

2 煖 Kg

3 On this emendation, see section 4.75, note 7.

4 嚴 Kg

5 昔 Kg

6 The reference here to “overestimating pride” (增上慢) again seems to betray a debt to the formal discussions in *vinaya* literature, in this case those concerning (false) claims to sanctity, the fourth *pārājika*. In all known *vinaya*, an exception to this rule is given when such declarations are made from “overestimating pride” (Pāli, *abhimāna*; Sanskrit, *adhimāna*), technically the kind of pride (*māna*) that judges oneself to be better than one actually is (as opposed to pride that underestimates someone else). See for example Vin, 3.90; Prebish 1975, 52–53 (for the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* and *Mahāsāṅghika* codes). All extant Chinese translations of the *prātimokṣa* include a similar exception (Hirakawa 1993–1994, 1:298–323). Interestingly, however, the *Chan Essentials* seems to invoke this idea only to suggest that such pride is no excuse, and in this regard goes against all known *vinaya* texts.

7 Or perhaps simply “amidst a great crowd of people.”

8 The following description is largely similar, but not exactly the same, as the fate said to await monks and nuns who make similar claims about their meditative achievement.

婆夷，過時不說，不自改悔，經須臾間，一日乃至五日。是¹優婆夷，貪求無厭，實²非梵行，自言梵行，實非坐禪，自言坐禪。此大惡人，必定當墮三惡趣中，隨業受生。

If a laywoman claims magic powers so as to delude the masses,³ not actually practicing meditation but claiming to practice meditation, then this laywoman incurs a “sin of inattention.” She [becomes] bound up with filth,⁴ impure, unable to arise, fallen, a doer of impure things, a foul *caṇḍala*. Such a laywoman is a companion of the wicked, a follower of Māra, and is certain to fall into the three evil realms of rebirth.

If this laywoman does not confess and repent as soon as she transgresses, instead allowing five days to pass [without confessing], then this laywoman, who covets [personal gain] without respite, who claims to be pure when not actually pure, who claims to practice meditation when not actually doing so, is a great evil-doer who is certain to fall into the three evil realms and undergo rebirth according to her karma.

4.79

若優婆夷，實不得不淨觀乃至暖⁵法，於大眾中，唱如是言，起⁶增上慢，自言我得不淨觀乃至暖⁷法，此優婆夷，是天人中賊。命終之後，疾於[雹]{暴}⁸雨，必定當墮阿鼻地獄，滿一大劫。地獄壽盡，生餓鬼中，經八千歲，噉熱鐵丸。從餓鬼出，墮畜生中，生恒負重，死復剝皮。經五百身，還生人中，聾盲瘖瘂，癰殘百病。以為衣服。如是經苦，不可具說。

If a laywomen in truth has not obtained the impurity contemplation [or other meditative attainments] up to the stage of “heat” and yet, out of overestimating pride, declares to the assembly “I have attained the contemplation of impurity” [or other meditative attainments] up to the stage of “heat,” then such a laywomen is a thief among gods and men. When her life is over faster than a downpour of rain she will fall straight into the Avīci hell, where she will stay for an entire long *kalpa*. When her life in hell is over, for eight thousand years she will be born among the hungry ghosts, where she will be [forced to] swallow hot iron balls. Exiting from the realm of the hungry ghosts she will be reborn among the animals, where for her entire life she will carry heavy burdens and after death be skinned. After five hundred such lifetimes she will again be reborn as a human being, but she will be deaf, blind, mute, dumb, lame, or afflicted with many illnesses. Such will be her fate [while reborn in the human realm]. The suffering like this that such a person will undergo cannot be fully described.

1 過 Kg

2 是 Kg

3 The expression “claims magic powers so as to delude the masses” 顯異惑眾 appears to have been a set phrase describing false claims to magical powers. See for example the biography of Buddhahadra in the *Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.103c22–25.

4 The expression “bound up with filth” 垢結, which did not appear in the corresponding passages for laymen, is also found in the *Scripture on the Upāsika Precepts* passage discussed above (see p.531 note 2).

5 煖 Kg

6 趣 Kg

7 煖 Kg

8 雹 Kg. See 4.75 note 7.

4.80

佛告阿難：若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，繫念住意，心不散亂，端坐正受，住意一處，閉塞諸根。此人安心，念定力故，雖無境界，捨身他世，生兜率天，值遇彌勒，與彌勒¹俱，下生閻浮提。龍華初會，最先聞法，悟解脫道。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: There may be monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who fix their thoughts and concentrate their minds, who keep their minds free of distraction, sit upright in absorption, concentrate their minds in a single place, and block off their sense faculties. Even though they do not obtain any verificatory visions, such people, their minds calm, will by the power of their concentrated minds be reborn in Tuṣita heaven where they will meet Maitreya. They will then be reborn on earth together with him [when he becomes a Buddha]. Present at the first dragon-flower assembly, they will be among the first to hear [Maitreya's] Dharma and realize the path of liberation.

4.81

復次阿難，佛滅度後，濁惡世中，若有比丘、比丘尼²、優婆塞、優婆夷，實修梵行，行十二頭陀，莊嚴身心，行念³定，修白骨觀，觀於不淨，入深境界，心眼明利，通達禪法。如此四眾，為增長佛法故，為法不滅故，當密身口⁴意。

Further, oh Ānanda, in the impure, evil age after the Buddha has passed away there may be monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who do in fact cultivate the practice of purity,⁵ who cultivate the twelve *dhūtas* [austerities], who adorn their bodies and minds [with practice,]⁶ who practice mental concentration, who cultivate the white-bone contemplation, who contemplate impurity and, reaching to profound verificatory visions, their minds' eyes perspicacious, attain the fruits of trance. People such as this from any of the four groups [of followers], for the sake of the prosperity of Buddhism and so that the teaching does not become extinguished, must keep secret [their actions of] body, speech, and mind.⁷

1 [與彌勒] A

2 After this point the Anyue inscription (A) continues a short while further, but it is no longer readable. Then there is a dedication: "The *Scripture of the Secret Essentials of Meditation Spoken by the Buddha*. [This carving] reverently offered by Li Sha (?) of Changjiang county on the 15th day of the 2nd month of the 23rd year of the Kaiyuan era [March 13th, 735]" {佛}說禪祕要經開元廿三年二月十五日長江縣李沙敬造供養。

3 +佛 Kg

4 中 Kg

5 On the possible meanings of *fan xing* 梵行 see above p.531n2. Here "cultivating purity" probably refers to performing the rituals of meditation and repentance as outlined in texts such as this.

6 This recalls the passage above (4.70) where those who are pure with regards the precepts are said to be "adorned by purity" (莊嚴梵行).

7 The meaning seems to be that they must not speak of their attainments to others, though as the example below in 4.84 suggests there is also perhaps the implication that the meditation practices in question are to be carried out in private. This passage, and indeed much of this section, bears a close resemblance to the final chapter of the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, entitled "the secret practice of the contemplation of the Buddha" 觀佛密行品. This section begins with the following injunction: "The Buddha said to Ānanda: Beings of the future who attain this *samādhi* of the recollection of the Buddha, who contemplate the marks of the Buddha, who attain the *samādhi* in which the buddhas appear, *must be instructed to keep secret [their actions of] body, speech and mind.*" 佛告阿難：未來眾生其有得是念佛三昧者，觀諸佛相好者，得諸佛現前三昧者，當教是人密身口意。(T.643:15.695b9–11). The text goes on to give a number of analogies about the need for secrecy.

4.82

猶如有人，遇身心病，良醫¹處方²，當服醍醐。爾時病者，則詣³國王，求乞醍醐。王慈愍故，即以醍醐，持用賜之，因勅病人服醍醐法，當於密屋無風塵處而取飲之。飲已閉口，調四大氣⁴，勿令失度。

For example suppose that after becoming sick in body and mind a person is told by a skillful doctor to take pure ghee as medicine. At this time the sick person goes to the king of the country and begs for pure ghee. Out of pity, the king bestows this gift, but commands the sick person to drink the ghee within a sealed room where there is no wind or dust, and after drinking it to close his mouth and regulate the energies of the four elements and keep them in balance.⁵

4.83

若比丘、比丘尼，服此甘露灌頂藥者，唯除知法教授之師，不得妄向他人宣說。若向他說，即失境界。亦犯十三僧殘之罪。若諸白衣，欲行禪定，得五神通，尚⁶不應向他人宣說，言我得⁷神通仙呪術，一切宜祕。何況出家，受具足戒，若得不淨觀乃至暖法，不得妄向他人宣說。若向他說，即滅境界，使多眾生於佛法中生疑惑心。

[Similarly] if a monk or nun obtains the medicine of ambrosial consecration [of the meditative attainments described above,] he or she must not wantonly speak of them to anyone apart from the guiding teacher, who is knowledgeable in the teachings. If he or she does speak of them to others, then the verificatory visions [and hence the attainments themselves] will be lost. This will also constitute a *saṅghādiśeṣa* violation.⁸

Even laypersons eager to cultivate trance and attain the five powers must not say to others that they have attained a magic method [leading to the] powers, but must rather keep everything [pertaining to their practice] secret. How much more so must fully ordained monks

Attainments resulting from the practice are, for example, compared to precious jewels that one must keep hidden from robbers or kings, and these examples bear a general similarity to the analogy given below in section 4.85.

1 賢 Kg

2 病 Kg

3 諸 Kg

4 調四大氣 = 調伏四氣 Kg

5 This passage is significant in that it appears to equate the regulation of the four elements (*mahābhūta*), the standard recommendation for insuring bodily health in (Indian) Buddhist texts, with the regulation of their *qi* 氣, a word that I here translate as “energy” (though this fails to capture the patently *material* implications of this word). Indeed on several occasions the *Chan Essentials* has used the word *qi* to describe the four elements as they exist and interact within the body (1.120, 4.55). Also worth noting is the clear analogy drawn between methods of meditation and medicines—just as medicine works by regulating the four elements within the body, so too the most important stages of progress through meditation involve practices centered on the four elements (as discussed at length throughout the *Chan Essentials*).

6 當 S, Q, Y; 常 P, Kg

7 [得] Kg

8 In Indian *vinaya* texts, including those translated into Chinese in the early fifth century, even true claims to meditative attainment were subject to censure if they were uttered to lay persons. The Sarvāstivāda *prātimokṣa* for examples classifies this as *pāyattika* (波夜提) offense (*Shi song bi qiu bo luo ti mu zha jie ben* 十誦比丘波羅提木叉戒本, T.1436:23.474a25–27). It is interesting that the *Chan Essentials* accords such a transgression the status of a comparatively serious *saṅghādiśeṣa* offense.

and nuns not proclaim to others their attainment of the impurity contemplation [or any of the other meditative attainments] up the stage of “heat.” If they speak of such matters to others, their verificatory vision [and hence their attainment]¹ will vanish, and this will cause people to become suspicious of Buddhism.²

4.84

是故我今於此眾中，制諸比丘、比丘尼，若得不淨觀乃至暖法，當密修行。令心明利，唯向智者、教授師說，不得廣傳向他人說。若向他說，為利養心，應時即犯十三僧殘。過時不懺，心無慚愧，亦犯重罪，如上所說。

For this reason I now lay down the following rule:³ monks and nuns who have attained the contemplation of impurity [or the other attainments] up the stage of “heat” must conceal [from others the nature of their meditative] cultivation. Making their minds clear and sharp [through their meditation], they may speak [of their attainments] only to their preceptor or guiding teacher,⁴ and they must not speak about them in detail to others.⁵ If they speak of them to

1 It may be appropriate here to simply translate *jing jie* 境界 as “attainment.”

2 The idea seems to be that having announced one’s attainment, the attainment will disappear, leaving the person in the situation of having claimed an attainment that he or she no longer possesses. If this were then interpreted by others as a false claim to attainment, it might cause the practitioner to be accused of charlatanism.

3 The word *zhi* 制 here, together with the general tenor of this section, strongly suggests a conscious attempt to model the language and style of the *vinaya* passages in which the Buddha institutes (*zhi* 制) new monastic rules and declares how violations of them are to be classified.

4 The titles *zhi zhe* 智者, “preceptor” and *jiao shou shi* 教授師, “guiding teacher,” are not simply generic references. “Guiding teacher” is a translation of *amusāsana-ācarya*, “ordination master,” the master who during an ordination provides instructions in the proper ritual procedure. Together with the *upadhyāya* (*he shang* 和上 or 和尚), who bestows the precepts, and the *karma-ācarya* (*jie mo shi* 羯磨師), who provides instructions in the proper ritual utterances, these are the three officiating masters necessary necessary for a valid monastic ordination (in addition seven senior monks are needed to serve as witnesses; the rules for nuns add yet further complexity). Meanwhile the term *zhi zhe* 智者, which I translate simply as “preceptor” (literally “wise one”) is also a technical term used in ordination rituals connected to the bodhisattva precepts. Such rituals borrow the terminology of traditional monastic ordinations but assign the formal role of transmitter of the precepts (*upadhyāya*) to the Buddha or buddhas (in some later ritual manuals other deities or bodhisattvas are assigned to the other official roles). The human master, meanwhile, is formally given a supporting position, which in the bodhisattva-precept rituals introduced to China in the early fifth century is termed “the wise one” (*zhi zhe* 智者; see *Pu sa shan jie jing* 菩薩善戒經, T.1583:30.1014b10 and passim). Although one of the interesting points about rituals for receiving the bodhisattva precepts is that they can be undertaken without a human master at all (since the buddhas are the true transmitters of these precepts), in practice the “wise one” served as the preceptor. Although the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing* are in generally relentlessly non-Mahāyāna in orientation (specifying the goal of arhatship and arhatship only), it seems clear that they were composed in environment where the ritual technologies associated with the bodhisattva precepts were known. We can see this most clearly above in passage 1.166 at the conclusion of the first sutra, where the Śākyamuni appears to the meditator and declares himself to be the practitioner’s *upadhyāya* (*he shang* 和上). Given the popularity in south China during the fifth century of bodhisattva-precept rituals (Funayama 1995), and the trope within these rituals of invoking the buddhas themselves as the ordinands’ *upadhyāya*, it seems almost certain that some connection is being established to those ideas. This also fits with the broader argument from chapters 4 and 5, namely that the meditation practices found in both the *Chan Essentials* and the *Methods for Curing* were in practice used together with rituals of purification and repentance.

5 不得廣傳向他人說 could also be parsed as two separate clauses: “they must not spread it widely, [and they must

others with the intention of gaining personal benefit thereby, right away they commit a *saṅghādiśeṣa* violation. If time passes and, feeling no remorse in their minds, they do not repent, then as explained above it becomes a grave sin.

4.85

復次阿難，佛滅度後，現前無佛，四部弟子，求解脫者，得不淨觀，當密藏[祕]{之?}，勿令¹他知。譬如有人，貧窮孤獨，生濁惡世，屬無道王。彼貧窮人，掘地求水，宿世因緣，忽遇伏藏，大獲珍寶。怖畏惡王，密藏此寶，不令他知。但於屏處，取此珍寶，以供妻子，密受快樂。佛滅度後，四部弟子，得禪樂者，亦復如是，當密藏之，不得廣說。若廣說者，犯大重罪²。

Again, Ānanda, after the Buddha has passed into extinction, in the time when there is no buddha present in the world, seekers of liberation from among the four groups of disciples who attain the contemplation of impurity must keep this secret.³ They must not let others know. For example suppose there were a poor man without parents living in an evil age governed by a wicked ruler. If while digging a well this poor man were, because of his [good] karma from previous lives, to unexpectedly find buried treasure and thereby gain rare and precious things, afraid of the evil ruler he would hide this treasure and tell no one. Instead, he would keep it hidden, drawing from it to support his family and secretly enjoying happiness. So too after the Buddha has passed into extinction if a disciple from among the four groups of followers attains the bliss of trance, he must keep this secret and not speak of it to others. If he speaks of it, he commits a grave sin.

4.86

復次阿難，譬如長者，獨有一子，遇大重病，鬚眉落盡。爾時長者，內自思惟：我今衰禍，唯此一子，遇此重病。當{於}⁴何處求覓良醫⁵？作此語已，大出財寶，募訪良醫。長者宿福，忽遇一醫，多知經方。長者白⁶言：唯願大師，起大慈悲。我有一子，遇患多時。唯願大師，救療此患。設得愈病，今我家中，大有財寶，猶如北方毘沙門天王。若子得

not] speak of it to others.” But I am not sure what “spread it widely” would mean. This might conceivably refer to a written or oral account of what has been seen by the meditator, in other words something similar to the content of the *Chan Essentials* itself!

1 命 Kg

2 [罪] Kg

3 The text reads 當密藏祕勿令他知. As two four-character clauses this does not seem intelligible. We might then punctuate as 當密藏，祕勿令他知, but this seems awkward. The final chapter of the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, which as discussed above resembles this section here (see above p.534n7), contains the line “he must secretly conceal it” 當密藏之, “it” here being the attainment of *samādhi*, the need to keep such attainment secret analogized to the need to conceal treasure from thieves or an evil king (T.643:15.695c4), the same comparison invoked in this passage of the *Chan Essentials*. This expression 當密藏之 also appears just below here in the *Chan Essentials*. Given these parallels, I have supposed that 祕 is an error for 之.

4 Following Kg.

5 賢 Kg, which follows this reading for all instances of 醫 below as well.

6 向 Kg

差，唯除我身，一切奉上，不敢違逆。時彼良醫，告長者言：汝今能造七¹重閤室，極²令³深密，然後可令汝子服藥。服此藥已，不得見人，不向他說，[輕]{經}⁴四百日，兒乃可差。

Further, Ānanda, it is similar to the case a prominent man whose only son contracts a grave illness that causes his hair and eyebrows to fall out. The prominent man then thinks to himself: “I am now old, and I have only this one, gravely ill son. Where can I find a skillful doctor?” Considering in this way he then spends a great sum of money to recruit a skillful doctor. Owing to his merit generated in previous lives, this prominent man then stumbles upon a doctor learned in medical techniques.

The prominent man then says: “Master, please show your compassion. I have but this one son, who has long suffered from this malady. I beg you to treat it! If you are able to cure him, then with the exception of my person, I will without fail give you all my wealth, [as great as that of] Vaiśravaṇa, protector god of the northern direction.”

The skillful doctor then says to the prominent man: “You must first construct a dark chamber with walls seven layers thick, making it extremely well sealed. Then have your son take this medicine [and sit with the chamber]⁵. After he has taken it, he will be cured, but only if he neither looks at nor speaks to anyone for four hundred days.”

4.87

佛告阿難：佛滅度後，佛四部眾弟子，若修禪定求解脫者，如重病人，隨良醫教，當於靜處。若塚間，若林樹下，若阿練若處，修行甚深諸賢聖道。當密身口，於內心中修四⁶梵行，修四念處，修四正勤，修四如意足，修五根，修五力，修七覺道，修八聖道分，修四禪，修四無量心，遊入甚深無量空三昧門，乃至得六神[道]{通}⁷。如是種種勝妙功德，但當一心，密而行之，慎勿虛妄，於多眾前，自說得過人法。若說得過人法，如上所說，必定當墮阿鼻地獄。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: After the Buddha has passed into extinction a disciple from among the four groups of Buddhists who cultivates trance and seeks liberation must, like that gravely sick person, follow the teachings of the skillful doctor and [remain] in a secluded place, either in a graveyard, beneath a tree in the forest, or in a forest hermitage, and cultivate this profound, holy path. He must conceal his actions and remain silent, while within his mind he cultivates the four practices [leading to] Brahmā,⁸ the four bases of mindfulness,⁹ the four right efforts, the four bases of magic power, the five roots, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the eight parts of the path of the sages, the four trances, the four unlimited minds, and roams through the innumerable gates of the profound *samādhi* of emptiness until he attains

1 十 S, Q, Y, P

2 遊 Kg

3 命 Kg

4 Following K, Q (the Taishō is presumably a misprint); 逕 P, Kg

5 This seems to be the implication, though it is not stated explicitly.

6 [四] S, Q, Y, P

7 Following K, P, Q, Kg (the Taishō is presumably a misprint).

8 This passage mentions the four *brahma-vihāras* (*si fan xing* 四梵行) and the four *apramānas* (*si wu liang xin* 四無量心) as if they were different things (see p.82).

9 Here follow the standard thirty-seven *bodhi-pakṣika-dharmas*.

the six powers [and becomes an arhat].

Single-mindedly he must secretly practice all these amazing, meritorious activities, being extremely careful not to vainly declare in front of others that he has attained any super-human states.¹ If he declares that he has attained any super-human states, then as explained above he will assuredly fall into the Avīci hell.

4.88

佛²告阿難：我般涅槃後，初一百歲，此不淨觀，行閻浮提，攝放逸者，令³觀四諦。一日之中，修無常觀，得解脫者，如我住世，等無有異。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: In the first one hundred years after my *parinirvāṇa* this contemplation of impurity⁴ will circulate in Jambudvīpa where it will restrain those who are heedless and allow them to contemplate the four truths. [During this time] those who cultivate [this] contemplation of impermanence⁵ for but a single day will attain liberation just as [easily] as when I was still present in the world.

4.89

二百歲後，此閻浮提，四部弟子，二分之一，一分弟子，修無常觀，得解脫道... 千歲之時，四部弟子，億分之一，十人百人，修無常觀，得解脫道。過千歲已，此無常觀，雖復流行閻浮提中，億億千萬眾多弟子，若一，若兩，修無常觀，得解脫道。

In the second hundred years [after my death], only half of my disciples will cultivate the contemplation of impermanence and attain liberation [thereby]. In the third hundred years⁶ only one in four will do so. In the fourth hundred years only one in five will do so. In the fifth hundred years only one in ten will do so. In the sixth hundred only one in a hundred will do so. In the seventh hundred years only one in a thousand will do so. In the eighth hundred years only one in ten thousand will do so. In the ninth hundred years only one in ten million will do so. One thousand years [after my death] only a few dozen⁷ among billions and billions will do so. Beyond a thousand years, though this contemplation of impermanence will still circulate in Jambudvīpa, only one or two disciples out of hundreds of millions of billions will cultivate it and attain liberation thereby.

1 Here we again see implicit reference to the *vinaya* rules pertaining to fourth *pārājika*. As above (4.77), it seems that exception is being taken to the normal statement that declarations of attainment based on “pride” (*adhimāna*) are exempted from *pārājika* status. Moreover the passage here uses the technical term “super-human states” (*guorenfa* 過人法; *uttarimanuṣyadharmā*), which in the *vinaya* accounts of the fourth *pārājika* is the word used to describe those things to which one must avoid laying false (or even true) claim.

2 The Taishō’s error of 為 has been corrected by CBETA.

3 命 Kg

4 We may note how “contemplation of impurity” here seems to refer to the entire *Chan Essentials*.

5 Here “contemplation of impurity” 不淨觀 and “contemplation of impermanence” 無常觀 appear to be synonymous.

6 Here the text repeats word-for-word the entire previous clause with the new numbers. I have simplified the translation (and omitted the repetitions in the Chinese text above).

7 Literally “between ten and one hundred.”

4.90

千五百歲後，若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，讚歎宣說無常、苦、空、無我觀者，多有眾生，懷嫉妬心，或以刀斫，或以瓦礫，打拍彼人，罵言：癡人，世間何處有無常[觀?]、苦、空、無我？身肌¹白淨無量，云何反說身為不淨。汝大惡人，宜合驅擯。

After fifteen hundred years,² if monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen praise or proclaim the contemplations of impermanence, suffering, emptiness, or non-self, there will be many who, their minds consumed with jealousy, attack these [monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen] with knives, axes, rocks or shards of pottery, cursing them as follows: “Fools! When has there ever been in this world things such as impermanence, suffering, emptiness, or non-self? The flesh of the human body is pure beyond measure. How could one perversely say that it is impure? Evil people! You must all be expelled!”³

4.91

此相現時，百千人中，無有一人修無常觀。此相現時，法幢崩，慧日沒，一切眾生盲無眼目。釋迦牟尼佛，雖有弟子，所著袈裟⁴，如木頭幡，自然變白。諸比丘尼，猶如姪女，銜賣⁵色以用自活。諸優婆塞，如旃陀羅，殺生無度。諸優婆夷，邪淫無道，欺誑百端。此相現時，釋迦牟尼無上正法，永沒無餘。

When signs such as this appear [the age will have begun in which] not even one person among hundreds of thousands will cultivate this contemplation of impermanence. When these signs appear, [it means that] the banner of the Dharma has fallen, the sun of wisdom has set, and that sentient beings are as if blind. Though there may be disciples of the buddha Śākyamuni, the *kāśāya* robes they wear will be like flags hung upon trees and will spontaneously become white [like the clothes of the laity].⁶ Any nuns remaining [at this time] will be like prostitutes who

1 體 P

2 This presumably refers to the time when the *Chan Essentials* was written. Though there were a number of different theories concerning the date of the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, the one most relevant here is perhaps that reported by Faxian 法顯 (340–420) in the records of his travels in India, where it is said that the Buddha's death occurred in 1084 BCE, (Chappell 1980, 138). This would place the 1500 year mark in the year 417, which given our other information is a very reasonable *terminus post quem* for the composition of the *Chan Essentials*.

3 This passage is remarkable because it invokes the typical rhetoric of Mahāyāna sutras—both the prophecy of the initial flourishing and eventual decline of its teachings and more importantly the idea that the teachings of the text will be scorned and reviled by others—even though the teachings in question are not Mahāyāna or otherwise novel ideas but rather the most basic and universally accepted Buddhist teachings, such as the notions of impermanence, bodily impurity, and so forth. This passage gives us valuable information about the context within which the *Chan Essentials* was composed. Indeed in south China during the early years of the Song dynasty there were some Chinese monks and foreign missionaries who actively campaigned against the orthodoxy of Mahāyāna teachings and scriptures. We thus seem to see here an attempt by the authors of the *Chan Essentials* to argue for the validity of what from our perspective appear to be fundamental Buddhist teachings in the face of widespread Chinese acceptance of texts such as the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, which make a point of proclaiming their opposite.

4 濃 Kg

5 +女 S, Q, Y, P

6 The spontaneous transformation of monastic robes into lay clothing as a sign of the decay of Buddhism is mentioned in the *Fo shuo fa mie jin jing* 佛說法滅盡經 (T.396:12.1119b2–4), a short text of unknown origin mentioned in the *Records of the Canon* as an anonymous translation, and which thus must have been in existence no later than the late fifth century. The passage from this text concerning the spontaneous whitening of monastic

make their living selling their flesh on the streets. Laymen will act like outcasts,¹ butchering animals without limit. Laywomen will be lustful, impious, and deceitful beyond measure. When these signs appear [it means that] the unsurpassed true Dharma of Śākyamuni has disappeared forever.

4.92

佛告阿難：汝持佛語，為未來世四部弟子，當廣宣說分別其義。慎勿忘²失。復次阿難，汝當為來世諸眾生等，當宣此言。如來大法，不³久[心]{必}⁴沒，汝等於佛法中，應勤⁵精進。當觀苦、空、無常⁶、無⁷我等法。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: You must preserve my words and in the future widely expound their meaning for the four classes of disciples. Do not forget them! Further, Ānanda, to the beings of the future you must proclaim the following words: “The great teaching of the Tathāgata will soon perish. You must thus now make diligent effort in your practice of Buddhism. You must contemplate suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and non-self.”

4.93

佛說此語時，八千天子，悟⁸解無常，遠塵離垢，得法眼淨。五⁹百比丘，即於座上，不受諸法，漏¹⁰盡意解，成阿羅漢。爾時[長]{尊?}者阿祇達，并千二百五十比丘、諸天、龍、神，聞¹¹佛說此無常觀門，心開意解，皆悉達解苦、空、無常。頂禮佛足，歡喜奉行。

robes was frequently cited in later Chinese works (*Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma*, T.2122:53.1012a2–3). The source of the phrase “like flags draped on trees” seems to be the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, in a passage describing the behavior of those evil monks who rejoice when the Buddha has died. Relieved to be free of strenuous rules, these monks happily cast aside their *kaṣaya*-robes “like flags draped over a tree” 如木頭幡。(T.374:12.399a12–18). Here the point seems to be that casting aside the robes in this manner is akin to discarding them. On the other hand later Chinese writers take up this image with a slightly different meaning, namely that unworthy monks who wear monastic robes are like mere “wood draped in cloth.” See for example the *Si nian chu* 四念處 attributed to Zhiyi (T.1918:46.557a13–16), which, moreover, appears to draw this usage from the *Scripture on the Supremacy of Meditation* (*Zui sheng miao ding jing* 最妙勝定經), a Chinese composition of the early sixth century found at Dunhuang that contains an influential prophecy of the decline of the Dharma (Sekiguchi 1969, 401). Either of these two meanings might be applicable in this passage of the *Chan Essentials*.

1 Literally the word here is the Chinese transcription of *caṇḍala*.

2 The Taishō’s error of 妄 has been corrected by CBETA.

3 +不 Kg

4 Following K, P, Q, Kg (the Taishō is presumably a misprint).

5 難 Kg

6 當 Kg

7 [無] Kg

8 語 Kg

9 三 P

10 滿 Kg

11 Kg here omits 22 characters: [聞佛說此無常觀門心開意解皆悉達解苦空無常頂禮]. Since the break occurs precisely between the bottom of one line and the top of the text, the initial assumption would be that a line has been skipped. However that 22 character omitted (relative to K) is quite interesting. All known manuscript versions of the text in Japan are written in the standard 17 (with slight variations) character lines. It thus seems possible that Kg is heir to a lineage which at one point included a version with 22 characters per line.

Appendix 3: Translations and Chinese editions of the *Chan Essentials and Methods for Curing*

When the Buddha had spoken these words, eight thousand young gods understood [the truth] of impermanence, parted from stain and defilement, and attained the purity of the Dharma-eye.¹ Five hundred monks right then and there ceased to cling to anything, and with their defilements eliminated and minds liberated,² they became arhats.

Then, the venerable³ Agnidatta, together with 1,250 other monks, as well as the various gods and dragons, having heard the Buddha preach this teaching on the contemplation of impermanence, became liberated in mind, and each of them thoroughly comprehended suffering, emptiness, and impermanence. Bowing their heads to the Buddha's feet, they joyfully undertook to put [this teaching] into practice.

1 This phrase is normally associated with attainment of the first fruit (*śrotāpanna*).

2 The exact wording of this formula appears in several of Kumārajīva's translations, such as the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (*Wei mo jie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, T.475:14.538c29–539a6). The extant Sanskrit manuscript here reads *anupādāyāsravebhyāś cittāni vimuktāni*, “[their] minds were liberated from the defilements by way of non-clinging” (VN, 50).

3 The opening of the sutra clearly declares that Agnidatta is a monk, and it is peculiar that he is now called a *zhang zhe* 長者, a word used in Buddhist texts to refer to wealthy laymen. However the Agnidatta known from canonical texts was indeed a layman (see appendix 1), so perhaps we see here traces of the evolution of the narrative.

5.1

如是我聞。一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園，與千二百五十比丘俱。夏五月十五日。五百釋子比丘，在竹林下，行阿練若法。修心十二，於安那般那，入毘琉璃三昧。

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling in Śrāvastī in the park [given to the Buddha by Sudatta,] “He Who Gives to the Poor,” in the forest of [prince] Jeta, together with 1,250 monks. It was summer, the fifteenth day of the fifth month.¹ Five hundred monks of the Śākya clan were dwelling in a bamboo grove cultivating the “forest-dwellers practice” [meditation].² Cultivating their minds [through the] the twelve [*dhūtas*], while performing breath meditation they entered the beryl *samādhi*.³

5.2

時波斯匿王，有一太子名毘琉璃，與五百長者子，乘大香象，在祇洹邊，作那羅戲。復醉諸象，作鬪象戲。有一行蓮華黑象，其聲可惡，狀如霹靂，中間細聲，如猫子吼⁴。釋

- 1 According to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, the fifteenth day of the fifth month was the beginning of the summer rains retreat (T.1442:23.796b11–16). Other *vinaya* sources give slightly different dates (see the sources cited in *Si fen lü shan fan bu que xing shi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.38b22–24).
- 2 I take “forest dwellers’ practice” 阿練若法 to mean meditation. The *Records of the Canon*, for example, records a text entitled *Scripture on the Method for Forest Dweller’s Cultivation of Meditation*” 阿練若習禪法經, supposedly an excerpt of Kumārajīva’s *Meditation Scripture* (T.2145:55.30c9).
- 3 A “beryl *samādhi*” (*bi luo san mei* 琉璃三昧) is mentioned twice in the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture* (T.618:15.320c5–6; 324a16). Interestingly the second reference is linked to a contemplation of the twelve links *pratīyasamutpāda*. The beryl *samādhi* is also mentioned in what I have hypothesized to be the *Avalokitasvara Contemplation*, associated with the state of meditation leading to buddhahood in contrast to *pratyekabuddhahood* (T.1043:20.37a21–22; see appendix 2 section 6). Earlier in the *Chan Essentials* there were a few passages implying that “beryl” is a substance stronger than “adamantine” (*jin gang* 金剛, *vajra*; see 3.51, 3.61). In many formulations of the Buddhist path the state of meditation immediately preceding the attainment of arhatship is called the *vajropama-samādhi*, the “adamantine-like *samādhi*,” so strong that it definitively cuts off all defilements. Since the *Chan Essentials* states that beryl is stronger than adamantite, perhaps the “beryl *samādhi*” is modeled on the *vajropama-samādhi* but posited as an even higher state of meditation, leading to buddhahood (as suggested by the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture*) rather than arhatship.

The other mystery in this passage is the phrase “cultivating their minds through the twelve” (修心十二). That this refers to the *dhūtas* is suggested by Chengguan’s 澂觀 (738–839) commentary to the *Hua yan* 華嚴 sutra (*Da fang guang fo hua yan jing sui shu yan yi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T.1736:36.334a19–334c5) where we find a long citation of the *Methods for Curing* (see p.125). In the version of this passage cited there, the line actually reads 修心十二頭陀. It is, of course, difficult to know if this is the version of the *Methods for Curing* seen by Chengguan, if he was adding his own understanding to passage, or even if the two characters 頭陀 are later notes or glosses to Chengguan’s original text. Indeed this commentary is known only in Ming and later printings (in addition to the three Japanese versions collated in the Taishō, I have checked the version in the *Yongle Beizang* 永樂北藏, which gives the same reading as the Taishō versions).

Finally, there is the matter of the transcription *pi liu li* 毘琉璃, used in the text here not only as a transcription of the name of the precious stone *vaidūrya* (usually understood as “beryl,” a word originating in the Greek *beryllos*, itself thought to be derived from the Sanskrit *vaidūrya*), but also, in the very next passage (5.2), for the name Virūḍhaka (P. Viḍūḍabha), son of King Prasenajit. Although *vaidūrya* is more regularly transcribed simply as *liu li* 琉璃 (var: 流離, 瑠璃), the transcription found here also appears in a few passages from the *Chan Essentials* (1.140; 1.150). It is not clear whether the use of this transcription for these two rather different purposes in the same text has any special significance, or if it is just a coincidence.

4 乳 Kg

子比丘，禪難提、優波¹難提等，心驚毛豎。於風大觀，發狂癡想。從禪定起，如醉象奔，不可禁制。

At this time the son of King Prasenajit [of Śrāvasti], Virūdhaka, was riding on a great fragrant elephant, accompanied by five hundred other sons of prominent men. Playing at *na-luo*² near the edge of the Jetavāna grove, they got their elephants drunk and had them fight each other for sport. There was [among these elephants] a black lotus-elephant with a horrid roar like a thunderclap interspersed with the sharp sound of a wailing cat. [Upon hearing this sound] the Śākya monks Nandika the Meditator, Upanandi,³ and others became so startled that their hair stood up on end, and while immersed in the contemplation of the wind element there arose in them maddened and deluded thoughts. Emerging from meditation, they became unrestrained, like drunken elephants.⁴

5.3

尊者阿難勅諸比丘，堅閉房戶。我諸釋子，今者發狂，[脫]{免?}能傷壞。諸比丘僧即往舍利弗所白言：大德，大德所知，智慧無障，如天帝釋第一勝幢，所至無畏。唯願慈悲，救諸釋子狂亂之苦。

The venerable Ānanda then ordered the other monks to lock the doors of [the maddened monks'] rooms, saying: “These Śākya monks have gone mad. Let us prevent them⁵ from doing harm.”

The other monks then went to Śāriputra and said: “Oh venerable one, your wisdom is unobstructed,⁶ and like the victory banner of lord Indra fear vanishes in your wake. Please have compassion and rescue these Śākya monks from the suffering of their madness!”⁷

5.4

爾時舍利弗即從坐起，牽阿難手往詣佛所。繞佛三匝，為佛作禮，長跪合掌，白佛言：世尊，唯願天尊慈悲一切，為未來世諸阿練若比丘因五種事發狂者，一者因亂聲，二者因惡名，三者因利養，四者因外風，五者因內風。此五種病，當云何治。唯願天尊，為我解說。

Thereupon Śāriputra got up from his seat and led Ānanda by the hand to the Buddha. He circled the Buddha three times, and having made prostrations knelt down before him with joined palms and addressed the Buddha saying: “Oh World-honored One, may you, honored by the gods, bestow your compassion on all, and for the sake of forest-dwelling monks of the future in whom madness arises in five different ways (one, because of loud sounds; two, because of bad

1 婆 P, S, Y

2 Passing reference to a game by this name is made in the *Scripture of the Wise and the Foolish* (T.202:4.442a18), but I have not been able to determine anything more about it.

3 On these names, see appendix 1.

4 This would appear to be euphemistic for the violation of the precepts.

5 I do not understand what 脫能傷壞 could mean. Assuming that 堅閉房戶 in the previous line does indeed mean that the maddened monks are to be locked up, 脫能傷壞 seems to be an explanation of why this is necessary, and I have tentatively emended to 脫 to 免 on this theory.

6 Śāriputra is traditionally known as the disciple of the Buddha with foremost wisdom.

7 Given the arc of the narrative of this sutra, which culminates in a ritual for “curing” 治 violations of the precepts, it does not seem unreasonable to interpret the “suffering” intended here as at least including the expected future retribution for violations of the precepts.

reputation;¹ three, because of [having desire for] personal gain; four, because of external winds; five, because of internal winds) [may you explain]² how these five illness may be cured. Please, oh honored by the gods, explain this matter for me.”

5.5

爾時世尊，即便微笑，有五色光，從佛口出，繞佛七匝，還從頂入。告舍利弗：諦聽諦聽，善思念之。吾當為汝分別解說。

The World-honored One then smiled, and from his mouth emerged a five-colored light, which circled him seven times and then reentered through the crown of his head. He then said to Śāriputra: “Listen carefully, listen carefully, and consider this well. I will now explain [this matter] for you.”

5.6

若有行者，行阿練若，修心十二，於阿那般那，因外惡聲，觸內心根，四百四脈，持心急故，一時動亂，風力強故，最初發狂。心脈動轉，五風入咽。先作惡口。

When the heart-organ of one practicing the forest-dwellers’ practice and cultivating his mind [through] the twelve [*dhūtas*] is shaken by an evil noise while he [cultivates] breath meditation, owing to tension in the heart [at such a moment] the 404 channels³ will all at once

- 1 What might be meant here by “bad reputation” is not clear. This too may be a euphemism for violation of the precepts. This would, first of all, fit with the general tenor of the *Methods for Curing* (at least the first sutra, which culminates with a ritual for repenting transgressions of the precepts). Similarly in the *Medicine King Contemplation* we find a passage where a *dhāraṇī* is said, among other benefits, to “destroy the bad reputation [resulting from] violation of the precepts” 毀禁惡名皆悉除滅 (T.1161:20.661c12–13).
- 2 The preposition “for the sake of” 為 earlier in this long sentence does not seem to resolve properly, as no main verb follows. I thus here supply the verb “explain,” which seems to be the point.
- 3 In his commentary to the *Great Calming and Contemplation* the eighth-century Tiantai exegete Zhanran 湛然 (711–782) summarizes this passage of the *Methods for Curing*, and he writes not simply “four-hundred four channels” 四百四脈 (as in all known versions of the text) but “four-hundred four illness-channels” 四百四病脈 (*Zhi guan fu xing chuan hong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, T.1912:46.400a17–18). It is difficult to determine if this reflects an authentic variant, or if Zhanran or another author added this character by way of explanation. Regardless, there can be no doubt that this interpretation of the meaning of these 404 channels is correct, as in the reckoning of so-called “Buddhist medicine,” in which illness is explained in terms of imbalances in the four elements within the body (as opposed to Āyurvedic traditions that use the scheme of the three *doṣas*), there are a total of 404 different possible kinds of illness, 101 for each of the four elements (Fukunaga 1980, 56–57).

However the system mentioned here in the *Methods for Curing* in which these 404 illnesses are linked to a system of 404 channels leading to the heart (心) is, as far as I know, unknown from other sources. The only later Chinese author who seems to draw from it is Zhiyi, who mentions these 404 channels in his presentation of the so-called *tong ming guan* 通明觀, a system of meditation that he claims was promoted by many “northern” *chan* masters during his day (Tada 1976; Aoki 1989; Wang 2001, 187–245).

Concerning the channels themselves, Zhiyi does not make explicit reference to the *Methods for Curing*, but since his is the only explanation how these were thought to work, it is worth citing here: “The heart-channel is the chief of all the channels. From it there branch forth the [four] channels of the four elements, each of which [divides into] ten. Within each of these there are yet further nine more channels, yielding a total of four hundred [which when added to the four channels of the four elements makes 404], which stretch from head to toe. Within these 404 channels flow the currents of wind, *qi*, and blood. Within the blood [that flows in these] channels there are further many tiny worms, which live within the channels. When the practitioner knows [his body to be like this], then this is what it means to know that the body, both inside and out, is insubstantial, like the trunk of a

become agitated. Because wind is the strongest [of the four elements] it is the first to produce madness [in the practitioner.] The [wind] channels of the heart shake about,¹ and five kinds of wind enter the throat. As a first [consequence of this] evil speech is produced.²

5.7

應當教是行者，服食酥³蜜及[阿]{訶}⁴梨勒，繫心一處。先想作一頗梨色鏡，自觀己身在彼鏡中作諸狂事。見此事已，復當更[觀]{教}⁵而作是言。汝於明鏡，自見汝身作狂癡事，父母宗親皆見汝作不祥之事。我今教汝離狂癡法，汝當憶知。

In this case the practitioner must be instructed to consume milk, honey, and *harītakī* [fruit]⁶, and to fix his mind upon a single thing. He must first imagine a crystal mirror, and contemplate himself within the mirror performing various deeds of madness.⁷ When he has seen this, [the master] must further instruct him with the following words: “You now see yourself within the clear mirror performing these deeds of madness and delusion. [So too] do your parents and kinsmen all see you doing these wicked things. I will now teach you how to separate yourself from madness and delusion. You must remember [what I say].”

5.8

先教除聲。除聲法者，舉舌向腭，想二摩尼珠在兩耳根中，如意珠端，猶如乳滴⁸，滴滴之中，流出醍醐，潤於耳根，使不受聲，設有大聲，如膏油潤，終不動搖。

First teach him how to remove the [evil] sound.⁹ The method for removing the [evil]

plantain tree.” 身內諸脈，心脈為主。復從心脈內，生四大之脈。一大各十脈。十脈之內，一一復各九脈，合成四百脈，從頭至足。四百四脈，內悉有風、氣、血流相注。此脈血之內，亦有諸細微之蟲，依脈而住。行者如是知，是知身內外不實，猶如芭蕉。(T.1916:46.530b27–c3). This same physiology is invoked in Guanding’s commentary to the *Invitation Sutra*, the text I have hypothesized to contain at least part of the lost *Avalokitasvara Contemplation (Qing guan yin jing shu 請觀音經疏*, T.1800:39.976b11–17). Here the system is cited as a commentary to the word “heart-channel” (*xin mai* 心脈) from the base text.

- 1 For an overview of the system of the 404 illnesses and channels, see the previous note. The idea is thus that all of the illness-causing channels of the heart are affected, but those pertaining to the wind element begin their movement first, and this results in evil “winds” affecting various parts of the body. What is of course most interesting here is that the result of these winds is not simply bodily illness, but vocal action.
- 2 From this it now becomes absolutely clear that though the question is initially framed as a matter of curing “madness” (*kuang* 狂), the real issue is the transgression of the precepts that results from this “madness.”
- 3 蘇 Kg
- 4 呵 Kg
- 5 Following P, S, Y.
- 6 The term here is almost certainly *he li le*, 訶梨勒 (*harītakī*), the name of an Indian fruit mentioned in numerous unquestionably authentic Chinese Buddhist translations as a potent medicine. To take but two examples, see *Da ban nie pan jing* 大般涅槃經, T.374:12.394b10–11 and *Zeng yi a han jing* 增壹阿含經, T.125:2.650c25–27. Dharmakṣema’s translation of the *Suvarṇa-bhāṣottama-sūtra (Jin guang ming jing 金光明經)* gives this as the kind of medicine to be prescribed for cases of “heat” (*pitta*; bile) illnesses (T.663:16.352a18–19), though note that the extant Sanskrit here gives not *harītakī* but *virecanam*, “purgatives” (Nobel 1937, 180).
- 7 In other words the person imagines seeing the various ways in which he has transgressed.
- 8 Throughout Kg reads 滴 + 適, presumably equivalent to 滴.
- 9 It is possible that this is a play on the word 聲. On the one hand this seems to be a method for curing the effects of literally hearing “evil sounds” 惡聲, such as the cry of the elephants in the story above. But it also seems

sound is as follows. [First he must] press his tongue upwards against his palate. Then he should imagine a *mani*-pearl within each of his two ears. From the tips of these wish-fulfilling pearls, which are like droplets of milk, ghee flows forth and coats the ear-drums¹ such that they no longer register sound. Even if there is a loud noise they will remain unmoving as if coated in thick oil.

5.9

此想成已，次想一九重金剛蓋從如意珠王出，覆行者身。下有金剛華，行者坐上。有金剛山，四面周匝，繞彼行者。其間密²緻靜絕外聲。一一山中，有七佛坐，為於行者說四念處。爾時寂然不聞外聲，隨於佛教。

When this meditation has been completed the practitioner should next imagine a nine-layered *vajra* canopy emerging from these royal, wish-fulfilling pearls that covers his body. Below is a *vajra* flower that the practitioner sits atop. There are further *vajra* mountains surrounding the practitioner on all four sides. There is no gap between [these mountains] such that external sounds are completely blocked. Within each of the mountains there are seven seated buddhas, who instruct the practitioner³ in the four bases of mindfulness. At this time there is total silence, and [the practitioner] hears no external sounds. He hears [only] the teachings of these buddhas.

5.10

此名除亂法門，去惡⁴聲想。告舍利弗，汝等行者宜當修習，慎莫忘失。是名治亂⁵倒⁶心法。

This is called the method for removing disturbance, the meditation that removes evil sounds. [The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: You practitioners (?)⁷ must cultivate [this] and not forget it. This is called the method for curing a perturbed mind.⁸

possible to interpret this as the “evil reputation” of those who violate the precepts.

- 1 Here “ear-drum” is literally “ear-organ,” meaning that part of the physical ear which actually senses sound. Buddhist texts normally present this (and the other) “organs” (*indriya*) as extremely “subtle” (*sukṣma*) matter invisible to the eye.
- 2 蜜 Kg
- 3 The grammar of the construction 為於 is peculiar, and I do not fully understand it. Based on the context, it would seem to simply mean “for” (as would 為 by itself). This unusual pattern is also found in some of the other Contemplation Scriptures (see for example *Samantabhadra Contemplation*, T.277:9.390c27–28; 393a3–4). We also see it above in the *Chan Essentials* (sections 1.168 and 4.45).
- 4 [惡] Kg
- 5 [治亂] Kg
- 6 到 Kg
- 7 It is not clear how we are supposed to construe 汝等行者. Could the meaning perhaps be “your practitioners,” that is to say those monks under the jurisdiction of Śāriputra who have (following the narrative) gone mad?
- 8 Here and throughout the *Methods for Curing* we find short passages in small characters after each section that summarize and name the previously described exercise.

5.11

復次舍利弗，既去外聲已，當去內¹聲。內聲者，因於外聲。動六情根，心脈顛倒，五種惡風，從心脈入。風動心故，或歌，或舞，作種種變。

Next, Śāriputra, having removed external sounds, internal sounds must be removed. Internal sounds are caused by external sounds.² [These internal sounds] stimulate the six sense-organs, thereby perturbing the heart-channel, and allowing the five evil winds to enter [the heart] through this heart-channel. When the heart [mind] is moved by these winds [the person] sings, dances, or behaves strangely.

5.12

汝當教洗³心觀。洗⁴心觀者，先自觀心，令漸漸明，猶如火珠。四百⁵四脈，如毘琉璃、黃金芭蕉，直至心邊。火珠出氣，不冷不熱，不麤不細，用熏⁶諸脈。想一梵王，持摩尼鏡，照行者胸。爾時行者，自觀胸如如意珠王，明淨可愛，火珠為心。

You must teach [such a person] the “heart-cleansing contemplation.” [To perform] the heart-cleansing contemplation [the practitioner must] first contemplate his heart, making it gradually brighter until like a fire-jewel, its 404 channels like beryl or golden plantain [leaves wrapped around the heart]⁷ touching it directly. The fire-jewel [of the heart] emits a vapor, neither cold nor hot, neither thick nor thin, which wafts into the channels. [The practitioner must then] imagine a Brahmā-king holding a *maṇi*-jewel mirror turned towards the practitioner’s chest. The practitioner then sees his own chest [reflected in the mirror] as like a royal *maṇi*-jewel, bright and lovely, with a fire-jewel as his heart.

5.13

大梵天王掌中有轉輪印，轉輪印⁸中有白蓮花，白蓮華上有天童子。手⁹擎¹⁰乳湏¹¹，從如意珠王出，以灌諸脈。乳漸漸下，至於心端。童子手持二針，一黃金色，二青色，從心兩邊安二金花，以針鑽之。七鑽之後，心還柔軟如前。復以乳還洗¹²於心，乳滴¹³流注入大

1 [內] Kg

2 For a somewhat different translation of this passage, see Salguero 2010, 205. Note that the description here of the “internal winds” is exactly opposite that given above for the external winds (5.6). In that sequence, first the mind is overly stimulated, which ramifies outward through the heart-channel, eventually leading to the production of wind that enters the throat and causes (evil) speech. Here, in contrast, we have evil winds *entering* the heart and then producing aberrant behavior.

3 洒

4 洒 P

5 +四十 P, S, Y; given the importance of the number 404 (see above), it is unlikely that this variant is correct.

6 **+童 Kg

7 Translation tentative.

8 [轉輪印] Kg

9 平 Kg

10 驚 Kg

11 [重+引] P; [重+乳] Kg.

12 洒 P

13 +適 Kg

腸中。大腸滿已，入小腸中。小腸滿已，流出諸乳，滴滴不絕，入八[萬]{十}¹戶蟲口中。諸蟲飽滿，遍於身內，流注諸骨，三百三十六節，皆令周遍。

The great Brahmā-king holds a wheel-turning scepter,² within which is a white lotus flower. Atop the white lotus flower is a young god, who from the royal *mani*-jewel scoops up fresh milk³ with his hands and pours it into the channels [leading to the practitioner's heart]. The milk drips downward [through the channels] to the edge of the heart. The young god holds two needles, one golden and one blue. He then places two gold flowers against either side of the heart and runs the needles through them seven times.⁴ Having done this, the heart returns to its former state of relaxation. [The young god] then further rinses the heart with milk. The milk then drips into the large intestine.⁵ When the large intestine is full, [the milk] flows into the small intestine. When the small intestine is full, the milk drips from it drop by drop into the mouths of the eighty families of worms. When the worms are full, [the milk] circulates everywhere throughout the inside of the body, irrigating⁶ the 336 bones.⁷

5.14

然後想一乳池，有白蓮花在乳池中生。行者坐上，以乳澡浴。想兜羅綿，如白蓮華，繞身七匝，行者處中。梵王自執己身乳，令行者嗽⁸。行者嗽⁹已，梵王執蓋，覆行者上。於梵王蓋，普見一切諸勝境界。還得本心，無有錯亂。

Next, [the practitioner must] imagine a pond of milk with a white lotus flower growing in it. The practitioner himself sits upon [the flower] and rinses himself with the milk. [He] then imagines *tūla* cloth, [white like] a white lotus flower, that wraps around his body seven times. The Brahmā-king then takes the milk of his own (?)¹⁰ body and rinses out the practitioner's mouth. Having done this, the Brahmā-king takes a parasol and holds it above the practitioner's head. Within the Brahmā-king's parasol [the practitioner] sees all the many advanced verificatory visions.¹¹ He then regains his sanity and is no longer disturbed.

1 Following Kg.

2 Translation tentative. Perhaps referring to that kind of scepter wielded by wheel-turning monarchs?

3 In the *Glosses on the Canon* (T.2128:54.668c9–10) 擎 is explained as “to lift up with the hands,” and 漚 is explained as a southern (江南) word for milk (乳汁). Interestingly this unusual word 乳漚 also appears several times in Kang Senghui's *Liu du ji jing* 六度集經 (T.152:3.4c29), written in the Wu kingdom during the middle of the third century, and thus seeming to confirm that this was perhaps a typically southern expression. This would thus seem to provide another indication that the text was written, or at least redacted in southern China.

4 The idea seems to be that these flowers are actually sewn onto the heart itself.

5 As in the *Chan Essentials* “large intestine” (大腸) refers to what in English is called the “small intestine.”

6 See below 5.23 where the 404 channels are said to actually enter (入) the bones themselves, and similarly to “irrigate” (流注) them.

7 In the *Chan Essentials* the total number of bones is said to be 363 (see 1.69 and passim).

8 [口+數] P, S, Y, Kg

9 [口+數] P, S, Y, Kg

10 It is unclear if this means the milk of the god's body, or that already within the body of the practitioner.

11 As is made clear especially in sections 5.64–5.75 (the method for curing violations of the grave precepts), transgression of the precepts results in a meditator's verificatory vision disappearing, and purification of the transgression through repentance is indicated by its (re)attainment. This passage here seems to have some connection to this idea.

5.15

佛說此語時，五百釋子比丘，隨順佛語，一一行之。心即清涼，觀色受想行識，無常苦空無我，不貪世間，達解空法，豁然還得本心，破八十億炯然之結，成須陀洹。漸漸修學，得阿羅漢，三明六通，具八解脫。時諸比丘，聞佛¹所說，歡²喜奉行。此名柔軟治四大內風法。

When the Buddha had spoken these words the five hundred Śākyan monks followed the Buddha's instructions exactly. Their minds then became clear, and they contemplated [the five *skandhas*] of matter, sensations, perceptions, volitional formations, and consciousness as impermanent, suffering, empty, and non-self. No longer clinging to the world, they came to an understanding of the truth of emptiness, and in a flash they regained sanity, smashed the eighty million mountain-like defilements³ and became *śrotāpannas*. Gradually continuing their cultivation, they became arhats, endowed with the three wisdoms, six powers, and eight liberations.

At this time the monks, having heard what the Buddha said, joyfully undertook to carry it out. This is called the method for softening and curing the internal wind element.⁴

5.16

復次舍利弗，若行者欲行禪定，宜當善觀四大境界，隨時增損。春時應入火⁵三昧，以溫身體。火光猛盛，身體蒸熱，宜當治之。想諸火光，作如意珠。從毛孔出，焰⁶焰⁷之間，作金蓮華。化佛坐上，說治病法。以三種珠。一者，月精摩尼。二者，星光摩尼，猶如天星，光⁸白身青。三者，水精摩尼。想此三珠，一照頭上，一照左肩，一照右肩。見三珠已，想身毛孔出三珠光，極為清涼。身心柔軟，入火⁹三昧。不為所壞¹⁰。是名治火大三昧法¹¹。

Further, oh Śāriputra, a practitioner who wishes to practice trance should skillfully take the four great elements as his object of contemplation,¹² adjusting according to the season.

In spring he should enter the fire *samādhi* thereby warming his body.¹³ [But] when the fire becomes [too] strong his body overheats and he must correct this [imbalance]. [He must] imagine the flames of the fire to be wish-fulfilling jewels. They emerge from his pores and in the midst of the flames he imagines golden lotus flowers upon which sit transformation-buddhas who preach a method of curing illness by means of three different jewels, a “moon essence”

1 聞佛 = 佛聞 Kg

2 觀 Kg

3 On this expression, see above section 4.65.

4 Translation tentative.

5 +光 P, S, Y

6 炎 Kg

7 炎 Kg

8 先 Kg

9 +光 P, S, Y

10 Kg writes the character with a 火 radical.

11 [法] P, S

12 Here it seems best to take *jing jie* 境界 in its more basic sense of “object.”

13 On the correlations here between the seasons and different meditation methods, see p.79–80.

maṇi [jewel], a “starlight” *maṇi* that is like a star, blue in color with a white glow, and a crystal *maṇi*. [He should] imagine these three jewels, one shining on top of his head, one shining on his left shoulder, and one shining on his right shoulder. When he has seen these three jewels, [he must] imagine the light of these three jewels emerging from the pores of his body, extremely cool and refreshing. His body and mind [then] relaxed, he is able to enter the fire *samādhi* without incurring harm. This is called the method for curing [problems associated with] the *samādhi* of the fire element.

5.17

復次舍利弗，秋時應當入地三昧。入地三昧，見此地相，百千石山、鐵山、鐵圍山、金剛山。從頭至足，三百三十六節，各為百千山，山[神]{貌?}¹巖嶠。爾時應當疾疾治之。

Further, Śāriputra, in autumn [the practitioner] should enter the earth *samādhi*. Immersed in the earth *samādhi*, he [may] see the following signs of the earth element: a hundred thousand stone mountains, iron mountains, encircling iron mountains, and adamantine mountains. [He may see that] each of the 336 bones of his body becomes these hundreds of thousands of mountains, steep and jagged in appearance.

5.18

治地大法，想此諸山，一一諦觀，猶若芭蕉。如是次第，如經十譬，一一諦觀。爾時但見十方大地，如白琉璃，有白寶花。見舍利弗、目連、迦葉、迦旃延，坐白金剛窟，履地如水，為行者說五破五合，說地無常。行者見已，身心柔軟，還得本心。是名治地大法。

To cure [the imbalance that these signs indicate], he must imagine and carefully contemplate these mountains as [insubstantial] like [the trunk of] a plantain tree. One by one in this manner he contemplates [the mountains as empty] using the ten canonical metaphors.² He then sees the great earth in all directions become [transparent] like white beryl, [adorned with (?)] white-jewel flowers. He sees Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Kāśyapa, and Kātyāyana sitting within caves of white adamantine. [They display their miraculous powers such as] sinking into the earth as if it were water. They preach for the practitioner the “separation and coming together of the five”³ and the impermanence of the earth element. When the practitioner sees these things, his body and mind become relaxed and he regains his sanity. This is called the method for curing [problems occurring when entering the *samādhi* of] the earth element.

1 Emendation tentative. But some correction seems needed here as I do not see how a word such as 巖嶠 could possibly apply to a “mountain god” (山神).

2 Reference to the “ten metaphors” (十譬) for emptiness, beginning as here with the image of the plantain tree, is also found in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.674c23–28). Initially one would think that these refer to the metaphors of emptiness found in *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, which are often enumerated as ten in number (as in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.105b28–c1). Interestingly, however, the list found in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* does not include the example of the plantain tree. The reference here in the *Methods for Curing* is probably to the list of ten metaphors from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* where we do find this image (*Wei mo jie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, T.475:14.539b15–21). It seems that this group became particularly well known in China as ten metaphors for emptiness. For example the *Extended Records of Proselytizing* preserves a collection of poems attributed to Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) entitled *Eight verses in praise of the ten metaphors from the Vimalakīrti Sutra* 維摩詰經中十譬讚八首 (T.2103:52.200a28; there are only eight because some poems discuss two of the metaphors).

3 Unclear. Perhaps referring to the five *skandhas*?

5.19

復次舍利弗，行者入水三昧者，自見己身如大涌泉，三百三十六節，隨水流去。見十方地，滿中青水，或白或赤。宜當急治。治水法者，先當觀身作摩尼珠吉祥之瓶，金花覆上。使十方水，流入瓶中。此吉祥瓶，涌出七花，七莖分明。一一莖間，有七泉水，一一泉中，有七¹金花，一一華上，有一佛坐說七覺支。是名治水大法。

Further, Śāriputra, if when the practitioner enters the water *samādhi* he sees his body as like a giant surging fountain of water, such that his 336 bones are all washed away, [and if further] he sees the world in all directions filled with blue, white, or red water, then he must quickly be cured [of the imbalance in the water element that this represents].

The method for curing [this imbalance in the] water [element] is as follows. First, [he] must contemplate his body as an auspiciousness *maṇi*-jewel vessel, with golden flowers covering its top, and then make the waters of the ten directions flow into the vessel. Seven flowers then emerge from this auspicious vessel, their seven stalks each clearly apparent. Within each stalk there are seven jets of water. Within each jet of water there are seven golden flowers, and upon each flower there sits a buddha preaching the seven limbs of awakening. This is called the method for curing [imbalance in the] water element.

5.20

復次舍利弗，若行者入風三昧，自見己身作一九頭龍，一一龍頭，有九百耳無量口，身毛孔耳及口，如大溪谷，皆出猛風，宜急治之。治之法者，當教行者，自觀己身，作金剛座。從於四面，想四金剛輪，以持此風。金{剛}輪復生七金剛華，華上化佛，手捉澡[灌]{罐}²。澡[灌]{罐}³中，有一六頭龍，動身吸風，[今]{令}⁴十方風恬靜不動。爾時行者，復見七佛、四大聲聞，重為解說七覺支，漸入八聖道分。是名治內風大法也⁵。

Further, Śāriputra, when the practitioner enters the wind *samādhi* if he sees his body as a nine-headed snake, each head with nine hundred ears and innumerable mouths, the pores of the body, the ears, and the mouths [of these snakes] like deep gorges blowing forth violent winds, then he must quickly be cured.

The method for curing is as follows. The practitioner must be taught to contemplate his body as an adamant seat. On each side he imagines an adamant wheel that blocks the wind. Seven adamant flowers then emerge from these wheels, upon which are transformation buddhas holding pitchers water. Within each pitcher is a six-headed dragon that moves about inhaling the wind of the ten directions and making it still. The practitioner then again sees the seven buddhas and the four great voice-hearers [mentioned above,]⁶ who again explain for him the seven limbs of awakening, gradually entering into [an exposition of the] the eight-fold holy

1 有七 = 七有 Kg

2 Following P, S, Y.

3 Following P, S, Y.

4 Following K, J, P, Q, Kg; the Taishō is presumably a misprint.

5 [也] P, S, Y

6 This presumably refers to the four characters mentioned in section 5.18

path.¹ This is called the method for curing [imbalance in] the internal wind element.²

5.21

擁³酥⁴觀，柔軟四大，漸入聖分爾焰⁵境界。復次舍利弗，若有行者，四大麤澁，或瞋或喜，或悲或笑，或復腹行，或放下風。如是諸病，當教急治。

The enveloping⁶ butter contemplation,⁷ which makes supple the four elements [of the body], gradually giving access to the verificatory visions⁸ [attesting to the stages of] sanctity.

Further, Śāriputra, a practitioner, [because of] coarseness in the four elements [of his body],⁹ may become alternately angry and happy, sad and joyful, or may crawl on his stomach, or may have excessive gas. He must be taught to immediately cure such illnesses.

- 1 The hierarchy among the four elements, the contemplation of the wind-element as the highest, is thus revealed (apart from their mere ordering) by the progression to successively higher levels of Buddhist doctrine. Thus while in the third method (the water element) the seven buddhas reveal the seven “limbs of awakening” (七覺支; *bodhyaṅga*), in the fourth method (wind) this teaching then advances to the eight-fold path, which follows the seven limbs of awakening as the final items in the thirty-seven *bodhipakṣika-dharmas*.
- 2 Given that the comparable passages from the other sections are given in small characters, it seems likely that this sentence here was also originally a note of this kind.
- 3 癰 P (incorrectly noted by the Taishō as 癰); 手+維 Kg
- 4 蘇 P, S, Kg
- 5 炎 P, Q, Kg
- 6 In the *Great Calming and Contemplation* Zhiyi refers to something called the “warm butter method for curing exhaustion” (煖蘇治勞損法), which he presents as an example of “healing through imagination” (假想為治; T.1911:46.109a22–23). This appears to be the same practice mentioned here in the *Methods for Curing*, though Zhiyi reads “warm” 煖 rather than 擁. Since 擁 occurs in this usage several times here, I have assumed that it is correct. Although bathing in melted butter does not strike the modern reader as a particularly exciting prospect, it was a well-known remedy in India, and indeed the very feeling of melted butter (or ghee) on the skin was apparently pleasurable. Thus the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* describes the bliss of entering the third *dhyāna* as “like having one’s body enveloped in warm butter” (譬如煖蘇漬身; T.1509:25.120c17–19).
- 7 In K and J, each of which have 14 characters per line, the opening sentence here (up to the word 境界) appears simply as the first line of this new section. However in editions such as P, Q, and Kg, which have 16 or 17 characters per line, it is clear that this opening sentence is intended as the title of the ensuing section, and it is set apart as its own line.
- 8 爾焰 (or 爾炎) is a transcription of *jñeya* “what is to be known” (see *Glossary of Indian Words*, T.2130:54.989c18), a word that in Indian meditation texts is often synonymous with terms such as *ālambana* and *viśaya*. 爾焰境界 is thus effectively a joint transcription-translation of the same concept. Indeed traditional Chinese commentators regularly gloss 爾焰 as 境界 (see for example Jizang’s commentary to the *Śrīmālā-devī-sūtra*, the *Sheng man bao ku* 勝鬘寶窟, T.1744:37.16b4–5). As a technical term in Chinese Buddhist texts 爾焰 first appears in Buddhahadra’s translations. Indeed the only other example of the expression 爾焰境界 that I have found occurs in the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture* (T.618:15.324b16–17), where it describes the objects seen by the buddhas in their meditation. It is of interest that this section occurs during a description of the “contemplation of the factors of dependent origination [with regards] a pure object, having entered the pure beryl *samādhi*” 快淨琉璃三昧於明淨境界觀緣起支 (T.618:15.324a16–17).
- 9 “Coarse” *karkaśa* is a word often used to describe the imbalances of the four elements that in Buddhist medical theories lie at the root of bodily maladies (Salguero 2010, 172). Although given the tenor of the *Methods for Curing* this meaning is surely relevant, it is also significant that very similar language is invoked in certain texts in descriptions of how the attainment of *dhyāna* transforms the elements of the practitioner’s body from the “coarse” matter of the plane of the desire (*kāmadhātu*) into the refined matter of the plane of form (*rūpadhātu*). This language is found in particular in the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture*, where it is regularly stated, as if it were

5.22

治之法者。先觀薄皮，從半節起。見於薄皮，九十九重，猶如泡氣。次觀厚皮，九十九重，猶如芭蕉。次復觀膜，如眼上翳，九十九重，潰潰欲穿。

The method for curing them is as follows. First [the practitioner] must contemplate the outer skin¹ beginning with half [the toe]² bone. He sees the outer skin, ninety-nine layers thick, swelling up as if filled with air. Next he must contemplate the inner skin, ninety-nine layers thick, [encasing the body] like [the leaves forming the trunk of a] plantain tree. Next he must contemplate the [skin] membrane [lying between the two], [as thin as] a cataract upon the eye, composed of ninety-nine layers, bulging outwards to the verge of tearing.

5.23

次復觀肉，亦九十九重，如芭蕉葉。中間有蟲，細於秋毫。蟲各四頭四口，九十九尾。次當觀骨，見骨皎白，如白琉璃，九十³八重，四百四脈，入其骨間，流注上下，猶如芭蕉。次當觀髓，九十八重，如蟲網絲。

Next he must contemplate the muscles, which also have ninety-nine layers, like the leaves [forming the trunk of a] plantain tree. Within [the muscles] there are worms, as tiny as autumn goose down. Each worm has four heads, four mouths, and ninety-nine tails. Next he must contemplate the bones, shining white like white beryl, ninety-eight layers thick, like [the trunk of a] plantain tree.⁴ The 404 channels penetrate the bones, transmitting fluids up and down. Next he must contemplate the bone marrow, ninety-eight layers thick, like a cobweb [in appearance].

5.24

觀諸節已，次觀頭骨。一一髮下，有四百四脈，直入腦中。其餘薄皮厚皮骨與身無異，唯有腦膜十四重。腦為四分，九十八重，四百四脈，流注入心。大腸、小腸、脾、腎、肝、

a well-known refrain or saying, that the attainment of *samādhi* destroys the “coarse four elements” (麤澁四大) of the body and generates the “supple four elements” (隨順四大 or 柔順四大; see T.618:15.317a6–7; 320b24–25; 322b1–2; 322b14). Even more significantly, the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture* explains that if during *samādhi* the coarse material elements within the body begin to stir or become agitated, this will cause the practitioner’s mind to become destabilized: “The coarse four elements / again rise up within the body / shaking his concentration and causing it to disappear. / From this [the practitioner’s] mind becomes disturbed.” 麤澁四大種，還從身內起，掉動失正念，由是意憤亂。(T.618:15.302c13–14). The *Methods for Curing* is clearly drawing on a similar set of ideas, and the attainment of higher stages of meditation is coeval with the “softening” of the four elements and the elimination of the mental and physical disturbances caused by the “coarse” (that is, unbalanced) four elements.

- 1 On the various terms for skin in the *Chan Essentials* and *Methods for Curing*, see the notes to section 1.51 where, as here, we find three distinct terms: an “outer skin” (薄皮), an “inner skin” (厚皮), and a “membrane” (膜). In the *Chan Essentials* passage (1.51) it is clear from the description that the “membrane” lies between the outer and inner layers of skin. In the *Methods for Curing* the precise relationship is not specified, but we may assume that the arrangement is the same.
- 2 Although this is not specified, the “half bone” (半節) here recalls the instructions from the *Chan Essentials* where the meditation begins with the toe, so this is perhaps the meaning.
- 3 [十] Kg
- 4 The original text here seems to be understandable as one long sentence, but I have changed the arrangement in the translation for ease of comprehension.

肺¹、心、膽、喉嚨²、肺腴³、生熟二藏、八[萬]{十}⁴戶蟲，一一諦觀，皆使空虛皎然白淨。皮皮相裹。中間明淨。如白琉璃。

When he has contemplated all of the bones, he must next contemplate the skull. From beneath each hair⁵ 404 channels enter the brain. The rest of the thin skin, thick skin, and bones [of the head] are the same [in appearance as these things are] elsewhere in the body. However the brain membrane has only fourteen layers [as opposed to the skin membrane which has ninety-nine layers].⁶ The brain [itself] has four segments, ninety-eight layers, and 404 channels that connect to the heart.

[He must then] carefully contemplate his stomach, intestines, heart, spleen, kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, gal bladder, throat, lung-point,⁷ receptacles of undigested and digested food, and the eighty families of worms [within the receptacles of digested and undigested food],⁸ causing them all to become transparent, glimmering white, and pure. [The body], enclosed by layers of skin, is bright and pure within, like white beryl.

5.25

如是一一半節諦觀，使三百三十六節皆悉明了，令心停住。復更反⁹覆，一千九百九十九遍。然後當聚氣一處，數息¹⁰令調。想一梵王¹¹，手持梵瓶。與諸梵眾，至行者前。捉金剛刀，授與行者。既得刀已，自剗¹²頭骨，大如馬珂，置左膝上。於梵瓶中，生白蓮花，九節九莖九重。

In this manner he must contemplate each bone, making all his 336 bones clear, and causing his mind to become fixed [thereon]. [He should] then repeat this 1,999 times. Then he should gather his breath¹³ and count his inhalations and exhalations, making them even. [He should then] imagine a Brahmā-king¹⁴ holding a Brahma-pitcher. Together with a host of Brahmā-gods [the Brahmā-king] approaches and gives [the practitioner] an adamantite sword. Having taken the sword he slices off a piece of his skull the size of a [piece of] agate and places it on his left knee. A white lotus flower with nine segments, nine stalks, and nine tiers (?) grows within the pitcher.

1 肺 Kg

2 喉嚨 = 惟龍 Kg

3 喻 P, S, Y; 肺 Kg

4 Following Kg.

5 Indian Buddhist texts seem often to understand that hair connects directly to the bone, and we thus find descriptions of skeletons with hair.

6 Thus “brain membrane” (*nao mo* 腦膜), which in lists of the body parts is usually a translation of *mastaka-lungam*, seems here to have been understood as a special kind of the same “membrane” 膜 found elsewhere in the body as one of the three layers of skin.

7 On the lung-point (*fei yu* 肺腴), see the notes to section 1.11.

8 The progression here is nearly exactly the same as in section 1.11 of the *Chan Essentials*.

9 返 P, S, Y

10 自 Kg

11 天 P, S, Y

12 剗 Kg

13 I am not entirely certain how we are to understand the phrase “gather his breath” 聚氣一處.

14 For a summary and discussion of the following episode, see Salguero 2010, 207–210.

5.26

有一童子，隨梵王後，從初蓮華出。其身白色，如白玉¹人。手執白瓶，瓶內醍醐。梵王髻上如意珠中，出眾色藥，置醍醐中。童子灌之，從頂而入，入於腦脈，直下流注，至于左脚大拇指半節。半節滿已，津潤具足，乃至薄皮。復至一節，如是漸漸，遍滿半身。滿半身已，復滿全²身。滿全³身已，四百四脈，眾藥流注，[觀]{灌?}⁴身三百三十六節，皆悉盈滿。

A young [god] emerges from the first [of these] lotus flowers and falls in line behind the Brahmā-king.⁵ [The god] is white in color, like a white-jade man. He holds a white pitcher of ghee. The magic jewel within the Brahmā-king's top-knot then produces various medicinal herbs, which are placed within the ghee. The young god then pours the ghee into [the practitioner's open] skull. Entering the channels of the brain, it flows downward, reaching all the way to the tip of the bone of the left big toe. [This area] entirely filled [with the ghee], the saturating moisture [spreads outward] all the way to the outer skin. Segment by segment half the body is gradually filled [with ghee in this manner]. When half the body has been filled, [the process continues] until the entire body is filled. The entire body filled, the various medicines flow through all 404 channels irrigating his body's 336 bones and filling them [with medicines].

5.27

爾時行者，還取頭骨，安置頭上。童子復以青色之藥，布其頭上。此藥滴滴，從毛孔入。恐外風入，梵王復教作雪山酥⁶。皆令⁷鮮白，醍醐流注，如頗梨壁，持用擁身，七七四十九遍。復更廣大作醍醐池，白酥⁸為華，行者坐上，酥⁹蓋酥¹⁰窟。梵王慈藥，布散酥¹¹間。如是諦觀，九百九十九¹²遍。

The practitioner should then pick up the piece of his skull [that he had earlier removed] and place it back atop his head. The young god then takes blue medicine and spreads it on [the practitioner's] head. This medicine drips slowly into the pores. Fearing that external winds might

1 王 Kg

2 合 Kg

3 令 Kg

4 Emendation tentative. Although 觀 makes sense given what follows, it leaves the previous clause somewhat disconnected, and we have seen several examples above where the term 流注 is immediately connected to the location where the channels deliver their nourishment (see 5.13). The word *guan* 灌, "irrigate," was at this time nearly homophonous with *guan* 觀, "contemplate" (Pulleyblank 1991, 113), and is used throughout the *Methods for Curing* to describe the delivery of medicines into the channels.

5 Translation tentative. The text may be corrupt as it is first stated that the young god "follows behind the Brahmā-king" 隨梵王後 and only then says that he also "emerges from the first lotus flower" 從初蓮華出. This order does not seem to make sense.

6 藥 P, S, Y (probably an error for 蘇); 蘇 Kg

7 命 Kg

8 蘇 Kg

9 蘇 Kg

10 蘇 Kg

11 蘇 Kg

12 [九] Kg

enter,¹ the Brahmā-king then further has “Snow-mountain Butter” prepared. Fresh and pure, it drips with pure ghee,² and like a barrier of crystal it envelops the practitioner’s body forty-nine times. It then expands, becoming a lake of pure ghee [upon which floats] a flower of white butter. The practitioner sits atop [this flower], under a canopy of butter within cave of butter. The Brahmā-king’s “medicine of compassion” is dispersed throughout the butter. [The practitioner] must carefully contemplate in this manner 999 times.

5.28

然後復當想第二節蓮華中有一紅色童子，持赤色藥，散於髮間，及遍身體一切毛孔。使赤色藥從薄皮入，乃至於髓³。使心下明，遍體漸漸⁴軟。

After this he must next imagine that within the second segment of the lotus flower (?)⁵ there is a red-colored youth, who spreads red medicine through [the practitioner’s] hair and over all the pores of his body. The red medicine then penetrates through the outer skin eventually reaching the marrow. The area below [the practitioner’s] heart becomes bright and his entire body gradually becomes supple.

5.29

第三節中蓮華，復敷金色童子，持黃色藥，散於髮間，及遍身體一切毛孔。使黃色藥從薄皮入，乃至於髓。使心下青，遍體漸漸增長復更增長⁶軟。

From the third segment of the lotus flower emerges a golden youth, who spreads a yellow medicine through [the practitioner’s] hair and over all the pores of his body. The yellow medicine then penetrates through his outer skin eventually reaching his marrow. The area below his heart becomes blue and his entire body becomes ever more supple.⁷

5.30

第四節毘琉璃童子，持青色藥，右手持之，散於髮間，及遍身體一切毛孔。使青色藥從薄皮入，乃至於髓。使心下赤。一一毛孔，各下一針。從於足下，上刺二針。心上作三蓮花，三花之中，有三火珠，放赤色光，光照於心，令⁸心下漸漸暖。

[In] the fourth segment [there is] a beryl-colored youth who with his right hand spreads blue medicine through [the practitioner’s] hair and over all the pores of his body. The blue medicine then penetrates through his outer skin and continues until reaching his marrow. The

1 It is not clear to me whether this clause should be connected with the phrase before or after.

2 The image would seem to be of a lump of butter exuding droplets of pure butter-fat.

3 體 Kg

4 +柔 P, S, Y, Q

5 The measure word 節 was first introduced above when it was indicated that the lotus flower growing in the Brahmā-king’s pitcher had nine “segments” 節. Then the practitioner saw the young god emerge from the “first flower.” Here we see mentioned the “second segment” 二節. The terminology is none too clear. Perhaps the initial nine segments refers to a lotus flower with a nine-fold “platform” calyx in the center, and this now refers to the second of these? If so the phrasing 二節蓮華 would suggest that each 節 is regarded itself as a flower.

6 柔 P, S, Y, Q

7 Translation tentative.

8 合 Kg

area below his heart becomes red. Within each of his pores [the youth] inserts a needle pointing downward, and through the soles of his feet he inserts two [needles] pointing upwards. Three lotus flowers within which are three fire jewels radiating red light then appear above [the practitioner's] heart. The light shines upon his heart, gently warming the area beneath it.

5.31

然後兩掌諸節各下三針，隨脈上下。調和諸氣，[生]{令?}四百四脈不觸¹。大腸腎脈增長，復以五針，刺左腸²脈。如是童³子，調和諸針，以不思議熏，不思議修。挽⁴出諸針，置五爪下。以手摩觸遍行者身。

Then [the youth] inserts three needles into each of the joints of the practitioner's two palms, upwards or downwards according to the channel [in question.]⁵ This balances the various energies, making the 404 channels free of contrary impulses, and strengthening the large intestine and kidney channels.⁶ Next [the youth] takes five needles and inserts them into the left intestine channel. In this manner does the youth manipulate the various needles with unthinkable skill and refinement. [He then] removes them and puts them away beneath his nails.⁷ With his hands he then massages the practitioner's entire body.

5.32

第五節綠色童子，手捉玉瓶，從於糞門，灌綠色藥。遍大小腸⁸五藏諸脈，還從糞門。流出此水，雜穢諸蟲，隨水而流，不損醍醐，蟲止⁹水盡。復散綠色乾¹⁰藥，從於髮間及遍身體一切毛孔。使綠色乾¹¹藥，從薄皮入，乃至於髓¹²。使心下白¹³，遍體漸增柔軟。

In the fifth segment [of the flower] there is a green youth, who pours a jade pitcher of green medicine into [the practitioner's] anus. [The medicine] fills the large and small intestines, the five viscera, and all the channels, at which point it flows back out through the anus carrying with it various worms and impurities, but not diminishing the ghee [that had previously been poured into the practitioner]. When the worms are entirely removed the liquid stops flowing.

1 解 Kg

2 腹 Kg

3 僮 P, S

4 勉 Kg

5 Translation tentative. In the previous section we saw that the needles were inserted “downward” (下) in the pores, but “upward” (上) in the soles of the feet. The idea thus seems to be a regulation of the competing upward and downward energies, which as was discussed above (4.34) are the two contrary tendencies of the four elements. The idea here is thus perhaps that all of the channels are in some way connected to the palm, such that different channels require different applications of the needles, though in the end what it means to insert the needle “upward” or “downward” is not clear to me.

6 Translation tentative. I am not even certain of the correct punctuation here.

7 Translation tentative.

8 傷 Kg

9 上 Y

10 干 Kg

11 干 Kg

12 體 Kg

13 自 Kg

[The youth] then spreads a dry green medicine through [the practitioner's] hair and over all the pores of his body. The dry green medicine then penetrates through the outer skin eventually reaching the marrow. The area below his heart becomes white, and his entire body gradually becomes even more supple.

5.33

第六節紫色童子，捉玫瑰珠瓶，盛玫瑰水，遍洗諸脈。令玫瑰水從一切毛孔出，毛下諸蟲皆從水出¹。復以一琥珀²色乾³藥，散於髮間，及遍身體一切毛孔。使琥珀色乾藥從薄皮入，乃至於髓。使心下轉明，如白⁴雪光，遍體漸增柔軟。

In the sixth segment is a purple youth, who with a rose-jewel pitcher of rosewater cleans [the practitioner's] channels. The rosewater is then made to exit his body through the pores, carrying with it all the worms [who live] beneath the hairs. [The purple youth] then spreads a dry rose-colored medicine through his hair and over all the pores of his body. The dry rose-colored medicine then penetrates through the outer skin eventually reaching the marrow. The area below his heart becomes even brighter, like gleaming white snow, and his entire body gradually becomes even more supple.

5.34

第七節黃色童子，捉金剛鑽，鑽⁵兩⁶脚下，鑽⁷兩掌，鑽⁸心兩邊。然後持如意珠王⁹，摩拭六根。諸¹⁰根開¹¹，受最上禪味樂。諸皮脈間，如塗白膏，一切柔軟。

In the seventh segment is a yellow youth who pierces the practitioner's hands, feet, and the two sides of his heart with an adamantine nail. Then he rubs [the practitioner's] six sense organs with a royal wish-fulfilling jewel, making the sense organs experience the bliss of the highest level of trance. [The practitioner's] entire [body] becomes supple, as if all the folds¹² of his skin were smeared with white fat.

1 +玫 Kg

2 魄 Kg (throughout)

3 干 Kg

4 自 Kg

5 攢 P

6 面 Kg

7 攢 P

8 攢 P

9 玉 Kg

10 +情

11 聞 Kg

12 Translation tentative. 皮脈 could also refer to the blood or other channels near the surface of the skin.

5.35

第八節金剛色¹童子，手持二瓶，以金剛色藥灌兩耳中，及一切毛孔。如按²摩法，停調諸節³，身如鈎鎖⁴，遊諸節間。

In the eighth joint is an adamantine-colored youth who from two pitchers pours adamantine-colored medicine into the practitioner's ears and pores, and just as a masseuse would adjust each of the body's joints in turn so too does [this medicine] travel through each of the joints of his chain-like body.

5.36

第九節摩尼⁵珠色童子。從瓶口出，至行者所。[內]{右?}五指，置行者口中，其五指端，流五色藥。行者飲已，觀身及心乃至諸脈，淨若明鏡，頗梨摩尼色不得譬。童子授蓮花莖，令行者噉，噉時如噉藕⁶法。[滴滴]{啖啖}⁷之中，流注甘⁸露。食此莖已，唯九華在。

In the ninth joint is a youth with the color of a wish-fulfilling jewel. He emerges from the mouth of the pitcher [in which the segmented lotus flower grows (?)] and comes before the practitioner. He places the five fingers of his right hand inside the practitioner's mouth, and from the tips of his five fingers a five-colored medicine flows forth. After having consumed this medicine, when he contemplates his body [he finds that] his heart and its channels are as pure as a clear mirror, beyond comparison with even crystal or *mani*-jewels. The youth then feeds the practitioner the stalk [of the lotus flower]. It should be chewed as one would chew lotus [root].⁹ With each bite ambrosia flows forth. When he has eaten the stalk, only the nine flowers remain.

5.37

一一華中，有一梵王，持梵王床。授與行者，令行者坐。坐此床已，七寶大蓋，覆行者上。梵王各各說慈法門，以教行者。梵王力故，十方諸佛，住行者前，為說慈、悲、喜、捨。隨根授藥，柔軟四大。

Within each flower there is a Brahmā-god, and [together] they give the practitioner a Brahmā throne to sit on. When he sits upon it a great canopy made of the seven treasures extends above him, and the Brahmā-kings each instruct the practitioner in the method for the cultivation of love. By the power of these Brahmā-kings the buddhas of the ten directions then arrive before the practitioner and preach for him [the cultivation of] love, pity, mutual joy, and equanimity.¹⁰ In accordance with his capacity they give him medicine, which makes the four elements [of his body] supple.

1 [色] Kg

2 案 P, S, Y, Q, Kg

3 停調諸節 = 停諸節間 Kg

4 瑣 P

5 [尼] Kg

6 蘇 P, S, Y; Kg seems to read [藕 - **]

7 I here tentatively emmend on the basis of *Glosses on the Canon* (T.2128:54.669a5).

8 可 Kg

9 Translation tentative.

10 The four *brahma-vihāras* or *apramānas*, the meditation practices associated with rebirth in the Brahma heavens.

5.38

告舍利弗：汝好持此柔軟四大伏九十八使身內身¹外一切諸病梵王灌頂擁酥灌法，為四眾說。爾時舍利弗、尊者阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: “You must preserve and preach for the four groups of Buddhists this method of consecration [in which] the head is consecrated with enveloping butter by the Brahmā-king, which by making supple the four elements of the body subdues the ninety-eight defilements and all illness both internal and external.”

When Śāriputra and the venerable Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.39

治²噎³法。復次舍利弗，若阿練{若}⁴比丘，用心[大]{太}⁵急，數息太麤。眠臥單薄，因外風寒。因動[脾]{胃}⁶管，脾、腎等脈，諸⁷筋起風。逆氣胸塞。節節流水，停住胸中。因成激⁸血⁹，氣發，頭痛¹⁰，背¹¹滿諸筋攣¹²縮。當疾治之。

The method for curing blockage.

Further, Śāriputra, if the mind of a meditating monk¹³ becomes too tense, his breathing will become too rough. His sleep will be poor, and he will be assailed by cold external winds. As a result his stomach gate¹⁴ and the spleen and kidney channels will become agitated, and wind

1 [身] P, S, Y

2 法 P, S

3 Zhanran’s summary of this passage in his *Zhi guan fu xing chuan hong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決 here reads 噎 rather than 噎 (T.1912:46.400b22–23). These two characters seem to be equivalent. The illness 噎 appears in the *Su wen* 素問 as a problem “resulting from cold in the stomach” (胃寒所生; *Su wen*, 5). The *Methods for Curing* appears to understand the condition similarly. See also Sun Simiao’s 孫思邈 seventh-century *Bei ji qian jin yao fang* 備急千金要方 (chapter 53), where the illness 噎 is described in similar terms. This chapter of Sun Simiao’s work presents many different kinds of 噎, all of which involve blockage, either in the pathways of eating and drinking, or in those of respiration.

4 Following P, S, Y.

5 Following P, Kg.

6 Following P, Kg; this reading is also shared by the *Zhi guan fu xing chuan hong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決.

7 [諸] Kg

8 凝 P, S, Y

9 面 Kg

10 病 Kg

11 皆 P, S, Y

12 (攣-手)+心 Kg

13 Literally “a forest (*aranya*) monk.”

14 This passage of the *Methods for Curing* contains many technical terms drawn from Chinese medicine and anatomy, one of which is “stomach gate.” In Chinese literature the earliest occurrence of this term that I have been able to locate is the biography of the physician *Hua tuo* 華佗 in the *San guo zhi* 三國志 (*San guo zhi*, 29.800), where it is mentioned as a site of acupuncture (or perhaps a part of the body to be affected by an acupuncture treatment). The word is common in later medical literature. In the *Bei ji qian jin yao fang* 備急千金要方 (chapter 31) it is said to be located three *cun* 寸 beneath the heart, and stimulation of this site is recommended for those afflicted by cold illnesses. This text also mentions that blockage of the stomach gate causes problems with digestion (chapter 52). The stomach gate is also mentioned frequently in Daoist

will stir within his muscles. He will experience a “reverse *qi*” such that his chest will become blocked.¹ All his joints will leak water, which will accumulate in his chest. His blood will roil and his *qi* will be over stimulated, [such that] his head will hurt and the muscles of his back will tighten. This condition must be treated quickly.

5.40

治之法者。先服肥膩世間美藥，然後仰眠，數息令定。想阿耨達池，其水盈滿，滿一由旬。底有金沙，四寶金輪，生黃金華，大如車輪。花中有四寶獸頭。象鼻出水，獅子口出水，馬口出水，牛口出水，繞池七匝。阿耨達龍王，七寶宮殿，在四獸頭間。龍王頂上如意珠中，龍王力故，生一千五百雜色蓮華。

The method for curing this is as follows. First [the practitioner] must take excellent, nourishing worldly medicine. He should then lie down on his back, count his breaths, and settle [his mind].² He should then imagine lake Anavatapta, its waters filling a full *yojana*. On the bottom [of the lake] there is golden sand and a golden wheel as big as a chariot’s made of four precious substances. From it grows a golden flower, within which are animal heads made from four precious substances.³ There is an elephant [head], whose trunk spouts water, and the heads of a lion, a horse, and a bull, whose mouths spout water. These waters circle the lake seven times. In the middle of these four animal heads the dragon-king of lake Anavatapta [resides] in his palace made of the seven treasures. By the power of the dragon-king 1,500 lotus flowers of various colors grow forth from the wish-fulfilling jewel on the crown of his head.

physiological texts. It occurs, for example, in the “outer” version of the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* 黃庭經 (YJQQ, 311), where the Tang commentary of Wu Chengzi 務成子 explains it to mean “entrance to the great granary [stomach]” (太倉口). It also appears several times in the (possibly late Han) *Central Scripture of Laozi* (*Lao zi zhong jing* 老子中經; YJQQ, 414; 414; 433; 442; 447) as the location of the “Cinnabar Lad” 子丹, the bodily incarnation of Laozi within the adept. But the *Methods for Curing* seems to draw most directly from Chinese medical tradition, in particular from the association between blockage of the stomach gate and excess cold/water. Finally we should note that the stomach gate is also discussed in these terms in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*: “The large worms, in their playful sport, enter the large intestine, and from the large intestine they enter the stomach. When a cold illness occurs, the ‘stomach gate’ becomes firmly shut and the worms are unable to enter [the stomach]. As a result, food is not digested.” 大蟲遊戲，入大腸中，從大腸出，復入胃中。冷病起時，胃管閉塞，蟲不得入，故食不消。(Ocean-samādhi Contemplation, T.643:15.652b15–17).

- 1 The problem of “reverse *qi*” (逆氣) is mentioned in the *Su wen* (47), described as resulting from problems in the “stomach channel” (胃脈). While “stomach gate” does not occur in the *Su wen*, the idea here seems to be very similar. “Reverse *qi*” is also mentioned in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.670c17–18).
- 2 As written we also might interpret this as “count his breaths and settle them,” but below (5.58) we see 先當數息繫心令定, suggesting that the intention here may be the same.
- 3 According to Buddhist cosmology lake Anavatapta is the source of the worlds’ rivers, particularly of the four great rivers, which supposedly flow from the heads of four animals on the edges of the lake (*Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.114a15–28; Lamotte 1944–1981, 450). Many of the items mentioned here in the *Methods for Curing* are described in this passage from the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, including the four animal heads, the ground of “golden sand,” and the “chariot-wheel” flowers. These are indeed standard features of lake Anavatapta (see for example *Zhang a han jing* 長阿含經, T.1:1.116c16–117a1). In the Indian accounts with which I am familiar, however, the animal heads are positioned at the edges of the lake in the four directions, from where they flow into the four rivers of the north, east, west and south, and this seems to differ from the description here.

5.41

青蓮花五百，尊者賓頭盧等五百阿羅漢，各坐其上。日暮則合¹，晝時則開。有七寶蓋，在比丘上。有七寶床，在蓮華下。五百金色蓮花，淳陀婆等五百沙彌，各坐其上。日暮則合，日晝²則開。有七寶蓋，在沙彌上。有七寶床，在蓮華下。五百紅蓮花，尊者優波³難陀和須蜜⁴多等大阿羅漢，或言是大菩薩眷屬五百，各坐其上。日暮則合，日晝則開。有七寶蓋，在比丘上。有七寶床，在蓮花下⁵。

Five hundred are blue lotus flowers, upon which are seated Piṇḍola and the other five hundred arhats. When the sun sets [the flowers] close, opening again at daybreak. Above the monks' heads there are seven-treasure canopies, and below [on] the lotus flowers are seven-treasure seats.

Upon five hundred golden lotus flowers sit Cundra and the other five hundred *śrāmaṇeras*.⁶ When the sun sets [the flowers] close, opening again at daybreak. Above the *śrāmaṇeras*' heads are seven-treasure canopies, and below [on] the lotus flowers are seven-treasure seats.

Upon five hundred red lotus flowers sit Upananda, Vaśumitra and the other great arhats. Some say this is the five-hundred-person retinue of the great bodhisattva [the dragon-king].⁷ When the sun sets [the flowers] close and they open again at daybreak. Above these monks' heads there is a seven-treasure canopy. Below the lotus flowers are seven-treasure seats.

5.42

有七寶高臺，長八千丈，從下方出，當阿耨達龍王宮前。有五百童子，在其臺上，身真金色。第一童子，名曰闍婆。第二童子，名曰善財。第五百童子，名灌頂力王。

There is further a tall dais made of the seven treasures, eight thousand feet wide, extending upwards directly in front of the palace of the dragon-king of lake Anavatapta. Upon this dais there are five hundred youths with golden bodies. The first is named Jīvaka,⁸ the second is named Good Fortune, and the last is named Lord Might of Consecration.

5.43

若欲治噎病者，先念尊者賓頭盧等一千五百人，如上所說。令了了見已，尊者賓頭盧，當將是闍婆童子，取阿耨達龍王所服白色菴婆陀藥。菴婆陀藥者，味如甘蔗，形似藕⁹根，味亦

1 令 Kg

2 盡 Kg

3 婆 Kg

4 蜜 P, S, Y; [蜜] Kg

5 在 Kg

6 The *śrāmaṇera* Cundra, together with Piṇḍola, is mentioned again below (6.12). The identity of this Cundra is unclear. The *Zeng yi a han jing* 增一阿含經 and corresponding *Samyutta-nikāya* both contain a short sutra mentioning a *śrāmaṇera* by this name, said to have been Śāriputra's attendant (T.99:2.176c1; *Cundasutta*, SN 5.161). This short sutra was popular enough in China to have circulated independently in the fifth and sixth centuries (*Records of the Canon*, T.2145:55.24b1).

7 According to the account of lake Anavatapta in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (see notes to section 5.40), the dragon-king is a seventh-stage bodhisattva.

8 Jīvaka is the name of the famous physician mentioned in many Buddhist scriptures.

9 蘇 P, S; 藕 Kg

有似石蜜者。服此藥已，噎病得差¹，四大調和，眼即明淨。

One who wishes to cure the illness of blockage should first bring to mind the venerable Piṇḍola and the other 1500 people mentioned above. [When the practitioner] has seen them all clearly the venerable Piṇḍola will take the youth Jīvaka to obtain a white medicinal herb named **abaddha*.² (The *abaddha* herb tastes like sugar-cane and is shaped like a lotus root. Its flavor is also like rock-sugar.) When [the practitioner] has consumed this medicine his blockage will be cured, the four elements [within his body] will become balanced, and his vision will become clear.

5.44

若發大乘心者，聞婆善財等五百童子，為說大乘法。因是得見跋陀婆羅等十六賢士，亦見賢劫彌勒等千菩薩，因發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心，具六波羅蜜。發聲聞心者，尊者賓頭盧。為說四念處法，乃至八聖道分。經九十日，得阿羅漢道。

For one who aspires to the great vehicle Jīvaka, Sudhana and the remainder of the five hundred youths will preach the teachings of the great vehicle. This will allow [the practitioner] to see the sixteen noble ones led by Bhadrāpāla,³ as well as Maitreya [and the remainder of] the one thousand bodhisattvas of [this era, the so-called] “eon of the worthy.” As a result, [the practitioner] will produce the aspiration for the complete, perfect awakening of a buddha (*anuttarasamyaksambodhi*), and he will become fully endowed with the six *pāramitās*.

For one who aspires to become a voice-hearer the venerable Piṇḍola will preach the four bases of mindfulness [and the other *bodhipakṣika-dharmas*] up to the eight-fold holy path. [Upon hearing these,] after ninety days [the practitioner] will become an arhat.

5.45

告舍利弗，汝好受持此治噎法，慎莫忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說⁴，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: “You must preserve this method for curing blockage. Do not forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1 瘥 P, S, Y

2 Reconstruction tentative. Note that 婆陀 is explained in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* as a transcription of *baddha*, “bound” (婆陀，秦言縛; T.1509:25.408b25–26). Accordingly 菴婆陀 could very easily be *abaddha*, “unbound,” an idea that would fit well with the idea of curing “blockage.”

3 This seems clearly to refer to the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, also known as the *Bhadrāpāla-sūtra* in which the main interlocutor is the lay bodhisattva Bhadrāpāla and his cohort of sixteen bodhisattvas (Harrison 1990). Note that Bhadrāpāla and the sixteen bodhisattvas are also mentioned in the introduction to the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.645c15–16).

4 治 Kg

5.46

治行者貪婬患法¹。復次舍利弗，若行者入禪定時，欲覺起貪婬，風²動四百四脈，從眼至身根，一時動搖。諸情閉塞，動於心風，使心顛狂。因是發狂。鬼魅所著，晝夜思欲。如救頭然，當疾治之。

The method for curing a practitioner beset by lust.

Further, Śāriputra, if in a practitioner who has entered trance there is the perception of something desirable,³ wind will stir the 404 channels [connecting] the eye to the penis.⁴ His sense organs blocked off [because of being in trance], [the stirring of the 404 channels] will agitate the heart-wind thus perturbing the heart.⁵ As a result he will go mad. Possessed by *gui mei* demons, day and night he will think only of the objects of his desire. He must quickly cure this, as urgently as if extinguishing a fire on his head.

5.47

治之法者，教此行者，觀子藏。子藏者，在生藏下，熟藏之上。九十九重膜。如死猪胞。四百四脈從於子藏，猶如樹[根]{措}⁶，布散諸根。如盛尿囊。一千九百節，似芭蕉葉。八[萬]{十}⁷戶蟲，圍繞周匝，四百四脈，及以子藏。猶如馬腸⁸，直至產門，如臂釧形，團團⁹大小。上圓下尖¹⁰，狀如貝¹¹齒。九十九重，一一重間，有四百四蟲。一一蟲有十二頭十二口。

1 This section of the *Methods for Curing* is cited under the name *Chan mi yao fa jing* 禪祕要法經 in the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* (T.2122:53.793b14–794a7) and the *Compendium of Scriptural Essentials* (T.2123:54.186b16). The passage is further cited in Zhizhou's 知周 (668–723) commentary to the *Brahma Net Scripture* (*Fan wang jing pu sa jie ben shu* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏, X.687:38.452a7). I will note variants from these excerpts with symbols F, Z, and Fw respectively, with the edition in question in parentheses. Thus F(S) indicates the Taishō Song canon variant to the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma*.

2 盛 Fw

3 Translation tentative.

4 On the word *shen gen* 身根 meaning “penis,” see sections 3.72, 5.55, 5.99. The word also clearly has this meaning in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.683b11–13 and passim). Concerning the anatomy here, in which 404 channels lead from the eye to the penis, see 5.49 and 5.50 below.

5 The meaning here is not entirely clear to me, in part because I am not certain what it means to say that the *qing* 情 have been “blocked off” (this idea is mentioned again below in section 5.57). If *qing* 情 means the sense organs, as it does sometimes in Buddhist texts, then this would seem to mean that, being in trance, his sense organs do not perceive objects. But the passage also clearly speaks of a case when the eye sees a desirable form (hence the discussion of the connection between the eye and the penis). Thus *qing* 情 may refer not to the sense organs per se but, in a more Chinese meaning, the “emotions” that arise in response to sense perception. The idea is thus that, being in trance, the meditator has no emotional response to desirable objects. But precisely for this reason upon seeing such an object there is instead a kind of physiological response through the “channels” that provokes madness.

6 脂 F(P,S,Y); 枝 Z(P,S,Y). Here I follow F(K) and Kg, a reading supported by the *Glosses on the Canon* (T.2128:54.668b6).

7 Following F, Z, Kg.

8 傷 Kg

9 圓 P, S, Y

10 尖 = 小大 Kg

11 貝 F, Z, Kg

The method for curing this is as follows. [A woman] practitioner¹ must be instructed to contemplate the “receptacle of the child.”² The “receptacle of the child” is located below the receptacle of undigested food and above the receptacle of digested food. Its membrane is ninety-nine layers thick. It is like the womb of a dead pig. 404 channels emerge from it, like [branches from] the trunk of a tree, spreading forth to all the sense organs.³ It is like a bag filled with shit. With 1,900 folds, it is like the leaves [that form the trunk of a] plantain tree. The eighty families of worms surround these 404 channels and the receptacle of the child. Like a horse’s intestine, it extends down to the vaginal opening, as round as a bracelet and just as big. Round on top and pointed on the bottom, like the shape of a tooth,⁴ between each of its ninety-nine layers there are 404 worms, each with twelve heads and twelve mouths.

5.48

人飲水時，水精入脈，布散諸蟲。入毘羅蟲頂，直至產門，半月半月，出不淨水。諸蟲各⁵吐，猶如敗膿。入九十蟲口[中]⁶，從十二蟲六竅中出，如敗絳汁。復有諸蟲，細於秋毫，遊戲其中。

When [a woman] drinks water the water-essence enters the channels and is distributed to the worms. It enters the head of the *pi lu* worms which then go to vaginal opening, which at the midpoint of each month leaks impure liquids, like fetid pus, that are the vomit of these worms. [This occurs when the water]⁷ enters nine or ten mouths of [each] worm and then comes out from the six openings of [each of the] worms’ twelve [heads] as a fetid red sludge.⁸ There are yet more worms, as tiny as autumn down, which frolic therein.

- 1 This section of the text seems to first describe the contemplation in the case of a woman (who contemplates how desire stirs the menstrual blood, taken as a sexual fluid). In 5.49, the analogous contemplation is given in the case of a man, where the fluid stirred in not blood but semen, and the anatomy in question is slightly different.
- 2 The word “receptacle of the child” (子藏) is a standard term in Chinese medical texts for the womb. The location given here, “below the receptacle of digested food and above the receptacle of undigested food,” is moreover the standard location of the womb found in Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist texts (see for example *A pi da mo da pi po sha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, T.1545:27.507a21–22; *Stages of the Path of Practice*, T.606:15.187c22). Interestingly, however, the term “receptacle of the child” 子藏 does not ever seem to appear in such translations.
- 3 Alternatively “like the roots (根) of a trees spreading forth from the trunk (樁).” The distinction hinges on whether 布散 is to be read transitively or intransitively. In the passage below, this same word is clearly intransitive (布散諸蟲), so I have provisionally adopted this reading here.
- 4 The variant reading of 貝齒, “a pearl,” is also possible.
- 5 [各] Kg
- 6 Following Kg.
- 7 This seems to be the subject. The entire passage is confusing.
- 8 Translation tentative.

5.49

諸男子等，宿惡罪故，四百四脈從眼根布散四支，流注諸腸¹，至生藏下，熟藏之上。肺腴²腎脈，於其兩邊，各有六十四蟲，蟲各十二頭亦十二口，[統]{婉}³縷相著。狀如指⁴環，盛青色膿，如野猪精，臭惡叵堪⁵。

In men, because of their sins from past lives, the 404 channels spread from the eye organ throughout the four limbs, flowing then to the entrails and reaching the place below the receptacle of raw food and above the receptacle of digested food. Between these two are found the channels associated with the lung-point and the kidney,⁶ in each of which there are sixty-four worms each with twelve heads and twelve mouths that squirm against each other.⁷ Shaped like tiny rings, they are full of blue pus, like the semen of wild boars, unbearably smelly and foul.

5.50

至陰藏⁸處，分為三支。二支⁹在上。如芭蕉葉，有一千二百脈。一一¹⁰脈中，生於風蟲，細若秋毫，似毘蘭多鳥觜。諸蟲口中，生筋色蟲。此蟲形體似筋，連持子藏，能動諸脈。吸精出入。男蟲青白，女蟲紅赤。七萬八千，共相纏¹¹裹，狀如累環，似瞿師羅鳥，眼九十八。

[These channels]¹² extend to the penis and divide into three branches. Two branches are on the top side. Like the leaves [forming the trunk of] a plantain tree there are here 1,200 channels. Within each channel live wind-worms, as tiny as autumn down, like the beak of a *Pi lan duo* bird.¹³ Within the mouths of these worms there live muscle-worms (These worms look like muscles. [In women]¹⁴ they latch onto the receptacle of the child and move the various channels. [In men] they ingest and excrete the semen. In men they are blueish-white, and in women they are pink). 78,000 in number, they are all joined together like linked rings, and like *ju shi luo* birds¹⁵ they have ninety-eight eyes.

5.51

脈上衝於心，乃至頂髻。諸男子等，眼觸於色，風動心根。四百四脈，為風所使，動轉

1 腹 Kg

2 肺腴 = 肺膈 Kg

3 Following P, S, Y, Kg.

4 相 Kg

5 甚 P, S, Y

6 Translation tentative. It would appear, however, that the text is positing these two channels as the male equivalent of the womb, both anatomically, and functionally as the site where the sexual fluids are produced.

7 The term 婉縷 is here glossed in the *Glosses on the Canon* as “stick close together” 不相離 (T.2128:54.668b7).

8 陰藏 = 藏陰 Kg

9 九 Kg

10 一一 = 二 Kg

11 源 Kg

12 This appears to be the subject.

13 This transcription is unknown from other sources.

14 The translation of this entire note is tentative, and I do not fully understand it.

15 The transcription 瞿師羅 is found in other Buddhist texts a transcription of Ghosila, a layman who gave a park to the Buddha. Its sense here is unclear.

不停。八[萬]{十}¹戶蟲，一時張口，眼出諸膿，流注諸脈，乃至蟲頂。諸蟲崩動，狂無所知，觸前女根。男精青²白，是諸蟲淚³。女精黃赤，是諸蟲膿。九十八使所熏修法，八[萬]{十}⁴戶蟲地、水、火、風動作，作此⁵。

[These] channels reach up [from the penis] to the heart, and from there they extend to the top of the head. When a man's eye encounters a visible form wind stirs the heart. The 404 channels fall under the control of this wind and move about without cease. The eighty families of worms [within the channels] at once open their mouths [and vomit] and emit pus from their eyes, which flows through the channels until it reaches the [other] worms' heads.⁶ The worms shake wildly, and loosing all control they charge madly towards the woman's sexual organs.⁷

The man's semen is bluish-white—this is the worms' tears. A woman's menstrual blood is yellowish-red—this is the worms' pus. These [sexual fluids] are thus created through the perfume-like conditioning of the ninety-eight defilements⁸ and the movements of earth, water, fire, and wind.

5.52

{佛}⁹告舍利弗：若有四眾，著慚愧¹⁰衣，服慚愧藥，欲求解脫度世苦者，當學此法，如飲甘露。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: If a follower of the Buddha wears the clothing of shame, takes the medicine of shame,¹¹ [and] wishes to seek liberation and traverse the suffering of the world, then he must learn this ambrosial method.

5.53

學此法者，想前子藏乃至女根、男子身分，大小諸蟲，張口豎[耳]{身}¹²瞋目吐膿。以手反之，置左膝端。數息令¹³定，一千九百九十九過觀。此想成已，置右膝端，如前觀之，復以手反之，用覆頭上，令此諸蟲眾不淨物先適¹⁴兩眼、耳、鼻、及口，無處不至。

One learning this method should imagine [as described] above the receptacle of the child,

1 Following Kg, F, Z, but not F(S,Y); 萬 = 十萬 Fw

2 清 Fw

3 尿 P, S, Y

4 Following Kg, F, Z, but not F(S,Y).

5 動作作此 = 動作由此 F(K); 之所動作 Z; 動作如此 Fw. All of these readings are syntactically more straightforward, but the great number of variants suggests that the harder to understand is correct.

6 Unclear. Perhaps this refers to the worms in the area where the semen is produced?

7 Translation tentative. The point would seem to be that these worms are in fact the man's semen.

8 "Defilement" (使), which in Buddhist texts often translates Indic terms such as *kleśa*, *anuṣaya*, or *saṃyojana*, is here the same word used earlier to describe how the movement of wind "controls" (使) the 404 channels.

9 Following F and Z, though this may well be a correction made by these two versions alone.

10 媿 P, S, Y

11 To "wear the clothing of shame" seems to mean to be fully pure after having repented (see *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, T.643:15.682a20–25). See also below section 5.74.

12 Following Kg.

13 命 Kg

14 滴 P, S, Y

the male and female sexual organs,¹ and the worms, large and small, which open their mouths, tense their bodies, open wide their eyes, and vomit up the pus [that forms the sexual fluids]. [The practitioner] should turn over [the pus (?)] with his hands and place it on the tip of his left knee.² He should then count his breath and still [his mind], contemplating [this pus] 1,999 times.

When this meditation is complete he should put the pus on the tip of his right knee and contemplate it as before. Then he must again take it with his hands, put it atop his head, and cause the many impurities of these worms to first go into his eyes, [then] into his ears, nose, and mouth, such that there is no place they do not go.³

5.54

見此事已，於好女色及好男色乃至天子天女，若眼視之，如見癩人那利瘡蟲⁴，如地獄箭半多羅鬼神狀，如阿鼻地獄猛火⁵熱。應當諦觀自身他身。是欲界一切眾生，身分不淨，皆悉如是。

After he has seen these things whenever seeing attractive women or men, even gods or goddesses, it will be as if seeing the worms from the *na-li* sores of leper,⁶ or a *Qian-ban-duo-luo*-demon from hell, or the raging fires of the Avīci hell. The practitioner must carefully contemplate his own body and the bodies of others. The bodies of all living beings of the sphere of desire are impure in this way.

5.55

告舍利弗：汝今知不？眾生身根，根本種子，悉不清淨，不可具說。但當數息⁷一心觀之。若服此藥，是大丈夫，天人之師，調御人主⁸，免⁹欲淤泥，不為使¹⁰水恩愛大河之所漂沒，淫泆¹¹不祥幻色¹²妖鬼之所燒¹³害。當知是人，未出生死，其身香潔，如優波羅，人中香象龍王，力士摩醯首羅所不能及，大力丈夫天人所敬。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: Do you now understand? The sexual organs of living beings, both the organs themselves and the seeds [they produce], are entirely, indescribably impure. [A practitioner] must merely count the breath and single-mindedly contemplate [this].

If he takes the medicine [of this practice], then he is a great man, a teacher of humans and

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- 1 The expression 男子身分 seems clearly to mean “male sexual organs,” and this word is used in this meaning in the *Ocean-samādhi Scripture* (T.643:15.685a12–15).
 - 2 Is this all something that the practitioner imagines? Might this passage describe the actual manipulation of sexual fluids, albeit for the purpose of contemplating their impurity?
 - 3 Thus just as desire originated in the sensory organs, leading to the stimulation of the sexual fluids, here the practitioner completes the cycle by bringing the fluids back into contact with the organs that produced them.
 - 4 Here Fw adds in small characters: “The [word] *na-li* means an infected sore” (翻那利為毒惡瘡).
 - 5 +熾 P, S, Y, Fw
 - 6 I treat 癩 as a generic reference to a sore-causing illness.
 - 7 [息] Kg
 - 8 至 Kg
 - 9 勉 Kg
 - 10 駛 P, S, Y
 - 11 送 Kg
 - 12 偽 P, S, Y
 - 13 燒 Kg

gods, a master of men to be trained.¹ He has escaped from the mud of desire, is no longer drowned by the waters of the defilements or the great river of attachment, nor will he be seduced by baneful, deceptive succubi. Know that such a person, though he has not yet escaped from birth and death, will have a fragrant body, like an *utpala* flower. He will be a fragrant elephant king among men, unequaled even by the mighty *Īsvara*, a mighty man, venerated by gods and men.

5.56

告舍利弗，汝好受持，為四眾說，慎勿忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: “You must preserve [this teaching] and preach it for the four groups of Buddhists. Do not forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.57

治利養瘡²法。復次舍利弗，若有行者，貪火所燒，利養毒箭，惡風吹動，以射其心。以貪因³緣，心或顛倒。晝夜六時，思[念貪]{食}⁴方便，如猫伺鼠，心無厭足。如七步蛇，吐⁵毒覆身。如此惡人，利養細滑，五百毒蛇，集在身[上]{中}⁶。剎那剎那頃，其心毒火，熾然不息。晝夜六時，煩惱猛風，吹利養薪，在其心內，熾然不息。諸蛇競作，燒善根芽⁷。以是因緣，狂亂黑⁸鬼，猛毒熾盛，見他得利，如箭射心，如刺入眼，如釘入耳。諸情閉塞，五百[五]{惡?}蛇，四大毒龍，五拔刀賊，六村羅刹，一時競作，因是發狂。當疾治之。

The method for curing the wound caused by personal benefits.⁹

Further, Śāriputra, a practitioner whose heart is burned by the fires of greed and into which an evil wind shoots the poisonous arrow of [desire for] personal benefits will, because of his greed, become disoriented in mind. Day and night he thinks only of how he can find

1 These are three of the traditional epithets of the Buddha.

2 創 Kg

3 [因] Kg

4 Tentatively following Kg.

5 [吐] Kg

6 Following K, J, P, Q, Kg. The Taishō is presumably a mistake, but note how the editors mark this variant from P, but not from S or Y. This shows that the Taishō's mistake derives from an error in the *Shukuzō* (Tokyo) edition.

7 牙 P, S; 耳 Kg

8 里 Kg

9 As above I here translate *li yang* 利養 as “personal benefits.” The precise expression “the wound of personal benefits” (利養瘡) seems to derive from the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (T.1509:25.164b26–c1), in a passage that according to Lamotte (1944–1981, 867) is a reference to the *Vālarajja-sutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (SN, 2.238). In that text, however, the image is of “gain, honor, and fame” (*lābhasakkārasiloka*) as like a “rope of hair” (*vālarajju*) that when tightened around the body cuts through the skin, flesh, tendons and bone in the manner of a garotte. Presumably then the passage from the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, 利養瘡深, should be translated not as “le gain et les honneurs sont une profonde blessure” as does Lamotte, but rather as “gain and honor wound deeply.”

something good to eat, like a cat stalking a mouse, his mind never knowing satisfaction.¹ As if bitten by the poison of a “seven-steps-to-death” snake,² the five hundred poisonous snakes of personal benefits and sensuous objects³ gather within his body. From moment to moment the searing fires of his heart burn without respite. Throughout all hours of the day the vicious wind of the defilements blows upon the fuel of personal benefits, which burns ceaselessly within his heart, and the snakes vie with one another to rise up and burn the sprouts of his wholesome roots. For this reason he is like a wild demon of the night, [beset by] raging fire and fierce poison,⁴ and seeing someone else acquire benefits is, for him, like an arrow piercing his heart, a needle poked in his eye, or a nail hammered into his ear. [If when seeing this] his sense organs are blocked off [because of being in trance],⁵ the five hundred evil snakes, the poisonous dragons of the four elements, the five blade-wielding thieves [of the five *skandhas*], and the six village-dwelling *rākṣasa* demons [of the six sense organs] all at once spring up. As a result he goes mad, and must be quickly treated.

5.58

治之法者，先當數息，繫心令定。想一丈六像，身紫金色，三十二相，在耆闍崛山七寶窟中，坐寶師子座，與諸四眾。說除貪法，告言：法子汝觀，貪人⁶所著，袈裟、六物、眾具，如棘刺林。[針]{縫}⁷縫之中，當生劍樹，百千鐵釘。鐵嘴諸蟲，啄食其身。融銅、鑊⁸湯、鐵鋸、鐵床⁹，是汝坐具。沸屎、毒蛇、鐵丸、鑊¹⁰湯、刀林、劍戟、百億棘刺、火河流銅、灰漿¹¹、膿血，是汝飲食。爾時世尊，說是語已，默然無聲。

The method for curing this is as follows. First [he] must count his breath and concentrate his mind. He [must then] imagine an image of the sixteen-foot [buddha], his body the color of purple gold, [endowed with] the thirty-two marks, sitting on a bejeweled lion’s seat within a cave made of the seven precious substances on Mount Gṛdrakūṭra, and accompanied by the four groups of followers.

[This Buddha] then preaches [for the practitioner] the method for destroying desire: “Oh dharma-child, you must now contemplate the things to which you cling in your greed—your monk’s robe, the six requisites,¹² and the various other implements—as like forests of brambles.

1 Very similar language is found section 4.74 of the *Chan Essentials*.

2 The *saptapadāṣi* (*Kanbon daijiten*, 18). Various sources mention this snake, with poison so potent that victims die after seven steps (*A pi tan pi po sha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論, T.1546:28.186a19–21).

3 “Pleasant sensations” is here *hua xi* 滑細, literally “the smooth and the fine.” This word is used in Chinese Buddhist texts (mostly, but not exclusively those translated prior to the time of Kumārajīva) as the translation of *sparṣtavyaḥ*, “contact,” that is to say the object of the tactile sense organ. As Chinese the word tends to imply specifically pleasant tactile sensations.

4 Translation tentative.

5 See above section 5.46.

6 火 Kg

7 Following J, Kg. That this reading is shared only by these two editions is most unusual.

8 灌 Kg

9 牀 J

10 鐵 Kg

11 醬 P, Kg

12 “Six requisites” usually refers to the three robes, begging bowl, sitting cloth, and water strainer (BGDJT, 1460).

Within the seams [of your robes] appear sword-trees, hundreds of thousands of iron nails, and worms with iron mouths that devour you. Cauldrons of molten copper, iron saws, and [hot] iron beds are your sitting cloths.¹ Boiling shit, snake poison, [red-hot] iron balls, cauldrons of boiling liquid, forests of knives and swords, millions of brambles, rivers of fire, molten copper, liquid ash, and pus and blood are your food and drink.” When this buddha has spoken these words, he becomes silent.

5.59

令於行者，自見己身，臥七重鐵城內。見五羅剎，張口兩向，以八十鐵鉗²，拔舌令出。無量鐵犁，狀如劍樹，以耕其舌。鐵牛甲間，流注融銅。鐵[卒³]{牛?}身內，有百千色膿，膿中諸蟲，不可稱數。

[The buddha]⁴ then causes the practitioner to see himself lying within a city ringed by seven iron walls.⁵ Five hundred *rākṣasa*-demons appear who stretch his mouth open wide and with eighteen iron tongs pull out his tongue. With innumerable iron plows shaped like sword-trees they plow his tongue. Molten copper flows from the hooves of the iron oxen [plowing the tongue].⁶ Within the bodies of the iron oxen there are hundreds of thousands of varieties of pus, within which are worms numerous beyond counting.

1 The imagery here, and in the next passage, is drawn from standard descriptions of Buddhist hells. The specific motif of contemplating or experiencing one’s monastic gear as like the instruments of torture in hell may be drawn from the following extremely similar passage in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*: “When one who breaks the precepts puts on his monastic robe [it will feel like] hot copper or an iron saw being pressed against his body; when he holds his monks bowl it will be like [holding] a bowl filled with molten copper; when he eats it will be like swallowing a hot iron ball, or like drinking molten copper; when he receives offerings it will be as if he is being attacked by the demons of hell; when he enters the monastery it will be as if he is entering hell; when he sits upon his seat it will be like sitting on a bed of hot iron” 破戒之人，若著法衣，則是熱銅鐵鑠以纏其身；若持鉢盂，則是盛洋銅器；若所噉食，則是吞燒鐵丸，飲熱洋銅；若受人供養供給，則是地獄獄鬼守之；若入精舍，則是入大地獄；若坐眾僧床榻，是為坐熱鐵床上。(T.1509:25.154b24–29).

2 鉤 P, S, Y

3 卒 P, S, Y

4 Presumably this refers to the buddha who has appeared to the practitioner, but given the nested nature of the instructions (the Buddha preaching to Śāriputra a method for instructing a practitioner to imagine a buddha who will then preach to the practitioner), it is rather difficult to be entirely certain.

5 The description is almost certainly of the Avīci hell, which in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* is described in these terms: “The Avīci hell is square, eighth thousand *yojanas* on a side, surrounded by seven rings of iron walls and covered in seven layers of iron nets” 阿鼻地獄，縱廣正等八千由旬，七重鐵城，七層鐵網。(T.643:15.668c4–5). This account of the layout of the Avīci hell later becomes standard in Chinese repentance literature (see for example *Ci bei dao chang chan fa* 慈悲道場懺法, T.1909:45.939b10–11; *Fo ming jing* 佛名經, T.441:14.287c18–19), no doubt in part because it was included in the description of the Avīci hell given in the sixth-century encyclopedia *Marvels from the Scriptures* (*Jing lü yi xiang* 經律異相, T.2121:53.262c9–10).

6 The description here is similar to the “hell of thorns” (刺林地獄) described in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation*, especially the lines “holding iron pincers they pull out [the sinner’s] tongue, while eighteen iron oxen [pulling] great iron plows plow his tongue to pieces.” 手執鐵鉗，拔舌令出，八十鐵牛，有大鐵犁，耕破其舌。(T.643:15.672b18–c5).

5.60

觀見此事，心驚毛豎。出定入定，見所著衣，如膿屎和血，鐵嘴諸蟲¹，刀林劍戟，以為莊嚴。見所食物，猶如蛔²蟲百千小蟲，耳生諸膿、屎、尿、諸血，八十嘴蟲、風蟲、火蟲、水蟲、地蟲、地獄蟲、一切諸蟲，吐膿吐毒，滿鉢³多羅。鐵丸劍戟，以為果蓏。

Having contemplated and seen these things [the practitioner] becomes alarmed and his hair stands on end. Whether immersed in trance or not he sees the robes he wears to be like pus and shit mixed with blood, bedecked with iron-mouthed worms and forests of razor blades. He sees his food as like the pus, shit, piss, and blood that comes from the ears of hundreds of thousands of small tapeworms.⁴ [He sees] his monks bowl filled with the pus and poisonous vomit of all kinds of worms—worms with eighty mouths, wind worms, fire worms, water worms, earth worms, and hell worms. [He sees] the fruit [he eats] as like [hot] iron balls or razor blades.

5.61

爾時世尊，而說偈言⁵：生死不斷絕，貪欲嗜味故。養怨入丘塚⁶，唐⁷受諸辛苦。身臭如死尸⁸，九孔流不淨。如廁蟲樂糞，愚貪⁹身無異。智者應觀身，不貪染世間¹⁰。無累無所欲，是名真涅槃。如諸佛所說，一心一意行，數息在靜處¹¹，是名行頭陀。

The World-honored One then spoke the following verses: It is because of craving and fondness for delicious flavors / that birth and death are not yet severed. / Harboring anger one enters the tomb, / vainly undergoing hardship and suffering [in the next life]. / The body is foul, like a corpse, / leaking impurity from its nine openings. / Fools who crave the body are thus no different / from worms in a dung-heap delighting in excrement. / A wise one must rather contemplate the body [as it is], / not craving for the polluted things of this world. / To have no attachment and no desire, / this is what is called true *nirvāṇa*. / To practice single-mindedly / as the buddhas have taught, / counting the breath while dwelling in solitude, / this is what is called practicing the *dhūtas*.

1 諸蟲 = 蟲諸 Kg

2 虫+由 J; 虫+曲 Kg

3 針 Kg

4 On 蛔 as meaning specifically a parasitic worm, see *Glosses on the Canon*, T.2128:54.669b4.

5 This verse is cited in Zhiyi's *Explanation of the Sequential Path* as from a "dhyāna scripture" 禪經 (T.1916:46.488a3–10), and I include here the variants from this excerpt, marked with the symbol "Ex." Zhiyi cites the same verse in his so-called *Lesser Calming and Contemplation* (*Xiao zhi guan* 小止觀, T.1915:46.464a6–13), whose variants will be marked with "Xzg." Note finally that the first four couplets are taken directly from Kumārajīva's translation of the *Pūrṇa-paripṛcchā* (*Pu sa zang jing* 菩薩藏經; now incorporated into the *Da bao ji jing* 大寶集經, T.310:11.446c11–14).

6 家 Kg

7 廣 Ex; 虛 Xzg

8 屍 Ex, Xzg

9 人 Xzg

10 樂 Xzg

11 靜處 = 禪定 Ex, Xzg

5.62

告舍利弗：利養傷身，敗人善根，不可具說。但當數息，一心觀之。若服此藥，是大丈夫，天人之師，調御人¹主。免欲淤泥，不為使水恩愛大河之所漂沒，貪利不祥之所燒害。當知是人，未出生死，其身香潔，如²優波羅。人中香象龍王，力士摩醯首羅，所不能及，大力丈夫，天人所敬。

[The Buddha] then said to Śāriputra: It is simply indescribable the extent to which [desire for] personal benefits causes harm and destroys roots of good.³ One must simply count the breath, concentrate the mind, and contemplate. One who takes this medicine is a great man, a teacher of humans and gods, a master of men to be trained. He has escaped from the mud of desire, is no longer drowned by the waters of the defilements or the great river of affection, nor burned by personal benefits, which are baneful. Know that such a person, though he has not yet escaped from birth and death, will possess a fragrant body, like an *utpala* flower. He will be a fragrant elephant king among men, unequaled even by the mighty Ívara, a mighty man, venerated by gods and men.

5.63

告舍利弗。汝好受持。為四眾說。慎勿忘失。時舍利弗。及阿難等。聞佛所說。歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: “You must preserve [this teaching] and preach it for the four groups of Buddhists. Do not forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.64

治⁴犯戒法。復次舍利弗，若比丘、比丘尼、式叉摩尼、沙彌、沙彌尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，受佛禁戒，身心狂亂。猶如猿猴，種植之法，未及生長，滅⁵枝毀根。七眾亦爾，於佛禁戒，戒色未生，犯突吉羅乃至波羅夷。猶如醉象，不避好惡，不識諸方，蹈⁶壞一切諸善好物。[四]{七?}眾亦爾，蹈⁷破淨戒青蓮花池，破戒猛盛。猶如狂狗，見人見木，乃至鳥獸⁸，隨逐齧之。犯戒惡人，見佛羅漢清淨比丘，功德福田，隨逐罵辱，誹謗毀之。自飲毒藥，遍體血現，節節火然，狂愚無智。結使猛風，動煩惱山，貪婬為眼，瞋為手足，愚癡身體，踐踏世間，植⁹種¹⁰惡子。既自種已，復教他人。求覓地獄獄卒羅刹，牛頭阿傍，劫火惡鬼，劍林之神，閻羅王等十八獄主，常¹¹為己作大親友上善知識，必定當與如是獄

1 之 P, S, Y

2 始 S

3 With the exception of a single line the conclusion to this section is exactly the same as section 5.55.

4 CBETA here corrects the Taishō misprint of 汝.

5 滅 P, S, Y

6 踊 Kg

7 踊 Kg

8 狩 J

9 殖 Kg

10 植種 = 種植 P, S, Y

11 +當 P, S, Y

種晝夜遊處。

Method for curing violations of the precepts.

Further, Śāriputra, there may be monks, nuns, probationary nuns, novice monks, novice nuns, laymen, or laywomen who have received the Buddha's precepts and who go mad in body and mind.¹ Just as wild monkeys might destroy crops root and branch before they have come to fruition, so too does this practitioner, before the precept-matter² has yet sprouted [in the attainment of the fruits],³ violate precepts ranging from *duṣkṛta* [offenses up to] *pārājika* offenses. Like a drunken elephant who, paying no attention to the good or evil of what he does and unable to realize where he is going, tramples and destroys all manners of good things, so too does this practitioner trample and destroy the blue lotus pond of the pure precepts, becoming a most abject precept-breaker. Like a crazed dog who chases and bites whatever it sees, be it a person, a stick, or a beast, so too whenever this evil person meets auspicious fields of merit such as buddhas, arhats, or pure monks, he curses, vilifies, slanders, and abuses them. Drinking [this] poison, his entire body becomes flush with blood, he feels burning fire in all his joints, and he becomes deranged. The raging wind of defilements stirs the mountain of the afflictions, and with lust for his eyes, hatred for his hands and feet, and stupidity for his body, he blunders through the world sowing the seeds of evil. Having planted such seeds for himself, he further instructs others [to do so as well]. He seeks out the demonic prison guardians of hell, bull-headed *a-bangs*,⁴ evil demons [who appear during] the *kalpa*-ending fires, the spirits of sword-trees, and the eighteen lords of hell beginning with king Yama, and constantly treats [these evil beings] as his kinsmen, friends, and teachers, associating with these hell-beings day and night.

5.65

此破戒人，諸惡猛火已來入心，為利養故，為名聞故，自稱善好威德具足。詣阿練若知法者所，猶如幻師，幻惑他目⁵。此幻偽⁶人，詐行頭陀，破戒惡風，吹罪業華，常散己上。惡口誹謗，不善心香，以熏身心。此人身心，猶如伊蘭，似百千蟲狗。

This precept-breaker, the fires of evil having entered his heart, for the sake of personal benefit and fame claims to be good, to be fully endowed with the awesome virtue [of a monk].

1 We here again see a clear association between “madness” and violation of the precepts.

2 On the “precept-matter” (*jie se* 戒色), or “precept-essence” (*jie ti* 戒體) as it is known in later Chinese sources, see p.258n38.

3 Later Chinese texts frequently speak about the “precept-essence” (戒體) as the root that “gives birth to” (生) higher attainments (*Si fen lü shan fan bu que xing shi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, T.1804:40.50a28–29).

4 *A-bang* 阿傍 (also written 阿旁) are the bull-headed guardians of hell. The original Indic word is unknown, though these creatures appear in descriptions of hell in a variety of Chinese sources, at least some of which have clear Indian origins. Thus in *Mahīśāsaka-vinaya*, in a section concerning possible violations of the fourth *pārājika*, the Buddha says it is not a false claim to supernatural power if, just before dying, a monk tells others the “signs” that he sees of his impending rebirth, and here an *a-bang* 阿傍 is given as an example of a “sign” of impending rebirth in hell (*Wu fen lü* 五分律, T.1421:22.184c18–22). In some Chinese sources the *a-bang* are described as rulers of the subdivisions of hell (see for example the apocryphal *Jing tu san mei jing* 淨土三昧經, cited in the *Marvels from the Scriptures*, T.2121:53.258c7–12).

5 自 Kg

6 為 Kg

When going to his meditation teacher¹ he is like a magician who fools and deludes the eyes. This deceitful person pretends to practice the *dhūtas*. The evil wind of his precept breaking blows upon the flowers of evil karma, which are constantly scattered atop him. With his vicious speech he slanders [the good] and the perfume of his evil thoughts imbues his body and mind, which become like [the foul smelling] *eraṇḍa* flower, like a hundred thousand wormy dogs.²

5.66

雖行禪定，偽³現數息所見境界，始初之時，見黑色佛，如黑⁴象脚，見如灰人。見諸比丘，頭破脚折，見比丘尼，莊嚴花鬢。見諸天象⁵，化為獼猴，毛端火然，來觸擾已。或見一野狐⁶，及一野干，有百千尾，一一尾端，無量諸蟲種種雜惡。或見羸瘦駝驢、猪、狗。鳩槃荼等，諸惡夜叉，羅剎魁膾，各持種種武器惡火，打撲比丘。因是發狂，或歌或舞，臥地糞穢，作種種惡。當疾治之。

Though he practices trance he falsely claims the verificatory vision of breath-counting appears [to him]. But from the very beginning [of his meditation he in fact] sees a blackened buddha that looks like the leg of a black elephant, like a person covered in ash; he sees monks with their heads smashed and legs broken, and nuns adorned in flower garlands; he sees various heavenly elephants who transform into monkeys and who approach him and try to touch him, the tips of the hairs of their bodies burning; or else he sees a wild fox, or a wild jackal, with a hundred thousand tails whose every tip houses innumerable insects and various other assorted vile things; or else he sees starving camels, pigs, or dogs; or he sees a monk being attacked by *kumbandana*-demons, evil *yakṣa* spirits, and murderous *rākṣasa*-demons each wielding various weapons and vicious fires.

As a result [of seeing these things] he goes mad. He will dance and sing, lie on the ground in filth, and perform various evil actions. He must be quickly cured.

5.67

治之法者，向諸智者，至誠[至]{自}⁷說，懺悔所作惡不善業。智者應當教此比丘念釋迦牟尼佛，乃至次第念於七佛。念七佛已，念三十五佛，然後復當念諸菩薩，念大乘心，觀於空法。深自慚愧，想一一佛。捉澡罐⁸水，以灌其頂。復自想身墮⁹阿鼻地獄，十八地獄，受諸苦惱。於地獄中，稱南無佛南無法南無比丘僧，修行六念。諸佛如來，於其夢中，放白毫¹⁰光，救地獄苦。

The method for curing is as follows. [The precept-breaker] must address his preceptors¹¹

1 練若知法者, literally “one who knows the *araṇya* methods.”

2 The unusual expression “wormy dogs” appeared above in the *Chan Essentials* (1.118).

3 為 Kg

4 里 Kg

5 像 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

6 獼 Kg

7 Following K, J, P, Q, Kg (the Taishō is presumably a misprint).

8 灌 J, Kg

9 隨 Kg

10 豪 Kg

11 On 智者 as “preceptor,” see the notes to section 4.84.

and, speaking himself¹ with utmost sincerity, confess and repent all the evil actions he has committed. The preceptors must then instruct this monk to bring to mind Śākyamuni Buddha, and then to bring to mind in order the remainder of the seven buddhas. Having brought the seven buddhas to mind, he must bring to mind the thirty-five buddhas, and then must further bring to mind the various bodhisattvas, arouse aspiration for the great vehicle, and contemplate the emptiness of *dharmas*. Feeling deep shame, he imagines each of these buddhas pour a pitcher of water over his head. He must then further imagine that he has been reborn in the Avīci hell [or the other] eighteen hells, where he undergoes much torment, and that while within these hells he cultivates the six recollections, chanting “Homage to the Buddha! Homage to the Dharma! Homage to the Sangha of monks!”

[Having done this] the various buddhas [he has invoked will appear] in his dreams, emitting a light from the white tuft of hair between their eyebrows that relieves his hellish suffering.

5.68

見此事已，如負債人²，心懷慚愧，應當償之。一心一意，脫僧伽梨，著安多³會，詣清淨僧所，五體投地，如大⁴山崩。心懷慚愧，懺悔諸罪，為僧執事，作諸苦役，掃廁擔糞。經八百日，然後復當澡浴身體，還著僧伽梨，入於塔中，一心合掌，諦觀如來眉間白毫⁵大人⁶相光，一日至七日。

Having seen these things [he will feel] like a debtor who, his mind full of shame, seeks to repay what he owes. His intention resolute, he must remove his *saṅghāti* [outer robe] and wear [only his] *antarvāsa* [under-robe]. Going before the pure monks he casts his body to the ground like the crumbling of a great mountain. His heart filled with shame, he repents all his sins, and [as a means of atonement] for eight hundred days he performs various menial duties for the other monks [such as] cleaning and emptying the toilets. At the conclusion of the eight hundred days he should bathe, put on his *saṅghāti*, enter the sanctuary, concentrate his mind, place his palms together, and for between one and seven days carefully contemplate the light of the white tuft of hair between the Buddha’s eyebrows, one of the marks of the great man.

5.69

還至智者所，求索懺悔。智者應當告言：比丘，汝今自觀汝身，猶如金瓶盛四毒蛇，二上二下，吐毒可畏⁷。復觀一龍六頭繞瓶，龍亦吐毒，滴蛇口中。四方大樹，從金瓶出，遍三界。黑象復來，欲拔此樹，四面火起。

He then goes back to see his preceptor and [again] seeks to repent. The preceptor must then say to him: “Oh monk, you must now contemplate your body as like a golden vase filled with four poisonous snakes, two of which go upwards and two of which go downwards, each

1 The meaning of 自說 is not entirely clear. It might simply mean “confess.”

2 丈 Kg

3 陀 P, S

4 太 P, S

5 豪 Kg

6 [人] Kg

7 [畏] Kg

spewing poison and very frightful.¹ Next contemplate one dragon with six heads who encircles the vase and spews poison that drips into the mouths of the snakes. A great tree [that covers]² the four directions emerges from the golden vase and fills the triple world. The black elephants approach and try to uproot the tree. On all four sides fire springs forth.”

5.70

見此事已，應當告言：比丘當知，金瓶者，是地氣³也。青色蛇者，從風大生，是風大毒。綠色蛇者，從水大生，是水大毒。白色蛇者，從地大生，是地大毒。黃色蛇者，從火大生，是火大毒。六頭龍者，是汝身中五陰及空。如此身者，毒害不淨，云何縱惡，犯戒不治。

When he has seen these things [the preceptor] must then say to him: “You must know, oh monk, that the golden vase is the ‘earth *qi*,’⁴ The blue snake is born of the wind element; it is the poison that is the wind element. The green snake is born of the water element; it is the poison that is the water element. The white snake is born of the earth element; it is the poison that is the earth element. The yellow snake is born of the fire element; it is the poison that is the fire element. The six-headed dragon is the five *skandhas* of your body plus space [as the sixth].⁵ Such a body is vile and impure. Why then did you give way to evil, violating the precepts without restraint?”

5.71

說此語已，復教掃塔塗地，作諸苦役。更教觀佛，見佛放金色光，以手摩頭。然後方當教不淨觀。不淨門徹⁶，無有諸障，然後可與僧中說戒。

When [the preceptor] has spoken these words, he must then further instruct the practitioner to clean the sanctuary, wash the floors, and perform various menial tasks. He is to be further instructed to contemplate the Buddha [until] he sees the Buddha emit golden light and stroke his head with his hand. Only after this should he be taught the contemplation of impurity. After he has fully traversed the gate of impurity, [thereby verifying that he] has no further obstructions, he may recite the precepts together with the other monks [and be formally readmitted to the Sangha].

1 On this description of the snakes of the four elements, see p.83–84.

2 Or is 方 perhaps an error for 大, such that it should be “the great tree of the four elements”?

3 蛇器 P, S, Y, Q. See the next note.

4 We might assume that 地氣 found in K, J, and Kg is a mistake for 蛇器 of the other editions. However the reading 地氣 is supported by a passage in the *Chan Essentials* (beginning in section 4.45) that describes the “contemplation method for the purification of the four great elements” (四大清淨觀法), and makes reference to an “earth *qi*,” seemingly in addition to the four elements themselves (serving perhaps as that which holds them all together), and that then proceeds to the contemplation of the five *skandha*. In both terminology and sequence this thus seems quite similar to what is mentioned here in the *Methods for Curing* only schematically. It further suggests that the reading 地氣 is correct. Presumably 地 was mistaken for 蛇 (in manuscripts the right half of 蛇 is often written as 也), at which point an editor replaced 氣 with the homophone 器.

5 I am unaware of any regularly grouping of five *skandha* together with space (*ākāśa*), though space is often included as the sixth element (*mahābūta*), added to the usual four (earth, fire, water, wind) plus consciousness.

6 Written with the 足 radical in Kg.

5.72

欲說戒時，應唱是語：某甲比丘，某甲比丘尼，已八百日，行於苦役。七日觀佛眉間白毫¹，作毒蛇觀，地獄想成，復觀一佛，說懺悔法，不淨觀門無我人[鏡]{境}²，還復通達。境界中，佛以澡罐³水，灌比丘頂，天神現夢，說[已]{己}清淨。今已慚愧，我所證知，唯願聽許。爾時律師，復應以律檢問⁴此人。復⁵教誦戒，經八百遍，然後方與如淨比丘得無有異。

Before reciting the precepts [with the other monks] he must make the following formal announcement: “I, the monk so-and-so (or, the nun so-and-so), have finished eight hundred days of menial labor, have performed the contemplation of the poisonous snakes, have completed the meditation on hell, have further contemplated a single buddha, recited the repentance text,⁶ and in the contemplation of impurity I have again⁷ reached the stage of the non-existence of self and other, where I have had a verificatory vision of the Buddha pouring a pitcher of water over a monk’s head. And in my dreams a god appeared to me and said I am pure. That I am now fully humble is something that I know for certain, thus may you please accept this.”

At this time a *vinaya* master must question the practitioner with regards [his adherence to] the *vinaya*. He must then be instructed to recite the precepts eight hundred times. Only after this is it allowed that he has regained the state of being no different than a pure monk.

5.73

告舍利弗，若有七眾，犯於⁸輕戒，過二夜不懺悔者，是人現身雖行禪定，終不獲道。若犯重戒，墮大地獄，從地獄出，受畜生身。如是具足，足⁹滿三劫。然後為人，雖得人身，貧窮癩病，七十七身，不見佛，不聞法，諸根不具。是故智者，若犯佛戒於突吉羅，應生怖畏，如被刀斫，極懷慚¹⁰愧，何況重戒。若能服此持戒藥者，當知是人最上慚愧¹¹忍辱丈夫，無能過者。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: If a Buddhist follower¹² violates one of the minor precepts and allows two nights to pass without repenting, then this person, though he practices trance, will in this present life never obtain the path. If he violates a grave precept, he will fall into hell, and when he emerges from hell he will be reborn as an animal for three entire eons. After this he will be reborn as a human being, but though born in a human body he will be poor and crippled; for seventy-seven lifetimes will neither see the Buddha nor hear the Dharma, and

1 豪 Kg

2 Following P, S, Q, Y. The reading 鏡 is shared by K, J, and Kg.

3 灌 Kg

4 門 Kg

5 須 Kg

6 Literally, “repentance method” (懺悔法), but since it is recited this presumably refers to a text.

7 Here “again” 還復 may simply mean “and furthermore,” but it may also imply that the practitioner’s attainment, lost when he violated the precepts, has now been restored.

8 [於] P, S, Y

9 [足] P

10 [慚] Kg

11 慚愧 = 愧愧 Kg

12 Literally, “someone from among the seven groups of followers.”

his physical faculties will be impaired. For this reason when they violate even the most minor precept¹ the wise should be as afraid as if having been stabbed with a knife, and should be greatly ashamed. How much more so for the grave precepts! One able to take this medicine [that permits continued] maintenance of the precepts² is known as a “supreme penitent,” a “hero of humility.”

5.74

爾時世尊，而說偈言：

破戒心不淨 猶如偷賊狗 處處求利養 為貪心所殺 當服慚愧藥 忍辱為衣裳 懺悔莊嚴華 熏用善心香 一心觀佛相 除苦無憂苦³ 亦當念空法 修心觀不淨 是名諸如來 甘露灌頂藥 服者心無憂 可至涅槃岸 如⁵法應修行 非法不應作 今世若過世 行法者得度 隨順佛所說 持戒行頭陀 身心無惡行⁶ 疾至於解脫。

The World-honored One then spoke the following verse: Breaking the precepts makes⁷ the mind impure. / Like a vile thief / who seeks personal benefits everywhere, / he is destroyed by his own greedy mind. / He must take the medicine of shame, / wear the clothes of humility / and the flower garland of repentance, / and perfume himself with the incense of a virtuous mind. / Wholeheartedly contemplating the marks of the Buddha, / he eliminates suffering and despair. / He must further meditate upon the emptiness of *dharmas*, / cultivating the mind and contemplating impurity. / This is called the Tathagata’s medicine of ambrosial consecration. / The minds of those who consume it become free of worry, / and can reach the other shore of *nirvāṇa*. / That which accords with the Dharma should be cultivated, / and that which is not the Dharma should not be done. / In this age, just as in past ages [when the Buddha was alive] / those who practice the teachings will attain salvation. / Following the teachings of the Buddha, / maintaining the precepts and practicing the *dhūtas*, / free of evil bodily or mental conduct, / one quickly arrives at liberation.

5.75

爾時世尊，告舍利弗：汝好受此治犯戒藥，慎莫忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。⁸

The World-honored One then said to Śāriputra: “You must remember this medicine for curing violations of the precepts. Be sure not to forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda had heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1 Literally, a *duṣkṛta* offense, the lowest class of violations.

2 I presume that 持戒藥, “medicine for the maintenance of the precepts” denotes the repentance ritual outlined above, which allows those who have transgressed to again be counted as “upholders of the precepts.”

3 患 P, S, Y

4 其 Kg

5 法 Kg

6 相 P, Kg

7 Or perhaps: “One who violates the precepts and whose mind is impure,” or “one whose mind is impure because of breaking the precepts.”

8 Here ends the first fascicle of the *Methods for Curing* in all of the printed editions. Kg, which is in a single fascicle, continues uninterrupted.

5.76

治樂音樂法。復次舍利弗，若四部眾，樂諸音樂，作倡¹無厭。因是動風，如縱逸馬，亦如秋狗，似伊尼利鹿王，耽惑愚癡。心如羶²膠，處處隨著，不可禁制。當疾治之。

Method for curing [the illness resulting from] delight in music.

Further, Śāriputra, there may a Buddhist follower who enjoys various kinds of music, and who sings without cease. As a result his winds will stir. Like an unbridled horse, like a dog in rut,³ like a royal stag (?),⁴ [this person] sinks into deluded attachment. His mind becomes like glue, sticking to everything it encounters, unable to be restrained. He must quickly be cured.

5.77

治之法者。先想一天女，端正無雙，兩手自然有諸樂器，聲萬種音。行者見已，見此天女，過於外色，百億萬倍，聞此天聲，世所無比，因是惑⁵着觀色聽聲。

The method for curing this is as follows. [The practitioner must] first imagine a goddess of unparalleled beauty. Various musical instruments that produce thousands of kinds of music appear spontaneously within her hands. When the practitioner has seen this, then because of seeing this goddess who is hundreds of thousands of times more [beautiful] than any other material form, [and because of] hearing this heavenly music which surpasses any [music] in the world, [the practitioner] becomes bewitched as he beholds these forms and hears these sounds.

5.78

因是當教觀此女人六情諸根。所起境界，數息力故，見可愛眼生六毒蛇，從眼根出，入耳根中。復見二蟲，狀如鷄鶩，發大惡聲，破頭出腦，爭取食之。餘四根中，見貓見鼠，見狗⁶野干，爭取食之。

Then [the practitioner] must be taught to contemplate this goddess' six sense organs.⁷ Because of the power [gained by] counting his breath the following verificatory vision arises. He sees six poisonous snakes appear in [the goddess'] lovely eyes. They go out from her eyes into

1 偈 P

2 (米+离) J, P, Q, Kg

3 Literally, “like a dog in autumn.” On autumn as the mating season of dogs, see *Pi po sha lun* 鞞婆沙論, T.1547:28.518b10–13; *A bi tan pi po sha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論, T.1546:28.267b6–9; *A pi da mo da pi po sha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, T.1545:27.361a19–22.

4 Translation tentative. The word 伊尼利鹿王 may indicate *aiṇeya*, a “black antelope” or “royal stag,” normally transcribed as 伊尼延 or 伊尼耶. In Buddhist texts this term is used almost exclusively in the compound *aiṇeyajāṅgha*, “thighs like a royal stag,” one of the so-called marks of a great man (*mahāpuruṣalakṣana*). This meaning is further suggested by the actual translation of this term here, 鹿王. However the transcription of *aiṇeya* here, if that is what it is, is anomalous and phonetically problematic, though 利 perhaps reflects a -yi ending deriving from a Central Asian vernacular, as we saw in the similarly anomalous transcription of the name *Kāśyapa* (seemingly as *Kāśyapi*) above (see p423n3). But apart from the phonetics, the bigger problem is that the meaning here does not bear any obvious relationship to what this term is normally used for.

5 或 Kg

6 [狗] Kg

7 As seen from the passage below it seems that we must take this to mean that the practitioner contemplates the six sense organs of the goddess. This is rather odd. The entire translation remains tentative.

her ears. He further sees two creatures, similar in appearance to rapacious owls.¹ Letting out a harsh cry they split open [the goddess'] head, pull out her brains, and fight with one another to eat them. Within the [goddess'] other four organs he sees a cat, a rat, a dog, and a jackal, who vie with one another to eat [the organs in question].²

5.79

因是，得見一切女色，三十六物，污³露不淨，子藏蛔⁴蟲，為女瓔珞。見女所執諸雜樂器，宛轉糞⁵中，諸蟲鼓動，作野干鳴。所說妖怪⁶，不可聽採，如羅刹哭，因是厭離。詣智者所，說前所作惡不善業，誠心懺悔。智者應當教無常觀。

As a result of this [the practitioner] is able to see this goddess' physical body as nothing but the thirty-six impure things, with the womb and its parasitic worms for her flower garlands.⁷ He sees the various musical instruments she holds twisting about within a heap of dung, where they are strummed and beaten by various creatures, producing sounds akin to the howling of wild jackals. He now finds her bewitching words utterly repellent, like the cries of demons, and as a result he feels revulsion. He should then go to his preceptor and confess his past evil actions, repenting with utmost sincerity. The preceptor must then teach the practitioner the contemplation of impermanence.

5.80

告舍利弗：汝好受此治音樂法，慎莫忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] then said to Śāriputra: “You must remember this method for curing those who delight in music. Be sure not to forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda had heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.81

治好歌唄偈讚法。復次舍利弗。若行者，好作偈頌。美音讚歎，猶如風動娑羅樹葉。出和雅音，聲如梵音，悅可他耳。作適意辭，令他喜樂。因是風響⁸，貢高憍慢，心如亂草，隨煩惱風。處處不停，起憍慢幢，打自大鼓，弄⁹諸[脈零]{見鈴}¹⁰。因是發狂，如¹¹癡獼

1 According to the *Glosses on the Canon*, a *chi xiu* 鷓鴣 is a nocturnal bird of prey (T.2128:54.669a17–18).

2 Translation tentative.

3 惡 P, S, Y

4 虫+由 Kg

5 童 Kg

6 怙 Kg

7 The language here echoes sections 5.47–53. We should also note a certain similarity with a passage in the *Shou shi shan jie jing* 受十善戒經, a ritual manual for receiving the ten precepts that seems to have been composed in China, most likely during the fifth century, which is one of the only other known Buddhist texts where we find the term *zi zang* 子藏, “womb.” We find here a meditation on the impurity of women, said to be impure because they have had the “womb and its various worms as their clothing” (子藏諸蟲以為衣服) over the course of many lives (T.1486:24.1027a12–14).

8 響 S, Y

9 弄 = 上下 J, Kg

10 Following S, Y.

11 知 Kg

猴採拾花菓，心無暫停，不能數息。當疾治之。

Method for curing those fond of hymns.¹

Further, Śāriputra, a practitioner may be fond of performing hymns. When with his beautiful voice he sings elegies it is like wind rustling the leaves of a Śāla tree. When he produces refined and elegant tones his voice is like that of the gods, pleasing to the ears of others. He composes pleasing lyrics that bring joy to others. But as a result of his fame he becomes haughty and proud, and his mind becomes like unkempt weeds blown about by the wind of the defilements. Everywhere and at all times he holds up the banner of pride, beats the drum of arrogance, and rings the bells of [false] views.² As a result, he goes mad, and he is unable to count his breath, like a foolish ape whose mind is never still as he gathers fruits and flowers here and there. This must quickly be cured.

5.82

治之法者，先當想一七寶高幢。有乾闥婆，在其幢端，身如白玉。動身讚偈，身毛孔中，出大蓮華，百千比丘，在蓮華上。聲萬³種音，過於己身，百千萬倍。因是漸漸息其憍慢。

The method for curing this is as follows. [The practitioner] should first imagine a tall pillar made of the seven precious substances. On the tip of the pillar is a *gandharva* [a heavenly musician] with a body like white jade. Swaying his body he intones verses, and a large lotus flower upon which stand a hundred thousand monks emerges from his pores. The [*gandharva*'s] voice [produces] tens of thousands of tones, surpassing the practitioner's [voice] a million-fold. As a result [of seeing this] the practitioner's pride gradually diminishes.

5.83

智者復應教於行者，諦觀幢端。見於幢端，頗梨明鏡。諸比丘等，恃聲憍慢，心不淨者，化為羅刹，出大惡聲，火從口出。復有夜叉，從四方來，拔舌取心，置於幢端，其心戰掉⁴。號哭叫喚，如醉象吼。或復細聲，如毘舍闍吟。

1 Here I translate 歌唄偈讚 loosely as “hymns,” though each of these four characters may refer to a distinct genre of religious chanting. More literally we might perhaps render this a “songs, melodic chanting, religious poems, and elegies.” On the varieties of melodic Buddhist chanting in China, see Demiéville 1929–1930.

2 The variant readings of this final line present some difficulties. In their entirety, the different versions read:

i (K) 弄諸脈零
ii) (P, S, Y, Q) 弄諸見鈴
iii) (J and Kg) 上下諸脈零

The reading from P, S, Y, Q (the so-called southern Song canons), which I have tentatively followed, is the easiest to understand, and best fits the context (forming a parallelism of sorts with the previous clause). But precisely for this reason it might be a later correction of the more difficult reading from K, which could perhaps be translated as “causing all his channels to become disrupted.” The reading of J and Kg can be explained in that a single character with 上 above and 下 below is a known variant of 弄. In the case of J, we can be sure that a single character was intended by counting the number of characters per line (14, as in all Kaibao-lineage carvings). Nevertheless Kg clearly gives two distinct characters, and while the evidence from J suggests that by the time of Kaibao carving this was understood to be a single character (meaning 弄), it still cannot be entirely ruled out that Kg preserves the original reading, later (wrongly) understood as 弄.

3 方 Kg

4 佻 J, Kg

His preceptor should then further instruct the practitioner to carefully contemplate the tip of the pillar. He sees the tip of the pillar to be [like a] crystal mirror. The monks, their minds sullied by arrogantly thinking highly of their own voices, transform into *rākṣasa*-demons that scream forth horrid cries, flames shooting from their mouths. Various *yakṣa*-demons then approach from all sides and pull out the [monks'] tongues, rip out their still-beating hearts, and place them on the tip of the pillar. The howling and crying [of these monks] is like the bray of a drunken elephant, or else is a screeching sound like the moaning of *piśācā*-demons.

5.84

因是，復見諸美音聲，如人叫喚稱己父母罵詈無道。因是厭離，耳不樂聞，生厭離想。智者應當教觀八苦。如八苦觀說。

As a result when [the practitioner] next encounters beautiful singing or a beautiful voice it sounds to him [as harsh as the sound of] someone vilifying his own parents as scoundrels. Accordingly he will feel revulsion, and will not delight in hearing [these sounds] but will rather wish to escape from them. The preceptor must then instruct [the practitioner] to contemplate the eight kinds of suffering as explained in [the exposition of] the contemplation of the eight kinds of suffering.¹

5.85

告舍利弗：汝好受此治歌唄偈讚法，慎莫忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] then said to Śāriputra: “You must remember this method for curing [those fond of] hymns. Be sure not to forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda had heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.86

治水大猛盛²因是得下³。復次舍利弗，若有四眾，入水三昧，遍體水出，不見身心，猶如大海。出定⁴時，飲食不甘，患心下⁵熱。水脈增動，患下不止。當疾治之。

[The method for] curing diarrhea⁶ resulting from excess of the water element

Further, Śāriputra, there may be a Buddhist practitioner who enters the *samādhi* of the water element such that water emerges from all over his body, and he can no longer see his body or mind, which become like giant oceans. Emerging from trance he feels no desire to eat or drink and suffers from a burning sensation below the heart. His water channels⁷ become increasingly agitated and he [therefore] suffers from constant diarrhea. This must be quickly cured.

1 The usual list of the eight kinds of suffering includes the suffering of birth, aging, sickness, death, separation from loved ones, proximity to those one hates, not obtaining one's desires, and the five *upādāna-skandha* (that is to say, embodied existence writ large for a non-enlightened being).

2 [盛] Kg

3 +法 S, Y

4 +之 S, Y

5 不 S, Y

6 I follow Salguero in understanding 下 here to mean diarrhea (Salguero 2010, 204).

7 Here “water channels” presumably refers to the 101 channels among the 404 discussed above that pertain to the water element.

5.87

治之法者，想一金翅鳥，比丘乘上，於大海中，遊行無畏。諸龍羅剎，皆悉驚走。鳥取龍食。龍畏怖故，吸水都盡，化為四蛇。金翅鳥王，口銜四蛇，比丘坐上，求水不得。金翅鳥王，眼出火燒蛇。諸蛇驚怖，猶如幻夫，所作幻人，隱沒不現，入比丘身。

The method for curing this is as follows. [The practitioner] must imagine a golden-winged bird¹ upon which rides a monk. As they fly at ease over the great ocean the various dragons and *rākṣasa*-demons all run in fright. The bird then catches a dragon, and the frightened dragon, on the point of being eaten, drinks up all the water [of the ocean] and transforms into four snakes. This royal golden-winged bird then holds these four snakes in his beak and, with the monk riding atop, is unable to find any water. The royal golden-winged bird then shoots fire from his eyes so as to burn the snakes.² The snakes are afraid, and they then suddenly disappear and enter into the monk's body just as would the magical creations of a conjurer.

5.88

從是出定，應服世間斷下之藥。想二火珠，一在胃管溫煖諸脈，一在糞門。狀如熱石。想雪山神，名鬱多伽，身長六丈³，白如珂雪。持一香藥，名娑呵那伽，授與行者。服此藥時，先發無上菩提之心。一服藥已，四百四病，終身不動。何況下耶。

The practitioner should then emerge from trance and consume medicines⁴ for curing diarrhea. [He should then] imagine two fire jewels, like hot rocks, one at the stomach-gate,⁵ where it warms the channels, and one at the anus. [He must next] imagine the god of the snow-covered mountains named Uttaraga⁶, who is six feet tall and as white as shell or snow. He bestows upon the practitioner a fragrant medicine called Vahanaka.⁷ When the practitioner takes this medicine he must first produce the aspiration for unsurpassed enlightenment. After taking it, for the rest of his life he will be free not only from diarrhea, but from all the 404 illnesses.

1 In Chinese Buddhist texts “golden-winged bird” 金翅鳥 is often a translation of the word *garuda*, the roc-like bird of Indian mythology known for feasting upon the *nāgas* (which are the makers of rain).

2 On the trope of burning a snake to produce rain, see Tanabe 1981.

3 大 Kg

4 Literally “worldly medicines,” presumably ordinary medicine as opposed to the kinds of “medicine” that a text such as the *Methods for Curing* is prescribing.

5 On this term see above p561n14. As discussed there the “stomach-gate” is known from the Chinese medical tradition as a passageway that becomes blocked in cases of “cold” illness, which are also associated with excess of water. In this passage we thus see that part of the treatment is to warm the stomach-gate.

6 Here we have 鬱多伽, but below the name is given as 鬱多羅伽. This more complete transcription might perhaps render *ut-ta-ra-ga*. If so, might we understand that the god Uttaraga, “upward goer,” is meant to cure “downwardness” (下), that is to say diarrhea? The *Glossary of Indian Words* (T.2130:54.1013a22) lists a similar name (鬱陀羅伽仙人) from the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, but with the definition “having a great belly” (大腹) this suggests the name Udraka (Chen 2004, 89), and indeed according to Lamotte this is Udraka Rāmaputra, one of the masters under whom Gautama studied (Lamotte 1944–1981, 1050). It thus seems unlikely that there is any connection between this Udraka and the deity given here in the *Methods for Curing*. In the end the reconstruction Uttaraga is speculative, but in the absence of any alternatives I will use it.

7 The meaning of 娑呵那伽 is uncertain, and I have not been able to find a similar name or word elsewhere. Based on the sounds, however, might this represent *va-ha-na-ka*, perhaps meaning “remover”?

5.89

若令彼神疾疾來者，當淨¹澡浴，不食五辛，不飲酒，不噉肉，於靜寂處，一心數息，稱彼神名，念彼神像，一日至七日。雪山大神，與十二白光神等，至行者前。先為說法，後授與藥，復教十二門禪。彼諸神等，皆是五地大菩薩也。若有病者，應先念彼鬱多羅伽神，次念勇健神、強力神、雄猛神、智行神、自在神、善臂神、鳩摩羅神、難勝神、白光明神、白光明王神、藥王神等，十二白光神。

If [the practitioner] wishes to make the god [Uttaraga] come with all due haste,² he must first purify himself through bathing, refrain from eating the five pungent foods,³ refrain from drinking alcohol, and not consume meat. [He should] dwell in a quiet place, concentrate his mind by counting his breaths, and for seven days chant this god's name and bring to mind his image. [Uttaraga,] god of the snow-covered mountains, will then come before the practitioner together with [the remainder of the]⁴ twelve radiant gods. First they will preach the Dharma for him, after which they will give him medicine. They will also teach him the twelve stages of trance.⁵

These various gods are all great fifth-stage bodhisattvas. One who is sick should first bring to mind the god Uttaraga, and next bring to mind the remainder of twelve radiant gods, [namely] the gods Vigor (*śūra), Strength (*dr̥ḍha), Might (*nārāyaṇabala), Wisdom (*cāritamati), Power (*prabhu), Strong-arms (*subāhu), Kumāra, Unconquerable (*durdharṣa), Radiance, Radiance King, and Medicine King.⁶

1 深 Kg

2 Although not following the formula exactly the wording here (疾疾) may faintly echo the traditional Chinese closing formula of prayers to underworld gods (“quickly quickly in accord with the statutes” 疾疾如令), a locution derived from the Han legal tradition.

3 This is one of the earliest known references to the incorporation of the Chinese notion of the five pungent foods into Buddhist ritual texts.

4 Eleven more gods are listed below, suggesting that Uttaraga himself is one of the twelve.

5 Following Chinese usage stemming from the time of An Shigao the “twelve gates of trance” (十二門禪) would refer to the four *dhyāna*, the four *apramāṇa*, and the four *arupya* meditations. Note however that this expression appears to be a Chinese word, and apart from its use in An Shigao's text, it is not found in other Chinese texts known to have been direct translations.

6 These names are taken from Buddhahadra's translation of the *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī-sūtra* (*Chu sheng wu liang men chi jing* 出生無量門持經). See the discussion on p.84–85. The Sanskrit names given here are those reconstructed by Inagaki in his translation of the Tibetan version of the text (Inagaki 1987, 68). Buddhahadra's translation of the text is also notable because it includes the expression “sins [leading to further] birth and death” (生死之罪), which are said to be eliminated as a result of hearing the *dhāraṇī*. This expression occurs frequently in later Chinese repentance literature, but its most important scriptural source is the various Contemplation Scriptures. Tōdō Shun'ei 藤堂俊英 has recently attempted to trace the usage of this particular phrase in Chinese Buddhist texts (Tōdō 1999), but he did not note this occurrence in Buddhahadra's *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī-sūtra*. Tōdō does, however, find several instances of the expression in texts with Tibetan or Sanskrit parallels, and in all the cases he identifies nothing obviously corresponds to the word “sins” (*zui* 罪). The same situation obtains with the *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī*. According to Buddhahadra's version (T.1012), hearing this *dhāraṇī* will allow a practitioner to “eliminate the sins of birth and death of four hundred thousand *kalpas*” (除却四十萬劫生死之罪). The corresponding passages from the other Chinese translations are as follows (I follow the translators that Inagaki suggests, though some are questionable):

Buddhahadra (T.1012): 除却四十萬劫生死之罪
Zhi Qian (T.1011): 除後四十萬劫生死之行

5.90

既得見已，於一一神所。各問異法門。彼諸神等，先令行者得見彌勒菩薩，於彌勒菩薩所，見文殊師利等一切諸菩薩，及十方佛。若此人過去世，不犯四重禁，現在世不破四重禁，見諸神時，即見道跡。若犯戒者。是諸神王教已，懺悔足滿千¹日。然後得見彌勒菩薩，及文殊師利、諸大士等，後獲道跡。

When [the practitioner] has seen [these gods], he inquires about a different teaching with each of them. These gods first cause the practitioner to see the bodhisattva Maitreya, and in Maitreya's abode he sees Mañjuśrī and all the other bodhisattvas, as well as the buddhas of the ten directions.

If the practitioner has not violated the four grave prohibitions (*pārājika*) either in this life or past lives, then when he sees these gods he will immediately see the traces of the path [and achieve the first stage of awakening].²

If, however, he has violated the precepts, then after the gods have instructed him he must perform repentance practices for a thousand days. Only after this will he be able to see Maitreya

Guṇabhadra (T.1013):	超越四十萬劫
Gongdezhi 功德直 (T.1014):	經歷四十百千劫中常勤背捨生死之法
Buddhaśānta (?) (T.1015):	超越四十萬劫不復勤苦
Samghavarman (?) (T.1016)	四百萬劫不生惡趣
Jñānagupta (T.1017)	四百萬劫中所有煩惱一切超過不能為礙
Zhiyan 智嚴 (T.1018)	超越世間四十百千劫生死流轉
Amogavajra (T.1009)	棄背四十俱胝劫流轉生死

The different versions all express slightly different understandings, and of course the original texts may also have differed. It is clear, however, that only in Buddhahadra's version is there anything similar to the notion of "sins" (罪). The other versions speak only of passing over many *kalpas* of rebirth, and the idea seems to be that this *dhāraṇī* will considerably reduce the normally very long career of a bodhisattva and allow liberation to be achieved more rapidly. Although we cannot be entirely certain, given Tōdō's conclusions drawn from the comparison of this same expression to known Sanskrit or Tibetan parallels, it seems likely that here too the notion of "sins" (罪) has been added by the translator. It is difficult to say if Buddhahadra's translation introduced this expression, which was then taken up in the Contemplation Scriptures, or if this expression was already common among Chinese Buddhists when Buddhahadra translated the *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī* (which, being the southern Chinese capital during the early fifth-century, is the same environment in which the Contemplation Scriptures likely originated). Either way, given that an entirely different set of ideas (the list of gods seen here) was also borrowed from the *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī* by the *Methods for Curing*, it would seem certain that the *Anantamukha-nirhāra-dhāraṇī* was an important text among those Chinese Buddhists who produced both the *Methods for Curing* and the Contemplation Scriptures.

1 于 Kg

2 "Path-traces" (*dao ji* 道跡) is a regular Chinese translation of *śrotāpanna*, first of the four fruits. This expression appears in Chinese Buddhist texts from a very early period (I have found it as early as Chen Hui's 陳慧 third-century *Yin chi ru jing zhu* 陰持入經註; T.1694:33.23c13–14). Though it is consistently linked to the attainment of the first fruit, it does not seem to have been a direct translation of this idea. For example see Sengzhao's comments to the famous scene from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* in which the Buddha reveals the world as pure: "[Seng]zhao comments: The impure world can be made pure, and once pure can again become impure. As a result of understanding impermanence [as manifested by this transformation], one obtains the purity of the Dharma-eye. The Dharma-eye being pure [means obtaining] the path of *śrotāpanna*. [At this stage] one first sees the traces of the path, and for this reason this is called obtaining the Dharma-eye." (*Zhu wei mo jie jing* 注維摩詰經; T.1775:38.338b29–c3).

bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī, and the other great saints, and then finally attain the path.¹

5.91

告舍利弗：若有行者，因水致下，動四百四病，欲得治者，當疾服是娑呵[等]{那伽?}藥。除病無患，滅業障海，疾見道跡。是故汝等，善好受持，慎莫忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] said to Śāriputra: “Any practitioner in whom the 404 illnesses arise as a result of the downward movement of the water element [within the body] and who wishes to cure this condition must promptly take this medicine [named] Vahanaka. When his illness is completely removed and he has eliminated the ocean of karmic obstructions, [he will] quickly see the path.² Therefore you all must diligently remember [this method]. Be sure not to forget it.”

When Śāriputra and Ānanda had heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.92

治因火大頭痛眼痛耳聾法。復次舍利弗：若行者，入火三昧，節節火焰³，大腸⁴、小腸，一時火起，燒動火⁵脈。出定時，頭微微痛，諸脈掣⁶縮，眼赤耳聾。因是發病⁷，當疾治之。The method for curing pain in the head and eyes and deafness in the ears resulting from the fire element.

Further, Śāriputra, if a practitioner enters the fire *samādhi* [in which] flames emerge from his joints,⁸ [but then] fire arises simultaneously in his large and small intestines [thereby] heating and stimulating the fire channels,⁹ when he emerges from trance his head will ache slightly, all his channels will contract, his eyes will become red, and he will have difficulty hearing. One who becomes ill in this manner must be quickly cured.

5.93

治之法者，先想一琉璃甕，盛眾色水，生雜寶花。花上皆有百千化佛，諸化菩薩，各放白毫，照諸火光，令¹⁰諸火光¹¹，化為金龍。行者見已，即生歡喜。

1 The expression 獲道迹 is presumably equivalent to 見道跡 (see previous note).

2 Section 5.90 implies that one might meet the god Uttaraḡa and yet still need to repent for one thousand days. We should thus probably understand this passage as implying that one will “see the path” after having completed two separate steps—taking the medicine to heal the illness, and eliminating karmic obstructions through repentance.

3 爛 Kg

4 腹 Kg

5 水 Kg

6 攣 P, S, Q, Y

7 痛 Kg

8 See section 3.27 above where “fire emerging from the joints” (火大從支節起) is discussed as what is supposed to happen during the fire *samādhi*. The point thus seems to be that in addition to this, other unfavorable results may also occur which then need treatment.

9 Above (5.86) we saw that the water *samādhi* led to over-stimulation of the “water channels” (水脈), so this would appear to be the analogous problem for the fire *samādhi*.

10 合 Kg

11 [光] Kg

The method for curing this is as follows. He should first imagine a beryl vase filled with multicolored water, within which grow flowers [made of] various kinds of jewels. Atop the flowers are hundreds of thousands of transformation-buddhas and various transformation-bodhisattvas. They each radiate light from the white hair-tufts [between their eyebrows,] which shines upon the fires transforming them into golden dragons. Seeing this, the practitioner becomes happy.

5.94

作念想甕，安置火下。花臺在上。已往佛所。以手攀甕，手即清涼。因是舉身投於甕邊¹，為佛作禮。即見化佛，放眉間光，兩滴甘露，灑散諸節。所滴之處，化成琉璃，因灌大腸 [大腸]²小腸³，甘露盈滿，火光漸息，生諸寶花，寶華有光，其色紅白。

He [then should] imagine a large vase, placing it below the fires, with the buds of the flowers above him leaning towards the Buddha (?).⁴ He touches the vase, whereupon his hands feel cool and refreshed. He then throws his entire body down besides the vase and prostrates to the Buddha. He then immediately sees the transformation-buddhas emit light from between their eyebrows, which falls gently upon each part of his body like a shower of ambrosia.⁵ Each place it touches transforms into beryl, and ambrosia then flows into his large and small intestines. When they are both filled with ambrosia the fires gradually go out, and there arises [in their place] various jeweled flowers that radiate red and white light.

1 鳥 Kg

2 Following P, S, Q, Y

3 [小腸] J. Only Kg and K share the reading 大腸大腸小腸. We might imagine the following scenario. The original reading was 大腸小腸, preserved today in southern Song canons. An error in one early version led to the reading 大腸大腸, then taken up by the Kaibao from which it entered J. Meanwhile manuscript copies collated both readings (大腸小腸 and 大腸大腸) to produce 大腸大腸小腸, as seen in Kg which likely reflects the lineage of official manuscript copies. This version then was taken up in the Liao canon, and was consulted during the second carving of the Korean canon (K) and favored over the original Kaibao reading 大腸大腸. Conversely it is also possible that the reading of J (and presumably the Kaibao), 大腸大腸, is correct. We might punctuate the entire clause as 因灌大腸，大腸甘露盈滿，火光漸息. In this case it would be the southern Song canons that introduce the error 大腸小腸. Either way the most likely explanation is that Kg and K represent an attempt to reconcile the two versions. For otherwise (that is if 大腸大腸小腸 were the original) we would have to imagine that two different textual lineages independently introduced errors at this very same spot, which is rather unlikely. A further confirmation of this comes from the arrangement of K. Beginning with this passage we find in K two lines with 15 characters each, while J retains the Kaibao standard of 14 characters per line (as does K in the surrounding passages and throughout the text). It thus seems clear that during the second carving of the Korean canon two extra characters were added to the text somewhere around here.

4 I am not able to understand this sentence and my translation is little more than a guess.

5 Alternatively, the meaning may be that the radiating of light and the sprinkling of ambrosia are two separate occurrences. Nevertheless since the source of the ambrosia is not mentioned, I assume that the light emitted by the buddhas is being likened to ambrosia in its healing effects.

5.95

復當想一摩醯首羅。乘金色牛。持寶瓶水。至行者前。水中眾藥。藥名破毒。令行者服。復持一珠。名旃陀羅摩¹尼，宋言月精，置其頂上。流出諸藥，灌耳²灌眼灌鼻。但一見已，即得除差³。摩醯首羅，是大菩薩，常自遊戲首楞嚴三昧，即從眉間，放大光明，化作佛像，五百仙人侍衛世尊。為於⁴行者，說甘露門治⁵病之法。

He should then imagine the god Maheśvara who, riding a golden bull and carrying a jeweled water-pitcher, approaches the practitioner. Within the water is a medicine named “poison-destroyer,” which [Maheśvara] gives to the practitioner. [Maheśvara] then places a pearl named Candramāni (which in Chinese means “moon essence”)⁶ on the crown of [the practitioner’s] head. Various medicines flow forth from [the pearl] into [the practitioner’s] ears, eyes, and nose. As soon as the practitioner sees these things he will be cured

Maheśvara, a great bodhisattva who constantly disports himself in the *śūraṅgama-samādhi*,⁷ then emits a bright light from between his eyebrows, which transforms into an image of the Buddha surrounded by five hundred immortals that then preaches for the practitioner a divine healing method.⁸

5.96

告舍利弗：汝好受持⁹，慎莫忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] then said to Śāriputra: “You must remember this [teaching.] Be sure not to forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.97

治入地三昧見不祥事驚怖失心法。復次舍利弗，若行者，入地三昧，見四方面黑山。諸山巖間，有無量無邊諸鳩槃荼，蹲踞土埤，現醜惡形，身根分端。復有五山，夜叉競來爭取彼山。諸鳩槃荼，痛急驚怖，發大惡聲，向行者所。復見諸鬼頭髮蓬亂，捉大鐵棒，棒端有山。至行者所。復見夜叉，擔山起舞。羅剎持樹，至夜叉所，羅剎瞋恚，與夜叉鬪。毘舍遮鬼，頭戴黑山，口銜死虎。

The method for curing insanity caused by the terror occasioned by seeing inauspicious things upon entering the earth-*samādhi*.

Further, Śāriputra, upon entering the earth-*samādhi* a practitioner may see dark mountains in all directions, within whose crags there are innumerable *kumbhāṇḍa*-demons

1 應 Kg

2 [灌耳] J.

3 瘥 P, S, Q, Y

4 為於 = 信 Kg

5 持 Kg

6 The characters 宋言月精 appear in small characters in K, P, and Q (and presumably S and Y, though these versions were not available for direct inspection). Nevertheless in both J and Kg (which we have seen elsewhere share a number of unique features) they appear in normal size type.

7 The “*samādhi* of the heroic stride,” also the title of a well-known Mahāyāna scripture.

8 Here “divine” translates “gate of ambrosia” (甘露門).

9 [持] Kg

squatting on piles of dirt. [These demons] are extremely ugly and have forked penises. Various *yakṣa*-demons then come charging forward to seize control of five of these mountains. The *kumbhāṇḍa*-demons become dreadfully afraid, and crying out horribly they approach the practitioner. He further sees demons with disheveled hair wielding great iron clubs with mountain-tips. They too approach the practitioner. He further sees *yakṣa*-demons dancing about while carrying mountains on their shoulders. [Female]¹ *rākṣasī*-demons wielding trees [as weapons (?)] then approach the *yakṣa*-demons and fight with them angrily. [There are also] *piśāca*-demons who carry dark mountains upon their heads and hold dead tigers in their mouths.

5.98

行者見已，心驚毛豎。以驚怖故，羅刹熾盛，共夜叉鬪。羅刹得勝，截夜叉頭，毘舍遮手足，以為瓔珞，鳩槃荼身根，以為花鬘。鼓舞前地，狗牙上出，如劍樹枝。眼中雨電²，霹靂火起。

Seeing these things the practitioner becomes alarmed and gets goose bumps. Because of his fear the *rākṣasīs* become more aggressive in their battle with the *yakṣas*. When the *rākṣasīs* gain the upper hand, they decapitate the *yakṣas*, slice off the hands and feet of the *piśācas*, and wear [these severed body parts] as garlands. They [cut off] the penises of the *kumbhāṇḍas* and use them as decorative head ornaments. Dancing wildly before the practitioner, their fangs point upwards like the branches of sword-trees. Hail rains from their eyes and lightning flashes.

5.99

夜叉復勝，搏撮羅刹，剝其面皮，剝³取女根，截鳩槃荼身根，毘舍遮手足，用為花鬘，串⁴耳串⁵頸。鼓舞前地，動身大叫，發大惡聲，甚可怖畏。

[On the other hand] when the *yakṣas* gain the upper hand they capture the *rākṣasīs*, skin their faces, and gouge out their vaginas. They cut off the *kumbhāṇḍas*' penises and the *piśācas*' hands and feet, turning them into decorative head ornaments, earrings, or neck-piercings. Dancing wildly before [the practitioner] they shake their bodies, shout loudly, and produce various horrible, frightening sounds.

5.100

復見四大海神所生之母，毘牟樓至，仰臥海水。有千頭，各二千手足，挖⁶身四向，現其女根，巖嶸可畏，如血塗山。其諸惡毛，狀如劍樹。中生一樹，如刀山林。百千無量驢耳、牛頭、師子口、馬脚、狼尾、鳩槃荼身根，如是諸鬼等，從中而出。

[The practitioner] further sees the goddess Vimalatī,⁷ born of the god of the four oceans,

1 As becomes clear in section 5.99, these are indeed *rākṣasīs* (female *rākṣasas*). This raises the question of whether or not all the references to such demons in the text should be construed this way.

2 雨電 = 電雨 Kg

3 挽 P, Kg

4 貫 S, Q, Y

5 貫 S, Q, Y; [串] Kg

6 撫 P

7 What name these characters might transcribe is not clear. It seems almost certain, however, that this is one of the seven, eight, or even nine so-called *mātrkās*, “mothers” (here given in the Chinese as *mu* 母), a set of goddess

lying on her back upon the ocean. She has one thousand heads each of which has two thousand hands and feet. She stretches her body across the four directions, exposing her vagina, tall and foreboding like a blood-smeared mountain, with its many, awful, sword-tree hairs. Within it grows one particular tree that is like a forest of blade-mountains. From [the vagina] come forth innumerable demons with donkey-ears, bull-heads, lion-mouths, horse-feet, wolf-tails, and *kumbhāṇḍa*-demon-penises.

5.101

復見大龍，百千頭，長數十由旬，從中而出。見有一鬼，似百¹獸，形如師子，有一萬脚，甲間無數，百千毒蛇，從中而出。復見餓鬼，其形長大，十億由旬，吐毒吐²火，擔³諸山，從中而出。復見千狼，連尾異體，牙如石尖⁴，從中而出。復見千虎，尾亦有頭，合身側行，從中而出。復見龍女，瓔珞嚴身，甚[脫]{悅}⁵人目，從中而出，夜叉取食。狸猫、鼯鼠、獼猴、野干、狐魅惡鬼、一切惡獸，皆從中出。

He further sees emerge from [this vagina] a great dragon several tens of *yojana* long, with hundreds of thousands of heads. He further sees emerge from it a bestial demon with the body of lion and ten thousand feet, within the claws of which there are hundreds of thousands of poisonous snakes. He further sees emerge from it hungry ghosts, their bodies tens of millions of *yojanas* tall, who vomit forth poison and fire and carry various mountains on their shoulders. He further sees emerge from it a thousand wolves sharing a single tail but with separate bodies, whose teeth are like rock-needles.⁶ He further sees emerge from it a thousand tigers, whose tails have heads on them. Their bodies pressed closely together, they walk with heads bowed down. He further sees emerge from it a dragon-woman adorned with garlands and extremely beautiful

worshiped widely in India. Nevertheless I have not been able to align the transcription here, which I tentatively reconstruct as *Vimalatī*, with any of the usual names of the *mātrkāś*.

1 自 Kg

2 [吐] Kg

3 +負 Q, Y

4 石尖 = 石炎 P, S, Kg; 尖石 Y

5 Following K, J, P, Q, Kg. The *Taishō* is presumably a misprint.

6 Although the meaning of the expression 石尖, “rock-needle,” is not entirely clear, we may presume that it is related to what the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* calls the “hell of rock-needles” 尖石地獄 (T.643:15.673c13). The term appears to refer to some kind of medical instrument. The hell is described in the following manner: “As retribution for their sins, such people, when their life is about to end, feel a stagnation of breath beneath the heart, and their bellies swell up like a drum. When they try to eat or drink they cough and hack and cannot even get water to go down. They then think as follows: ‘If only I had a rock-needle to push into my throat [and clear the blockage], that indeed would be wonderful!’ When they have this thought, a *rākṣasa* jailer [from this] hell disguises himself magically as a skilled doctor, and using his magic turns a rock-needle into a ball of potent medicine which he puts into [the dying person’s] mouth. He then instructs [the dying person] to close his mouth. [The dying person] rejoices, but when he dies he is reborn among rocky mountains, and innumerable rock needles pierce through his chest.” 此人罪報，命欲終時，心下氣滿，腹脹如鼓。飲食噎吐，水漿不下。即作是念：得一石尖塞我咽喉，不亦快乎。作是念時，獄卒羅刹，化作良醫，幻捉石尖，作大藥丸。著其口中，告言閉口。心生歡喜，氣絕命終，生石山間，無量尖石，從背上入，從胸前出。(T.643:15.673c19–26). As in other cases (such as the demons who look like “sword-trees,” or who have eyes like “hot iron balls”), the imagery is thus associated with the hells, and the vision would thus seem to indicate the presence of karma that will lead to hell if steps are not taken to eliminate it.

who is then eaten by the *yakṣas*. He further sees emerge from it all manners of evil, wild beasts such as cats, rats, apes, jackals, and evil fox spirits.

5.102

阿鼻地獄沃焦山神、十八地獄神、九億牛頭阿傍、八十億餓鬼、千億廁蟲、五百億蛔蟲，如是種種諸變狀事可惡鬼神，或持刀山，或捉劍樹，或搖須彌，或動鐵圍由乾陀山等。行者自見身滿大地，三百三十六節，皆如高山，至無色界。齊¹中出水，四大毒蛇，遊戲水中。口中出火，十惡羅剎，在火中走。耳中出風，糞門出風，吹動諸山。一切鬼神，皆來瞋目節解。行者因是驚怖，喜發狂病。若見是事，當疾治之。

[The practitioner then has] a vision² of various evil demons—the spirits of the “whirlpool-burner mountain”³ of the Avīci hell, the spirits of the eighteen hells, nine million bull-headed *a-bangs*, eighty million hungry ghosts, a thousand million dung beetles, five hundred million tapeworms. Some hold blade-mountains, some hold sword-trees, some shake Mt. Sumeru, some shake the Yugamdhara encircling iron mountains. The practitioner then sees his own body filling the earth, his 336 bones as like tall mountains, reaching all the way up to the formless realms. Water emerges from his navel, within which the poisonous snakes of the four elements play freely. Fire emerges from his mouth, within which the ten evil *rākṣasas* scurry about. Wind emerges from his ears and anus, blowing upon the various mountains. All the various demons and gods approach him, glaring hatefully . . . (?)⁴ and as a result the practitioner becomes afraid and prone to madness.⁵

If the practitioner sees such things, he must quickly be cured.

5.103

治之法者，先想一日與日天子。乘四寶宮殿，作百千伎樂。在黑⁶山上，照耀黑山，令漸漸明。想一日成已，復想二日。想二日已，復當自觀己身白骨三百三十六節，白如雪山，日照雪山。復想頂上，有月天子，四寶宮殿百千眷屬，捉於月珠，置其頭上。

The method for curing this is as follows. He must first imagine the sun along with the sun god who dwells in a palace made of the four treasures and plays hundreds of thousands of kinds beautiful music. [He imagines the sun] to shine down from above the black mountains, making them gradually brighter. Having imagined one such sun, he should next imagine two suns. Having imagined two suns, he must next contemplate the 336 white bones of his body, as white as snow-covered mountains upon which these suns shine. Next, above his head he imagines the god of the moon in his palace made of the four treasures and his hundreds of thousands of attendants [The moon god] places a moon-pearl atop [the practitioner’s] head.

1 臍 P, S, Q, Y

2 On the meaning of 變狀, see p.237n159.

3 On the “whirlpool-burner mountain” 沃焦山, see chapter p.85–86.

4 I am uncertain how to interpret the final two characters (節解), and the text may here be corrupt.

5 The expression 喜發, seeming to mean “prone to madness,” also occurs in section 4.24 above.

6 異 S, Q, Y

5.104

此想成已，想第三山上，復有一日，如上無異。見此日已，復想頂骨。白雪山上，如¹上復有一月。既見²月已，復想第四山上，復有一日，照此黑山。既見日已，當想³己身三百三十六節白骨之山，皆角相向，四角皆相對也，一一角間，有一月光。{月}⁴天子，手捉兩珠，兩向持。如是諸節角角之間，皆應停心，十出入息頃⁵，諦觀令了了。見一一骨，有二十八宿，明淨可愛，如七寶珠。

When this meditation is complete [the practitioner should] imagine that above the third mountain (?)⁶ there is yet another sun exactly the same as [the suns described] above. When he has seen this sun he next imagines the bone at the crown of his head, and atop the snow-white mountain [of his bones] there is again a moon. Having seen this moon, he must next imagine another sun above the fourth mountain,⁷ which shines upon this dark mountain [of his body (?)]. Having seen this sun he must imagine the mountain of the 336 white bones of his own body such that the corners of each of the bones face each other (the four corners [at each joint] positioned directly across from one another),⁸ and in the space between each corner there is moonlight. [This light is] the moon god who, grasping two pearls in his hands, holds the two [bones] together. In this manner at each joint [the practitioner] should fix his mind on the space between the corners of each of the bones for ten inhalations and exhalations, carefully contemplating and making it very clear. He sees on each bone the twenty-eight asterisms, bright and lovely, like pearls made of the seven precious substances.

5.105

此想成已，復想一金翅鳥王，頭戴摩尼珠，搏撮四蛇及與六龍。蛇驚龍走，諸山鬼神，一時驚動。

When this meditation is complete he should next imagine a royal golden-winged bird who wears a *māṇi* pearl atop his head chasing after the four snakes and six dragons. The snakes and dragons flee in panic, while the demons and spirits of the mountains run about frantically.

5.106

狀如黑色，皆是前身破戒果報。當勤懺悔，嚴淨尸羅。尸羅淨故，日月⁹光明，倍更明顯。若心念惡，口說惡言，犯突吉羅，摩尼珠上，則兩¹⁰黑¹¹土。日月塗塵，星宿不行。阿修羅王，九百九十九手千頭，一時出現，映蔽日月，星宿不現。此名為退。為惡心刀、惡

1 白雪山上如 = 如雪山想此山 S, Q, Y

2 +日已當想 Kg. These characters appear to have been miscopied from the next line.

3 [日已當想] Kg

4 Following J, P, S, Q, Y, Kg. This reading was presumably changed during the second carving of Korean canon as can be judged from the abnormal line length (13 characters) in this passage.

5 須 P, S, Q, Y

6 Unclear.

7 As with the “third mountain” above it is not clear to what this refers.

8 The characters 四角皆相對也 would seem to be an interlinear comment that has crept into the text.

9 日 J

10 兩 P, S

11 墨 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

口火、破戒賊之所劫奪。若欲服此勝甘露藥，先當持戒，淨諸威儀，懺悔業障惡不善罪。

If [in the above practice the light of the sun and the moon remain] dark in color this is retribution for the violation of the precepts in a past life. [Such a practitioner] must diligently repent so as to purify his *śīla*. When his *śīla* has been purified the light of the sun and moon will become ever brighter.

If [the practitioner] thinks evil thoughts, speaks evil words, or commits a *duṣkṛta* offense¹ then black dirt will rain upon the *māṇi*-pearl. The sun and moon will be obscured with dust, and Jupiter will no longer follow its course. The king of the *asuras* will suddenly appear, with his 999 hands and 1,000 heads, shading the sun and moon and making Jupiter no longer appear.

This is called “backsliding,”² for the bandits of transgression have robbed [the practitioner] with the sword of evil thoughts and the fire of evil speech. If [the practitioner] wishes to take this excellent, ambrosial medicine, he must first take on the precepts, purify his deportment, and repent his karmic obstructions and evil sins.

5.107

復當繫心繫意，端坐一處，數息閉氣，如前觀於三百三十六節。使一一節，角角相向，星月之屬，亦如上說。心復明利。見一一節間，月光如衣，星光如縷，縫持相著。

Then he must concentrate his mind, sit upright without moving, count his inhalations and exhalations, seal his breath within,³ and as before contemplate the 336 bones [of his body]. He must cause the corners of each bone to face one another, and [contemplate therein] all those things associated with the asterisms and moon as explained above. His mind becomes increasingly perspicacious, and within each joint he sees moonlight, like a piece of cloth, and starlight, like thread, stitching [the bones] together.

5.108

見四日出，四大海水三分減二。見五日出，須彌融盡，大海消竭。見六日出，想此諸山，漸漸融盡。見七日出，大地爛⁴然，諸鬼羅剎，飛住空中，乃至欲界，火幢隨後。復至色界，火亦隨至，欲往無色界，手脚焦縮，落火聚中，聲吼可畏，動於大地。入此三昧時，大地稍稍動也，如車輪⁵旋⁶。

He then sees a fourth sun appear, [and by its heat] the waters of the four oceans are

1 These three seem to correspond to mind, speech, and body respectively.

2 As discussed in chapter one, the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture* divides the stages of cultivation for each given meditation exercise into four categories: “backsliding” (退), “stagnation” (住), “progress” (升進) and “mastery” (決定), which correspond to the classification of *dhyāna* into the levels of *hānabhāgīya*, *sthitibhāgīya*, *viśeṣabhāgīya*, and *nirvedhabhāgīya* as seen in texts such as the *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* (see chapter 1, p.37n160). The *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture*, moreover, includes in the level of “backsliding” (退) a number of phenomena that seem analogous to the inauspicious experiences described here (see for example T.618:15.302a; c6–16; 315a20–24). Significantly, however, in the *Dharmatrāta Chan Scripture* these events are presented simply as regression in one’s practice of *dhyāna*, not as having any particular connection to violations of the precepts, which in the present passage is clearly the main point.

3 The expression “seal the breath within” (*bi qi* 閉氣) occurred above in the *Chan Essentials* (see section 4.58).

4 洞 P, S, Y; 爛 Kg

5 車 Kg

6 旋 J, P

reduced by two-thirds.¹ He then sees a fifth sun appear, which melts away Mt. Sumeru itself and dries up the ocean. He then sees a sixth sun appear, and he imagines all the mountains gradually melting away. He then sees a seventh sun appear which incinerates the entire earth. All the demons and *rākṣasas* fly into the air [to avoid the fire], but the pillars of flame follow behind them all the way up to the [heavens of] the desire realm and then further to the [heavens of the] realm of form. [The demons] try to keep going to the formless realm, but they are engulfed by the mass of fire, their hands and feet twisting and burning² and their dreadful shrieking shaking the earth. (When one enters this *samādhi*, the earth shakes slightly, as if a spinning carriage wheel.)

5.109

當疾持心，想三百三十六節，如金剛山，形狀可愛，過於須彌，地水火風，不能傾動。唯見四蛇，含摩尼珠，在骨山間。

With all due haste [the practitioner] must then collect his mind and imagine his 336 bones to be an adamantine mountain, lovely in form, surpassing even Mt. Sumeru [in firmness], unmoved by earth, water, fire, or wind, [troubled] only by four snakes holding *maṇi*-jewels in their mouths, who dwell within this mountain of bone.³

5.110

爾時應當先想佛影。見金剛際，金剛幢端，有摩尼鏡，過去七佛，影現鏡中。復當諦觀毘婆尸佛眉間白毫，尸棄佛眉間白毫，提舍佛眉間白毫，拘樓孫佛眉間白毫，迦那含牟尼佛眉間白毫，迦葉佛眉間白毫，釋迦牟尼佛眉間白毫。見七佛眉間白毫，如頗梨色水甚清涼，洗諸節間。三百三十六節，白毫水洗，皎然大白，色潔鮮妙，如頗梨鏡，無物可譬。

He must then imagine the emanations of [the seven] buddhas. He sees, at the adamantine extremity, an adamantine pillar topped with a *maṇi*-jewel mirror within which appear the emanations of the seven buddhas of the past.⁴ He must then carefully contemplate the white tuft of hair between the eyebrows of [these seven] buddhas [named] Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśva[bhū], Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśya[pa], and Śākayamuni. When he sees the white tufts of hair

- 1 The following passage, which describes the appearance of eight suns and the eventually incineration of the earth, is at least somewhat indebted to canonical Buddhist accounts of the destruction of the universe at the end of each *kalpa* (see for example *Zhong a han jing* 中阿含經, T.26:1.428c8–429c27). In general the explanation is that all realms below the formless realms (*arūpa-dhātu*) are destroyed, and this why in the present passage the demons attempt to find refuge there. The *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* also contains a description of this process very similar to that found here (T.643:15.696b4–10). In the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* the context is a metaphor explaining that one who brings to mind the Buddha (*nian fo* 念佛) is like the “adamantine mountain” that survives this destruction. Here in the *Methods for Curing* this same idea is enacted more literally, and the practitioner actually imagines his own body as this “adamantine mountain” (see section 5.109) able to resist even the fiercest of fires. It is worth noting that while the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* at least partially preserves the original narrative context of a description of the fires that arise at the end of the *kalpa*, in the *Methods for Curing* this same imagery is used in an entirely different context.
- 2 *Jiao suo* 焦縮 seems to refer to the twisting contortions of a burning object. The same expression occurs in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.652c13–14).
- 3 This is perhaps a sign that the four elements (the four snakes) have been brought into balance.
- 4 On the “emanations” of the buddha(s), see p.210n68. Here the meaning of *ying* 影 as “reflection” is also relevant as these emanations appear with in a mirror.

between their eyebrows it is as if pure, crystal-colored water were to cleanse his bones, and bathed by this water from the white tufts of hair [of the seven buddhas] his 336 bones become brilliantly white, pure, and sparkling, incomparably [pure] like a crystal mirror.

5.111

因是復見五金剛輪，在七寶幢端，從下方出，迴旋空中，說四諦義。雖見聞此，一心觀於身白骨山。即見釋迦牟尼佛，以澡罐¹水，灌其頂上。餘六佛亦爾。

As a result [of this practice] he then sees five adamantine wheels² mounted atop pillars made from the seven precious substances. They emerge from below, spinning in the air, and preaching the teaching of the four truths. Though he sees and hears all this, [the practitioner must] keep his mind fixed in contemplation of his mountain-like skeleton. He will then see the buddha Śākyamuni and the other six buddhas pour pitchers of water over his head.

5.112

爾³時釋迦牟尼佛告言：法子！色、受、想、行、識，苦、空、無常、無我，汝當諦觀。又為廣說空、無相、無作、無願。說身空寂，四大無主，五陰無家，畢竟寂滅，同於虛空。因是即悟無常壞世間，觀四真諦。

The buddha Śākyamuni then address him: “Oh Dharma-child! You must carefully contemplate that matter, sensations, perceptions, volitional formations, and consciousness are painful, empty, impermanent, and devoid of self.”

[Śākyamuni] then further explains the teachings of emptiness, signlessness, non-action, and wishlessness.⁴ He explains that the body is empty and quiescent, that the four elements have no master, that the five dark elements have no home,⁵ and that ultimate tranquil extinction⁶ is just the same as utter emptiness. As a result [of hearing these teachings the practitioner] immediately awakens to the impermanence and fragility of the world, and he contemplates the four truths.

5.113

五出入息頃，破二十億炯⁷然之結，成須陀洹。十出入息頃，免⁸諸欲流，成斯陀舍。十出入息頃，斷諸鈍使，欲色界使，諸結根本，不還欲界，成阿那舍。

During the space of five breaths he smashes through the twenty million mountain-like defilements and becomes a *śrotāpanna*. In the space of [the next] ten breaths he escapes from the flood of desire and becomes a *sakṛdagāmin*. In the space of [the next] ten breaths, he cuts off the weak defilements,⁹ the defilements of the sphere of desire, and the roots of all the defilements,

1 灌 J, Kg

2 Five adamantine wheels were mentioned in section 1.172.

3 [爾] P, Kg

4 On the unexpected conjunction of these four, see p.82.

5 This would seem to mean that the five dark elements (*skandha*) are not themselves housed within any other thing (such as a self), but together constitute the person.

6 “Tranquil extinction” 寂滅 is a frequently used translation of *nirvāṇa*. It might also be possible to construe the line here as: “and that all these things are ultimately tranquil and extinguished, equal to utter emptiness.”

7 洞 P, S, Y; 炯 Kg

8 勉 Kg

9 Becoming an *anāgamin* is usually described as involving the destruction of the five “lower” defilements

such that he becomes an *anāgamin*, one who will never again return to the realm of desire.¹

5.114

於十息頃，遊戲空法，心無繫礙，住三十四心相應，解脫十根本不減不壞，摧³九十八使山，大勇猛將慧光法幢，從四⁴方至⁵。金剛寶座，從下方出。共相振⁶觸，演說空法。五金剛輪，住左⁷膝邊，自然演說九無礙八解脫法。過去聲聞，皆入毘琉璃三昧，住立其前。釋迦牟尼佛，廣為宣說金剛譬定境界義味。

In the space of [the next] ten breaths he disports himself in emptiness and, his mind free

(*avarabhāgiyā*). It is of considerable interest, however, that the Chinese term used here, *dun shi* 鈍使 (translated as “weak defilements”), does not seem to appear in Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist texts, but is used extensively in the Chinese commentarial tradition. Indeed it is somewhat difficult to see how *dun* 鈍 (“dull”) could be a translation of *avarabhāgiyā*, usually understood as “lower” in the sense of binding one to the lower realm (*kāma-dhātu*). Apart from the *Methods for Curing* (which may be the earliest attested example), the next earliest use of this word I have found is from Fayun’s 法雲 early sixth-century commentary to the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Fa hua jing yi ji* 法華經義記 (or *yi shu* 義疏). In one instance Fayun introduces the term in a discussion of the five kinds of “corruption” (濁) that characterize the age after the death of the Buddha. First he equates the “corruption of the afflictions” (煩惱濁) and the “corruption of views” (見濁) with the ten principal defilements (*shi shi* 十使), dividing this group in two: the “gross defilements” (*dun shi* 鈍使) and the “acute defilements” (*li shi* 利使; T.1715:33.604c4–6). This division of the ten principal defilements was much discussed in later Chinese exegesis. They are, for example, taken up in Zhiyi’s *Fa jie ci di chu men* 法界次第初門, which explains that the “acute” defilements are severed through the path of seeing (*darśana-mārga*) the truths (見諦所斷), while the “gross” defilements are cut off through “meditation” (*bhāvanā-mārga*) (思惟所斷; T.1925:46.667c3–10). A similar arrangement is given by Huiyuan the younger in his *Da sheng yi zhang* 大乘義章 (T.851:44.584b5–12), with a division identical to what in the *Abhidharma-kośa* is given as the distinction between the five defilements that “have the nature of being a view” (*dr̥ṣṭisvabhāva*), and the five that “have the nature of not being a view” (*adr̥ṣṭisvabhāva*), though the *Abhidharma-kośa* does not explain this as a matter of the distinction between acute and weak. In China, however, the terms *dun* 鈍 and *li* 利 were eventually explained as related to the relative ease of severing the defilement in question. A detailed explanation of this is given in the *Forest of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma* chapter on the ten defilements (T.2122:53.837a2–c12). The “acute” 利 defilements, connected with views, are said to be easy to sever once one becomes aware of them, but at the same time their existence is only noticed by the wise, and they are thus “subtle” 利. These defilements are thus “easy to sever but hard to perceive” (難識易斷). Meanwhile the “weak” 鈍 defilements are explained as “coarse” 鈍 in the sense that even ordinary people notice their presence, but they are also difficult to sever. They are thus explained as “easy to perceive but hard to sever” (易識難斷). As a result they are “still possessed by even an *anāgamin*” (以難斷故那含亦有). These later classifications thus do not match the use of the term *dun shi* 鈍使 in the *Methods for Curing*, and indeed following the classification of the *Abhidharma-kośa* the five lower fetters severed by *anāgamins* are not the same as the five defilements which “have the nature of not being a view” (*adr̥ṣṭisvabhāva*).

1 That an *anāgamin* is one who “does not return to the sphere of desire” (不還欲界) is the usual characterization found in Chinese Buddhist texts (see for example *Bie yi za a han jing* 別譯雜阿含經; T.100:2.446b17–18). Note that the wording here differs from the standard Pāli formula in which *anāgamins* simply “do not fall away from that word [where they are reborn]” (*anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā*; MN, 1.489, corresponding to the passage cited above from the Chinese translation of the *Samyuktāgama*). The meaning however seems to be the same.

2 想 Kg

3 推 Kg

of any entanglement, dwells in the thirty-fourth mental moment¹ where he attains permanent liberation from the ten root-[defilements]² thereby smashing the mountain of the 98 defilements.³ The dharma-pillars [possessed of] the light of wisdom of the great valiant generals (?) arrive from the four directions.⁴ A precious adamantine seat emerges from below. Brushing against one another (?) [they] expound the teachings of emptiness.⁵ The five adamantine wheels come to rest beside [the practitioner's] left knee, where they spontaneously expound the teachings of the nine uninterrupted [moments of the path] and the eight liberations.⁶ Voice-hearers from the past appear before [the practitioner], all immersed in the beryl *samādhi*. Then the buddha Śākyamuni expounds for [the practitioner] the meaning and character of the verificatory visions of the adamantine-like *samādhi*.⁷

4 国 Kg (marked with 四カ in margin)

5 並 Kg

6 撐 P, S, Q, Y, Kg

7 在 Kg

1 In Vaibhāṣika scholasticism the 34 mental moments comprise the totality of the *darśana-* and *bhāvana-mārgas*. The *darśana-mārga* is composed of 16 moments of contemplation of the four noble truths (four moments for each truth), after which one becomes a *śrotāpanna* up to an *anāgamin*. The *bhāvanā-mārga* which then follows is comprised of a further 18 moments (*Pi po sha lun* 鞞婆沙論, T.1547:28.446c4–12).

2 Translation tentative. In Vaibhāṣika scholasticism various kinds of “liberation” (*vimukti*) are distinguished by whether or not they can suffer degradation, a notion that allows for the controversial idea of retrogressing arhats (see AKBh, 372–374). The liberation (*vimukti*) of buddhas, meanwhile, is characterized by being immune to such degradation (*nāsti vimuktiparihāniḥ*), which is the eleventh of a buddha's eighteen “unshared qualities” (*avenīkadharma*; on these see Lamotte 1944–1981, 1625–1630). This quality is translated into Chinese in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* as “suffering no degradation of liberation” 解脫無減 (T.1509:25.247b14–15), and perhaps most importantly in the explanation to this passage we find, among the various classifications of states of liberation (解脫; *vimukti*), those that are “destructible” 壞解脫 or “indestructible” 不壞解脫 (T.1509:25.250c21). Given this shared vocabulary it seems plausible to read the phrase 不減不壞 here in the *Methods for Curing* as referring to precisely this special, non-reversible quality of the practitioner's liberation (解脫). If this is so, it would appear that the *Methods for Curing* is explicitly attempting to ascribe to the attainment of arhatship qualities normally reserved for buddhas.

3 A similar passage likening the defilements to a mountain that is eventually smashed by the power of the final moment of liberation (the so-called “adamantine-like *samādhi*,” *vajropama-samādhi*) can be found in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*: “With the weakening of the three poisons, the mountain of the ninety-eight defilements begins to shake. One gradually progresses along the path, and using the adamantine-like *samādhi* one smashes the mountain of the defilements.” 三毒薄故，一切九十八使山皆動，漸漸增進其道，以金剛三昧，摧碎結山。(T.1509:25.218b5–8).

4 Translation tentative.

5 Translation tentative. Does this refer to pillars and the seat?

6 On the problem of the correct interpretation of 九無礙, see above p.490n6.

7 The *vajropama-samādhi*, the meditative state within which arhatship is attained, plays a key role in non-Mahāyāna scholastic accounts of the path to liberation. In many Mahāyāna texts too it assumes an analogous role, and it was an topic of considerably analysis among Chinese Buddhists during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries. A careful survey of the role of this concept in East Asian Buddhism is given by Buswell 1989, 104–115, who argues that it may have contributed to the formation of the notion of “sudden enlightenment,” as even Indian scholastic treatises credit it with the power of bringing about near-instantaneous awakening. Note, moreover that the normal Chinese translation of this term is *jin gang ding* 金剛定, or *jin gang san mei* 金剛三昧. The character *yu* 譬, “like,” which appears here in the *Methods for Curing* is obviously rendering *upama* in the word *varja+upama* → *vajropama*, and thus 金剛譬定 actually translates *vajropama-samādhi* more precisely

5.115

於是寂然，不見身心，入金剛三昧。從金剛三昧起，結使山崩，煩惱根絕，無明河竭，老死[奴]{怨}¹滅，於生分永盡，梵行已立，如煉²真金，不受諸欲，所作已辦，是名大阿羅漢。

Thereupon [the practitioner] becomes tranquil and, no longer aware of his own body or mind, enters the adamantine *samādhi*. He emerges from the adamantine *samādhi* as a great arhat, having obliterated the mountain of the defilements, having severed the roots of affliction, having dried up the river of ignorance, having eradicated death, old age, and despair, having brought to a definitive end his allotted time within the cycle of rebirth, having fully established his holy practice, having become [free of impurity] like purified gold, having put an end to all desire, and having accomplished what is to be accomplished.

5.116

若發無上菩提心者，初見七佛白毫光照，一一如來白毫光明³分為十支，化十寶花寶樹寶臺⁴，行列在空。時十方佛，亦放光水，如上所說，洗諸節間。一一佛白毫光中，說十八種慈心法門，說十八種大悲法門，說十八種大喜法門，說十八種大捨法門，漸漸增長。

If [the practitioner] has aspired to the awakening of a buddha, when he initially sees the light from the white tuft of hair of the seven buddhas these lights will split into ten separate rays, which then transform into ten jeweled flowers, ten jeweled trees, and ten jeweled terraces, which array themselves in the air.⁵ [Along the with the seven buddhas] the buddhas of the ten directions will also emit glowing water that, as described above, cleanses all [the practitioner's] bones. [Then] from within the buddhas' white tuft of hair there emerges a gradually increasing [sound of the] preaching of the eighteen practices of love, the eighteen practices of compassion, the eighteen practices of great joy, and the eighteen practices of great equanimity.⁶

5.117

教已，修習四無量心，具四無量已，為說十種明心。具明心已，教說：色即是空，非色滅空。既⁷觀空已，教菩薩六法。行六法已，修行六念，念佛法身。念佛法身已，起迴向心。迴向成已，立四弘誓，不捨眾生。四願成已，具菩薩戒。菩薩戒成已，學修相似檀波羅蜜。檀波羅蜜成已，學修相似十波羅蜜。

Having been thus instructed, [the practitioner] cultivates these four measureless minds [of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity]. Having become fully possessed of the four measureless

than do the more usual translations. This same translation is, moreover, found three times in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.653c28; 655c24; 690a22), yet apart from these two texts it does not seem to appear in any extant Chinese texts from the fifth century or earlier.

1 Following S, Y; 怒 Kg.

2 練 J, Kg; 鍊 P, S, Q, Y

3 [明] Kg

4 其 Kg

5 Perhaps these refer to the ten bodhisattva stages?

6 Love, compassion, joy, and equanimity are the four *apramāṇa* meditations, but I have not found other reference to the notion that each of these have 18 steps or methods.

7 [既] Kg

[minds], he is taught the ten kinds of clear mind. Having come to possess these, he is taught that “form itself is emptiness, it is not that emptiness occurs with the destruction of form.”¹ Having thus contemplated emptiness he is taught the six methods of the bodhisattva.² Having practiced the six methods, he cultivates the six remembrances, and brings to mind the dharma-body of the buddhas. Having brought to mind the dharma-body of the buddhas he arouses the mind of dedication [of merit]. When dedication of merit has been completed he takes the four universal vows,³ [pledging thereby] to not forsake living beings. When the four vows are established he acquires the bodhisattva precepts. When the bodhisattva precepts are completely acquired, he begins practice of the approximate *dāna-pāramitā*.⁴ When the approximate [*dāna*]-*pāramitā* is obtained, he begins cultivation of [the remainder of the] ten approximate *pāramitās*.

5.118

此想成已，觀內空外空。於是現前，見百千無量諸佛，以水灌頂，以繒繫[頭]{頸?}，為說空法。因空心悟，入菩薩位。是名性地菩薩最初境界。於此法多生⁵增上慢。宜應識之。此是菩提心初境界相。

When this meditation is complete he contemplates emptiness both inwardly and outwardly. He then sees before him hundreds of thousands of innumerable buddhas who anoint his head with water, tie a piece of silk cloth around his neck, and preach for him the teaching of emptiness. He then understands emptiness and enters the ranks of the bodhisattvas. This is called the first verificatory vision for bodhisattvas of the stage “nature.”⁶

In this method [leading to buddhahood] many are those who give rise to excessive pride. One must be sure to notice this [when it occurs]. [Given above are] the features of the first verificatory vision [for those who have given rise to] the mind of [unsurpassed] awakening [and thus seek buddhahood rather than arhatship].

- 1 This appears to be a direct citation of Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* (T.475:14.551a19–20).
- 2 The meaning is uncertain, though we must note that the *Records of the Canon* does record a text called *Scripture on the Bodhisattva’s Six-fold Practice of the Teachings* (*Pu sa liu fa xing jing* 菩薩六法行經; see T.2145:55.22c28).
- 3 These are the so-called four bodhisattva vows.
- 4 The “approximate *pāramitās*” are mentioned in various Mahāyāna sources as preparatory steps to be fulfilled before practice of the pure *pāramitās* (see for example the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, T.1509:25.139b1–6). See also the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.694c4–7), in which attaining the “approximate *pāramitās*” is associated with the first bodhisattva stage, just as it is here in the next passage (5.118).
- 5 [生] P, S, Q, Y
- 6 The “stage of [first acquiring the bodhisattva] nature” (*xing di* 性地) is the second bodhisattva stage in the lists of the ten bodhisattva stages derived from the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts and the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*. Note that a similar passage appears in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* in a section dedicated to the “bringing to mind of the buddhas of the ten directions” (念十方佛品). Here, having seen the buddhas of the ten directions, the practitioner receives the “rank of child of the dharma-king” (法王子位) and becomes a “bodhisattva of the stage of [acquiring the] nature” 性地菩薩 (T.643:15.694a16–18).

5.119

告舍利弗：此名治地三昧[增上慢]¹滅無明母三毒可畏相。汝好受持，慎莫忘失。時舍利弗，及阿難等，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

[The Buddha] then said to Śāriputra: “This is called [the method] for curing [problems arising from] the earth *samādhi*, for destroying the frightful signs of ignorance, mother of the three poisons. You must remember this. Be sure not to forget it.” When Śāriputra and Ānanda had heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

5.120

治風大法。復次舍利弗，若行者入風三昧，自見己身九孔之中，如大溪谷，出五色風。復見己身，三百三十六節，白如雪山，節節風出²。諸藹吉支。藹吉支者起尸鬼也。[諸藹吉支]³手捉鐵棒，以千髑髏，為身璣⁴珞，與諸龍鬼九十八種，至行者所。行者見已，心驚毛豎，因是發狂，或⁵白癩病。當疾治之。

Method for curing the wind element

Further, Śāriputra, while in the wind *samādhi* a practitioner may see five kinds of wind emerge from the nine openings of his body, as if they were deep gorges. He further sees that from each of the 336 bones of his body, white as a snow-covered mountain, a wind blows forth. Various zombies⁶ holding iron clubs and wearing garlands made from a thousand skulls come before the practitioner together with ninety-eight species of dragons and demons. When he sees these creatures the practitioner becomes alarmed and his hairs stand on end. As a result he goes mad, or else develops leprosy (?).⁷ This must be quickly cured.

5.121

治之法者，先當觀於雪山香山四大仙人，皆悉盡是大菩薩也。想彼仙人，身黃金色，長十六丈。一手捉花，一手捉金剛輪，口銜香藥。遮護行者，不令風起。仙人持花，呪水出龍，吸諸風盡。龍身脹大，在地眠臥，終不能起。當觀此龍，猶如芭蕉，皮支相裹，不能喘息。

The method for curing this is as follows. He should first contemplate the four immortals

1 These three characters seems to have been copied by mistake from the previous line, where they occurred exactly 17 characters (one manuscript line) before.

2 土 P

3 I presume that here the four characters 諸藹吉支 have been recopied by accident after the interlinear gloss. The only alternative would be to read the first 諸藹吉支 as the direct object of the previous 出, which seems odd.

4 [璣] Kg

5 [或] Kg

6 Rather than transcribe the otherwise unknown word *jie jia zhi* 藹吉支, I here follow the meaning provided by the interlinear gloss that explains this to be a “risen corpse-demon” 起尸鬼, in other words a zombie.

7 The term 白癩 does not seem to be included in modern dictionaries. We would expect it to be a disease involving white spots on the body. The term is used in a number of translated Buddhist texts, such as Kumārajīva’s *Lotus Sutra* (T.262:9.62a20). Karashima translates it as “leprosy,” though the Sanskrit parallel texts give simply “his body becomes spotted” *kāyaś citro baviṣyati* (Karashima 2001, 9–10). As with all disease names, precise translation is probably not possible. A different Chinese Buddhist text describes the disease as one causing pus and blood-filled boils (**Vinaya-mātrka-sūtra*, T.1463:24.821a12–13).

of Incense Mountain¹ in the snow-covered mountains, who are great bodhisattvas. He must imagine these immortals with their sixteen-foot golden bodies. In one hand they hold flowers, in one hand golden wheels, and in their mouths they hold fragrant medicines. They shield the practitioner with their bodies so as to prevent any winds from arising. Holding flowers, they recite incantations over [a vessel of (?)] water, causing a dragon to appear who sucks up all the wind. The dragon's body then swells up, becoming very large, and lying down on the ground to sleep it cannot be roused. [The practitioner] must contemplate this dragon. Wrapped in layer upon layer of skin like [the trunk of a] plantain tree it does not leak any air.²

5.122

爾時世尊，而說呪曰 . . . 爾時世尊，說此呪已，告舍利弗：如此神呪，過去無量諸佛所說，我今現在亦說此呪，未來彌勒、賢劫菩薩，亦³當宣說。如此神呪功德，如自在天，能令後世五百歲中諸惡比丘，得淨心意，調和善治四大增損。亦治心內四百四病、四百四脈所起境⁴界，九十八使⁵，性欲種子。亦治業障犯戒諸惡，永盡無餘。此名善治七⁶十二種病憂惱陀羅尼，亦名拔五種陰無明根本陀羅尼，亦名現前見一切佛及諸聲聞為說真法破諸結⁷使。

The World-honored One then spoke a spell . . .⁸

When the World-honored One had spoken this spell he said to Śāriputra: This magic spell that I have spoken today was previously spoken by innumerable past buddhas. In the future Maitreya and the other bodhisattvas of this eon⁹ will also preach it. This magic spell has as much power as the god Maheśvara. It is capable of purifying the minds of evil monks living during the five hundred years of the later age, harmonizing excesses and deficiencies in the four elements, curing the 404 illnesses of the heart, the visions¹⁰ produced by the 404 channels, the 98 defilements, and the seeds of sexual desire.¹¹ It can also cure the evils of both karmic obstructions [from previous lives] and transgressions of the precepts [in the present life], permanently eliminating them without remainder. This [spell] is known as the *dhāraṇī* that cures the sorrow of the seventy-two kinds of illness. It is also known as the *dhāraṇī* that extirpates the fundamental ignorance of the five dark elements.¹² It is also called the present seeing of all

1 On “Incense Mountain” (*gandha-mādana*), see *Mochizuki*, 1063.

2 Literally “unable to breathe,” but the point seems to be that the dragon has safely sequestered all of the wind.

3 品 Kg

4 壞 (法)

5 +使 Kg

6 + S, Y

7 法 (法 K)

8 I here omit the *dhāraṇī*. This same *dhāraṇī* can be found in some versions of a *dhāraṇī* collection known as the *Zun sheng pu sa suo wen jing* 尊勝菩薩所問經 (T.1343:21.849c15–24). It is not clear whether the *Methods for Curing* has borrowed the *dhāraṇī* from this source or vice-versa.

9 Literally “the *kalpa* of the worthies” (賢劫), this term is usually a translation of *bhadra-kalpa*, “the auspicious eon,” referring the present age during which there will be a large number of buddhas.

10 Here *jing jie* 境界 must refer to the inauspicious visions produced owing to imbalances in the four elements.

11 Translation tentative.

12 Translation tentative. Here 五種陰 would seem to refer to the five *skandha*. Perhaps this refers to the “fundamental” ignorance that takes the five *skandhas* as the self or a locus of the self.

buddhas and voice-hearers who preach the true teaching that destroys all defilements.

5.123

爾時世尊而說偈言：

法性無所依 觀空亦復然 若能觀四大 不為使所殺
服藥行禪定 誦此陀羅尼 一心念諸佛 結使永不起
煩惱海永盡 恩愛河亦¹絕 諸欲無所因 自稱是解脫
無患心恬怕² 遊戲六神通 亦以陀羅尼 教授於他人

The World-honored One then spoke the following verse: The nature of all things is that they have no ultimate ground, / and this is how one contemplates emptiness. / If one can contemplate the four elements [in this way], / one will not be slaughtered by the defilements. / If you take medicine, practice trance, / recite this *dhāraṇī*, / and single-mindedly bring to mind all buddhas, / then the defilements will never again arise. / The ocean of affliction will be forever exhausted, / and the river of attachment will run dry. / With nothing left that can incite desire, / one can declare oneself to be liberated.³ / Free of trouble, the mind at peace, / one playfully wields the six magic powers / and further transmits this / *dhāraṇī* to others.

5.124

爾時世尊，說此偈已，告舍利弗：汝今當知，我涅槃後，未來世中，若有比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，得聞此甚深祕要淨尸羅法，及行禪定諸病方藥此光明王勝幢陀羅尼，當知此人，不於一佛二佛三四五佛種諸善根，久於無量百千佛所，修習三種菩提之心。[今]{令}⁴得聞此甚深祕要，如說修行。當知是人，最後邊身，如駛水流，速疾當得四沙門果及菩薩行。

When the World-honored One had spoken this verse he said to Śāriputra: You must understand as follows. After I have passed into *nirvāṇa* a monk, nun, layman, or laywoman who manages to hear this profound secret method for the purification of *śīla* and this *dhāraṇī* of the victory pillar of the king of radiant light which is a medicine for the various illness that arise while practicing trance, can be known to have planted good roots under not merely one, two, three, four, or five buddhas, but one who has in fact cultivated the aspiration for one of the three kinds of awakening⁵ in the presence of innumerable hundreds of thousands of buddhas. [This] has caused this person to now manage to hear this profound secret method and to cultivate it properly. Know that this person is in his last rebirth.⁶ As fast as a quickly flowing stream he will

1 池 Kg

2 恬怕= 怕治 J, P

3 Or perhaps “this I declare to be liberation.”

4 Following J, P, S, Q, Y. The agreement of J with P, but not with K or Kg probably reflects a case where K has followed the Liao canon reading over the Kaibao reading, with the Liao canon reflecting a lineage of official manuscripts from Chang’an sharing readings similar to Kg.

5 We also find reference to the “three kinds of *bodhi* mind”(三種菩提之心), here translated as “aspiration for one of the three kinds of awakening,” in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (T.643:15.662c17–19) and the *Ākāśagarbha Contemplation* (T.409:13.677c23).

6 The expression 最後邊身 seems to have first been used as a translation of the expression (or its equivalent) *antimadehadhārī* “one who possesses his final body.” See for example the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*

soon attain either the four holy fruits or the bodhisattva practices.

5.125

佛說是語時，五百釋子，倍更增進，具六神通。舍衛城中，一千首陀羅，宿世行禪發狂之者，聞佛所說，即生歡喜，得須陀洹。八十億諸天，治四大病。身心無患，應時¹即發無上道心，普雨天花，以散佛上及諸大眾。爾時會中，天龍八部，聞佛所說，異口同音，而說是言：如來出世，正為治此狂惡邪見羅剎行人，令得本心，如好花幢，甚可愛樂。善哉世尊，如優曇花，時乃一現。

When the Buddha had thus spoken, the five hundred Śākya²s redoubled their efforts and obtained the six magic powers [possessed by arhats]. Upon hearing the Buddha's teachings one thousand [low-caste] *śudras* from Śrāvastī who in their past lives had gone mad as result of practicing trance immediately experienced great happiness and became *śrotāpannas*. Eighty million gods were able to cure their illnesses [resulting from imbalances in the] four elements. Their bodies and minds became free of trouble and they immediately gave rise to the aspiration for the supreme path. Then they rained heavenly flowers upon the Buddha and the great assembly. When the eight groups [of followers consisting of] gods, dragons, [and the rest] heard what the Buddha had said, they proclaimed in unison: “The Tathāgata indeed appears in the world so as to cure maddened, demonic practitioners who hold heretical views, making them regain their original minds and become like beautiful flower-pillars,³ extremely pleasing and delightful. Excellent, World-honored One, [you are as precious] as the *udumbara* flower, which appears but once each age.

5.126

時會大眾，以偈讚言：

日種王太子	甘蔗之苗裔	星光月外甥	摩耶夫人子
生時行七步	足躡動大千	十方諸神應	嘉瑞三十二
棄國如涕唾	坐於畢鉢羅	金剛勝道場	降伏萬億魔
得成菩提道	面淨如滿月	心垢亦永盡	我今一心禮
諸釋中最勝	具勝慈悲者	能令諸眾生	永脫生死苦

Then, the great assembly spoke the following verse of praise: Prince of the solar lineage, / descendant of the one born from sugar-cane (Ikṣvāku),⁵ / maternal nephew of Starlight Moon,⁶ / son of lady Maya. / At birth you took seven steps, / each step shaking the cosmos, /

(T.1509:25.64a21–22) citing a verse found in the *Samyutta-nikāya* (S 1.14). The same verse is translated in Guṇabhadra's translation of the *Samyuktāgama* (*Za a han jing* 雜阿含經, T.99:2.154b23–25), where the term is given the same rendering (on this verse, see Lamotte 1944–1981, 67).

1 [應時] Kg

2 Here referring to those monks mentioned in the opening of the *Methods for Curing* who had gone mad upon hearing the screeching elephant while immersed in trance.

3 Or perhaps “flower banners.” This term appears in the *Immeasurable Life Contemplation* (T.365:12.342a16–17).

4 異 Kg

5 This line may be drawn directly from Dharmakṣema's early fifth-century translation of the *Buddhacarita* (*Fo suo xing zang* 佛所行讚, T.192:4.1a8). I have not found exact parallels for any of the other stanzas, however.

6 Unclear.

and the gods of the ten directions all came in greeting. / Endowed with auspicious marks 32 in number. / Casting aside your throne as if it were spittle, / you sat beneath the *Pippala* tree. / There at the auspicious adamantine seat of awakening, / you defeated innumerable demons, / attained the path of *bodhi*, / your face pure like the full moon, / mental stains eliminated forever. / We now bow down to you with all our hearts, / you, most excellent of the Śākyans, / who possessed of supreme compassion, / helps all living beings / to escape forever from the suffering of birth and death.

5.127

爾時世尊，聞諸四眾說此偈已，復更殷勤，申金色¹手，摩舍利弗及阿難頂，付囑是事。時舍利弗及阿難等，并餘大眾，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

When the World-honored One heard the four-fold assembly speak this verse, to encourage them yet further he extended his golden hands and placed them upon the heads of Śāriputra and Ānanda, entrusting them with this teaching. When Śāriputra, Ānanda, and the rest of the assembly had heard what the Buddha said, they joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1 [色]Kg

6.1

初學坐者鬼魅所著種種不安不能得定治之法。尊者阿難所問。

如是我聞。一時佛在舍衛國，祇樹給孤獨園¹，那利樓鬼所住之處，末利夫人所造講堂。羅旬踰等一千長者子，始²初出家。請尊者阿難、摩訶迦葉、舍利弗等，以為和上。摩訶迦葉，教千比丘，數息靜處，鬼魅所著。見一鬼神，面如琵琶，四眼兩口，舉面放光。以手擊擗³兩腋下及餘身分。口中唱言：埠惕埠惕⁴。如旋火輪，似掣電光，或起或滅，令於行者心不安所。若見此者⁵，當急治之。

The method for curing beginning meditators who are attacked by *gui-mei* demons and disturbed in various ways such that they are unable to attain concentration. (As asked by the venerable Ānanda.)

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling in Śrāvastī in the park [given to the Buddha by Sudatta,] “He Who Gives to the Poor,” in the forest of [prince] Jeta, in a place where *na-li-luo* demons reside, at the hall built by lady Mallikā.⁶ At this time Lekuñcika and 999 other sons of prominent men had just been ordained, with Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa, and Śāriputra as their preceptors. Mahākāśyapa instructed these one thousand monks [in meditation], and while in a quiet place practicing breath meditation they were attacked by *gui-mei* demons. One demon they saw had an [enormous] face like a Central Asian lute.⁷ It had four eyes and two mouths, and its entire face glowed. It tickled⁸ the monks beneath their armpits and all over their bodies, murmuring “*buti buti*.”⁹ Like a spinning wheel of fire, or flashing lightning, [this demon] appeared and disappeared, preventing the practitioners’ minds from becoming concentrated.

One who sees this must be quickly cured.

1 [如是我聞一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園] Kg. It is tempting to think that Kg here preserves a version in which this final section was not framed as a separate sutra. However relative to the other versions Kg is missing exactly 17 characters, one standard column. This suggests that it has simply dropped one line by mistake.

2 如 Kg

3 擗 J, P, S, Q, Y, Kg

4 Written 埠惕 in the summary of this passage in the *Lesser Calming and Contemplation* (T.1915:46.470b22–c2)

5 [若見此者] Kg

6 This would appear to refer to Mallikā, wife of Prasenajit and mother of the same prince Virūdhaka who figures in the first sutra of the *Methods for Curing*. The Chinese translation of the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* mentions in passing an “assembly hall (講堂) build by lady Mallikā” in Śrāvastī” (*Shi song lü* 十誦律, T.1435:23.278b13), but I have not been able to find any more information about this.

7 I unsure exactly what the comparison here is meant to evoke. *Pipa* 琵琶 (here translated as “Central Asian lute”) are large lutes with thin necks. The main body is round, about three feet in diameter, so I have imagined that the image here is of a thin neck and a giant, bulbous head.

8 The *Glosses on the Canon* says of this word here that it means that “the demon pokes a person causing their mind to become unbalanced” 鬼以指擊觸人令心不定也 (T.2128:54.669b15). The word 擊擗, while not recorded in modern dictionaries, is a technical term from *vinaya* texts where it seems to mean “tickle,” an act that is the subject of a *vinaya* rule (corresponding to *aṅgulipratodana*, “finger poking”; see *pāyantika* number 67 in the *prātimokṣa* of the *Lokottaravādin-mahāsaṅghika*; Tatia 1976, corresponding to *Mi sha sai wu fen jie ben* 彌沙塞五分戒本, T.1422a:22.198a2; in the *prātimokṣa* of other schools its number is slightly different, see Prebish 1975, 143). This translation is used in nearly all Chinese *vinaya* texts, and the more detailed stories make clear that it refers mainly to tickling (e.g. *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*, T.1435:23.112a28–b10).

9 This demon is mentioned by Zhiyi in the *Lesser Calming and Contemplation* (T.1915:46.470b22–c2). As for the possible origins of the word 埠惕, *bu ti*, the Sanskrit *bhūta* means a ghost or other spirits of the dead, so it is perhaps possible that the word derives from a feminine version of this, such as *bhūtī*.

6.2

治之法者，教此行人，埠惕來時，一心閉眼，陰而罵之，而作是言：我今識¹汝，知汝是此閻浮提中食火嗅香偷臘²吉支，汝為邪見，喜破戒種。我今持戒，終不畏汝。若出家人，應誦戒序。若在家家人，應誦三歸、五戒、八戒。鬼便³却行匍匐而去。

The method for curing this is as follows. The practitioner must be instructed to close his eyes and silently curse the Bu-ti demon: “I know you! You are a *tou-lao-ji-zhi*⁴ demon who consumes the smells of the fires of Jambudvīpa.⁵ You cause false views and delight in causing the destruction of the precepts.⁶ But I hold to the precepts and am not afraid of you.”

If [the practitioner] is a monk or nun he or she should recite the opening passage of the *prātimokṣa*.⁷ If [the practitioner] is a layperson, he should recite the three refuges, the five precepts, or the eight precepts. The demon will then crawl away.

6.3

爾時阿難，聞此語已，白佛言：世尊，今此長者子比丘，因世尊說治埠惕鬼，以免諸惡，不為鬼魅之所縛著。後世比丘，佛涅槃後，過千歲已，欲教比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷，數息靜處，念定安般。若諸鬼神，為亂道故，化作鼠形，或黑，或赤，掬⁸行者心，搔⁹行者脚、兩手、兩耳，無處不至。或作鳥聲，或作鬼吟，或復竊語。或有狐魅，作新婦形，莊嚴其身，為於行者，按摩調身，說於非法。或現作狗，號哭無度，或作鷓鴣百類眾鳥，作種種聲、竊語、大喚，其音不同。或作小兒，百千為行，十十五五，若一二三¹⁰，作種種聲，至行者所。或見蛇、蠅、蟲、蚤、蛇、虱，或入耳中，如蜂王鳴，或入眼中，如迸[酪]{落}¹¹沙。或復觸心，作種種亂事，因是發狂。捨離靜處，作放逸行。當云何治。

1 諸 Kg

2 藹 J, P, S, Q, Y, Kg. This reading would make the word 藹吉支, seen above (5.120). However the reading 臘 is supported by the citations of this passage in Zhiyi’s various meditation texts (e.g. *Explanation of the Sequential Path*, T.1916:46.507a20). K here has presumably followed the Liao canon over the Kaibao (since J also reads 藹). But given that this agrees with Zhiyi’s citation, it must be a very old reading. It seems easier to imagine that a later editor would have changed this to match the earlier reading.

3 使 J, P, S, Q, Y

4 Unknown.

5 Translation tentative.

6 Translation tentative. I assume that 種 is the demon, “of the race that.” That there is reference here to “breaking the precepts” suggests that the “tickling” here is not entirely innocent, and that the *bu ti* demon is more like a succubus. This is confirmed below (6.5).

7 The use of the *prātimokṣa* as a protective text in this manner is well-known throughout Buddhism. Based on its usage in Chinese *vinaya* texts, “opening passage of the *prātimokṣa*” (戒序) would appear to refer to the ritual invocation pronounced prior to the beginning of the recitation of the *prātimokṣa*, in which it is declared that the precepts will be recited, that those with transgressions must confess, and that those who remain silent after each precept are presumed to be pure (e.g. *Mi sha sai wu fen jie ben* 彌沙塞五分戒本, T.1422b:22.200c9–16).

8 匏 P, S, Y; 匏 Kg; 跑 J

9 騷 P, S, Kg

10 十十五五若一二三 = 十五若一 Kg

11 [酪] Kg; in my emendation I here following the *Glosses on the Canon* (T.2128:54.669b21).

When Ānanda heard this¹² he said to the Buddha: “World-honored One, having learned from you this method for staving off the Bu-ti demon, these monks, sons of prominent men, having escape from evil, are no longer harassed by *gui-mei* demons. But in later ages, a thousand years after the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*, there will be monks who wish to teach monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen how to dwell in a quiet place, count their breath, and fix their minds [in the practice of] breath meditation.

“[At this time] there may be various demons who, to disrupt the teachings of Buddhism, transform into black or red rodents, strike the practitioner’s heart, and scratch his feet, hands, ears, and elsewhere. Or else they caw like crows, or moan like ghosts, or else make whispering sounds. Or there may be fox-spirits that take the form of young women, making themselves beautiful and then coming before the practitioner to massage his body and speak of improper things. Or there may be [demons] who appear in the form of dogs, howling without cease. Or else they may take the form of a flock of carnivorous birds making all manners of sounds ranging from quiet whispers to loud cries. Or else they may come before the practitioner in the form of small children making various sounds, a hundred thousand of them all in a rows of ten (?).² Or else [the practitioner] may see cobras, worms, bugs, crickets, snakes, or vipers enter his ear, buzzing like a hornet-king. Or else they enter his eyes, like flying sand.³ Or else they strike his heart, causing much disturbance and driving him mad.

“As a result [of such disturbances the practitioner] goes away from his quiet place [of meditation] and does various heedless things.⁴ How can such a practitioner be cured?”

6.4

佛告阿難：諦聽，諦聽，善思念之，當為汝說。若有四眾患此鬼者，汝當為說治鬼之法。此埠惕鬼，有六十三名。乃是過去迦那含牟尼佛時，有一比丘，垂向須陀洹，因邪命故，為僧所擯。瞋恚命終，自誓為鬼。乃至今日，惱亂四眾。壽命一劫，劫盡命終，落阿鼻獄。汝等今日宜識名字，一心繫念，莫為所亂。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: Listen carefully, and ponder well what I now tell you. If a practitioner is afflicted by this kind of demon you must explain for him the method of curing demonic interference. The Bu-ti demon has sixty-three names. During the age of the past buddha Kanakamuni there was a monk who was about to become a *śrotāpanna*. But because of his “evil livelihood”⁵ he was expelled by the other monks. When his life ended he was filled with hatred,

12 The passage is constructed as if the Buddha had been speaking in the previous paragraph.

2 The passage is unclear. The rather drastic change in Kg (see the footnotes to the Chinese text) seems to indicate that past editors also had trouble here.

3 *Glosses on the Canon* explains 迸 here to mean “scattered about” 散走 (T.2128:54.669b21).

4 As we have seen elsewhere, *fang yi* 放逸 seems to denote or at least include violations of the precepts. That below this demon is associated with nocturnal emissions further suggests that the misdeeds in question may be sexual in nature.

5 “Evil livelihood” (*xie ming* 邪命) may be euphemistic. Normally this word translates *mithyājīva* or related expression and refers to monks or nuns who support themselves through non-approved means such as fortune-telling. However we find this expression used in a seemingly different manner in the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* in a passage bearing much similarity to the prohibitions in the *Chan Essentials* concerning speaking of one’s meditative attainment (4.73–4.79). The passage from the *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* reads: “One who obtains this *samādhi* in which the buddhas appear must be instructed to keep secret his conduct. He

and he vowed to become a ghost. Even now he still harasses Buddhist practitioners. His life [as a ghost] will last for one eon, after which he will die and fall into the Avīci hell. You must remember his names [thereby warding him off] so that you may keep your minds concentrated and not be disturbed by him.

6.5

爾時世尊即說曰：埠惕埠惕，是惡夜叉，亦名夢鬼。夢見此時，即便失精。當起懺悔：埠惕來也，我是過去惡因緣故，遇此破戒賊害惡鬼，我今鞭心，束縛諸情，不使放逸。

The World-honored One then said: This evil *yakṣa* Buti-buti is also called “the dream-demon.” Seeing [her] in one’s dreams one will have a nocturnal emission. One must then repent [as follows]: “Buti has come! Because of evil [committed] in the past, I have met this baleful demon who destroys the precepts. I will now spur on my mind, restrain my sense organs, and not be heedless.”

6.6

如此鬼神，住虛空時，名虛空鬼；在床褥間，名腹行鬼。復有三名，一名深索迦伏丘那丘泥脂隸覆嗅覆嗅阿摩勒迦沙禍訶；方道鬼；魑魅鬼；魍魎鬼；淪膿鬼；食唾鬼；水神鬼；火神鬼；山神鬼；園林神鬼；婦女鬼；男子鬼；童男鬼；童女鬼；剝利鬼；婆羅門鬼；毘舍鬼；首陀羅鬼；步行鬼；倒行鬼；騎乘鬼；驢耳鬼；虎頭鬼；猫子聲鬼；鳩鴿鬼；車鴿聲鬼；士鴿鳥鬼；角鴿鳥鬼；或復化作八部鬼神；虛耗鬼；八角鬼；白鼠鬼；蓮華色鬼；狐魅鬼；鬼魅鬼；百蟲精魅鬼；四惡毘舍遮鬼；鳩槃荼鬼。如是等醜惡鬼神，六十三種，是鬼神名。

[The names of this demon are as follows.] When this demon flies through the air it is named “air demon”; when between the sheets it is named “belly-crawler.” It has a further three names: one is *shen suo jia fu qiu na qiu ni zhi li fu chou fu chou a ma le jia sha guo he*. [It is also named] road-demon, *chi-mei*, *wang-liang*, pus-drinker, spit-eater, water-spirit, fire-spirit, mountain-spirit, forest-spirit, wife-demon, man-demon, boy-demon, girl-demon, *kṣatriya*-demon, *brahmin*-demon, *vaiṣya*-demon, *śūdra*-demon, walker, crawler, rider, donkey-ears, tiger-head, cat-meow, hawk, owl, vulture,¹ crow. Or else it becomes one of the eight groups of demons (?). [It is also called] exhauster, eight-horned, white-rat, lotus-colored, fox-spirit, *gui-mei*, insect-spirit, the four evil *piśāca*-demons, and *kumbhāṇḍa*-demon. These sixty-three kinds of evil demons are the names of this [Buti] demon.

must not give rise to ‘evil livelihood’ and must not become arrogant. If he gives rise to evil livelihood or becomes arrogant, then know that this person is one of overbearing arrogance who destroys the Buddhist teachings.” 得諸佛現前三昧者，當教是人密身、口、意，莫起邪命，莫生貢高。若起邪命及貢高法，當知此人是增上慢破滅佛法 (T.643:15.695b10–13). Here too the exact sense is not clear. But given the context, it is not unreasonable to interpret “evil livelihood” as meaning an attempt to gain support through claims to advanced attainment. This also fits the context in the *Methods for Curing*, in as much as the monk was “expelled” (擯), perhaps implying violation of the *pārājika* (such as that concerning claims to advanced attainment).

1 On 車鴿 and 士鴿, see *Glosses on the Canon* (T.2128:54.669b24–c1).

6.7

鬼¹為亂時，應當數息，極令閑靜。應當至心念過去七佛，稱彼佛名：南無毘婆尸佛、尸棄佛、提舍佛、鳩樓孫佛、迦那含牟尼佛、迦葉佛、釋迦牟尼佛。稱彼佛名已，應當憶持一切音聲陀羅尼即說呪曰 ...

If this demon disturbs [the practitioner] he must count his breath and make himself very calm. He should focus his mind and bring to mind the seven buddhas of the past, chanting their names [as follows]: “Homage to the buddhas Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśva[bhū], Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni.” Having chanted these names he should hold firm in his mind the *dhāraṇī* “all sounds,” speaking this spell as follows . . .²

6.8

若有亂心為埠惕鬼所惑亂者，或作種種諸幻境界，應當誦持此陀羅尼、七佛名字、彌勒菩薩。一心數息，誦波羅提木叉，經一百遍。此諸惡鬼，各各調伏，終不惱亂行道四眾。

One whose mind is disturbed and who is harassed by the Buti demon will see various hallucinations, and must chant the above *dhāraṇī*, the names of the seven buddhas, and that of Maitreya bodhisattva. He must focus his mind, count his breaths, and then chant the *prātimokṣa* one hundred times, thereby quelling these evil demons who will never again harass him.³

6.9

佛告阿難：汝好持是淨身口意調伏威儀擯惡鬼法，為得增長四部弟子，使不起亂念，得入三昧。當好受持，慎莫忘失。爾時尊者阿難，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “So as to help Buddhist practitioners make progress, avoid distracted thoughts, and enter *samādhi*, you must remember this method, which banishes evil demons, instills proper conduct, and purifies body, speech, and mind. Remember it well. Do not forget it.”

When Ānanda heard what the Buddha said he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

6.10

復次阿難，若行者坐時患兩耳，滿骨節疼痛，兩手掌癢，兩脚下痛，心下動，項筋轉，眼眩，坐處臍，鬼來竊語，或散香花，作種種妖怪。當疾治之。

Further, Ānanda, while sitting in meditation a practitioner may suffer from pain in his ears, aching joints, itchy palms, pain on the soles of his feet, fluttering in his heart,⁴ twitching in his neck, blurry vision, numb legs,⁵ or demons who approach him, whisper to him, scatter incense and flowers [on him], or perform mischief. This must quickly be cured.

1 若 S, Y

2 I again omit the *dhāraṇī*.

3 The meaning would seem to be “this member of the four groups who practices the path” (行道四眾). The syntax is peculiar.

4 Or perhaps we should emend 動項 to 動傾?

5 *Glosses on the Canon* here says that 臍 is equivalent to 痺, and that it means “when the legs tingle and have no strength” 足痿無力 (T.2128:54.669c4).

6.11

治之法者，先當觀藥王、藥上二菩薩，手執金瓶，持水灌之。次復當觀雪山神王，持一白花，至行者所，覆其頂上，白光流入，潤身毛孔，即得柔軟，更無異相。然後復見闍婆童子持仙人花，散行者上，一一花間，雨諸妙藥，潤於毛孔，諸毗¹疼癢，種種苦痛，音聲細語，諸鬼神輩，永盡無餘。

The method to cure this is as follows. First, he must contemplate the two bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Lord,² who from golden vases pour water over his head. Next he must contemplate the god of the Snowy Mountains³ who approaches the practitioner and places a white flower above his head, which radiates white light that infuses his pores, immediately relaxing his body and eliminating all unusual symptoms. He then sees the youth Jīvaka who scatters “flowers of the immortals” above his head. Magic medicine rains forth from each flower, infusing his pores and completely eliminating his discomfort as well as the many whispering demons [that harass him].

6.12

藥王菩薩、藥上菩薩，為說平等摩訶衍法。香山雪山一切神王，闍婆童子，亦隨其根，為說種種十二門禪，隨病[湯]{賜}藥醫、方呪術。因是得見尊者賓頭盧，及諸羅漢，五百沙彌淳陀婆等，一時悉來至行人所，一一聲聞，[所]{即}⁴說種種治病之法。

The bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Lord then preach the universal Mahāyāna teachings. So too all the spirit-kings of Fragrance Mountain in the Snowy Mountains and the youth Jīvaka will teach him the twelve stages of trance in accordance with his capacities,⁵ and they will bestow on him medicines and curative spells to treat his illnesses. As a result [of receiving these teachings and medicines] he will then see the venerable Piṇḍola and the [other] arhats, as well as the five hundred novice monks [headed by] Cundra.⁶ All at once they will approach the practitioner, and each arhat⁷ will preach methods for curing illness.

6.13

或有羅漢，隨佛所說，教此比丘，剎於頂上，使漸漸空。舉身皆空，以油灌之。梵天持藥，其藥金色，灌身令滿。菩薩醫王，說種種法。若發聲聞心，隨賓頭盧所說，得須陀洹。若發大乘心，隨藥王、藥上二菩薩所說，即得諸佛現前三昧。

Some of these arhats will, following the Buddha's teachings, instruct the practitioner⁸ to

1 髀 S, Y

2 Medicine King 藥王 and Medicine Lord 藥上 figure prominently in the *Medicine King Contemplation*, a text that suggests there was an active cult to these figures in the time and place where the Contemplation Scriptures were composed. Pace Yamabe (1999, 111), I see no reason to assume that mention of these two bodhisattvas here presupposes the existence of the *Medicine King Contemplation* itself.

3 See 5.88–5.89.

4 Emendation tentative. But the grammar seems problematic otherwise.

5 The “twelve stages of trance” (十二門禪) are also mentioned in passage 5.89 above as the content of the teachings of the gods of the Snowy Mountains.

6 These figure also appeared in section 5.41.

7 Literally “each voice-hearer,” but presumably this refers only to the arhats and not the novices.

8 Literally “this monk” (此比丘).

[imagine] gouging out the top of his head and gradually emptying [his body]. When his entire body is empty [the arhats (?)] will anoint him with oil, while the god Brahmā pours golden medicine into his body until it is full. The bodhisattva Medicine King will then preach various teachings.

If [the practitioner] aspires¹ to become a voice-hearer, then following the teachings given by Piṇḍola he will become a *śrotāpanna*. If he aspires to the great vehicle, then following the teachings given by the bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Lord he will attain the *samādhi* in which all the buddhas appear.²

6.14

佛告阿難：佛滅度後，四部弟子，若欲坐禪，先當寂靜端坐七日，然後修心數息七日，復當服此除病等藥，除聲去眚，定心守³意，修心修身，調和諸大，令不失時，一心一意。不犯輕戒，及與威儀。於所持戒，如護眼目，如重病人隨良醫教，行者亦爾。隨數數增，不令退失，如救頭燃，順⁴賢聖語。是名治病，服煖身藥。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: After I have passed away, those wishing to practice seated meditation should first sit quietly for seven days. Then they should cultivate their minds through breath-counting for seven days. Then they should take these medicines⁵ for removing illness so as to eliminate [distracting] noises and do away with numb legs, concentrate their minds and restrain their desires, cultivate their body and mind, and harmonize the four elements [of their bodies], so that they may waste no time in bringing their minds to perfect concentration. They must not violate even the minor precepts or the basic rules of deportment. They should protect the precepts they have received as they would their very eyes, [as diligently] as a gravely ill person would follow the teachings of a skilled doctor. [In counting the breath] they should count in order, not getting behind or losing their place. They should follow the holy teachings as diligently as one would extinguish a fire on one's own head. This is called taking the warming medicine for the curing of illness.

6.15

佛告阿難：汝好受持，慎莫忘失。時尊者阿難聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “You must remember this teaching. Do not forget it.” When the venerable Ānanda heard what the Buddha said he joyfully undertook to carry it out.

1 The point is probably not that the practitioner simply chooses. Rather it may be, as we see in certain passages from the *Five Gates*, that the arousing of the aspiration for these paths is assumed to have taken place already in previous lives, such that it is rather the content of the vision that occurs that reveals what path the practitioner is already on.

2 The so-called *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi*, “*samādhi* of the direct encounter with the buddhas of the present.”

3 安 P, S, Y

4 憶 P

5 Here “take these medicines” would seem to refer to the practices described in the previous sections, namely the recitation of spells and the visionary encounters with various gods, bodhisattvas, and buddhas.

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- Divy *Divyāvadāna* (Vaidya 1959)
- DNKMJ *Dainihon komonjo* 大日本古文書. Tokyo: Tokyo teikoku daigaku (1904–)
- GHYZD *Wang Li gu han yu zi dian* 王力古漢語字典 (Wang Li 王力 2002)
- GXHB *Gu xun hui bian* 古訓彙編
- HYDZD *Han yu da zi dian* 漢語大字典

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