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**In praise of his mighty name: a Tibetan poem on
Amitābha from Dunhuang**

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Chapter 3

In Praise of His Mighty Name

A Tibetan Poem on Amitābha from Dunhuang

Jonathan A. Silk

Nothing, it is obvious to say, is meaningful or valuable in isolation, and the significance, and subsequently the value, of something can only be determined by a context. Nor is it surprising that cultural artifacts, like any other objects, have significance only in context, at a particular location at a particular time, and to a particular person or persons, a community. From this it follows that if we choose to view an object in a decontextualized frame—without reference to any specific community—we surrender any chance to discern the object’s value, since this can only be assigned by some person or persons. But the matter is not entirely simple, since traditions are by definition nonspecific, nonparticular, and nonlocal, and the generalization inherent in the formation of tradition requires an easing, or even erasure, of local distinctions, a glossing over of the individual in favor of the generic. As a result of this simple reasoning, we are compelled to conclude that our appreciation of, for instance, a religious text must balance its specific and generic loci. This is a balance that is often difficult to achieve.

Religious traditions are communities of individuals. We know—or persuade ourselves that we know—what these individuals thought and did on the basis of evidence produced by these individuals, evidence such as texts and physical objects. From an examination of this evidence we form a picture of the worldview of, let us say, “Tibetan Buddhism” or “Pure Land Buddhism,” while knowing full well from the outset that there has never existed one, single Tibetan or Pure Land Buddhism, abstracted from time and place. What exists is particular evidence, local in time and place, and an abstraction that ties multiple instances together over space and time. Whether a particular piece of evidence—a certain

scripture, let us say—is also found in some form in other times and places as well does not materially alter the fact that each instance is in itself local to begin with.

Traditions, by virtue of their translocal and universalizing nature, have a tendency to erase the local, due in part to the fact that the authority, legitimacy, and vitality of traditions stem from their very (claim to) universality. When we consider texts belonging to—in the sense of “honored by”—traditions, it follows that such texts both are inherently local, being used by individuals in specific times and places, and general, being shared across diverse times and place, with the result that they are simultaneously the property of all, but when considered in the abstract, the property of none, of no particular individual or community.

It is not difficult to locate individual objects, such as manuscripts or paintings. What is harder is to set them in a meaningful contextual frame. The literary antecedents of a text or the stylistic antecedents of a painting are just as important for its understanding as the social, political, or historical circumstances of its production, and this type of context might be termed “original.” Another type of context is one imposed on objects by a later community retrospectively, a point to which I will return below.

In addition to a tremendous treasure of visual documentation painted on the walls themselves, the sealed repository of discarded documents found early in this century in the cave-temples of Dunhuang in western China has provided us with a huge amount of manuscript material, of interest to political and social historians, to linguists, and to scholars of religion. Much is already known about Dunhuang during its cultural heyday until the ninth or tenth century, and the documents recovered from the “sacred dust heap” continue to be studied by a growing legion of specialists. For readers of the present book, the documents of greatest interest are likely to be those that deal most directly with Buddhism. These make accessible, among many other things, Chinese and Tibetan manuscript versions of texts frequently far older than the versions preserved in standardized canonical collections, first of all in the Tibetan Kanjurs and the Chinese *Dazangjing*. All these materials are by definition local, although they may be related to traditions defined by other objects as well. But in addition to manuscripts containing versions of known and translocal texts, there are many others that contain texts entirely unknown to the canonical traditions. These texts are deeply interesting in that we recognize them as inherently particular, since they were apparently local products that were never generalized and never

universalized.¹ Part of the effort to provide an “original” context for such works within the world of Dunhuang involves the attempt to read them in light of the entire library of Dunhuang Buddhist culture. Subsequently, one might also seek to understand such texts in the broader context of, respectively, the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist cultures, not to mention the cultural history of humanity. But the initial task must be to edit the texts, reconstruct them where necessary, and read them in a much more limited, even minimally contextualized, frame.

The text I call “The Praise of the Name of the Tathāgata Amitābha” is one example of this local literature, a hymn written in the Tibetan language, of which only six fragmentary manuscripts from Dunhuang are known to exist.² Since my earlier publication in 1993 I have identified an additional leaf of one of the manuscripts then used, now edited in the appendix to this chapter.³ No other Tibetan version, nor model in any other language, has yet been identified. The poem of fifty-nine verses, each consisting of four seven-syllable lines, must be reconstructed from these six fragmentary manuscripts, none of which contains the complete set of verses.⁴ Most of the manuscripts also contain exclamations to *Amita, that is to the Buddha Amitābha / Amitāyus,⁵ written after each quarter of each verse. I believe these are not integral to the text, but rather a part of the liturgical instructions for its recitation, similar to the “Amen” that in Jewish or Christian prayer books indicates the proper congregational response. One of the things that is so interesting about these exclamations is their language. The poem itself is in Tibetan, and naturally the manuscripts are written in Tibetan script. The exclamations are also written in Tibetan script: *a myi ta pur, na mo a myi ta pur*. But this is not understandable as Tibetan language; the language is in fact Chinese, a transcription of 阿彌陀佛 南無阿彌陀佛, the medieval pronunciation of which was something like ʔâ-mjie-dâ-bjwət nâ-m-mju ʔâ-mjie-dâ-bjwət (Modern Standard Chinese: *amituofo nanwu amituofo*),⁶ “Amita Buddha! Namō [Homage to] Amita Buddha!” This suggests that the manuscripts, if not also the text they contain, may date to the time of the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang, the period of roughly 780–850, although the manuscripts might also be later, even as late as the tenth or eleventh century.⁷

It is virtually certain that this text as presented by its manuscripts was intended for recitation in a community in which Tibetan-Chinese bilingualism was common, if not the norm. Those manuscripts that accompany the text with interjections after each quarter verse seem to present the poem as something like a mantric composition, intended

for rhythmical recitation in a cultic setting, rather than for primarily literary enjoyment, or at least they present it *also* as a mantric composition.⁸ But a text may simultaneously have more than one function. The *Heart Sūtra*, for example, was and continues to be widely used for virtually mantric recitation in many cultural contexts, but at least one of its functions was, and perhaps still is, also to serve as a precis of the doctrine of the Perfection of Wisdom. In the same way, while *stotra*, or praise literature—one genre into which our poem falls—is surely designed not only, and probably not primarily, for study or poetic appreciation but rather for oral recitation, the type of recitation that was intended seems unlikely to have been the mantric, meditative, or ecstatic type.⁹ In general, poetry is designed to be recited or read as poetry, rather than, for example, as mantra. If one does not, therefore, pay attention to the poetic qualities of the verses, an important facet of their “meaning” goes unnoticed. That our text may in fact be understood as poetry or song is strongly suggested not only by its form, including a number of structural rhythmical repetitions in the final quarters of verses, but also by its imagery, some of which is shared not only with the *Sukhāvātīvyūha* (Pure Land) sutras and other classical scriptural literature, but even with the highly literary poems of Mātṛceṭa and other Buddhist poets.¹⁰ Some of the images are stereotypical in Buddhist literature, such as the image of a Buddha worshipped by Brahma and other gods (vs. 7), and the flowers of the limbs of awakening (vs. 8), common in the Avadāna literature. Striking however is the analogy (vs. 46) between one dwelling in the jungle as an ascetic, like a lion, and the man-lion, who is the Buddha. Equally striking is the pun in the following verse between the ascetic sitting at the foot of a tree and sitting at the foot of the bodhi tree in order to reach the seat of awakening, with its play on the meanings of the term *bodhimaṇḍa*, the physical seat beneath the bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya and the metaphorical spot of awakening, which is Awakening itself.

A complication in our appreciation of the poetic qualities of the work is the question of the language in which it was originally written. While there are a few examples of uncomfortable phrasing that could suggest it as a translation, there are also puns or apparent puns in the Tibetan that would argue for its original composition in that language. A not unlikely possibility is that within the multicultural and multilingual context of Dunhuang the poet was influenced from different quarters, melding both Tibetan and Chinese elements in an almost seamless fabric.

The overall structure of the poem is very clear and has been analyzed in the following way:¹¹

Verse		
1–11: Reverence	}	Fruit of the Buddha
and		
12–19: Array of the buddha-field	}	Cause of the Buddha
20–25: Six Perfections and the land		
26–30: Sentient beings in the land		
31–59: Practice for Rebirth		
		Fruit of Rebirth
		Cause of Rebirth

This structure elegantly divides the text into two halves: Buddha and sentient beings, cause and effect. In more detail, the fifty-nine verses may also be analyzed as follows:

Verses 1–11: All read in the last line “Thus I devoutly pay homage to him.”

1–5: Praise of the “mighty name.”

1: A general praise of Amitābha, mentioning that name.

2–5: Begin with “If one were to hear this mighty name,”¹² and continue with the various benefits that come from that practice.

6–10: Praise of various aspects of Amitābha’s powers continues.

Verse 11: Transitional. This verse contains the stock line of homage, but begins the praise of the pure field that follows.

Verses 11–19: Description of the pure field.

Verses 20–25: The pure field is perfected by correct practice of the six perfections, each perfection being given a verse. The six verses are almost identical, only the name of the perfection and the verb vary.

Verses 26–30: Description of the state of beings born in the pure field.

Verse 31: Transitional. What happens at the time of death.

Verses 32–59: All are constructed with a condition expressed in lines a–c, “if such-and-such practices are carried out,” then in line d: “One will be born in that pure field.”

32–39: Various practices are listed, including practicing the ten virtuous acts (*daśakuśala*), cultivating the four infinitudes (*brahmavihāras*), reverencing one’s parents, keeping the precepts, and producing the aspiration for awakening. Many of the practices seem monastic.

40–51: Advocacy of the cultivation of the twelve ascetic purification practices (*dhūtaguṇa*), each practice described in its own verse.

52–59: Advocacy of the cultivation of abstruse philosophical doctrines as a path to the pure field.

Doctrinally the text spans a broad spectrum. It advocates the mere hearing of the name of Amitābha, and details the fruits that flow from this—at least superficially passive—act. But at the same time it praises the generic Mahāyāna Buddhist practice of cultivating the six perfections, presumably performed by Amitābha himself (though this is not clear), and goes on to the rigorous monastic, renunciant practices of the twelve ascetic purification practices, the *dhūtaguṇas*. Finally, the last portion of the poem concerns the correct understanding of rather abstruse philosophical doctrines, including abandoning being and nonbeing (52), the Buddha’s *dharmatā* (53), nonapprehension of the two extremes (54), the lack of self-nature even in illusions (56), the not-one-not-many (57), and even some ideas reminiscent of the Rdzogs chen, such as the use of the deeply resonant term *gzhi*. The doctrinal content, then, is vastly inclusive, if anything tending toward the philosophical and monastic or renunciant, rather than the devotional.

Many of the ideas and images in the poem, especially those that characterize the pure land and its inhabitants, can be found already expressed in the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvativyūha* sutras, and to a lesser extent in the *Guan Wuliangshoufo jing* (Sūtra of contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life), although such ideas and descriptions, it should be noted, are by no means limited to those texts. Despite the final third of the poem, from verse 40 onwards, which is thoroughly unrelated to them, the Pure Land scriptures do seem to be the direct inspiration for at least major parts of the poem. No doubt influenced at least in part by this, Akamatsu presented the poem as an example of “Tibetan literature related to the Pure Land teachings.”¹³

Given the general tendency to see literature that deals in any way with the Buddha Amitābha as “Pure Land” literature, it will be helpful to inquire about the senses in which we can speak of something as being “related to the Pure Land teachings.” In other words, what is the justification for our placing objects entirely unknown to later tradition within the context of that tradition? Are we justified in expanding the canon of a tradition, in deciding that the implicit definitions of canonicity we derive from a tradition’s choices may be further applied to enter new objects into the canon of that tradition?¹⁴

In ordinary modern Japanese the term *jōdokyō* is used with a strong resonance of the doctrines and teachings of Hōnen (1133–1212) and

Shinran (1173–1262) and their schools, respectively the Jōdoshū (Pure Land Sect) and the Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land Sect).¹⁵ If by “Pure Land” is meant, however, that system of beliefs and resultant practices which emphasizes exclusively, or almost exclusively, the saving power of the Buddha Amitābha / Amitāyus (hereafter only Amitābha, for the sake of brevity), requiring of the devotee faith in that buddha’s power for the purpose of obtaining not direct buddhahood but rather rebirth in Sukhāvātī, and moreover to a great extent rejecting the viability of traditional elite Buddhist practices, then we must reach two main conclusions.

First, the Pure Land devotionism just described arose only in medieval Japan, specifically under the influence of Hōnen and Shinran. It has antecedents, to be sure, in some writings of Dao’an (313–385), Shandao (613–681) and others, but the Chinese versions of Pure Land faith were not nearly as exclusivistic and single-minded as the Japanese. That Indian texts like the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha* sutras represent Pure Land thought as a uniquely identifiable system or creed in the Indian milieu can be maintained only by denying these scriptures their context within the whole of Mahāyāna Buddhist literature.¹⁶ The second conclusion we can draw is that the version of Pure Land thought that we find in our poem has as much affinity with generalized medieval Mahāyāna doctrines as it does with anything justifiably labeled Pure Land in the aforementioned exclusivistic sense.¹⁷

Akamatsu has also suggested that our text is related to texts like the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* on the one hand, and the hymns of Tanluan (476–542), Shandao, and Fazhao (d. ca. 820) on the other.¹⁸ This is apparently based on his assumption that the repetition of the phrase *A mi ta pur, namo a mi ta pur* is an integral part of the text. The texts of Tanluan and the others are praises of Amitābha that actually contain the same or similar interjections as those in our manuscripts, that is *nanwu amituofu* (Homage to Amita Buddha), *nanwu zhixin guimingli xifang amituofu* 南無至心歸命禮西方阿彌陀佛 (Homage, I wholeheartedly take refuge in Amita Buddha of the western quarter), and so forth. And in many manuscripts of the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* we find the frequent repetition of a *dhāraṇī* interspersed with the text. Since I consider the interjections in our poem to be additions, appended for the purposes of cultic recitation, I do not believe that conclusions can be drawn about the genre of the text on this basis. The connection of our poem with Chinese hymns should, however, be further investigated.¹⁹

At the same time, and perhaps even more directly, an attempt must be made to examine all similar literature in Tibetan from Dunhuang,

which ultimately must include an effort to understand this literature in light of Chinese materials as well. So far, apparently the only scholar to have approached this subject seriously is Akamatsu.²⁰ In addition to the poem studied here and research on Dunhuang Tibetan versions of the two *Sukhāvativyūha* sutras,²¹ he has published an edition and translation of a poem of uncertain title concerning Amitābha,²² and he has examined, but not published an edition or translation of, a poem called *Sngang ba mtha' yas kyi [zhing gi] yon tan la rnal 'byor pas bstod pa* (The Yogin's praise of the virtuous qualities of [the land of] Amitābha).²³ In a further work, Akamatsu introduced a number of Dunhuang manuscripts that mention Amitābha in one way or another, but almost none of them have Amitābha or Sukhāvati as a central theme and, as Akamatsu points out, most of them are in fact tantric.²⁴

Forty years ago, Gregory Schopen argued for the generalization of the ideal of Sukhāvati, which becomes a reward not only for acts of devotion or practices connected with Amitābha, but for Buddhist religious practices in general, wherever they be directed.²⁵ This raises the question why acts directed toward Amitābha and leading toward the reward of rebirth in Sukhāvati should have a historically special status. Schopen does not address this question, and in fact seems to assume that the direction of influence is from a specialized Amitābha cult toward a more generalized cultic doctrine. Without denying the pervasive role of the Pure Land Sukhāvati in Indian Buddhist literature, it is equally plausible to maintain that the particular cultic connection between Amitābha and Sukhāvati has taken on a special, exaggerated importance only in the light of later sectarian developments in the Far East, and specifically in Japan from the medieval period on, and that such a connection is not a central element of Indian Buddhism.²⁶ This raises the historical question of the causes of the rise of Pure Land devotionalism in the Far East, but frees us from the responsibility of seeking everywhere in Indian Buddhism for Pure Land elements. The reason, I would suggest, why documents such as the present poem are distinguished from other types of praises lies more in modern Japanese sectarianism than in the historical situation of the texts themselves. We have, after all, no specific "Mañjuśrī Buddhism," despite the widespread popularity of texts such as the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgīti*. It is not that our poem and other texts like it do not contain Pure Land-type doctrines, for obviously they do. Rather, these elements do not necessarily indicate any exclusively Amitābha-directed cultic activity, nor do they indicate by their doctrines a special

historical connection with Pure Land proper, that is (as I suggest above), with specifically medieval Japanese Buddhist concerns.

Our poem focuses primarily on Amitābha and on the goal of rebirth in his land. Whether in the full context of Dunhuang Buddhism this might make it a “Pure Land” text as defined above remains for me unclear. But there is little to lead us to place it in a doctrinal continuum with the thought of Hōnen or Shinran, and from this point of view it seems misleading as well as historically anachronistic and unjustifiable to assign it to the category of “Pure Land thought.”²⁷ In addition, as mentioned above, the poem also contains some highly philosophical sections. The ideas mentioned there are not, so far as I know, specific to any one school, but they evidence a familiarity on the part of the author with the main topics of Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophical dogmatics. Likewise, the exposition of the ascetic purification practices shows a familiarity with a topic of general concern in generic Buddhist literature, especially that dealing with the proper renunciant life. From this point of view, it should be emphasized that despite some sections that clearly presuppose a nonmonastic audience, the poem as a whole cannot properly be interpreted as an expression of lay piety; the discussion of the ascetic purification practices and of the meditation on advanced topics of Buddhist dogmatics strongly suggests an intended audience of—or at least prominently including—professional monastics.

Despite a widespread, although perhaps vague, awareness of the influences China has had on Tibetan Buddhism, in general there still seems to be a presumption that when we look for antecedents of Tibetan practices and ideas we should turn to India. The present poem serves as an example perhaps suggesting that, at least in part, the genre of prayers for rebirth in the pure land of Amitābha so common in later Tibetan Buddhism might owe some of its inspiration not directly, for example, to the basic scriptures of the Pure Land traditions, the so-called Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvativyūha* sutras—although they are frequently cited—but rather to earlier Chinese models, perhaps by way of texts such as that studied here. At this stage in the investigation of Tibetan Buddhist history, we are unable to specify in detail possible influences of this type. In fact, until recently, most research on Pure Land traditions in Tibet—almost all of which has been done by Japanese scholars—concentrated on the Tibetan translations of the two Sanskrit *Sukhāvativyūha* sutras. Such investigations, however, clearly tell us very little about Tibetan traditions per se.²⁸ Rather more meaningful in this regard are the studies of

Onoda Shunzō, Kajihama Ryōshun, and others,²⁹ which have paid attention primarily to prayers for rebirth in Sukhāvātī (*bde smon*).

Onoda, for example, identifies two traditions of Pure Land type materials in Tibetan literature. One he locates in the Dge lugs pa, particularly in a text of Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), the *Bde ba can gyi zhing du skye ba 'dzin pa'i smon lam zhing mchog sgo 'byed* (Opening the door to the best land: A prayer to obtain birth in the Land of Bliss),³⁰ and in a later commentary on Tsong kha pa's text by the first Lcang skya Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan dpal bzang po (1642–1714), his *Zhing mchog sgo 'byed kyi dmigs rim mdor bsdus* (Summary of the stages of visualization according to "Opening the Door to the Best Land").³¹ The same author has also written the *Bde ba can gyi zhing du bgrod pa'i myur lam gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me* (The clarifying lamp: A quick path for travel to the Land of Bliss).³² The list of similar texts could easily be multiplied to include such texts as the *Bde ba can gyi smon lam dag zhing nye lam* (A shortcut to the Pure Land: A vow for the Land of Bliss)³³ by Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704–1788), and many others.³⁴

Another tradition, of course not unrelated, is that of the Karma Bka' brgyud scholar Karma chags med, who probably belongs to the seventeenth century, and his *Rnam dag bde chen zhing gi smon lam* (A vow for the Land of Highest Bliss), with its commentary *Rnam dag bde chen zhing gi smon lam gyi 'byed 'grel bde chen zhing du bgrod pa'i them skas bzang po* (A wonderful staircase for ascension to the Land of Great Bliss: Commentary to a vow for the Land of Highest Bliss). This text has been examined a number of times by modern scholars, even as long ago as 1932, and translated into Japanese, German, and English.³⁵

Other texts that have been translated so far into Japanese include a 'Pho ba text of the eighteenth century Chu bzang bla ma Ye shes rgya mtsho,³⁶ the *Bde ba can gyi zhing du thogs pa med par bgrod pa'i myur lam* (An unhindered quick path to the Land of Bliss) of the first Panchen Lama Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mthan (1567–1662),³⁷ the *Bde ba can gyi zhing sbyong ba'i dad pa gsal bar byed pa drang srong lung gi nyi ma* (The sun of the sage's instruction called clarification of faith [leading to] cultivation of the Land of Bliss) of Mi pham 'Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846–1912),³⁸ and parts of the *Bde ba can gyi zhing las brtsams pa'i gtam dge ba'i lo tog spel byed dbyar skyes sprin chen glal ba'i sgra dbyangs* (A talk on the Land of Bliss: Thundering sound from the big bursting summer clouds which nourish the Crops of Good Qualities) of the third Rdo Grub chen Rinpoche (1865–1926).³⁹

A determination of the relation of such texts to the so-called Pure Land materials in Tibetan from Dunhuang, which by way of illustration probably predate Tsong kha pa's time by as much as five or six centuries, and that of Karma chags med by perhaps nine, must be a task for the future. But in addition to their intrinsic interest and their value for an investigation of local Buddhism in Dunhuang, one of the things Tibetan materials such as the poem presented here do is remind us that our search for sources of later Tibetan traditions must encompass not only Indian but also Chinese antecedents as well, despite the well-known official history that holds that the so-called Council of Bsam yas set Tibetan Buddhism on an unalterable course blown by Indian winds alone. Without any doubt, some, at least, of the gentle, cool breezes which always blow in the Land of Bliss also blew, across the Tibetan plateau, from east to west.

The translation offered here remains tentative; there are more than a few verses I only poorly understand. Following the translation, a section of commentary provides notes on the individual verses. Verse numbers, not found in the original, have been added to the translation.

TRANSLATION

The Praise of the Name of the Tathāgata Amitābha

- 1 The Sugata Amitābha
 Possesses masses of infinite merit.
 His mighty name is famous throughout the ten directions.
 Thus I devoutly pay homage to him.

- 2 If someone were to hear this name of his
 He would obtain even the stage of nonreturn.
 Thus I devoutly proclaim his name and
 Placing my hands together I pay homage.

- 3 If one were to hear this mighty name
 All obscurations without exception would be cleansed, and
 Defilements without exception would be thoroughly purified.
 Thus bowing my head I pay homage.

- 4 If one were to hear this mighty name
 He would obtain the great buddha stage, and

- He would exhaust the suffering of birth and death.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 5 If one were to hear this mighty name
Terrifying to Māra and false teachers
He would attain the stage of victory.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 6 Since he possesses the marvelous, immeasurable double accumulation,
His highest dharma of control is limitless, and
He is praised by all the buddhas of the ten directions.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 7 Brahma and Devendra Śakra and
All the many groups of gods mentally
Touch their jeweled crowns to his feet.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 8 Through the flowers of the limbs of awakening
Restrained sentient beings are variously adorned and
Elevated to the level of the best awakening.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 9 [Amitābha's] clear wisdom is limitless and
Removes the darkness of delusion.
He teaches countless bright dharma doors.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 10 He is the great transformation, the man-lion.
His bodily marks are limitless.⁴⁰
Hearing his name the buddha's mastery is purified.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 11 Everywhere in that purified buddha-field
The teaching shines like the rays of the sun,
And the flowers of auspiciousness bloom.
Thus bowing my head I pay homage.
- 12 That buddha-field is established by those conditions, and
Its multitudinous jewels are causally arisen.⁴¹
Vast, flat, clear and pure,
Its jeweled tree trunks are crowded together.

- 13 Its paths are covered with jeweled paving stones,
A web of jewels is spread as an ornament.
The various garments of the gods are scattered.
The sweet smell of the best perfume arises everywhere.
- 14 Various types of music from sweet voices
Proclaim the names of the three jewels.
The hindrances of all those who hear [the music] are cleared.
All evil paths are cut off.
- 15 The bathing pools are established by great merit.
Their sides are built up from the seven jewels.
They are scattered with golden pebbles and sand, and
Filled full with the water possessing eight virtuous qualities.
- 16 [This land is] ornamented by lovely divine flowers, and
Various heavenly birds soar and wander about.
They send forth sweet sounding voices, incomparably lovely.
They possess ten types of lovely sweet-sounding voices according to
their inclinations.
- 17 The palaces of jewels are built up and
The fine and lovely symmetry is seen.
The divine banners are raised and fixed;
Perfume and flowers fall like rain.
- 18 The hosts of gods worship for a great aeon.
From many and various buddha-fields
Many sons of the conqueror gather there.
They honored that conqueror and entreated him.
- 19 The sky is covered by a divine canopy
Floating ensigns are fixed in space
Those born from the best fortunate lotus
In order to honor the Sugata gaze intently at his face.
- 20 Since the ten types of gifts are correctly given
With regard to the pure triple sphere,
Those buddha virtues and
That pure field are completely perfected.
- 21 Since the ten types of discipline are correctly preserved
With regard to the pure triple sphere,

- Those buddha virtues and
That pure field are completely perfected.
- 22 Since the ten types of patience are correctly cultivated
With regard to the pure triple sphere,
Those buddha virtues and
That pure field are completely perfected.
- 23 Since the ten types of energy are correctly diligently initiated
With regard to the pure triple sphere,
Those buddha virtues and
That pure field are completely perfected.
- 24 When the ten types of meditation are correctly cultivated
With regard to the pure triple sphere,⁴²
Those buddha virtues and
That pure field are completely perfected.
- 25 When the ten types of wisdom are correctly manifested
With regard to the pure triple sphere,
Those buddha virtues and
That pure field are completely perfected.
- 26 If one wants to be born in that buddha field⁴³
One must call to mind the three jewels.
All who will be born in that buddha field
Will be possessed of lovely golden color.
- 27 In full possession of the thirty-two major marks,
Adorned by the eighty minor marks,
Their life span will be immeasurable.
Common people are not born there.
- 28 Possessing the five superknowledges⁴⁴
They will clearly remember their former existences.
They will also know other minds.
They will display limitless varieties of magical powers.
- 29 Their divine eye will see infinite fields.
Their magic ear will hear the sound of dharma too.
When protected by the Sugata, one dwells happily.
One practices happily the varieties of great magic.

- 30 Honoring all the limitless buddhas,
Before the morning is past they return again, [and]
Happily go to their individual places.
They gather at the feet of that buddha.
- 31 Some hearing the mighty name
Always see the Buddha, the protector.
At the time of [their] death the Sugata shows [them] his face⁴⁵
And they will receive the prophecy of their future joy.
- 32 Producing the oceanic aspiration for awakening and
Practicing the ten virtues and the pure triple sphere,
If one has honored all the jewels
One will be born in that pure field.
- 33 One should completely practice the six perfections and
Cultivate the four immeasurables.
If one transfers one's merit in common with all beings
One will be born in that pure field.
- 34 [One should] reverently pay homage to the supreme ācārya and⁴⁶
Honor one's parents with deference.
If one abandons all haughtiness and pride
One will be born in that pure field.
- 35 Having served learned people,
Copied and listened to the Good Law,⁴⁷
If understanding its intent one teaches it to others,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 36 Although one preserves the best eight-part precepts
For a mere day or for a whole lifetime,
If one preserves one's promises insofar as one is able,⁴⁸
One will be born in that pure field.
- 37 On the six days of the *upoṣadha*, or
During the three-month festivals,
If one produces the aspiration for awakening and preserves the
discipline
One will be born in that pure field.
- 38 If those who received the teachings thusly
Vow to become unimpaired faultless sages and

- Preserve [their vows] for as long as life,
They will be born in that pure field.
- 39 If in order to perfect the unexcelled awakening
The nobles have correctly cultivated
The three doors of liberation,
They will be born in that pure field.
- 40 If one has cultivated pure discipline
Taking the vow to do the ascetic practices,
Doing the difficult practice of wearing refuse rags,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 41 If one abandons other worldly possessions, contented,
Having taken hold of the three best robes,
The banner praised by the Sage,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 42 If one has cultivated the vow of wearing felt,
Having completely abandoned all notions,
Being without a haughty or arrogant mind
One will be born in that pure field.
- 43 If one has undertaken to live on alms food
In order to benefit all sentient beings and
In order to illuminate all the directions,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 44 If, in accord with being immovable from the highest awakening,
One has cultivated the vow of one sitting,
In order to attain the state of an unexcelled buddha,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 45 If one has cultivated the vow of not taking [food] late,
Passionless, abandoning greed, holding fast to discipline
In order to obtain the best stage of nonreturn,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 46 If one has kept to dwelling in a jungle
As the lion, king of beasts,
In order to become the man-lion,
One will be born in that pure field.

- 47 If one has cultivated the vow of dwelling at the foot of a tree
By sitting at the foot of the bodhi tree
In order to travel to the seat of awakening,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 48 If one has cultivated the vow of dwelling without a roof
Intrepid, not relying on a refuge,
In order to perfect excellent awakening,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 49 If one has cultivated the vow of frequenting cemeteries,
Mediating extensively on compassion and love
In order to cultivate natural purity,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 50 If one has cultivated the vow of sleeping in a sitting posture
In order, having accumulated masses of merit and wisdom,
To manifest them with a single pointed mind,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 51 In order not to fall away from the *dharmadhātu* basis
And to understand it perfectly just as it is,
If one has preserved the taking of any seat which is offered
One will be born in that pure field.
- 52 If one has meditated on the teaching which has passed beyond thought
and reasoning,
Not dwelling in all dharmas,
Abandoning being and nonbeing,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 53 If one has meditated on this *dharmatā* of buddhas,
Without ends or middle, true reality,
Which passes beyond the three times,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 54 If one has meditated on the nonapprehension of the two extremes,
Passing beyond the aggregates and components,
Liberated from the spheres,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 55 If one has meditated without discrimination
On the teaching of equality, beyond thought,

- True by its intrinsic nature,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 56 All dharmas are like an illusion and
Those illusions too are empty of self-nature.
If one meditates on this very fact of things,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 57 If one has meditated on the natural purity
Of the teaching that, being not one, not many,
Is non-dual with regard to what is to be rejected and what is to be
adopted,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 58 If one has meditated on the dharma without marks,
Unproduced, without defects,
Without fictional human ideas, without appearances,
One will be born in that pure field.
- 59 If one has meditated on the reality that
The Tathāgata's nature is unproduced and
All dharmas are, in this, like the Sugata,
One will be born in that pure field.

Commentary

All translations in the following (which are my own unless otherwise noted) are made from the Sanskrit, if this is available. I do not wish to imply by this that the author or authors of our text knew the Sanskrit versions (or any version, for that matter) of the texts I cite as parallels. The materials are provided for the light they shed on the poem's meaning, and in the hope that they will spur further research into its sources. More detailed notes, including many of a philological nature, are found in my earlier publication.⁴⁹

Verse 1 evokes the Larger *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* (LSV) §39-a: “The Tathāgata Amitābha . . . whose unhindered name is proclaimed aloud in the worlds of the ten directions,” and the following verse LSV §9-a, vs. 3:

If when I have attained the seat of awakening
[My] name would not instantly reach the ten directions,
The many wide endless buddha fields,
May I not be a powerful lord of the world.

Verse 2 reminds one of LSV §29: Those beings who bring to mind the Tathāgata Amitābha gain various fruits including “They will be irreversible from unexcelled perfect awakening,” and the following verses LSV §31-f, vss. 17–18:

Then the Buddha Amitāyus preaches:
This [what precedes these verses] was my former vow.
Sentient beings hearing [my] name in whatever manner
Shall absolutely always come to my field.
This splendid vow of mine has been fulfilled,
And sentient beings come from many world spheres,
And having come before me in an instant
They are irreversible here, bound to only one more birth.

With 3 we may compare the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇanirdeśa*, which says that when one hears the name of Śākyamuni, “Whatever evil they have done, either then or in the past, will all quickly be destroyed.”⁵⁰

Verse 4 is similar to an expression in another Dunhuang poem to Amitābha, in which we read, “Whichever beings hear the famous name will be released from all the various sufferings.”⁵¹ It also suggests the Smaller *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* (SSV) §2: “In that world sphere Sukhāvātī sentient beings have no bodily suffering or mental suffering . . .” “The suffering of birth and death,” of course, refers to all sufferings of *samsāra*. The *Guan-jing* repeatedly contains the expression that a certain act or practice will lead to the elimination of the extremely heavy karma binding one to birth and death. In the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇanirdeśa* it is said that the relevant result of hearing the Buddha’s name is that “He who hears, indeed, the name of the Lord of the World will never be destined for an evil state.”⁵² These quotations from the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇanirdeśa* establish that these types of notions are at least not limited to “Pure Land” texts.

In verse 5 there seems to be a reference to the fifth stage of the bodhisattva’s course (*sudurjayā-bhūmi*). The *Madhyamakāvatāra* of Candrakīrti says, “At the stage called ‘The Unconquerable,’ the mighty one cannot be subdued even by all the forces of Māra,” and the commentary explains, “A bodhisattva abiding at the fifth bodhisattva stage cannot be subdued even by the *devaputramāras* found in all world systems, to say nothing of their servants and minions.”⁵³

In 6, the double accumulation consists of merit (*puṇyasambhāra*) and wisdom (*jñānasambhāra*). In the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṅgīti* verse 57 we read, “Possessed of merit, with accumulated merit, he is knowledge and the

great source of knowledge. Possessed of knowledge in knowing the real and unreal, he has accumulated the two accumulations.”⁵⁴ In 6b we have only one manuscript, and the reading may be corrupt. I do not understand the line very well. Samten Karmay suggests, “He possesses limitless power [to teach] the Dharma.”

To 7 we may compare the *Munayastava* 10: “Worshipped by Brahma, Indra, Varuṇa, Āditya, Yakṣas, Asuras, men and snakes, homage to him, the famous!”⁵⁵ Compare also *Ārya-Mañjuśrī-nāmāṣṭaśatakam* 12ab: “Hero made of all the gods, you are paid homage by all the gods.”⁵⁶

In 8 again we may recall the *Ārya-Mañjuśrī-nāmāṣṭaśatakam* 15: “[You are] clever and intelligent, and wise and clear sighted. [You are] virtuous and a wish-fulfilling tree adorned with the flowers of the limbs of awakening.”⁵⁷ The key term also appears in the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṅgīti* 128, whose metaphor is close to ours: “Fragrant from the blossoms of the limbs of enlightenment, being the ocean of qualities of the Tathāgata, in knowing the practice of the eight-limbed path, he knows the path of the perfect complete awakening.”⁵⁸ A half verse from Mātṛceṭa’s *Varṇārhavarṇa Stotra* VIII.21ab may also be cited: “Strewn with the flowers of the limbs of awakening, fragrant and free from the outflows.”⁵⁹ The expression is a stock one in Buddhist narrative literature (*avadāna*).⁶⁰ Verse 9 evokes LSV §9-b, vs. 6b: “Having removed the darkness of all men . . .”

With 11, the *Varṇārhavarṇa Stotra* I.22 also has the term “flowers of auspiciousness” (*guṇapuṣpāṇi*).⁶¹ Nāgārjuna’s *Nirāupamyastava* 25b has a similar expression.⁶² Whether these terms carry the same sense as that in our text I am not sure.

With reference to 12, LSV §16-1-b-c has a lengthy discussion of the jeweled trees in *Sukhāvātī*, too long to quote here. Another similar passage, again too long to quote, is *Guan-jing* II.8–12 (T. 365 [XII] 342b1–22).

13a is a bit difficult, but a hint is given by another Dunhuang manuscript poem about Amitābha: “In that land of Amitābha the ground is strewn with golden sand, a jeweled web canopy is spread out, a multitude of garlands branch off from silk tassels, and all the directions without exception are decorated with ornaments.”⁶³ In 13d, LSV §8-n, vow 31, describes how Amitābha vows his land to be filled with vases of fragrant perfumes. See also §16-1, and *passim* in LSV.

For 14, see LSV §8-n, vow 32: “And pleasant-sounding musical clouds always playing . . .” Again SSV §7: “In that buddha field when those [previously mentioned] rows of palm trees and nets of bells are blown by the wind they put forth a sweet and pleasing sound, like for example the sweet and pleasing sound put forth by a heavenly musical instrument

consisting of hundreds of thousands of myriads of elements played together by nobles. Just thus is the sweet and pleasing sound put forth when those rows of palm trees and strings of bells are blown by the wind. And when the people there have heard those sounds the recollection of the buddha arises in them, the recollection of the dharma arises in them, the recollection of the saṅgha arises in them.” LSV §18-e describes the sounds that the rivers in Sukhāvātī produce, namely whatever sound one wishes to hear, including a long list of doctrinal terms beginning with buddha, dharma, and saṅgha. At *Guan-jing* II.16 (T. 365 [XII] 342b8–10) we read: “Again [in the pure land] there are musical instruments suspended in the sky like heavenly jeweled banners. Unstruck they sound by themselves, and all of these sounds proclaim the mindfulness of the buddha, the mindfulness of the dharma, and the mindfulness of the bhikṣusaṅgha.” See also verse 19.

To verse 15 we may compare SSV §4: “There are lotus pools in the world sphere Sukhāvātī made of the seven jewels, namely gold, silver, lapis, crystal, red pearls, emeralds, and the seventh jewel coral. They are full of the water of the eight excellent qualities, filled up to their banks so that even a crow would be able to drink from them, and they are strewn with golden sands. And all around those lotus pools on four sides there are four staircases colorful and beautiful with four jewels [list omitted].” See also the parallel quoted above under verse 13.

To verse 16 we may compare SSV §6: “In that buddha field there are geese, herons, and peacocks. Three times during the night and three times during the day they come together and sing, and they sing each their own songs. And from their singing issues forth the sound of the [five] powers, the [five] strengths, and the [seven] limbs of awakening. The people there having heard that sound produce mindfulness of the buddha, mindfulness of the dharma, and mindfulness of the saṅgha.” And to verse 17 LSV §19-c: “They desire such a palace, of such a color, sign and appearance, height, breadth, with hundreds of thousands of turrets made of a multitude of jewels, covered with heavenly canopies, with jeweled couches arranged with variegated pillows, and just such a palace appears before them. And in these mentally arisen palaces they dwell, play, sport and frolic honored and surrounded by seven thousands of heavenly maidens.” We also recall SSV §5: “And in that buddha-field three times at night and three times during the day a rain of heavenly *mandarava* flowers rains down.” At 19 we think of LSV §31-c, vs. 7ab: “Those flowers thrown there stood as an umbrella then one hundred leagues in size.”

In verses 20–25 we find the six perfections enumerated, and their cultivation suggested as practices leading to rebirth in a pure buddha-field.⁶⁴ In verse 20 and the following, the purity of the so-called three spheres probably refers to giver, gift, and receiver, but might also refer to the doer, the action, and the receiver of the action. It is also possible, though less probable, that it refers to the triad of body, speech, and mind. In general, then, this grouping should likely refer only to charity, the first of the perfections here enumerated. But in fact it is extended to refer to all of them.

In verse 20, the ten types of gift are alternately explained in various sources. Das gives one list, the source of which is not clear.⁶⁵ In verse 21, it is probable that the ten types of discipline refers to the ten rules of moral behavior (*daśa-śīla*), not killing, and so on. In verses 22–23, no list of ten types of patience (*kṣānti*) or energy (*vīrya*) is known to me.

To 26 we can compare LSV §8-a, vow 3: “If, Blessed One, those sentient beings born in that buddha-field of mine should not all be of one color, namely of a golden color, may I not attain unexcelled perfect awakening.” At 27 see LSV §35: “And, Ānanda, the bodhisattvas who are born in that buddha-land are all possessed of the thirty-two characteristic marks of a great man.” See also SSV § 8: “The extent of the lives of his followers and of that Tathāgata will be infinite.” This passage is not in the canonical Tibetan translation, but is in both Chinese versions. Again, compare LSV §8-e, vow 14: “If, Blessed One, when I have attained to unexcelled perfect awakening there is any sentient being in my buddha-field whose life span would be measurable, excepting by the power of a vow, may I not attain to unexcelled perfect awakening.”

For 28 and 29, compare LSV §31-f, vs. 16:

And having come here to the best field
 They quickly obtain magical powers,
 And the divine eye and the divine ear,
 The memory of former births and knowledge of the thoughts of others.

For 28 compare LSV §8-b, vow 6: “If, Blessed One, there should be born in my buddha-field any sentient being who would not have the power to recall his former births, [even] so far as recalling hundreds of thousands of myriads of aeons, may I not attain unexcelled perfect awakening.” Again, LSV §36: “And from that moment on none shall ever be without the power to recall their former births,”⁶⁶ and LSV §8-c, vow 9: “If, Blessed One, the sentient beings who would be born in my buddha-field would not all be skillful in knowing the thoughts of others, [even]

knowing the thoughts and deeds of beings throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of myriads of buddha-fields, may I not attain to unexcelled perfect awakening.” See also LSV §8-b, vow 5: “If, Blessed One, there should be born in that buddha-field of mine sentient beings who would not all obtain the highest perfections consisting of magical powers, so far as the ability to pass over hundreds of thousands of millions of myriads of buddha-fields in a fraction of an instant of thought, may I not attain unexcelled perfect awakening.”

To verse 29 compare LSV §8-b, vow 7: “If, Blessed One, all the beings who would be born in my buddha-field would not have obtained the divine eye, such that they might see even hundreds of thousands of millions of myriads of world spheres, may I not attain unexcelled perfect awakening.” Compare too LSV §8-b, vow 8: “If, Blessed One, all the beings who would be born in my buddha-field would not have obtained the divine ear, such that they could hear the preaching of the True Dharma simultaneously from even hundreds of thousands of myriads of buddha-fields, may I not attain unexcelled perfect awakening.”

For verse 30, see SSV §5: “Those sentient beings born there once before the [morning] meal go to other world spheres and worship hundreds of thousands of myriads of buddhas there. And having bestrewn each Tathāgata with a rain of hundreds of thousands of myriads of flowers, they return again to their proper world sphere for their daily rest.” And LSV §8-i, vow 22: “If, Blessed One, when I have attained awakening, all the bodhisattvas who would be born in that buddha-field should, having gone once before their [morning] meal to other buddha-fields, not serve, with all things that cause happiness, many hundreds of buddhas, many thousands of buddhas, many hundreds of thousands of buddhas, many myriads of buddhas, even up to many hundreds of thousands of millions of myriads of buddhas, this by means of the buddha’s power, then may I not attain unexcelled perfect awakening.” A further discussion of this process, in considerable detail, is given at LSV §37-a-b-c, but it is too long to quote here. In 30d, which buddha is being referred to is not quite clear, but probably the buddha of the field in which they dwell, which would presumably be Amitābha.

For 31, any buddha can be referred to as protector (*mgon po*). Amitābha refers to himself as *lokanātha* in LSV §9-a, vs. 3d. It is not really clear whether the present verse refers specifically to Amitābha, although this seems the most likely explanation. Compare LSV §8-g, vow 18: “If, Blessed One, when I should attain awakening, those sentient beings who have raised the thought directed toward unexcelled perfect awakening in

other world spheres, having heard my name might bear me in mind with serene thoughts, and if as the time of their death approaches I would not stand before them, surrounded and honored by the community of monks, in order to calm their minds, may I not attain unexcelled perfect awakening.” LSV §27 and 28 also relate the same material, but are too long to quote here. See also SSV §10 (202.11–19): “And whatever son of good family or daughter of good family, Śāriputra, who will hear the name of the Blessed One, Tathāgata Amitāyus, and having heard it will be mindful of it for one night, or for two nights, or for three nights, or for four nights, or for five nights, or for six nights, or for seven nights, mindful of it with mind undisturbed, when that son of good family or daughter of good family will die, at his death that Tathāgata Amitāyus, accompanied by his retinue of Śrāvakas and honored by the group of bodhisattvas, will be present before him and he will die with a calm mind. Having died he will be reborn in the buddha-field of that Tathāgata Amitāyus, in the world sphere Sukhāvātī.” See also *Guan-jing* IV.8, 12, 20 (T. 365 [XII] 345a8–11; a24–27; b21–27), for similar passages.

This kind of passage is certainly not limited to the LSV, the SSV, and the *Guan-jing*, even when the place of rebirth is to be Sukhāvātī. This has been shown by Schopen,⁶⁷ quoting from the *Ekādaśamukham*, and the *Sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhānasattvālokanabuddhakṣetrasandarśanavyūha Sūtra*: Both passages say, “And at the time of death he will see the Tathāgata, and having died he will be reborn in the world sphere Sukhāvātī.” The latter text contains another similar passage as well: “And at the time of death he will see the buddha and he will see bodhisattvas . . . and having died he is reborn in the world sphere Sukhāvātī.” See also the passage from the *Bhaiṣajyaguru* translated by Schopen,⁶⁸ “to them at the time of the moment of death eight bodhisattvas, having come through magic power, will make visible their way.” Note of course that the object of veneration here in the first set of these passages is not Amitābha / Amitāyus, but rather Śākyamuni. In the *Bhaiṣajyaguru* the object of veneration is the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiddūryaprabha.

To verse 32 compare *Guan-jing* I.18 (T. 365 [XII] 341c10): Those who desire to be born in the pure land should, among other practices, “practice the ten virtuous acts.”

The reference in 33 is to the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*, also known as the four *brahmavihāras*), namely loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and impartiality (*maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekṣā*).

For 36, compare the *Bhaiṣajyaguru*, which makes the connection of the eight-fold fast (*aṣṭāṅgasamanvāgata-upavāsa*) with Sukhāvātī: With

regard to the four assemblies and good sons and daughters, if they “fast the fast possessed of eight limbs [that is, keep eight out of ten *śīla* rules], for one year or three months uphold the foundation of training . . . ,” then they vow to gain birth in Sukhāvātī.⁶⁹ Further note that the *Bhaiṣajyaguru* directly connects this with a deathbed appearance guarantee. See the remarks to verse 31 above.

In 37 the reference is to the 8th, 14th, 15th, 23rd, 29th, and 30th of the month, and to the rain retreats. Compare also the *Guan-jing* I.18 (T. 365 [XII] 341c11): Among other practices leading to rebirth in the pure land is “producing the aspiration for awakening.”

In 39 the three doors are emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness.

Verses 40 and following deal with the *dhūtaguṇas*. The order in which they are presented agrees with that in the *Mahāvīyutpatti* §1127–39, which is not a common ordering.⁷⁰ It is interesting to note that in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 2060 (L) 606a15–16, a seventh-century text, the monk Faxiang is said to have practiced the *dhūtaguṇas* while also praying to Amitābha.

In verse 42, with regard to abandoning all notions being connected with going to Sukhāvātī, the *Samādhirāja* says, “One who abandons all notions possesses infinite samādhis. . . . He, passing over world spheres, goes to Sukhāvātī.”⁷¹

In 44, one tradition understands this to mean staying on one seat for eating and for sleeping (or meditating). But the original meaning may rather be that one eats only once in a day.⁷² This is close to the sense in our Pāli sources, for example *Visuddhimagga* (Ñyānamoli 1956) II.35, that one eats in one session, and if one rises the meal is over. This does not imply that one cannot eat again later at a different meal. The imagery in the present verse, that of staying in one place immovably, does not firmly indicate one way or the other which meaning is the one being adopted here.

In verse 46 one may particularly note the poetical imagery, highlighted in the introduction above. One dwells in the forest or jungle, like a lion, in order to become the man-lion, that is, a buddha. Again in verse 47 the punning is clear. One sits at the foot of a tree (the ascetic purification practice) by sitting at the foot of the bodhi tree, the spot where the Buddha sat, in order to reach the seat of awakening, the *bodhimaṇḍa*, both the literal seat beneath the bodhi tree and the metaphorical ground of awakening.

In verse 48, there is evidently a pun on *skyabs la mi rten*, not relying on a refuge or shelter, both metaphorical and literal, and the ascetic purification practice of dwelling outside without a (literal) roof.

Dhutagaṇanirdeśa §13.2.v lists among the advantages of this practice *rten pa med pa nyid*, rendered by Bapat “One has not to depend upon anything.” It could as easily, and perhaps more literally, be translated “Being without a refuge.”

It might be possible to render the whole of verse 51 as follows:

If one has observed that basis correctly,
 In order to manifest perfectly just as it is
 The *dharmadhātu* not deprived of a basis,
 One will be born in that pure field.

At 52 begins a new theme, the discussion of abstract philosophical points. The doctrines seem to be more or less Madhyamaka flavored, but it is not possible to identify any exact possible sources. It is also possible that the Madhyamaka-type ideas owe something to Chan influence.

For verse 54, see *Niraupamyastava* 8ab.⁷³

As seen in verse 57, the “neither one nor many” argument (**ekānekaviyogahetu*) is a common one. See for example Śāntarakṣita’s *Madhyamakālamkāra*, verse 1 and following.

Appendix

In my 1993 work I edited all known manuscript witnesses for the poem presented above. However, upon reading Halkias’ *Luminous Bliss*, I realized that the material he presented on pages 75–83 is in fact a previously unrecognized portion of the same poem. Now preserved in the British Library under the shelfmark IOL Tib J 310.1207, its dimensions are 8.5 × 26 cm, it follows every line with the interjection *a myi ta pur*, and it shares the paleography of the manuscript preserved in Paris as Pelliot tibétain 761. It must be considered a leaf of the same original. One leaf in between this and the previously known portion is still missing, and other leaves at the beginning and end are also not yet discovered. I present below a new reading, based on the fine color photographs presented on the website of the International Dunhuang Project. I have added the verse numbers, which do not appear in the manuscript.

- 48 a myi ta pur ||
 rnam dag zhing der skye bar +gyur || a myi ta pur ||
- 49 snying rje byang cub cher bsgoms te || a myi ta pur ||
 rang bzhin dag par bsgoms ba’i phyir || a myi ta pur ||

dur khrodu pa+i sdom byas na || a myi ta pur ||
rnam dag zhing der skye bar sa +gyur || a myi ta pur ||

50 bsod nams_{ye} shes tshogs bsags te || a myi ta pur ||
rtse gcig sems kyis mngon bya+ ba+i phyir || a myi ta pur ||
cog bu pa+i sdom sbyangs na+ || a myi ta pur ||
rnam dag zhing der skye bar +gyur || a myi ta pur ||

51 chos_{kyi} dbyings la myi nyams shing || a myi ta pur ||
yang dag ji bzhin mngon ba+i phyir || a myi ta pur ||
gzhi bzhin som ba+ [verso] bsrungs byas na || a myi ta pur ||
rnam dag zhing der skye bar +gyur || a myi ta pur ||

52 tham cad chos la myi gnas shing || a myi ta pur ||
yod dang myed pa rnam spang st[e] || a myi ta pur ||
bsam rtogs +das pa+i chos bsgoms na+ || a myi ta pur ||
rnam dag zhing der skye bar +gyur || a myi ta pur ||

53 sangs_{rgyas} rnam ky[i] chos nyid de || a myi ta pur ||
mtha+ dang dbung myed yang dag nyid || a myi ta pur ||
dus gsum +das pa+i sgom byas na+ || a myi ta pur ||
rnam dag zhing der skye bar +gyur || a myi ta pur ||

phung po kham las +das pa ste || a myi ta pur ||
skye mche[d] rnam las | rnam par grol || a myi ta pur ||
mtha gnyis dmyigs

Notes

Much of this chapter is based on my 1993 work, “The Virtues of Amitābha: A Tibetan Poem from Dunhuang,” *Ryūkoku Daigaku Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 32: 1–109, which contains a full transcription of manuscript sources (but see the appendix above for an important addition), a normalized transcription of the Tibetan text, and extensive commentary on the verses, all omitted here. The present version contains a new introduction and additional material. I extend my deep thanks to Professor Oka Ryōji and the authorities of the Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo of Ryūkoku University for their permission to make use of some of my earlier material here.

The text translated here was published for the first time by Akamatsu Kōshō in his 1987 essay “Tonkō Chibetto Bunken no Jōdokyō Kankei Tekisuto” [Dunhuang Tibetan texts related to Pure Land Buddhism], *Indotetsugaku Bukkyōgaku* (Hokkaidō Indotetsugaku Bukkyō Gakkai) 2: 195–220.

Akamatsu's article was brief, but thanks to the great kindness of Mr. Akamatsu, I obtained photocopies of the Dunhuang manuscripts and was able to present a fuller study in "The Virtues of Amitābha." I express once again my great debt to Mr. Akamatsu and my gratitude for the help his studies have given me. In addition, I thank Cristina Scherer-Schaub and the late J. W. de Jong for suggestions in correction of a few points in my earlier publication, and Nobuyuki Yamagiwa for some remarks on this revision, which I first worked on in 2001, though it could not then be published.

- 1 At least this is how they present themselves to us; it may be that we see things this way simply as a result of our ignorance of their larger context. Of course, every text was at some point in its history a local product, so it is chiefly the afterlife of the text that is of primary interest to us in this context.
- 2 The actual title of the text remains unknown. The head title of the manuscript called Pelliot tibétain (hereafter P. tib.) 112 would seem to indicate that *de bzhin gshegs pa snang ba mtha' yas gyi mtshan brjod pa* is a title, "The Praise of the Name of the Tathāgata Amitābha." The end title of this same manuscript gives an (abbreviated?) title of *snang ba mtha' yas*, corresponding simply to Amitābha. The latter at least looks more like a generic label than a title. P. tib. 6 contains the end title (?) *snang ba mtha' yas mtshan*, perhaps something like *Amitābha-nāma? I do not believe that our text ever had a title in Sanskrit or any Indic language, and I offer this Sanskrit equivalent merely as a tool for understanding.
- 3 In his *Luminous Bliss: A Religious History of Pure Land Literature in Tibet: With an Annotated English Translation and Critical Analysis of the Orgyan-gling Gold Manuscript of the Short Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013): 75–83, Georgios Halkias publishes what he was able to identify only as a portion of an "aspiration poem," found in the British Stein collection as IOL Tib. J 310.1207. This leaf is in fact a further portion of the manuscript noted as Pelliot tibétain 761. See the appendix above.
- 4 The physical descriptions that follow are based on Marcelle Lalou, *Inventaire des Manuscrits tibétains de Touen-houang conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 1 (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1939), on Akamatsu's remarks, and on my own examination of the photocopies available to me. Neither Akamatsu nor I were able to examine the actual manuscripts. Color photographs are now available via the Artstor website. In "The Virtues of Amitābha" I have presented further details, including those concerning other texts copied in the same manuscripts.
 - (1) P. tib. 6: Twelve leaves, 8.5 × 25.7 cm, in concertina format, evidently incomplete. The whole verso (arbitrarily so named) contains verses 7 to 48 of our text, and on the recto the ninth leaf contains verses 57 to 59. The colophon on this leaf reads: *snang ba mtha' yas mtshan rdzogs so || dpal gyi shes rab kyis bris ste || zhus nas tshang ma mchis ||*. This might be

rendered, “The [text praising the] names of Amitābha is completed. Written by Dpal gyi shes rab, and having been corrected it is complete.” I do not know of the name of this copyist appearing in other Dunhuang manuscripts. The manuscript is fairly carefully written with some corrections. The manuscript does not contain the evocation to Amita found in other manuscripts after each foot.

- (2) P. tib. 105: A roll 25 × 578 cm. In total it contains 421 lines, of which the first four are fragmentary. From the first extant line to the 65th line we find from verse 12 (fragment only) to the end of our text. There is a notation at the end of the text that reads, *tshigs bcad dang po la a myi da phur gcig 'bod || 'og ma la gnyis 'bod ||*. We might render this as “One exclaims ‘A myi da phur’ once after the first line, and twice after the second.” We see in P. tib. 516 what this should mean: the first and third lines have *a mye tha bur* (or *phur*), the second and fourth *a mye tha bur na mo a mye tha bur*.
- (3) P. tib. 112: A fragmentary roll 30.5 × 110 cm, of which 100 lines remain. Lines 1–32 of this manuscript contain verses 1–14 of our text. Before the first verse there is a sentence that reads, *de bzhin gshegs pa | snang ba mtha yas gyi mtshan brjod pa'o || legs pa dang sangs rgyas gyi zhing gyi yon tan thob pa || mdor smos pa ||*. We may render this as “The Praise of the Names of the Tathāgata Amitābha. The acquisition of the good and the virtues of the buddha-field, briefly stated.” And even though the text seems to cut off at verse 14c, a colophon is added that reads, *snang ba mtha yas rdzogs so || gtsang mas bris*. We may render this as “[This text concerning] Amitābha is finished. Written by Gtsang ma.” This copyist’s name is also found on P. tib. 1597 (Lalou, *Inventaire des Manuscrits tibétains de Touen-houang*, 96), where it is written *ban de gtsang ma*. The manuscript is not clearly written, and perhaps the paper was overly absorbent.
- (4) P. tib. 516: Two leaves in poṭhi-format 8.8 × 27.5 cm, styled A and B. The first verse to the 5th of our text is written on the lower half of the recto and the full verso of 516B, and the 22nd to the 29th on both sides of 516A.
- (5) P. tib. 760: A horizontal roll measuring 25 × 83 cm, containing verses 26 to 51, without anything else on the roll. It is not well written, with *da* and *nga*, for example, being more than usually indistinguishable.
- (6) P. tib. 761: Two leaves in poṭhi format, 8.5 × 25.5 cm, called 761 A and B. The right edge of A is missing, probably five or six letters being lost per line. These leaves contain the 30th to the 41st verses. See the appendix for a further portion of this manuscript.

Charts illustrating graphically which manuscript contains what text are found in Jonathan Silk, “The Virtues of Amitābha: A Tibetan Poem from Dunhuang,” *Ryūkoku Daigaku Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 32 (1993): 6;

- and Akamatsu Kōshō, “Tonkō Chibetto Bunken no Jōdokyō Kankei Tekisuto” [Dunhuang Tibetan texts related to Pure Land Buddhism], *Indotetsugaku Bukkyōgaku (Hokkaidō Indotetsugaku Bukkyō Gakkai)* 2 (1987): 198.
- 5 Manuscripts P. tib. 6 and 105 aside, the other manuscripts contain the interjection after each verse. P. tib. 105 contains, at the end, an instruction to insert these interjections after every verse.
 - 6 The phonology of this exclamation is discussed in Silk “The Virtues of Amitābha,” 17–19. (In that discussion I overlooked the relevant remarks of Berthold Laufer, “Loan-words in Tibetan.” *T’oung-pao*, second series, 17, no. 4 (1916): 423.) The *-t* final often became *-l/-r* in Middle Chinese, as reflected clearly in the Korean pronunciation of “buddha,” *bul*.
 - 7 Tokio Takata, “Multilingualism in Tun-huang,” *Acta Asiatica* 78 (2000): 65, points out that Chinese was being written in Tibetan script in Dunhuang as late the tenth century; his article is an excellent overview of the multilingualism of Dunhuang generally. See also Tsugihito Takeuchi, “Sociolinguistic Implications of the Use of Tibetan in East Turkestan from the End of Tibetan Domination through the Tangut Period (9th–12th c.),” in *Turfan Revisited: The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road*, ed. Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Simone-Christiane Raschmann, Jens Wilkens, Marianne Yaldiz, Peter Zieme, et al. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2004), and Tsugihito Takeuchi, “Old Tibetan Buddhist Texts from the Post-Tibetan Imperial Period (mid-9th c. to late 10th c.),” in *Old Tibetan Studies: Dedicated to the Memory of R. E. Emmerick*, ed. Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Halkias, *Luminous Bliss*, 77, unfortunately misunderstood the transcribed Chinese *a myi ta pur* as Tibetan, or even Sanskrit, overlooking Laufer’s work pointed out in the previous note.
 - 8 Of course, religious poetry by definition has a religious locus, but it is fair to assume that the works of, for example, a religious poet like Mātṛceṭa were often appreciated from an aesthetic point of view, rather than merely from a religious one. The same must hold for the religious poems included in the Sanskrit anthology titled *Subhāṣitaratnaśa*, which, by including them in what is by definition a collection of fine literature, contextualizes the poems primarily from the point of view of their literary qualities.
 - 9 The same is true for the genre of *nāmasaṅgīti*, or “lauds of the names,” which celebrates the good qualities of a deity or object of worship. The purpose of such literature, a genre within which our text may also be included, cannot be served unless the text is in some way understood on a literal level.
 - 10 It is the limitations of my knowledge that lead me to point mostly to Indian parallels; no doubt those knowledgeable in Chinese and Tibetan traditions will be able to bring forth other valuable relevant materials.
 - 11 By Akamatsu, “Tonkō Chibetto Bunken no Jōdokyō Kankei Tekisuto,” 201.

- 12 Verse 2 omits “mighty” because it introduces the subject, “someone.”
- 13 *jōdokyō ni kansuru chibettobun shiryō.*
- 14 By framing the question in this way I do not intend to preclude the addition of any new materials, previously unknown, to a canon. I do not doubt that one would be justified in considering a newly discovered work by Hōnen, Shinran, or Rennyo as a perfectly acceptable Pure Land text. One modern example of just such a process might be the letters of Eshinni, Shinran’s wife, discovered only in 1921. It is another question who might have the authority to enter such objects into a canon; in any case, surely the outside scholar has no authority to do so, nor is this action appropriate or meaningful from a disinterested academic viewpoint.
- 15 The *Kōjien* (Shinmura Izuru, ed., *Kōjien*, 2nd ed. [Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1980]: 1103, s.v. *jōdo-kyō*), a standard Japanese dictionary, defines the term as “The teaching of the Pure Land Way. In opposition to the Way of the Nobles in which one practices in the present life and attempts to obtain Buddhahood, it is the teaching in which one expects, after death, to be reborn in the pure land, and there obtain Buddhahood. To it belong in India Aśvaghōṣa, Sthiramati, Nāgārjuna, and Vasubandhu, in China Huiyuan, Shandao, and Cimin, and in Japan Kūya, Genshin, Ryōnin, Hōnen of the Jōdoshū, Shinran of the Jōdo Shinshū, Ippen of the Jishū, and so on.” Needless to say, this view of the Indian and Chinese lineage of Pure Land Buddhism is an entirely emic and Japanese one.
- 16 It is very questionable whether these two scriptures had much impact on Indian Buddhism at all. It is worthwhile noting that neither is, as far as is yet known, ever quoted by an Indian author. One may contrast this, for example, with the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, which is relatively well-known in Indian texts (on which see Jonathan Silk, “The Place of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Indian Buddhism,” *Journal of Oriental Studies* 11 [2001]). In addition, there are also considerable questions as to whether the commentary to the Larger *Sukhāvativyūha*, the so-called **Sukhāvativyūhopadeśa* (T. 1524), is really an Indian work, much less by Vasubandhu. On the Larger *Sukhāvativyūha* in India, see Gérard Fussman, “La place des *Sukhāvati-vyūha* dans le Bouddhisme Indien,” *Journal Asiatique* 287, no. 2 (1999).
- 17 It is, however, a little difficult to leave the point here because Akamatsu, strictly speaking, suggests not that this text is a Pure Land text, but rather that it is “related to Pure Land.” It is unclear to me precisely what this means. In the sense that temples belonging to the Shingon monastic center on Kōyasan are filled with images of Amida, one could say that at least some Shingon is “related to Pure Land,” and some do seem willing to accept that there are elements “related to Pure Land” even in Shingon Buddhism. If this is the case, and a particular claim is being made for a Pure Land identification rather than the notice of one among many generic

Buddhist elements, I cannot help but think that the term “Pure Land” is being used in an overly broad sense such that one can never be quite sure what it means.

I incidentally find my own concerns echoed by Charles Jones in his review of Halkias, *Luminous Bliss* (H-Buddhism, H-Net Reviews, February 2014; <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=40391>, 2), when he says, “The reason Western scholars refer to ‘Pure Land Buddhism’ at all is that there is a loose but self-conscious Pure Land ‘lineage’ (zōng 宗) or ‘dharma-gate’ (fāmén 法門) with ‘patriarchs’ (zǔ 祖) in China and a strong set of Pure Land institutions in Japan. . . . Why characterize any Tibetan literature or practice as ‘Pure Land’ at all? Why segregate out texts dealing with Sukhāvātī and Amitābha from, say, other instances of dhāraṇī or gter-ma literature? Has the strong presence of a Pure Land tradition in East Asia led to the reification of an etic category in the Tibetan materials that would not have emerged without it?”

- 18 Akamatsu points to T. 1978, 1980, 1983 as his examples. It is possible Akamatsu associates the *Aparimitāyurjñāna* here because he connects the buddha of that text, Aparimitāyus, with Amitābha. At least from an Indian perspective, this is an error, as these buddhas are distinct. We may note that such apparent confusion is frequent in the scholarship; see for instance Alex Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī* (Boston: Shambala, 1985), 3; and Shunzō Onoda, “*Amida Kuon Jōō Darani-kyō ni motozuku Chibetto Mandara*” [A Tibetan maṇḍala based on the *Aparimitāyurjñānahṛdaya-dhāraṇī*], *Nihon Bukkyō Gakkai Nenpō* 52 (1987). On the other hand, there is some indication that an association was made by traditional exegetes as well, at least in Tibet. I will address these issues in a study of the *Aparimitāyurjñāna*, now in preparation.
- 19 I believe Akamatsu is wrong to associate the *Aparimitāyurjñāna* and its *dhāraṇī* with tantra, but I will discuss this point also in the study mentioned in the previous note.
- 20 His most recent publication of which I am aware, however, is from 1991, and he does not seem to be active in the field.
- 21 Akamatsu Kōshō, “Chibetto-yaku Amidakyō no Ihon: Tonkō Shāhon P tib 758 ni tsuite” [A variant Tibetan version of the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha*: Dunhuang manuscript P. tib 758], *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 33, no. 1 (1984), and Akamatsu Kōshō, “Chibetto-yaku Muryōjūkyō no Tonkō Shins-hutsu Iyakuon” [A variant Tibetan translation of the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* from Dunhuang], *Ryūokoku Daigaku Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 23 (1984). I have prepared an edition of the Dunhuang text of the Smaller Sūtra, translated from Chinese into Tibetan (roughly two-thirds of the text remains), and I am in the course of preparing an edition of the Larger Sūtra translated from Chinese, of which we have slightly more than half the text.

- 22 Akamatsu Kōshō, “Tonkō Chibetto Bunken no Jōdokyō Kankei Shiryō: P. tib. 153 ni tsuite,” P. tib. 153 [Dunhuang Tibetan materials related to Pure Land Buddhism: P. tib. 153], *Indotetsugaku Bukkyōgaku (Hokkaidō Indotetsugaku Bukkyō Gakkai)* 3 (1988). The unique manuscript of the poem translated by Akamatsu is P. tib. 153. I have referred to this occasionally below when it contains parallels to the poem studied here.
- 23 See Akamatsu Kōshō, “Tonkō Shahon yori mitaru Chibetto no Jōdo Shisō Juyō,” [The Tibetan reception of Pure Land Buddhism in the light of the Dunhuang documents], *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 35, no. 1 (1986). Five manuscripts have been identified, P. tib. 67, 99, 158, 759, and Stein 452.
- 24 Akamatsu Kōshō, “Amidabutsu ni genkyū suru Tonkō Chibetto-bun Shiryō Gaikan” [An outline of Dunhuang Tibetan materials concerning Amida Buddha], *Indotetsugaku Bukkyōgaku (Hokkaidō Indotetsugaku Bukkyō Gakkai)* 5 (1991), particularly 205. An exception is Stein 724, which was subsequently studied, although inadequately, in Silk, “Virtues of Amitābha,” 71–72. See now my re-edition, “The Ten Virtues of Loudly Invoking the Name of Amitābha: Stein Tibetan 724 and an Aspect of Chinese *Nianfō* Practice in Tibetan Dunhuang,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 137, no. 3 (2017): 473–482. The reference to Amitābha’s “magical nail” is due to a misunderstanding (apparently of Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts from Tun-Huang in the India Office Library* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962], 232) that *A mye da phur kyi yon tan bcu* is purely Tibetan; as discussed above, *a mye da phur* is Chinese; there is nothing here about a nail (*phur*), a fact which was noted already by Akamatsu, “Amidabutsu ni genkyū suru Tonkō Chibetto-bun Shiryō Gaikan,” 209 note 43.
- 25 Gregory Schopen, “Sukhāvātī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 19 (1977).
- 26 Cf. Fussman, “La place des *Sukhāvātī-vyūha* dans le Bouddhisme Indien,” 577.
- 27 The same type of critique can be applied to Akamatsu’s arguments that Pure Land thought is part of the doctrinal position of Tsong kha pa and other Tibetan thinkers. We might refer, for example, to statements in the first few cantos of the *Padma thang yig*, the hagiography of Padmasambhava, which continually praise Amitābha. That text, however, is far from being a Pure Land document in any meaningful sense.
- 28 I think there is little point in spending time on such exercises in cultural comparison as the attempts of Nakamura Hajime, “Gokuraku Jōdo no Kanzen no Indogaku-teki Kaimei to Chibetto-teki Hen’yō” [Studies on the idea of Pure Land in the perspective of Indian cultural history and the modification of the idea by Tibetans], *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 11, no. 2 (1963) (largely repeated by Kagawa, *Jōdokyō no Seiritsushiteki Kenkyū*, 331–352), to assert the Tibetan understanding of Pure Land Buddhism on the basis of

translation equivalents in the Tibetan translations of the *Sukhāvativyūha* scriptures. Aside from the probability, which is often not fully considered by such authors, that the Indic originals from which the translators worked were not identical with the extant Indic texts, the overall project to determine cultural characteristics from random uncontextualized word choices is, I believe, essentially pointless. (On the other hand, Nakamura Hajime, “Amidakyō Chibetto-yaku ni tsuite” [The Tibetan translation of the Smaller *Sukhāvativyūha sūtra*], in *Iwai Hakase Koki Kinen Tenseki Ronshū*, ed. Iwai Hakase Koki Kinen Jigyōkai [Shizuoka: Kaimeidō, 1963], some of which is repeated in the notes to his translation of the sūtra in *Jōdo Sambukyō [ge]* [Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1964], 133–141, shows a much more sober approach to the Tibetan translation.)

- 29 Onoda Shunzō, “Chibetto Senjutsu no Jōdokyō-kei Butten” [Pure Land Buddhist scriptures compiled in Tibet], *Bukkyō Daigaku Daigakuin Kenkyū Kiyō* 7 (1979); Onoda Shunzō, “Tsonkapa-zō Sajjōkoku Kaimon Shiyaku” [A tentative translation of Tsong kha pa’s *Zhing mchog sgo ’byed*]. *Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyū* 27 (1981); Onoda Shunzō, “Chibetto-shoden no Jōdo Kansō Shūhō: Aoki Bunkyō-shi Shōrai Shiryō Nos. 103, 104, 107, 108, 109 ni tsuite no Kanken’ Nos. 103, 104, 107, 108, 109 [Tibetan Pure Land visualization manuals: Items from the Aoki Bunkyō collection], *Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan Kenkyū Hōkoku Bessatsu* 1 (1983); Onoda Shunzō, “Chibetto Bukkyō no Jōdokyō Rikai” [The Tibetan understanding of Pure Land Buddhism], *Chūgai Nippō* 24152 (Jan. 19, 1990); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Tsonkapa-cho Gokuraku e no Seiganmon no Kenkyū” [A study of a prayer book on rebirth in the Land of Bliss (Sukhāvati) written by Tsong kha pa], *Ōsaka Kodai Setsunan Daigaku Chūken Shohō* 23, no. 3 (1991); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Mi pham no Jōdo Shisō” Mi pham [Mi pham’s Pure Land thought], *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 41, no. 1 (1992); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Panchen Rama Issei-cho Gokuraku no Kokudo ni Shōgai naku iku tame no Jinsoku na Michi no Kenkyū” [A study of the quick path for going to the Land of Bliss (Sukhāvati) without obstruction written by the 1st Panchen Lama], *Setsudai Gakujitsu* ser. B, no. 10 (1992); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Tsonkapa no Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū” [Tsong kha pa’s Pure Land thought], *Ōsaka Kodai Setsunan Daigaku Chūken Shohō* 24, no. 3 (1992); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Mipamu no Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū” [Mi pham’s Pure Land thought], *Setsudai Gakujitsu* ser. B, no. 11 (1993); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Chankya Issei no Jōdo Shisō” [Lcang skya l’s essay on Pure Land thought], *Ōsaka Kodai Setsunan Daigaku Chūken Shohō* 25, no. 3 (1993); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Chankya Issei no Ichishōron ni tsuite” [Lcang skya’s Essay on Amitābha]. *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 66, no. 4 (1993); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Chankya Issei no Ōjō Shisō no Kenkyū” [Lcang skya’s ideas on rebirth in the Pure Land], *Setsudai Jinbun Kagaku* 1 (1994); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Chankya Issei no Shōgai” [The life of Lcang skya l]. *Ōsaka Kodai Setsunan Daigaku Chūken Shohō* 26, no. 3 (1994); Kajihama Ryōshun, “3rd rDo Grubchen Rinpoche’s

Pure Land Thought (I),” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 43, no. 1 (1994); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Chankya Issei no Ōjō Shisō” [Lcang skya’s ideas on rebirth in the Pure Land], *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 67, no. 4 (1994); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Dotsupuchen Rinpoche Sansei no Ōjō Shisō no Kenkyū (I)” (I) [3rd Rdo Grub chen Rinpoche’s ideas on rebirth in the Pure Land], *Setsudai Jinbun Kagaku* 2 (1995); Kajihama Ryōshun, “3rd rDo Grubchen Rinpoche’s Pure Land Thought (II),” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 44, no. 2 (1995); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Tsonkapa no Saikō no Kokudo no Kaimon no Ichikaisetsusho ni tsuite” [Dpal Sprul Rinpoche’s Explanation of Tsong kha pa’s *Prayer for Entrance into the Best Land*], *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 68, no. 4 (1995); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Dotsupuchen Rinpoche Sansei no Ōjō Shisō no Kenkyū: Gokuraku no Kokudo ni tsuite Chosaku saretā Shomotsu no Dai-ni-shō o chūshin toshite” [3rd Rdo Grub chen Rinpoche’s ideas on rebirth in the Pure Land: The second chapter of the *Book on the Land of Bliss*], *Setsudai Jinbun Kagaku* 3 (1996); Kajihama Ryōshun, “Peruturu Rinpoche no Shōgai to Jōdo Shisō” [The life of Dpal Sprul Rinpoche, and his Pure Land thought], in *Watanabe Takao Kyōju Kanreki Kinen Bukkyō Shisō Bunkashi Ronsō*, edited by Watanabe Takao Kyōju Kanreki Kinenkai (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1997); and now, Kajihama Ryōshun, *Chibetto no Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 2002); Kajihama Ryōshun, “3rd rDo Grubchen Rinpoche’s Pure Land Thought (III),” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 50, no. 2 (2002); and Kajihama Ryōshun, “Chibetto no gokuraku no kokudo” [The Land of Bliss (Sukhāvati) in Tibetan Buddhism], *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 75, no. 4 (2002). See also the translations by Tshul khrims skal bzang and Odani Nobuchiyo, “Chibetto no Jōdokyō: Minshū no Shinkō” [Tibetan Pure Land Buddhism: Faith of the people], *Jōdo Bukkyō no Shisō 3: Ryūju, Seshin, Chibetto no Jōdokyō, Eon* (Tokyo: Kōdansha 1993), and Tokiya Kōki, “Muryōkōbutsu Raisanmon o megutte (josetsu): Sono Kaisetsu to Wayaku [Introduction to the Praise of Amitābha Buddha: Interpretation and translation], *Takata Tanki Daigaku Kiyō* 3 (1985). See now also Ryōshun Kajihama, *Amitābha in Tibetan Buddhism* (Takatsuki-city, Osaka: The Author, 2016), a collection of his studies in English.

- 30 Ōtani University, ed., *Catalogue of Tibetan Works Kept in Ōtani University Library* (Kyoto: Otani University Library, 1973), no. 10018 (hereafter Ōtani). Translated in full in Onoda, “Tsonkapa-zō *Saijōkoku Kaimon Shiyaku*,” Kajihama, “Tsonkapa no Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū,” and Tshul khrims skal bzang and Odani, “Chibetto no Jōdokyō: Minshū no Shinkō,” 233–267, and in Kajihama, “Tsonkapa-cho *Gokuraku e no Seiganmon* no Kenkyū,” with the Tibetan text, and both Japanese and English translations of the verses and vows only. Tokiya, “Muryōkōbutsu Raisanmon o megutte (josetsu),” contains the Tibetan text and Japanese translation of the verses and vows, along with the corresponding translation into Chinese completed by the monk Dalama Gabochusamudandaerji 達喇嘛嘎卜楚薩木丹達爾吉 in 1829, titled *Jile yuanwen* (T. 935). As far as I know, Tokiya is the first to have identi-

- fied this work as a translation of Tsong kha pa's text. (According to the kind information of Leonard van der Kuijp, the name of this monk is probably Tibetan, Dka' bcu Bsam gtan rdo rje, though this does not necessarily make him a Tibetan.) The text was recently translated into English by Halkias *Luminous Bliss*, 107–108. The same author, in the pages that follow, refers to a number of other texts as well, offering tables of contents for several.
- 31 Translated in Onoda, “Chibetto-shoden no Jōdo Kansō Shūhō,” and Kajihama, “Chankya Issei no Ōjō Shisō no Kenkyū.”
 - 32 Ōtani 11910, translated in Kajihama “Mipamu no Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū.”
 - 33 Ōtani 11101.
 - 34 Probably in the same general class belongs the text translated in Gelong Karma Khechong Palmo, with Thrangu Rinpoche and Cho kyī Nyma Tulku, “Translation of ‘Byang chub ltung bshags,’” *Bulletin of Tibetology* 10, no. 2 (1973).
 - 35 Translated by Munekawa Shūman, “Kanzen Shōjō Gokuraku Kokudo Seigan” [A Prayer for rebirth in the Land of Perfect Bliss], in *Imaoka Kyōju Kanreki Kinen Ronbunshū*, edited by Taishō Daigaku Jōdogaku Kenkyūkai, *Jōdogaku* 5, no. 6 (1932), translated and edited by Peter Schwieger, *Ein tibetisches Wunschgebet um Wiedergeburt in der Sukhāvātī* (St. Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1978), and translated by Tadeusz Skorupski, “A Prayer for Rebirth in Sukhāvātī,” *The Buddhist Forum* 3 (1994).
 - 36 Tshul khrims skal bzang and Odani, “Chibetto no Jōdokyō: Minshū no Shinkō,” 267–277. The authors inexplicably fail to note anywhere the name of the text they are translating, or its source.
 - 37 Ōtani 10432; Kajihama, “Panchen Rama Issei-cho Gokuraku no Kokudo ni Shōgai naku iku tame no Jinsoku na Michi no Kenkyū.”
 - 38 Kajihama, “Mipamu no Jōdo Shisō no Kenkyū.”
 - 39 Kajihama, “Dotsupuchen Rinpoche Sansei no Ōjō Shisō no Kenkyū (I),” and Kajihama, “Dotsupuchen Rinpoche Sansei no Ōjō Shisō no Kenkyū.”
 - 40 P. tib. 112, “the size of his body.”
 - 41 P. tib. 112 has something like “arisen from change,” or “transformationally arisen.”
 - 42 P. tib. 516, “When one [correctly] practices the cultivation [of the ten types of meditation] with regard to the pure triple sphere.”
 - 43 P. tib. 105, “pure field.”
 - 44 P. tib. 516, six superknowledges. Lists with both five or six superknowledges are equally well known; see Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., eds., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), s.v. *abhijñā*.

- 45 P. tib. 6, entails a change in subject: “they see the Sugata’s face at the time of their death.” This may be better.
- 46 P. tib. 761, “pay homage to the ācāryas,” which agrees better with the passage from the *Guan-jing* I.18 (T. 365 [XII] 341c9): Those who desire to born in the Pure Land should, among other practices, “filially nourish their father and mother, and serve their teachers and elders.”
- 47 P. tib. 760, 761, “enquire about.”
- 48 P. tib. 6, “If one preserves them in so far as one is able,” “them” referring back to the eight-part precepts which are also the antecedent of the expression “one’s promises.” The two readings are therefore equivalent in meaning.
- 49 See Silk, “The Virtues of Amitābha, 1-109.
- 50 Jiro Hirabayashi, William B. Rasmussen, and Safarali Shomakhmado, “The *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa* from Central Asia and Gilgit,” in *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments*, ed. Seishi Karashima and Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, vol. I: 85–143 (Tokyo: The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University, 2015): 100–101.
- 51 Akamatsu, “Tonkō Chibetto Bunken no Jōdokyō Kankei Shiryō: P. tib. 153 ni tsuite,” 223.9–10.
- 52 Hirabayashi, Rasmussen, and Shomakhmado, “The *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa* from Central Asia and Gilgit”: 93–94.
- 53 C[lair]e W. Huntington Jr., with Geshé Namgyal Wangchen, *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1989), 156, and 225 note 2.
- 54 Ronald M. Davidson, “The *Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī*: Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut Belge des hautes Études Chinoise, 1981), text, 26, translation, 53; and Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī*, 78.
- 55 Dieter Schlingloff, *Buddhistische Stotras aus ostturkistanischen Sanskrittexten* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1955), 86.
- 56 Ryūjō Kambayashi, “Laudatory Verses of Mañjuśrī,” *Journal of the Taishō University* 6–7, no. 2 (1930), reprint in *Wogihara Hakase Kanreki Kinen: Shukuga Ronbunshū* (Tokyo: Sankibō, 1972), 284, 289.
- 57 Kambayashi, “Laudatory Verses of Mañjuśrī,” 284, 290.
- 58 Davidson “The *Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī*,” 34, 59; see also Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī*, 102.

- 59 D. R. Shakelton Bailey, “The Varṇārhavarṇa Stotra of Mātṛceṭa (I) & (II),” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950–1951): 974; Jens-Uwe Hartmann, *Das Varṇārhavarṇastotra des Mātṛceṭa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 244.
- 60 See Étienne Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, des Origines à l'ère Śaka* (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, Université Catholique de Louvain, 1958), 715–716, and note.
- 61 Shakelton Bailey, “The Varṇārhavarṇa Stotra of Mātṛceṭa (I) & (II),” 676; Hartmann, *Das Varṇārhavarṇastotra des Mātṛceṭa*, 81.
- 62 Giuseppe Tucci, “Two Hymns of the Catuḥ-stava of Nāgārjuna,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1932): 320.
- 63 Akamatsu, “Tonkō Chibetto Bunken no Jōdokyō Kankei Shiryō,” 222.4–8.
- 64 In the Dunhuang Amitābha text found in Akamatsu, “Tonkō Chibetto Bunken no Jōdokyō Kankei Shiryō,” 224.9–225.10, the ten perfections are listed, along with their particular contributions to salvation.
- 65 Rai Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1902), 939.
- 66 See Gregory Schopen, “The Generalization of an Old Yogic Attainment in Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature: Some Notes on *Jātismāra*,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 6, no. 1 (1983), esp. 119–121, on obtaining *jātismāra* through acts connected with sacred names.
- 67 Schopen, “Sukhāvātī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature,” 187–198.
- 68 Schopen, “Sukhāvātī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature,” 177.
- 69 Schopen, “Sukhāvātī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature,” 177–178.
- 70 For discussion of these so-called ascetic purification practices, see Miyamoto Shōson, *Daijō Bukkyō no Seiritsushiteki Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1954), 302–310, and especially the chart on 304, and Jean Dantinne, *Les Qualités de l'Ascète (Dhutaguna): Etude sémantique et Doctrinale* (Brussels: Thanh-Long, 1991).
- 71 Schopen, “Sukhāvātī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature,” 189, quoting *Samādhirāja*, chap. 32, vs. 268cd & 270ab.
- 72 So Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo Daijiten* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1981), 803a.
- 73 Tucci, “Two Hymns of the Catuḥ-stava of Nāgārjuna,” 314.

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