THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY LOTUS SOCIETY:
THE IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF THE JINGZONG XUEHUI, THE PURE LAND
LEARNING CENTER, LED BY BUDDHIST MASTER JINGKONG

by

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ABSTRACT

It is because of the popularity of Lianshe 蓮社, the Lotus Society, that Pure Land Buddhism became the most prevalent and influential Buddhist school among ordinary Chinese people. However, since the downfall of the Qing Empire in 1911, the Chinese society has experienced drastic social and cultural changes. To carry on this tradition into the age of globalization and computerization, a modernized international Lotus Society, the Jingzong xuehui (ching-tsung-hsueh-hui) 淨宗學會, the Pure Land Learning Center, emerged to teach people integrated Pure Land teachings and the nianfo 念佛 practice with the help of updated information technology. In order to better understand the underlying reasons behind the success of these transformations, this pilot study intends to focus on the historical link, Dharma lineage, teaching, scriptural base, and ways of practice of the Learning Center and its leader, Jingkong (1927-; Ching-k'ung), a Buddhist master who has been teaching Buddhism for more than forty years. In other words, this thesis interprets the Learning Center's ideas in terms of the Master's teachings, complemented by the comparison of his teachings with 1) beliefs and ritual traditions of selected Pure Land predecessors and 2) doctrines and principles mentioned in some Mahāyāna Sūtras. Discussions include histories of the Lotus Society, the Pure Land Learning Center, and the Buddhist education of Master Jingkong, the connection between the Master's and his predecessors' teachings, and the purpose and significance of three types of recitation methods. Methodologically speaking, apart from analyzing literature and contextual materials, this thesis also involves the study of audio and video materials distributed by the Pure Land Learning Center. In conclusion, this
research provides substantial evidence showing how a traditional heritage reforms to cope with the needs of contemporary people, and argue that, by focusing on Master Jingkong as the pivotal figure in this contemporary development, the Master's efforts are similar to those predecessors who enlivened and sustained the traditions of their own times, and that the present teachings and practices are essentially inherited from those of the past, revealing the Learning Center's historical position as a modernized 20th century Lotus Society.
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真誠清淨平等正覺慈悲諸佛教我如是存心

The true sincerity, purity, equality, proper understanding, and compassion – all Buddhas teach us to cultivate [our] minds as such

b. The second line of the couplet reads as follows:

看破放下自在隨緣念佛菩萨現身為作示範

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Thanks to the popularity of *Bailianhua she*, 白蓮華社, the White Lotus Society, commonly known as *Lianshe* 蓮社, the Lotus Society, Pure Land Buddhism, or the Pure Land School, became the most prevalent and influential Buddhist school among ordinary Chinese people. Since 402, led by the Buddhist master Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416) on Mount Lu 廬山 in the province of Jiangxi 江西, for the purpose of obtaining salvation to the Western Pure Land by faith in its presiding Buddha, Amitābha, the gathering of the Lotus Society has long

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1 The names *Lianshe* and *Bailian she* 白蓮社 (the white Lotus Society) are the shortened forms of the *Bailianhua she*, which was named after (1) the white lotus pond in the Donglin Monastery 東林寺 (see figure 1-2) on Mount Lu, where lived the first Patriarch of the Pure Land School, Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416AD); and, (2) according to the Pure Land scriptures, the lotus flowers into which the Pure Land practitioners are said to be reborn. As for Pure land Buddhism, or the Pure Land School, it is one of the Buddhist schools in China based on the teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Great Vehicle of Buddhism, “whose followers vow to attain enlightenment for the sake of delivering all other sentient beings from suffering. The spiritual hero of the Mahāyāna is the Bodhisattva, in whom the virtues of wisdom and compassion are stressed and balanced (Ganna C.C. Chang (Chang, Chen-chi), ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūta Sūtra* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983) 478.).”

2 According to the major scriptures of the Pure Land School, Amitābha, the Buddha of infinite meritorious qualities, was a monk called Dharmākara (Fazang 法藏). After learning the teachings from Lokeśvararāja Buddha (Shuizhanzizaiwangfo 世間自在王佛), Dharmākara, who at the time was still a king, decided to become a monk and carry out practices of Bodhisattva as well as resolved to attain Buddhahood for the salvation of all sentient beings. In front of Lokeśvararāja Buddha, he made the solemn vow to create a wonderful world, where reincarnate sentient beings could enjoy happiness and attain Buddhahood effortlessly. In order to fulfill Dharmākara’s vow, Lokeśvararāja Buddha taught and manifested the magnificence and meritorious virtues of all Buddhas’ worlds for him so that he could model his world on the very best he had seen in the manifestation of
been recognized as a model for the Pure Land practitioners of later generations. Even today, the organization, principles and ritual traditions of the Lotus Society can still be found in some modern Asian countries with Chinese inhabitants like Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. These traditions, however, were established at the time of an agrarian society, fitting in with the needs of that way of life. After being influenced by the process of industrialization, and recently by digitalization and globalization, this agrarian culture has been experiencing a series of social changes. In the face of these changes, could these customs remain unchanged? Could there be alternative Buddhist groups for the new generation? Ironically, these are not easy questions for “today’s” experts since most scholarly research on Pure Land Buddhism has focused on historical documents and literature, making the school’s recent development an untouched area in the field. Because of this tendency, the primary goal of this thesis is to be a starting point for such an exploration of the situation of Pure Land Buddhism today.

After making the decision on the design of his world, Dharmakara then characterized the features of his world by generalizing them in the form of forty-eight specific vows. After thousands years of self-cultivation and bringing salvation to others, Dharmakara was completely enlightened and became Buddha Amitābha; the corresponding resultant Pure Land of his accumulated meritorious virtues was established as a world free of every cause of suffering and prepared with surroundings necessary for the salvation of its residents. Amitābha still presides over it, assisted by Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, the two Bodhisattvas representing the natures of compassion and wisdom respectively. For details, see the three major Pure Land scriptures: the four translations of the Infinite Life Sūtra (the Wuliangshou jing 無量壽經; the Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha-sūtra) in the Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正 新修 大藏 經 (The Buddhist Canon Published in the Taishō Era. hereafter abbreviated as TT), ed. Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaikyoku, vol. 12, no. 360: 265c-279a; no. 361: 279b-299c; no. 362: 300a-317c; and no. 363: 318a-326c; the Amitābha Sūtra (the Foshuo Amituo jing 佛說阿彌陀經; the Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha-sūtra), TT 12, no. 366: 346b-348b; and the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra (the Foshuo guan Wuliangshoufo jing 佛說觀無量壽佛經; the Amitayur-dhyāna-sūtra), TT 12, no. 365: 340c-346b.

In fact, after the Nationalist government of the Republic of China was driven from mainland China to Taiwan in 1949, the traditions of Chinese Buddhism did not entirely die out. After 1949, many Buddhist groups transferred their lineage to Taiwan from the Mainland China and, since then, the development of Chinese Buddhism has taken place mainly in Taiwan. This is a special historical phenomenon and needs a brief explanation here: [the following history is an abstract of information found in the following two books: Chen Lingrong 陳玲蓉, Rijushiqi shendaotongzhixia de taiwan zongjiao zhengce 日據時期神道統制下的台灣宗教政策 (Taipei: Zili wanbao 自立晚報, 1992) 71-100, 117-131; and Lan Jifu 藍吉富, Ershishiji de zhongrifojiao 二十世紀的中日佛教 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng 新文豐, 1991) 59-63.]

Before the Japanese occupation (1895-1945), the result owing to the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki at the end of the 1894 Sino-Japanese War, Buddhist ritual traditions in Taiwan were mainly inherited from the lineage of Yongquan Monastery 洞泉寺 on Mount Gu 鼓山 of Fujian 福建 for its geographical advantage as the closest province to Taiwan. Such traditions were brought over to Taiwan by the retreat of Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624-1662) during the late Ming era. As for the theory of practice, the Caodong 曹洞 and Linji 臨濟 Sects of Chan School and the Pure Land School were the mainstreams; in other words, most Buddhist groups emphasized the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land. For most ordinary people, the core of their beliefs was the worship of Guanyin 觀音 (Avalokiteśvara). However, less than ten of several thousands of monks comprehended the meaning of the sūtras they recited daily; the rest of them joined the monkhood simply for food and shelter.

During the early period of the Japanese occupation, Japanese Buddhism had almost no influence on Chinese Buddhism and other religions; they served mainly for Japanese who lived in Taiwan. As time went on, Japanese authority gradually announced a series of decrees to either restrict or prohibit many indigenous religious activities. For example, a decree was enforced to confiscate monasteries that were instituted without permission from local administrative authorities. In order to survive, many religious organizations, including Chinese Buddhist groups, asked for the protection from or simply joined Japanese Buddhist groups. At that time, most Chinese Buddhists joined Japanese Caodong or Linji schools while followers of other religions like Zhaijiao, or Vegetarian Sect 齋教, joined the Japanese True Sect, or Shin Sect 真宗, and Jōdo Sect.

On the other hand, after 1926, Shintō 神道 (the Way of the Gods), the native religion of Japan known for its worship of agrarian and ancestral gods, was promoted alongside with military expansion by Japanese imperialists. In 1934, the Japanese announced that each community should establish at least one Shintō temple as an educational center for its community. For this political reason, the influence of Japanese Buddhism on Chinese Buddhism and other religions was far behind than that of Shintō in Taiwan after 1926.
but was forced to migrate to another geographical area across the straits — Taiwan, where, for decades, the Chinese Pure Land School has managed to carry out self-reform to cope with its changing environment; growing out from the base of the long standing Lotus Society, the resulting “new” organization is called Jingzong xuehui (Ching-tsung-hsueh-hui)淨宗學會, the Pure Land Learning Center. It was founded under the guidance of the Buddhist master Jingkong 淨空 (1927-; Ching-k’ung), who has been teaching Mahāyāna Buddhism and Pure Land doctrines for more than forty years. His years of ceaseless effort in publicizing the teachings of the Pure Land as well as the establishment of the Learning Center has drawn enough attention from Chinese Buddhists all over the world; by their effort, a number of Learning Centers have been successively set up and the number is going up as well. Besides, Jingkong is also noted for his pioneer employment of multi-media and cyber technology in Buddhist teachings as well as his leading of the worldwide free distribution of over three million texts and tapes regarding Pure Land Buddhism. Recently, the Master has focused on

In general, Japanese Buddhism carried out similar religious activities as other Chinese religions did such as preaching, blessing, funerary services, and public charity (set up hospitals, schools, orphanage, etc.). The sources of their income were financial support from their “original mountains (head monasteries; benshan 本山)” in Japan, followers’ donations, and salaries from their own assets and ritual ceremonies. However, subsidies from “head monasteries” were cancelled because of Japanese involvement in the Second World War. Chinese Buddhist traditions finally regained their influences on Buddhist groups in Taiwan around 1949 after the Chinese Communist Party defeated the National People’s Party in the civil war fighting for the dominion over mainland China. Thus, since 1949, many Buddhist groups of different Schools went to Taiwan along with the retreat of the Nationalist government of the Republic of China. Almost all these Buddhist groups took over existing Buddhist monasteries in Taiwan, and reestablished and reformed their administrative system and ritual ceremony. By so doing, Buddhist traditions from the Southeast Buddhist lineage as well as traces of influence of Japanese Buddhism were both uprooted and taken over by Chinese Buddhist groups from the lineage of North China.
the training of Buddhist lecturers; most of his students are from China, Taiwan, Singapore and the United States.

Theoretically, the aim of setting up the Pure Land Learning Center was more or less the same as the traditional Lotus Society, which was to teach people integrated Pure Land teachings and the *nianfo* 念佛 practice. However, questions come up at once: could the application of current technologies and the worldwide expansion tackle the problem entirely? What would be the real force behind these rapidly developed Learning Centers among Chinese communities all over the world? How does this new generation of Pure Land practitioners interpret Buddhist culture? What is the role played by Master Jingkong behind the “reforms”? How shall we evaluate the Pure Land Learning Center historically? Certainly, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study of the principles and ideologies advocated by the Pure Land Learning Center in order to explore these questions and attempt to provide satisfactory explanations. At this point, since Master Jingkong is the controlling figure of the Learning Centers, the main objective of this research will be a more complete and systematic study of his advocacy. The structures and the patterns of administration of these organizations will also be discussed to some extent. Other concerns, like the historical position of the Pure Land Learning Center, and its connection to the Lotus Society, as well as the seven-day collective practice of *Foqi fahui* 佛七法會 (the Seven [Days] Nianfo Dharma Gathering), will also be discussed to help illustrate a clearer picture of the society and its beliefs.

Therefore, as a whole, this thesis will interpret the Learning Center’s ideas in terms of the Master’s teachings, complemented by the comparison of his teachings with 1) beliefs and ritual traditions of selected Pure Land patriarchs of the past and 2) doctrines and principles mentioned in several major Mahāyāna Sūtras. Methodologically speaking, apart from
analyzing literature and contextual materials, this thesis also involves the study of audio and video materials distributed by the Pure Land Learning Center.

In the following chapter, I will first present a summary of the founding and development of the Lotus Society and the Pure Land Learning Center, then, a brief history of the Buddhist education of Master Jingkong, with an emphasis on his relationships with some distinguished contemporary Buddhist figures such as Professor Fang Dongmei 方東美 (1899-1977), Master Zhangjia 章嘉 (1891-1957; Ye-ses rdo-rje or Sans-rg yas-skyabs in Mongolian; Lcan Lcan-skya in Tibetan), Mr. Li Bingnan 李炳南 (1888-1986) and Mr. Huang Nianzu 黃念祖 (1913-1992). This discussion will provide a basis for understanding the lineage of the Pure Land traditions and teachings behind the Pure Land Learning Center and Master Jingkong.5

The third chapter will adopt a historical approach and intends to examine the connection between the notions and rituals advocated by Master Jingkong and those of pervious Pure Land patriarchs and advocates. Five of them have been selected for the discussion; they are Shandao 善導 (613-681) and Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839; zi Daxiu 大休, hao Qingliang 清涼) of the Tang (618-907), Zhuhong 侏宏 (1535-1615, zi Fohui 佛慧, hao Lingfeng 靈峰) of the Ming (1368-1644), and Shengliang 聖量 (1860-1940, zi Yinguang 印光, hao Changcankuiseng 常惭愧僧) of the Qing (1644-1911). This chapter will propose that the present teachings and

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5 Parts of the content in this chapter about the founding and development of the Lotus Society and the Pure Land Learning Center as well as the biography of Li Bingnan are based on the author’s article published in Illumine. See May Ying Mary Ngai, “The Origins of the Jingzong xuehui 淨宗學會, or the Pure Land Learning Center,” Illumine: The Journal of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society Graduate Student Association vol.1, no. 1 (2001-02) 12-25.
practices are essentially inherited from those of the past, revealing the Learning Center’s historical position as a modernized 20th century form of the Lotus Society.

Having discussed the proposed historical lineage, the fourth chapter will explore the Learning Center’s integrated Pure Land doctrines by studying the Master’s lectures on Pure Land Sūtras and a variety of Mahāyāna Sūtras on which other Chinese Buddhist schools were founded. Major discussions will focus on the Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing 佛説大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經 (The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School, the compiled version of Wuliangshou jing 無量壽經, the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra, or the Infinite Life Sūtra), the Foshuo amituo jing 佛説阿彌陀經 (the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra; the Amitābha Sūtra), the Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing 佛説觀無量壽佛經 (the Amitayur-dhyāna-sūtra; the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra), the Puxianpusa xingyuanpin 普賢菩薩行願品 (the Chapter on Conduct and Vows of Samantabhadra; a chapter of the Avatamsaka-sūtra), and the Dashizhipusa nianfo yuantongzhang 大勢至菩薩念佛通經 (the Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Mahāsthāma through Buddha Name Recitation; a chapter of the Śūraṅgama-sūtra 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經), for they have been studied and recited by Pure Land practitioners for centuries. Other Mahāyāna sūtras, like the Dafangguang fo huayan jing 大方廣佛華嚴經 (the Avatamsaka-sūtra, the Flower Adornment Sūtra), the Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法蓮華經 (the Saddharmapundarika-sūtra; the Lotus Sūtra), and the Jingang bore boluomi jing 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (the Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra; the Diamond Sūtra), will be quoted to clarify and elaborate some significance of the discussions and the intimate connections between these Sūtras and Pure
Land teachings. In addition, the roles played by these Sūtras in determining the types and styles of Pure Land practices will also be discussed.

On the basis of the study on the teachings of the Learning Center, the fifth chapter will describe three types of recitation methods it advocated and investigate their purpose, significance, and meaning for the organization and its members. This chapter will show how the ideas and principles are implemented through the practice of the rituals.

In the concluding chapter, according to the outcomes of previous chapters, I will place the Pure Land Learning Center in the socio-historical context of the development of Pure Land Buddhism, and point out that, in terms of Pure Land traditions, the Center indeed plays an important role in inheriting the past and ushering in the future. Besides, by focusing on the life and teachings of Master Jingkong as the pivotal figure in this contemporary development, this chapter will argue that, the efforts that have been made by the Master are similar to those earlier patriarchs who either enlivened or sustained the traditions of their own times. Thus, this research will provide substantial evidence showing how a traditional heritage reforms to cope with the needs of contemporary people.
CHAPTER TWO

The Origin and Development, and Important Figures of Jingzong xuehui, the Pure Land Learning Center

The Lotus Society

The term *Lianshe*, or the Lotus Society, has long been recognized by Chinese Buddhists as an alternative name for Pure Land Buddhism. Originally, this term referred to a group of one hundred and twenty-three *nianfo* practitioners, both monks and lay Buddhists, led by the Buddhist master Huiyuan (334-416) on Mount Lu. The group is known for their gathering in 402 in the Donglin Monastery where they practiced and observed teachings of Pure Land Buddhism and made a vow in front of an image of Amitābha Buddha in the hopes of being reborn in the Western Pure Land. Members of this fellowship were all believed to have successfully attained the rebirth, which has become the most ideal or symbolic achievement for successors of later generations who resolve to organize activities and associations of this kind. Huiyuan has been reputed as the first patriarch of the Pure Land School for his role in organizing the society as well as specifying the *nianfo* practice.\(^7\)

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\(^6\) *Nianfo* is a term of wide comprehension in terms of Buddhist practice. For the Pure Land School, in general, the term *nianfo* is a complex expression of four different types of Buddhist practices. Since the recitation of Amitābha’s name became the most common Pure Land practice among ordinary people by the effort of the Lotus Society, the term *nianfo* was mistakenly simplified to specifically refer to the recitation method. Thus, to avoid any inappropriate generalization or misinterpretation of the term, this thesis uses the *pinyin* form, a system of romanizing Chinese ideograms, all along. Chapter five of this thesis has a more detailed discussion of it.

\(^7\) A) Regarding the earliest record of the founding of a school for the Pure Land Buddhism, there are two views. One claim that a Pure Land School did exist during the early period of the Tang dynasty (618-907) is supported by
a source written by a Korean named Wŏnhyo (617-686) while the other one deems that a Pure Land school was not formed until the Song dynasty (960-1280). The former view is still used by David Chappell in his article in *The Pure Land Tradition* (David W. Chappell, “The Formation of the Pure Land Movement in China: Tao-Ch’o and Shan-Tao,” pp. 139-171, *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon and Richard K. Payne (Berkeley, California: Regents of the University of California,1996) 140, 167.). The proof he used to support his claim is a Chinese phrase *yizong* — 真 (a school). However, Tang Yongtong quotes lots of evidence from historical documents to expound the changing of the meaning of this phrase corresponding to the historical changes and development of Buddhist activities at the time. According to his penetrating analysis on the issue of the forming of Chinese Buddhist schools, tang points out that, before the Song, the Chinese character *zong* 宗 has at least two meanings in terms of Buddhist terminology, which are “discourse” and “school.” He explains that, before the sixth century, a person’s argument on a theory or an exegesis of a Sūtra can also be called *zong*. Thus, at the time when Wŏnhyo used the phrase *yizong*, he could mean either “a discourse,” or “a school.” To further verify Wŏnhyo’s meaning, Tang turns to the history of the forming of Chinese Buddhist schools. According to him, only after the early Sui dynasty (581-618) did the character *zong* include the meaning of a school or sect. Before the Sui, Buddhist teachers were called *jingshi* 經師 (the teacher of sūtras) or *lunshi* 論師 (the teacher of Buddhist treatises). They usually interpreted Sūtras and Buddhism according to their own understandings. Those who wanted to learn the theories or teachings developed by these teachers could, traveling from place to place, freely attend their lectures; there was no record of any existence of a teacher-student organization (a school) exists yet. Until the beginning of the Sui, an official position called *zhongzhu* 真主 (the leader of the mass), deemed as the precursor of the forming of a school, was founded by the Emperor Wen with the purpose to operate a better-organized system for the teaching of Buddhism. Later, organizations named *jiao* 教 or sect like Sanjie jiao 三階教 (Three Stages Sect) arose, each of them advocating its own theories or exegeses on Sūtras, so that, probably, before long, the word *zong* started to be equated with the meaning of *jiao*. Accordingly, the phrase used by Wŏnhyo most likely just referred to the meaning of “discourse;” that is, the discourse or teachings on the Pure Land(s). This conclusion can also be supported by the fact that teachings on different Pure Lands aside from that of Amitābha were very popular at Wŏnhyo’s time in China. Hence, the argument about the meaning of the phrase as “a school” seems to be too weak to predate the existence of the Pure Land School. Therefore, this thesis adopts Tang’s view on the founding period of the Pure Land School, not only for its higher degree of reliability but also for its being widely accepted by scholars of the field. For details, see Tang Yongtong, “Lun zhongguo fojiao wu shizong [On the Issue that There Is No So-called Ten
However, neither Huiyuan's writings nor those of his contemporaries made reference to the name of the Lotus Society. The earliest record of an associated theme, *shiba gaoxian* 十八高


The Eighteen Sages,\(^8\) only appeared at the time of the Tang dynasty (618-907), as seen in the poems by the well-known Buddhist poet Bo Juyi 白居易 (772-846).\(^9\)

Nevertheless, some documents suggest that the association of organizations of she 社 and hui 會 with Buddhist activities was already formed long before Tang in the sixth century. The argument is supported by the quotation from the Jieshe faji wen 結社法集文 (Essay on Forming a Society to Gather Dharma) by the Song monk Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001).

According to this essay, during the reign of Emperor Wenxuan 文宣王 (r. 550-559) of the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577), the Emperor had called at least once for a gathering of both monks and laymen to carry out Buddhist practices together, yet this event appears to be merely an occasional incident at the time.\(^{10}\) In fact, based on existing primary sources and recent researches, it is only in the Song dynasty (960-1279) that, by the effort of master Shengchang, the organization of she or hui came into vogue and the activity of jieshe niانfo 結社念佛 (forming a society to practice [methods of] niанfo) became popular outside monasteries among lay Buddhists of different classes.\(^{11}\) However, back in the Tang dynasty, most organizations which concentrated on the practice of niанfo and advocated the teachings of Pure Land

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\(^8\) The Eighteen Sages refers to the eighteen most prominent members out of the total of one hundred and twenty-three gathered on Mount Lu.


\(^{10}\) The primary text is written as “齊竟陵文宣王，募僧俗行念佛，亦淨社也。…歷代以來，成就僧寺為法會社也。” Details see TT 47: 177b.

Buddhism were either monasteries or monastically operated; they were more frequently called *Daochang* 道場, Arenas of the Way.\(^{12}\)

As noted in the *Jingtu shengxian lu* 淨土聖賢錄 (Record of Sages and Worthies of the Pure Land), a huge, detailed chronicle of the biographies of those who were believed to be successfully reborn into the Pure Land of Amitābha, under the guidance of Shengchang 省常 (959-1020, zi Zaowei 造微), the seventh patriarch of the Pure Land School, a *Jingxingshe* 淨行社 (the Pure Behavior Society), modeled after the Lotus Society,\(^{13}\) was founded in Zhejiang.

\(^{12}\) This fact can be reflected in the *Jingtu shengxian lu*. According to this source, most titles of those monasteries associated with Pure Land Buddhism or *nianfo* practice are called *Daochang* 道場. For examples, the *Nianfodaochang* 念佛道場 (the Nianfo Arena of the Way) under the entry of Qihan 齊翰 (p. 97), the *Wuhuinianfodaochang* 五會念佛道場 (the Five Assemblies of Nianfo Arena of the Way) under the entry of Fazhao 法照 (p. 100), and the *Xifangdaochang* 西方道場 (the Western Direction Arena of the Way) under the entry of Wei Wenjin 韋文晉 (p. 261). Regarding the title of *she*, a *Xifangshe* 西方社 (the Western Direction Society) can be found under the entry of Shenhao 神皓 (p. 71). See Peng Jiqing, ed., *Jingtu shengxian lu* (Taizhong: Taizhong lianshe, reprint 1992) 71, 97, 100, and 261. The tendency of the use of the term *daochang* was most likely related to Emperor Yang 隋煬帝 (r. 604-618) of the Sui dynasty (581-618), who once issued a decree to rename the term *fosi* 佛寺 to *daochang*, a term that was recognized at that time as one of the ten terms referring to Buddhist monasteries. For details, see Tang Yongtong, *Sui Tang fojiao shi gao* 隋唐佛教史稿 [A Draft of the History of Buddhism in the Sui and Tang] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982) 6 and 59. And according to Daniel B. Stevenson’s article, *daochang* “is a Chinese translation of the Sanskrit word *bodhimanda*, which specifically means the ‘site where the Buddha attained enlightenment.’ By extension, it has also come to refer to any site where the Buddha (or the enlightenment that is the Buddha’s essence) is ritually invoked, sought, or found.” See Daniel Stevenson, “Pure Land Buddhist Worship and Meditation in China,” pp. 359-379, *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1995) 363-364.

\(^{13}\) Originally, the term Lotus Society specifically means the organization founded in 402 on Mount Lu; however, as the teachings and practices of the Pure Land were widely spread, it was conceptualized to refer to the activities of forming a society to practice the method of *nianfo* as a means to obtain salvation. Thus, societies bear different titles but carry out the above mentioned activities can be generally called the Lotus Societies.
In order to honor Huiyuan and his fellowship as well as to indicate their goal of attaining the rebirth together, a total of one hundred and twenty-three aristocrats and prominent government officials vowed to concentrate on the Pure Land practice. This event was so successful that a thousand monks also joined the society.

Peng Jiqing, ed., *Jingtu shengxian lu* (Taizhong: Taizhong lianshe, 1783, reprint 1992) 115. Other examples of similar activities in the Song dynasty can be found in the same book and the issue of *jieshe nianfo* is briefly discussed in Li Xiaoben’s article, in which Li mentions that: in 996, a society of monks and lay Buddhists was organized by Zunshi 遵式 (963-1032) of Siming 四明; in 1015, a *Nianfoshijiehui* 念佛施戒會 (the *Nianfo* and Precept Giving Society) was started by Zhili 知禮 (960-1028) of Siming; in 1017, a *Baolianshe* 白蓮社 (the White Lotus Society) on Mount Dongye 東掖山 was founded by Benru 本如 (981-1050), the prime minister, and other Buddhists; after the Yuanfeng 元豐 era (1078-1088), a *Jingyeshe* 淨業社 (the Pure Karma society) was established by Lingzhao 靈照, who led the seven-day *nianfo* practice of twenty thousands practitioners every spring; a *Jingtuhei* 淨士會 (the Pure Land Society) of hundred thousands monks and lay Buddhists was set up by Jingyan 淨嚴 (1639-1702) and the prime minister Wen Yanbo 文彦博 (1006-1097); and in 1089, a *Lianhuashenghui* 蓮花勝會 (the Lotus Magnificent Society) by Zongze 宗贊 (fl. 1086AD). All of these activities took place in the vicinity of Jiangzhe area and some of such gatherings even involved tens of thousand people. See Li Xiaoben, “Zhongguo jingtuzong shi,” *Jingtuzong shi*, ed. Zhang Mantao (Taipei: Dacheng wenhua chubanshe, 1979) 108-9.

There is another version referring to the number of lay member who joined the Society. In Yu Chun-fang’s *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), on page 44, she mentioned that under Shengchang’s leadership, “a Pure Land association called the Pure Behavior Society (Ching-hsing she) was organized. It had eighty lay believers, among them literati, members of the Hanlin Academy, and high government officials. Its membership also included a thousand monks.” This saying is based on an article *Lianshe jizu wudai fashi zhuan* 聯社繼祖五大法師傳 (Records of the Five Great Dharma Teachers as Successive Patriarchs of the Lotus Society) collected by Zongxiao in the third volume of the *Lebang wenlei* 儀師文類 (TT 47:193bc), and the sentences in question are written as “四省常師者。大宋淳化中。師住錢塘南昭慶院。專修淨業。結淨行社。王文正公尚為社首。...士夫預會。皆稱淨行社弟子。社友八十比丘一千大眾。孤山圓公。作師行業記井蓮社碑。” According to this original text, it is very clear that Yu Chun-fang mistook the number of *sheyou* 社友 (friends of
Undoubtedly, it was such a grand-scale congregation that people took delight in talking about it.

The Society), for shifu 士夫(literati), whose title was, instead, called jingxingshe dizi 淨行社弟子(students, or disciples, of the Pure Behavior Society).

This can be further supported by the inscription regarding master Shengchang and the lianshe on a tablet by the Revered Yuan mentioned in the same passage (孤山園公, 作師行記井蓮社碑). The full title of this inscription is Qiantang bailianshezhu bei 錢塘白蓮社主碑 (Tablet of the White Lotus Master of Qiantang), which is also collected in the same volume of the Lebang wenlei (TT 47:183c). The full name of the author the Revered Yuan 圆公 is Zhiyuan 智圆 (976-1022) of Mount Gu 孤山. He was contemporary with Shengchang.

According to his own account, he was invited to write the inscription in the winter of the same year that Shengchang had passed away in the spring. The beginning of the inscription is written as “聖宋天禧四年春正月十三日。白蓮社主園公。歸寂于錢塘西湖昭慶本寺之上方草堂。齡六十二。齡四十四。...其年冬門人之上首曰虞者。克荷師道。自業其事。再款吾靈。請吾之責。傳師之美。以勒豐碑。...兹是宰衛名卿邦伯牧長。有問公之風而悅之。或尋幽而問道。或瞻相知書。或考經而得意。三十餘年。為莫逆之交。預白蓮之儷者。凡一百二十三人。其化成也如是。有以見西湖之社嗣於盧山者。無懈德矣。” From the massage here, it is very clear that the number of literati who joined the Society was one hundred and twenty-three (預白蓮之儷者。凡一百二十三人) instead of eighty. Since Zhiyuan was contemporary with Shengchang, and the inscription was written only months after the death of the Master, his information is certainly more reliable.

Therefore, undoubtedly, the number of eighty is actually referred to the group of “friends of the Society,” whose identifications are definitely neither “literati” nor “members of the Hanlin Academy” or “high government officials,” but simply are unknown.

The reason why the number of “one hundred and twenty-three” needs to be confirmed here is that this number bears a symbolic meaning to every Pure Land practitioner. The successful practice of nianfo among the group led by master Huiyuan on Mount Lu has become a symbol of being successfully reborn into the Pure Land under the leadership of the Lotus Society. Such idea can also be supported by the above inscription. The last sentences quoted above reveal that master Shengchang’s Pure Behavior Society and the gathering of the group of one hundred and twenty-three literati were compared with the Lotus Society on Mount Lu by his contemporaries.

Similarly, nowadays, master Jingkong of the Pure Land Learning Center adopts the same idea to the common practice of nianfo that the number of people allowed to join the practice is limited to hundred and twenty-three. He has repeatedly mentioned the importance of this symbolic meaning for those who want to follow the tradition and lineage of the group on Mount Lu. This will be further discussed in Chapter Five.
The immediate result was the widespread of the movement of *jieshe nianfo* among society (*shenjin minjian* 深浸民間),\(^{16}\) which was particularly welcomed by the elite and largely popularized in the Jiangsu 江蘇 and Zhejiang provinces as well as their surrounding areas in the southern China.\(^{17}\) Certainly, the gathering of the Pure Behavior Society gives a general picture of the trend of such activity at the time.

Like most advocates of Pure Land Buddhism, Shengchang’s motivation behind the forming of the society was mainly out of “the admiration of the custom of Mount Lu (*mu Lushan zhi feng* 慕廬山之風).”\(^{18}\) This fact indicates that the advocacy of the *nianfo* practice and the assembly on Mount Lu were significant enough to uphold the traditions of the society and pass them down to the later generations. Huiyuan and the customs of Mount Lu have undoubtedly become symbolic elements of the leadership of the School. Hence, all succeeding patriarchs and advocates never hesitated about carrying on such advocacy and traditions and regarded the society as an effective tool in promoting Buddhist teachings among people, notwithstanding that they had made their respective contributions to the ritual, principle, and *nianfo* practice of Pure Land Buddhism in their period, like the revival of the trend of releasing living creatures by Zhuhong during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\(^{19}\) Such persistence is even more perceptible in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). For instances, the tenth and eleventh Pure Land patriarchs, Xingce 行策 (1628-1682, *zi* Jieliu 截流) and Shixian 寶賢 (1686-1734, *zi* Siqi 思齊, *hao* Shengan 省庵), in 1670 and 1729 respectively, began the

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advocacy of the Lotus Society among people after years of wars and disorders between the downfall of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and the establishment of the Qing.\textsuperscript{20} Besides, since 1800, under the influence of Jixing 醫醒 (1741-1810, \textit{zi} Chewu 徹悟, \textit{hao} Natang 諸堂 and Mengdong 夢東), the twelfth patriarch, the Zifu Monastery 資福寺 on Mount Hongluo 紅螺山 in Beijing became the biggest \textit{daochang} specialized in Pure Land practice in China,\textsuperscript{21} where Shengliang 聖量 (1860-1940, \textit{zi} Yinguang 印光, \textit{hao} Changcankuiseng 常惭愧僧; see figure 3), the later thirteenth patriarch, had spent five years practicing austerities and \textit{niánfo}.\textsuperscript{22} Likewise, under the guidance of Yinguang, the Lingyanshan Monastery 靈岩山寺 of Suzhou 蘇州 in the province of Jiangsu became another famous \textit{daochang} specialized in \textit{niánfo} practice after 1937, and because of his great influence the Lotus Society soon prospered throughout China.\textsuperscript{23}

Yinguang’s advocacy and teachings had been observed and developed by his disciples. Among them, the most influential one for the contemporary development of Pure Land Buddhism is Li Bingnan 李炳南 (1888-1986; see figure 4), who fled with the army and officials of the Nationalist government of the Republic of China to Taiwan in 1949, where he established the first Lotus Society in the Taizhong 台中 (Taichung) area in 1951.\textsuperscript{24} His effort

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\item \textsuperscript{20} Shoucheng, ed., \textit{Lidai jingtu gaozeng xuanji} (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijinhui, 1992) 24, 26.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Yanxing 演性 and Xinzhong 新鍾, ed., \textit{Lianzong shisanzu zhuanlue} (Taiwan: Sanbao dizi, 1997) 93.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Yanxing and Xinzhong, ed., \textit{Lianzong shisanzu zhuanlue} (Taiwan: Sanbao dizi, 1997) 98.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Yuanche 圓徹, “\textit{Lianzong shisanzu zhuan zhongyin liutong xu 蓮宗十三祖傳重印流通序 (Preface on the Reprint and Spread of the Biographies of the Thirteen Patriarchs of the Pure Land School)},” pp. 1-4, \textit{Lianzong shisanzu zhuanlue}, ed. Yanxing and Xinzhong (Taiwan: Sanbao dizi, 1997) 3.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Li Bingnan, \textit{Xueluolaoren jingtu xuanji}, ed. Xueluolaoren jingtu xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong: Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 17 and 411.
\end{itemize}
and ability in preaching and organizing allowed him to carry on Yinguang's tradition. It is on this foundation that the advocate of the modernized Pure Land Learning Center was fostered.

Mr. Li Bingnan and the Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society

Li Bingnan was an important lay figure in his succession to the Pure Land teachings popularized by Yinguang in China as well as in his diligent promotion of Pure Land Buddhism in Taiwan, where he was noted for spreading the Pure Land doctrines and ways of practice. Even after his death in 1986, his thirty-eight years of ceaseless teaching and writing still have

25 Most information concerning Mr. Li Bingnan is based on the Chinese source Xueluoren jingtu xuanji (Selected Works of the Old Xuelu on the Pure Land), with a few references quoted from Charles Brewer Jones's Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660-1990 (1999). However, some of their records are not consistent; a few facts recorded in Buddhism in Taiwan are different from the others. Since Xueluoren jingtu xuanji was written two months within the death of Li, I choose to follow it wherever a contradiction occurs. Examples of differences can be seen in Jones' book: on p. 122, he writes that before Li undertook a strict vegetarian diet, he "had been a revolutionary famous for his seemingly endless capacity for alcohol and meat," however, no such description of "seemingly endless capacity for alcohol and meat" is found in his Chinese biography and autobiographical articles. In addition, Jones mentions that Li "began corresponding with the master, and within a year he journeyed to Shanghai to take the Three Refuges under him." Here, according to the Chinese source, Li took the Three Refuges under Yinguang through correspondence by the recommendation of a disciple of the Master; Li began corresponding with Yinguang only after, not before, the Three Refuges rite. On the same page, Jones writes that: "His reputation spread, and in 1931 he received an invitation to go to Nanjing to assume the directorship of the 'Agency for Making Offering to the Past Masters Who Achieved Sagehood of the Republic of China'...," while, according to the Chinese source, Li received the invitation not simply because of his reputation but of his previous performance in the editorial task as well as the recommendation by the editor-in-chief. Besides, Li was not the director of the Office. On p. 123, Jones includes the "Lingshan Temple" as one of the Buddhist "enterprises" founded by Li, but, according to a Chinese source (Xingfan, Wangsheng jingtu zhuan jiyuan (Gaoxiong: Gaoxiong wenshu jiangtang, 1997) 280-281), it was established by a local Buddhist nun Deqin 德欽 (1888-1971) in 1938, eleven years before Li's arrival in Taizhong.
considerable influences on contemporary elite and people of different social classes.\textsuperscript{26} Above all, in terms of Buddhist practice, his efforts sustained the tradition of *jieshe nianfo*, through which the tradition of the Lotus Society was popularized to the rest of the island from the Taizhong area and the practice of reciting Amitābha’s name has became the major form of practice in Taiwan to this day.\textsuperscript{27} Under the guidance of Li, Jingkong successfully built up the solid foundation and capabilities for his future achievements in both teaching and leadership; in order to thoroughly understand Jingkong as a successor to the Dharma lineage from Yinguang through Li and as a reformer who emphasizes on the modernization of the ancient form Lotus Society, a study on Li’s philosophy and accomplishment is of the utmost importance.

Li Bingnan was a native of Jinan, Shandong, of China, the home province of Confucius. His parents named him as Li Yen 貞 (zi Bingnan, hao 號 Xuelu 雪露, Dharma name Deming 德明) but he is best known as Li Bingnan. Like many children of educated families, he studied Confucian classics in a traditional Chinese education system. At the young age of twenty-three (1912), he was elected as the first president of an educational institution organized by various academic groups in Jinan; his diligence in popularizing education was soon recognized and publicly praised by the Shandong provincial government. From 1920 onwards, he worked for the Judiciary until 1934. From 1934 to 1937, his literary competence earned him a respectful government position as one of the editors engaging in recomposing and reediting the county annuals of Jinan. Upon finishing the editorial work, in 1937, by the recommendation of the editor in chief, he was immediately appointed to work for


the *Dacheng zhisheng xianshi fengji guanfu* 大成 至聖先師 奉 祀 官 府 (*The Office of Sacrifices to the Greatly Accomplished Supreme Prior Teacher*), a government office in charge of offerings to Confucius and other related matters. He was soon promoted to the position of Secretary in Chief of the Office. In 1949, in his 60's, along with the Office and the government, he left China for Taiwan, where he continued to hold the same post until his resignation. 28

He married twice; after the death of his first wife Zhang Defu 張 德 馥, he married Zhao Defang 趙 德 芳. However, his wife, his son Junlong 俊 龍 and two granddaughters were not able to leave for Taiwan in time and remained in China all along. He remained single in Taiwan and lived in a small house alone in an austere way. He retained his health and vigor well into old age and refused being taken care of by his students until he was ninety-five. 29

Li has been recognized as an energetic man of versatile talents. Other than his knowledge of Confucianism and poem writing, he also mastered Chinese medicine and sword playing. When he was in Taizhong, people noticed that he worked in The Office of Sacrifices by day and taught Confucianism and Buddhism in various *daochang* at night. Other than these tasks, he also lectured on the *Lunyu* 論 語 (Analects) and Sūtras in the Medicine College of China 中國 醫 藥 學 院 as well as on Chinese poetry, the *Liji* 禮 記 (Record of Rites), and Buddhism in Chung Hsing 中 興 and Tung Hai 東 海 Universities in Taizhong. 30

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This characteristic of versatility is reflected in his study of Buddhism as well. From around 1920 to 1928, he studied Buddhist teachings of the Weishi 唯識 School (the Consciousness-only School)\(^{31}\) for eight years from Mr. Mei Guangxi 梅光羲 (b.1879) in a Foxueshe 佛學社 (Buddhism Learning Society) near Lake Daming 大明湖, Jinan. Then, from about 1928 to 1936, for another eight years, he studied Buddhist teachings of the Chan School under the guidance of master Keguan 客觀 of the Jingju Monastery 淨居寺, Jinan, and master Zhenkong 真空, who was invited from Beijing by the Jingju Monastery; and, from 1937 to 1945, he studied Tantric teachings for, again, eight years from Gongge Hutuktu of the White Sect 白教 and Nuona Hutuktu of the Red Sect 紅教 諸那呼圖克圖.\(^{32}\) All of Li’s teachers were famous for their expertise in their own fields of Buddhist study and were respected by their contemporaries. Li’s versatile talents broadened and deepened his understanding in Buddhism in different aspect, which only enriched his religious experience and prepared him for his future career in teaching. Surprisingly, after his diligent studies of Weishi, Chan and Tantric Buddhism, Li did not encourage his students to follow in his steps. Instead, he concluded that, because of its flexibility in meeting people’s needs and living conditions, Pure Land Buddhism was the school of doctrine and practice best suited to Buddhists of his time.\(^{33}\)

According to his own account, Li became a Pure Land practitioner in about 1930, shortly after he came across several freely distributed booklets regarding the teachings of

\(^{31}\) The ideology of the Weishi School bases on the idea of *weishi* 唯識 (vijñāna-mātra; Consciousness-only), which is a kind of Buddhist doctrine that nothing exist aside from consciousness.


Buddhism and the Pure Land School. Those books were printed, distributed freely and mailed on request by the Honghuashe (Grand Influence Society), a society organized by Yinguang in Suzhou mainly for printing and distributing Sutras and related materials. After some time, by correspondence, Li took the rite of Three Refuges under, and received his Dharma name from, the Master. From then on, he kept in touch with Yinguang: on the one hand he continued his studies by reading Sutras, and published letters and writings by the Master; on the other hand he frequently inquired and learned from his teacher through correspondence until the death of the Master in 1940. In about 1934, a business trip finally gave him the chance to visit Yinguang, who at that time was in sealed confinement in the


35 Biguan (閉關, translated as sealed confinement, literally means closed barrier. This kind of practice was initiated by Chan practitioners who isolate themselves for Buddhist practices. The place for a biguan practitioner to carry out the practice is called the guanfang (the confined room). Those who are in sealed confinement can either read and study sutras from the Buddhist Canon or concentrate on “one” type of Buddhist practice such as nianfo and meditation. The time limit and goal for biguan vary with one’s own needs. When one is in sealed confinement, one is not allowed to leave the confined room; therefore, it is necessary to have someone else to take care of the food, medications, and miscellaneous matters for the practitioner. This kind of butler-like individuals is called the huguan (the barrier protector).

Besides, according to the entry of Nianshao biguan (年少閉關, In Sealed Confinement in the days of Youth) from the book Zhuchuang sanbi (The Third Jottings Under a Bamboo Window, 1615) by Zhuhong (1535-1615), several features about biguan are revealed. The short passage is written as “閉關之說，古未有也。後世乃有之。所以養道，非所以造道也。...昔高僧坐死關於張公洞，依岩架屋，懸處虛空，如鳥在巢，人罕覧之者。然大悟以後事耳，如其圖安逸而緩封自便，則斷乎不可。” (The complete passage see Lianchi, Zhuchuang sanbi (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijinhou, reprint 1995) 168-169.)

This passage tells that:

1) the beginning of the practice of biguan was not clear even to the people in the 17th century;
Baoguo Monastery 報國寺 of Suzhou. Li spent a day talking to the Master, which was deemed as a rare occasion since the Master seldom chatted with visitors more than twenty minutes. By Li’s own account, although this was the only time he could learn from the Master in person, the experience was splendid and invaluable.36

In his article in memory of master Yinguang, Li summarizes the content of the first letter he received from the Master, in which the Master answered his seeking of the Three

2) such practice was supposed to “cultivate the Way,” not to “produce the Way;” in other words, a biguan practitioner needed to be an enlightened one;

3) from the anecdote of the Chan master Yuanmiao 原妙 (1238-1295, hao Gaofeng 高峰) of the Linji Sect, it is clear that biguan had been put into practice, at least, by the 13th century, during the Southern Song dynasty;

4) during that time, some Buddhists misunderstood the purpose of biguan as a means of comfort.

For the second feature, master Jingkong also mentions that, according to Li Bingnan, those who are in sealed confinement should be enlightened. The purpose for such practice is to cultivate and maintain the “enlightened condition,” which is called wuhou qixiu 悟後起修, to start the real cultivation after attaining the enlightenment. Besides, this kind of enlightened Buddhists were also visited by other Buddhists and travelling monks. During the imperial era, when a travelling monk arrived at a new place, he would inquire of local people about the whereabouts of biguan practitioners. If there were one, the monk would visit and learn from that person. Details see Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing qinwenji (Taipei: Sanbao dizi, 1999).

These statements can be supported by the experiences of two famous contemporary Buddhist masters, Xuyun 虚雲 (1840-1959) and Guangqin 廣欽 (1892-1985). It is said that when Xuyun practiced biguan at 30, he had not yet attained the enlightenment and spent a lots of time on meditation without knowing the true meaning of the teachings. A year later, he was fortunately reminded by a travelling monk, who thought that Xuyun was an enlightened teacher. After knowing that he himself misunderstood the practice and Buddhist teachings, Xuyun left to look for an enlightened teacher himself. As for Guangqin, he was known to start to practice biguan on a mountain after attaining enlightenment through the practice of nianfo. Details see Xuyun laoheshang nianpu (Taipei, Huazang fojiao shiting tushuguan, reprint 1979) 7-8; and, Yidai gaoseng guangqinshangren chuani shihue kaishulu ji xingchi vulu (Gaoxiong: Nenjing xuehui, 1997) 40-42.

Refuges by giving him the Dharma name Deming, setting forth the principles of Pure Land Buddhism, and pointing out some key points for the *nianfo* practice. This summary gives a glimpse of the practicality of Yinguang’s thought:  

...老人賜給之開示，其中大要：
學佛之人。必須敦倫盡分。閑邪存誠。諸惡莫作。眾善奉行。
自行化他。同修淨業。念佛之法。宜執持名號。口念清楚。
耳聽清楚。久久自得一心。不必兼修觀想。因信不明教相。
境細心粗。反而生弊。
對於持齋戒殺。更是諄諄告誡。...

... The gist of the teachings that was bestowed on me by the Old Man is:
One who studies to be a Buddha should: set forward harmonious human relations and fulfill one’s duty; avoid evil thoughts and preserve sincerity; not to do any misdeeds, but pursue all good deeds; carry [these] out by oneself and transform others so as to practice Pure Karma\(^{38}\) together. For the method of *nianfo*, [one] should insist on sustaining [the recitation of] the name [of Amitābha Buddha]; [if one’s] mouth recites clearly and ears listen to [the recitation] clearly, for a long, long time, [the stage] of one-mindedness will be attained naturally. There is no need to practice visualization concurrently for [if one] does not comprehend the teachings and theories [for


\(^{38}\) “Pure Karma” refers to the Pure Land practice here.
visualization], [when] the phenomena [to be visualized] are subtle but the mind is inattentive, contrary [to one's intentions] disadvantages will arise.

For [the issues of] sustaining a vegetarian diet and of prohibiting killing, [he] was only too pleased to exhort repeatedly...39

As stated in his biography, Li placed this letter in front of an image of Buddha and kowtowed one hundred times to show his reverence for the teachings. Li obviously had observed them seriously throughout the rest of his life, in particular the exhortation that “carry [these] out by oneself and transform others so as to practice Pure Karma together.” This can be exemplified in his devotion to teaching and the establishment of the multi-functional Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society.

Li’s teaching career started in around 1931, at which he started to teach Buddhism locally in Jinan soon after he learned about the profound ideology of the Pure Land School through reading the booklets he had obtained. In 1937, Mei Guangxi recommended to master Taixu 太虚 (1889-1947) that Li served as a lecturer on Buddhism to prisoners in jails. The outcome was so remarkable that he was complimented in an inscription by Taixu. Later, he set up a Lianshe in Mount Gele 歌樂山 of Yu City 渝市 where he taught Sutras and practiced nianfo for a long time. After that, because of the chaotic political situation as a result of the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) and the following Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) between the Chinese Communist Party and the National People’s Party, Li, as an officer of The Office of Sacrifices, had to frequently move along with the government he served; despite the difficulties

he faced, he managed to teach Buddhism wherever he relocated.\footnote{40} Shortly after he arrived in Taizhong, he was invited by a Buddhist nun Deqin 德欽 (1888-1971) of the Lingshan Monastery 靈山寺 to give lectures on the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism.\footnote{41} Since his in-depth interpretation of Buddhist scriptures was rarely seen in Taiwan at that time,\footnote{42} his reputation soon spread and the number of his followers increased. In just two years, he founded the *Taizhong fojiao lianshe* 台中佛教蓮社 (the *Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society*; commonly known as the *Taizong lianshe* 台中蓮社, or the Taizhong Lotus Society), from which the doctrines of Pure Land Buddhism and the practice of *nianfo* have spread to the whole island.

In addition to Pure Land Buddhism, he also gave lectures on other Mahāyāna Sūtras and on Confucian classics, which include the *Śūrāngama Sūtra*, *Flower Adornment Sūtra*, *Lotus Sūtra*, *Dizang jing* 地藏經 (*Earth Treasure Sūtra*), *Yuanjue jing* 圓覺經 (*Complete Enlightenment Sūtra*), *Diamond Sūtra*, *Analects*, *Record of Rites*, etc.\footnote{43} It is known that at the peak of Li’s teaching career, in Taizhong alone, where approximately two hundred thousand

\footnote{40} Li Bingnan, *Xuelularen jingtu xuanji*, ed. Xuelularen jingtu xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong: Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 16-17. and 418.

\footnote{41} Xingfan, *Wangsheng jingtu zhuan jiyou* (Gaoxiong: Gaoxiong wenshu jiangtang, 1997) 280.

\footnote{42} As explained in footnote no. 4, before the arrival of the Nationalists from the Mainland China, most monks in Taiwan joined the *sangha* simply for living, they were not trained to teach but to perform ceremonies that were irrelevant to their studies and practices. Therefore, after the arrival of the Nationalists, partly because of the influence of this new government and partly because of the efforts of a number of elite Buddhists, both monks and laymen, from China, most monasteries in Taiwan were taken over and reformed by the new comers. However, among these elite Buddhists, Li Bingnan was the only one who mastered both the self-practice for salvation and the teaching of Pure Land Buddhism and a wide variety of scriptures of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Pure Land practitioners were following his teachings. His career continued until the last days of his life when he passed away at ninety-seven.

Symbolically, the establishment of the Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society can be viewed as a substantiation of Yinguang’s teachings. Like those preceding Lotus Societies in the imperial China before 1911, this Society gives first priority to propagating the teachings of the Pure Land School. However, aside from transmitting Pure Land Buddhism to Taiwan from China, the immediate influence of this Society over Taiwan’s Buddhist development is that it introduces the collective practice of Foqi 佛七 and the rite of Receiving the Precepts. Both rites are modeled on those that had been observing in China long before 1949. In the case of Foqi ceremony, the liturgy observed by the Society is recorded in the Fomen bibei kesongben 佛門必備課誦本 (the Buddhist Essential Recitation Manual), in which there is a statement that the rules and the schedule of the Foqi ceremony are copied from the one used in the Lingyanshan Monastery 靈巖山寺 of Suzhou. Fortunately, this liturgy survives and is titled as the Lingyanshansi zhuanxiu jingtudaochang niansongyiguì 靈巖山寺專修淨土道場念誦儀規 (the Chanting and Reciting Liturgy of the Specialized Pure Land Arena of the Lingyanshan Monastery). The postscript of this Lingyanshansi liturgy reveals that it was established by a Buddhist master Miaozhen 妙真 of the Lingyanshan Monastery in 1938 under

44 Li Bingnan, Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji, ed. Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong: Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 418.
45 The statement reads as follows: Caizi Lingyanshansi keben 摘自靈巖山寺課本 (Adopt from the Lingyanshan Monastery textbook); see Fomen bibei kesongben, (Taizhong: Ruicheng shuju, reprint 1982) 104. According to the date mentioned on the title page of this manual, this is a re-edition of the 1954 version.
the guidance of Yinguang. This confirms that the Pure Land teachings promoted by the Taizhong Lotus Society are a direct heritage from the traditional Pure Land School in China.

Nevertheless, the Taizhong Lotus Society was not organized merely for the collective practice of nianfo and daily or weekly gatherings; structurally speaking, it is a more complicated organization. Many affiliates have been set up one by one for various purposes; for instance, the Compassion Light Library (Ciguang tushuguan 慈光圖書館) was established in 1958 to meet readers’ needs. Within decades, a succession of further institutions was founded, namely, the Compassion Light Childcare Association (Ciguang yuyouyuan 慈光育幼院) in 1959, the Bodhi Salvation Association (Puti jiuj hui 菩提救濟會; later renamed as the Home of Benevolence and Love, Renai zhi jia 仁愛之家) in 1963, the Bodhi Hospital (Puti yiyuan 菩提醫院) in 1963, the Ethics Demonstration Society (Minglun she 明倫社; a publishing house) in 1970, and many Doctrine Promotion Places (Bujiao suo 佈教所) from 1957 to 1984. Each of these affiliated organizations, including the Taizhong Lotus Society itself, is further subdivided into groups for specific purposes. For example, the subgroups of the Taizhong Lotus Society include the Salvation Society (Jiuj hui 救濟會), the Society for Releasing Living Beings (Fangsheng hui 放生會), the Chinese Tutorial Classes (Guowen buxiban 國文補習班), the Society for Printing Sūtra (Shoutuo yinjing hui 受託印經會), the Grand Influence Group (Honghua tuan 弘化團), the

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47 A brief discussion on the adoption of Lingyanshansi liturgies can be found in Charles Jones’ Buddhism in Taiwan, pp. 119-122.
49 Li Bingnan, Xuelulaoren jingtut xuanji, ed. Xuelulaoren jingtut xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong: Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 18.
Heavenly Music Class (Tianyue ban 天樂班), the Prosperous Nianfo Assisting Group (Rongfu zhunian tuan 榮福助念團), the Society for the Annotation and Translation of Sūtra (Fojing zhushu yuji hui 佛經注疏譯會), the Study Class on Inner Classics (Neidian yanjiu ban 內典研究班), the Class on How to Instruct the Analects (Lunyu jiangxi ban 論語講習班), the Initiation Class on National Literature (Guoxue qimeng ban 國學啓蒙班), and the Study Class on Social Education (Shejiao yanxi ban 社教研習班). The unusual, highly diversified functions of these subgroups reflect that efforts had been made to carry out Yinguang’s exhortation: “set forward harmonious human relations and fulfill one’s duty; avoid evil thoughts and preserve sincerity; not to do any misdeed but pursue all good deeds.”

Influenced by Li Bingnan, it is apparent that Pure Land practitioners in Taiwan had tried their best attempting to integrate Yinguang’s teachings with the daily needs of the public. As many of these affiliates are still working properly to this day, the success of their endeavor is undeniable; as a result, the Tai-chung Lotus Society has successfully transformed the Lianshe into a huge social, cultural, and educational network.

After the death of Li Bingnan, the mission of “carrying on the traditions to cope with the change of the society” passed on to master Jingkong 淨空, one of Li’s students who had been training for ten years to teach Buddhism. This transmission was carried out by a symbolic act of passing a copy of the newly compiled Infinite Life Sūtra on to the new Master by Li.

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Mr. Xia Lianju and the newly compiled Infinite Life Sūtra

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The compilation of this Sutra was done by a lay Buddhist, Xia Lianju 夏蓮居 (1882-1965; see figure 5), who was also the one who first proposed the establishment of the Pure Land Learning Center after the Second World War. From 1932 to 1935, Xia spent three years compiling the sūtra Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing 佛説大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經, which is a compilation of five different translations of the Wuliangshoujing 無量壽經 (the Infinite Life Sūtra). According to the prefaces written by Mei Guangxi and Huang Chaozi 黃超子 as well as the postscript by Huang Nianzu 黃念祖, the release of the draft of this compiled Sutra quickly attracted the attention of

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53 Jingkong, Renshi fojiao: xinfu meiman de jiaoyu (Taipei: Huazang fojiao tushuguan, 1997) 211.
55 See Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing (Taipei: Huazang jingzongxuehui, 1935, reprint 1992) 1. The five different translations are:

1). Wuliang qingjing pingdeng jue jing 無量清淨平等覺經 (147-186) of the Latter Han dynasty (25-220) translated by Lokaksema 陸迦薩 mistranslated as TT. 12, 279b-290c.
2). Foshuo zhuo anitu sanyesanfosaloufotanguyodurenda jing 佛説諸阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛幢過度人道經 (223-228) of the Wu dynasty (222-280) translated by Zhiqian 支謙 mistranslated as TT. 12, 300a-317c.
3). Wuliangshou jing 無量壽經 (252) of the Wei dynasty (222-265) translated by Sanghavarman 康僧鑑 mistranslated as TT. 12, 265c-279a.
4). Wuliangshounuai huì 無量壽如來會 (706-713) of the Tang dynasty (618-907) translated by Bodhinici 菩提流志 mistranslated as TT. 11, 91c-101c.
5). Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan jing 佛説大乘無量壽莊嚴經 (980) of the Liu-Song dynasty (960-1279) translated by Faxian 法賢 mistranslated as TT. 12, 318a-326c.

56 Huang Nianzu, born in 1913, had several Dharma names and bynames as Longzun 龍尊, Xinshi 心示, Lesheng 樂生, Laonian 老念, and Butu weng 不退翁 (see figure 6). He came to know Buddhism when he was only a little child; from his mother Madam Mei’s devotion to Buddhism, he had chances to attend different Buddhist lectures with her. Besides, he also learned Buddhism under the guidance of his Uncle, Mei Guangxi, who was a well-known Chan practitioner at the time.
various Buddhist groups; it was sent to the press immediately by a Buddhist General Zhang Xianchen 張憲臣 and was reprinted several times.\(^57\) Above all, it was soon reputed as the best-compiled version of the Infinite Life Sūtra.\(^58\)

Huang read the Diamond Sūtra for the first time at the age of 20, when he was studying in the College of Engineering in Beijing. He was very much amazed by the Sūtra’s wonderful meaning of “wuzhu shengxin 無住生心,” using the mind [to interact with phenomena] yet not to attach to [them]. At 23, he was considered to attain the initial enlightenment (chu kaiwu 初開悟). During his early life, he had taken refuges and learned under the famous Patriarch Xuyun 虚雲 of the Chan Sect, Gongge Hutuktu of the White Sect 白教貢噶呼圖克圖 of Tantric Buddhism, and Lotus Sambodhi Wang Hutuktu 蓮花正覺王呼圖克圖, the successor of Nuona Hutuktu of the Red Sect 紅教諾那呼圖克圖. At 32, through the introduction of his Uncle Mei, he became the disciple of the famed Chan and Pure Land practitioner Xia Lianju. At 40, he became a professor of Tianjin University 天津大學; while teaching, he still practiced and recited sutras assiduously. During that time, he was considered to attain enlightenment, which was confirmed by both Xia and Wang Hutuktu. In 1959, he succeeded Wang Hutuktu as Vajra Ācārya 金剛阿舍梨, or Diamond Instructor, of the Lotus Monastery.

In 1979, he started to annotate Xia’s compiled Sūtra, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing: the first draft was finished in 1981, the second draft in 1982, and the final draft in 1984. In 1987, this annotation began to be published and circulated outside China. During these years of writing, he also taught Pure Land Buddhism at the College of Chinese Buddhism 中國佛學院, the Lay Buddhist Grove 居士林, and the Guanghua Monastery 廣化寺. He died in 1992. Since two months before his death, he recited daily the name of Amitābha one hundred and sixty thousand times; he smiled at his last moment.

His publications include the Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jie 佛説大乘無量壽莊嚴平等覺經解 (The Annotation of the Infinite Life Sūtra), the Jingtu ziliang 淨土資糧 (Provisions and Funds for the Pure Land), the Guxiang ji 谷響集 (Collected Works of Echoes of a Valley), the Huayan nianfo sanmei lun jiangji 華嚴念佛三昧論講記 (Lecture Notes of the Discussion of the Samādhi on Nianfo in the Avatamsaka-sūtra), the Xinsheng lu 心聲錄 (Record on the Sound of the Mind), and an incomplete annotation in the vernacular writing (baihua jie 白話解) of the compiled Sūtra.

Details see Huang Nianzu, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jie (Taipei: Wufeng sanbaohuchihui, 1993) 1-4.

\(^57\) Details see Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing (Taipei: Huazang jingzongxuehui, 1935, reprint 1992) 1-8, 133-135.
However, since this Sutra is a relatively new version, it was not heard of in Taiwan before 1949; the one who brought the first and the only copy to Taiwan was Huang Luchu 王臘初 (1886-1960), a Lieutenant General. He gave this copy to Li Bingnan, who later bestowed it on Jingkong and urged him to propagate it to the whole world. The uniqueness of this copy is even enhanced by Li’s personal marks, specifically, his manuscript of exegesis.

58 Xia Lianju, ed., Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing (Taipei: Huazang jinzongxuehui, 1935, reprint 1992) 1.4-5. This is the fourth compiled Infinite Life Sûtra. The first attempt was made by a Song jinshi 王日休 (d. 1173) and his work is the Da amituo jing 大阿彌陀經 (Large Infinite Life Sûtra). The second one is the Wuliangshou jing 無量壽經 (Infinite Life Sûtra) by Peng Jiqing (1740-1796) and the third one is the Mohe amituo jing 摩訶阿彌陀經 (Great Infinite Life Sûtra) by Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857). A brief comparison of these four compiled versions can be found in Huang Nianzu, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jie (Taizhong: Wufeng sanbao huchihui, 1993) 70-75.

59 Huang took the Three Refuges in 1937 and decided to specialize in the practice of Pure Land. In 1945, due to job transfer, he moved from Xian 西安 to Beiping 北平 (Beijing), where he got to know many important Buddhist figures, of whom Master Cizhou 慈舟 and Xia Lianju were closest to him and told him that the study of the Infinite Life Sûtra were essential to Pure Land practices. In 1948, he fled to Taiwan from Beiping, with a mission urged by the two teachers to promote the Infinite Life Sûtra, for which he had the compiled Sûtra reprinted twice in Taiwan. He became a monk in 1949 and was given a Buddhist name Zongjing 塔觀 (zi Lühang 諸航, hao Xina 西衲). In order to concentrate on the nianfo practice, he took the 100-day sealed confinement twice. Later in 1956, he became the abbot of Cishan Monastery 慈善寺 in Taizhong. Details see Xingfan, Wangsheng jingtu zhuang yin you (Gaoxiong: Gaoxiong wenshu jiangtang, 1997) 263-264; and Lühang, “Wuliangshou jing yu jingtu famen guanxi zhongyao lun [On the Importance of the Relationship between the Infinite Life Sûtra and the Pure Land Dharma Method],” ed. Zhang Mantao 張曼濤, Jingtu dianji yanjiu [Studies on Pure Land Texts] (Taipei: Dacheng wenhua chubanshe, 1979) 241-248.

By now, it is quite clear that the roles played by Li Bingnan and the Taizhong Lotus Society were a link between masters Yinguang and Jingkong as well as between the traditional Lotus Society and the contemporary Pure Land Learning Center. This transitional stage allows the Lotus Society to gradually adjust to social changes in a relatively stable environment in Taiwan after 1949 so that the Learning Center can be well-prepared for the process of internationalization and digitalization. The passing on of the compiled Sūtra represents that, through Li, Jingkong was given a mission to complete Xia’s plan in reviving the Infinite Life Sūtra and renewing the Lotus Society, for which Jingkong resolved and succeeded in promoting the compiled Sūtra and establishing the Learning Center.\(^6\) In addition, since the founding of the first Learning Center the compiled Sūtra has been using as the guide for the Learning Center in preaching and practice, and therefore this Sūtra could be viewed as the tangible heritage left to the Learning Center by Xia. In other words, Li Bingnan and Xia Lianju are important in the establishment of the Learning Center because they provided Jingkong’s reform a solid foundation and explicit directions.

Surprisingly, although Xia is such a prominent person in the development of the Learning Center, his life is not known to most contemporary Pure Land practitioners. His sinking into obscurity may largely be due to the unusual political situation of the time because, under the rule of Communism, China had experienced a series of radical changes, in which most traditions were discarded and no religion was allowed to be practiced. However, his name and his effort in compiling the Infinite Life Sūtra are now being made known to people

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\(^6\) As discussed, Li had learned Weishi Buddhism from Mei Guangxi, who was the best friend of Xia Lianju. Hence, from Mei’s close relations with Xia and from Li’s keeping and transferring of the compiled Sūtra, Li’s attitude towards Xia can be revealed even though there is no textual evidence that can tell if Li was an acquaintance of Xia.
within and without China again by the endeavor of two people, the master Jingkong and Huang Nianzu, a direct disciple of Xia. The following is a reconstruction of the biography of Xia, which is based mainly on the Chinese source *Jindai wangsheng suiwenlu* 近代往生随闻录 (1998) and fragmented accounts found in the prefaces and postscript of the compiled Sūtra and other related materials.

Xia was born in Yun City 郯城, Shandong, and was named Xia Jiquan 夏继泉 (zi Puzhai 溥齋) but was best known as Xia Lianju 夏莲居. He had held different government positions in the provinces of Shandong, Henan 河南 and Hebei 河北 until his resignation in 1922. Then, he accepted a position as the principal of the Donglu School 東魯學校 but resigned in 1927. His last position was associated with the Dongyao wenhua xiehui 東要文化協會 (the Dongyao Cultural Association).

During his youth, he studied Confucianism, read extensively in a variety of classics and literature, and was good at various arts and skills. At middle age, he turned to Buddhism; he did not limit himself to any single school and studied extensively the teachings of different schools, including Chan and Tantric Buddhism. Likewise, it is said that after he fully understood the principles of Buddhism, he decided to concentrate on Pure Land practice.

In 1925, the warlord Zhang Zongchang 張宗昌, who at that time held power over Shandong province, made a false charge against Xia, confiscated his assets and ordered his arrest. Xia escaped to Japan; when everything was over, he went back to China and started a period of sealed confinement in Jinmen 津門, where he practiced *nianfo* for ten years. During this time, his room displayed only an image of Amitābha Buddha so as to express his

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determination toward Pure Land practice. In 1931, a war broke out in Shandong; by the consecutive invitations of monks and lay Buddhists, he moved to Beijing.\(^{64}\)

The following year he started to compile the *Infinite Life Sūtra*. It is said that he took this work so seriously that he did not leave his room on the second floor for three years to avoid distraction. He finally finished the first draft in 1935\(^{65}\) and revised it nine more times in the following seven years. Meanwhile, after 1935 until his death, he gave himself to the teaching of Buddhism; he was frequently invited to give lectures on Mahāyāna Buddhism and Pure Land practice, and is known to have received a large number of daily visitors and learners to discuss Buddhist teachings and practices.\(^{66}\) Such achievements were recognized in contemporary Buddhist circles and earned him a complimentary title, “*nan Mei bei Xia* 南梅北夏” (the South Mei and the North Xia), juxtaposing him with his friend, Mei Guangxi 梅光羲 (b.1879).\(^{67}\) They had been friends and colleagues for thirty years and both were regarded as the most important lay Buddhist figures of the time.

Xia passed away in 1965 at the age of eighty-three. It is said that, though he was in a good health, he started to mention his own coming death ten days ahead of time. During these days, other than his usual lecturing on the essential points of Buddhist teachings, he talked about some personal spiritual experiences. On the night he passed away, Xia, surround by his

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\(^{64}\) Kuanlu, *Jindai wangsheng suwenlu* (Taipei: Fotou jiaoyu jijinluii, 1998) 64.

\(^{65}\) The compilation of chapter six, which is the core of the *Infinite Life Sūtra*, was done by the joint effort of Mr. Xia, Mr. Mei and the famed master Huiming 明. They together spent one month to finish this chapter. Details see Xia Lianju, ed, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing* (Taipei: Huazang jingzongxuehui, 1935, reprint 1992) 4.


family, had been reciting the name of Amitābha ceaselessly. Suddenly, the family heard him sing the name aloud and found him passed away at that very moment. He left tens of writings and poems, of which the compiled Sūtra is considered his most influential work for the later development of the Pure Land School.

Master Jingkong and the Pure Land Learning Center

1. Master Jingkong and Mr. Huang Nianzu

Master Jingkong is an advocate of the establishment of the contemporary Jingzong xuehui (the Pure Land Learning Center). However, another important figure regarding the founding of this organization should not be omitted here, and the whole story can be traced back to the year of 1985. In this year, the Master was invited to Washington D.C. to give lectures. After he finished the lectures, his students asked for his permission to invite a famed lay Buddhist from China to give talks. When the Master learned that that person was Huang Nianzu, he was overjoyed because he was so happy to know that Huang was still alive. In fact, at that time, the Master did not know Huang in person; he had only heard his name from Li when he was in Taizhong. He knew that Huang was Mei Guangxi’s nephew and Xia Lianju’s direct disciple. In his youth, Huang had been known for his expertise of both Chan and Tantric Buddhism: his enlightenment was affirmed by Chan masters and he was chosen to succeed his teacher as a master of Tantric Buddhism. Nevertheless, despite his

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69 The original English translations of Jingzong xuehui are the “Amitabha Buddhist Society” and the “Amitabha Society,” they have been widely used in the United States before the 1997 gathering in Singapore. The new English translation is the “Pure Land Learning Center.” However, for legal reasons and convenience, both types of name are accepted by all Learning Centers.
accomplishments in these Buddhist practices, Huang deemed that the niæfo practice was the best.\textsuperscript{70}

Huang finally went to Washington D. C. in response to the invitation, but the Master had left. During his stay in the United States, Huang mailed the Master a draft of his important work, the commentary on Xia’s compiled Infinite Life Sūtra. This was another surprise to the Master; he was delighted to know that there were someone in China who, like him, also promoted Pure Land practice and, particularly, the compiled Sūtra. The draft finally went to the press in Taiwan, titled the Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jie 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經解.\textsuperscript{71}

At last, they met in 1988; it was the first time for the Master to go back to China after 1949. For him, paying a visit to Huang was the main purpose of this trip.\textsuperscript{72} During their meeting, Huang told the Master about Xia’s unfulfilled wish of the setting up of the Pure Land Learning Center, and hoped that the Master could found the Learning Center in Taiwan, overseas, and also in China. Furthermore, he mentioned that Xia had even suggested that, for continuous improvement, there should be a gathering held every year in turn by representative Centers to exchange experience teaching Pure Land Buddhism and niæfo practice.

Accordingly, from the very beginning of this proposal, Xia aimed to establish this organization internationally, not merely regionally. After this meeting, the Master started to advocate the idea of the Pure Land Learning Center while he was travelling around the world to give lectures. In response to the Master’s appeal, his audiences acted without hesitation.\textsuperscript{73}


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There are now more than fifty such organizations set up by local adepts around the world (Taiwan, Singapore, the United States, Canada, Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Spain, etc). They all run independently, for the Master does not encourage establishing one general leading committee to control all personnel administration and financial policies of different ethnic communities. Instead, they are expected to develop a kind of brotherly relations to help and cooperate with each other. Members are urged to focus more on practice and to serve as a good role model for all. Doing so, according to the Master, is a practical way to propagate the Buddha's teachings and to introduce Pure Land practice to people around the world. This intention of globalization is amply reflected in the Master's remark that one of the main goals in founding the Pure Land Learning Center is to “introduce traditional Chinese culture to Westerners and to help them practice Buddhism.” The following are the management guidelines for all Learning Centers:

1. All Learning Centers will organize activities according to local and state laws and policies.

2. All Learning Centers will sincerely follow Buddha's guidelines and teachings.

3. All Learning Centers are independent, having no affiliation with any international organizations.

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4. All the boards and directors of the Pure Land Learning Centers are elected democratically by their own members. Additionally, local citizens are to hold these positions. All procedures are to follow local customs.

5. Generally, Master Jingkong is invited to be a permanent advisor to the Pure Land Learning Centers.

The first four are very general guidelines emphasizing the legality, independence, and localization of the Centers while the last one reveals that master Jingkong is the spiritual guide for these organizations. In order to have a more precise and thorough study of the Master’s beliefs, teachings and influences on the Centers, it is necessary to study his background and Buddhist education first.

2. A Sketch of the Life of Master Jingkong

Master Jingkong (Ching-k’ung; see figure 7), who was born Xu Yehong 徐業鴻 on February 15, 1927, is a native of Lujiang County 安徽 of China. He grew up in Jianou 建甌, Fujian 福建, and, during the Second World War, attended the Third National Guizhou Junior High School, and later, after the War, the First Nanjing Municipal High School. In 1949, he went to Taiwan and soon worked in the Shijian Institution 實踐學社. In 1959, he received preliminary ordination at the Linji Monastery 临済寺 of Yuanshan 圓山, Taipei, and he was given the Dharma name Juejing 覺淨, zi Jingkong. After receiving the full ordination, he began to teach in Taiwan and, later, overseas. 78

After his ordination the Master has held a variety of positions, which give a glimpse of his competence in teaching and in other Buddhist-education-related matters. For instance, in 78 “A Life of Sincerity and Respect: The Life of Venerable Master Ching Kung: Propagating the Buddha’s Teachings through Education,” preface, 4 Jan. 2000 <http://www.amtb.org.tw/e-bud/profile.HTM>.
Taiwan alone he was the clerk of Linji Monastery and an instructor at the Tripitaka Institute at Shipu Monastery (1960); an instructor of the Buddhist institute of Nanputuo 南普陀佛学院; a committee member of the Propagating Teachings Committee (1961) and the Planning Committee of the Buddhist Association of Taiwan 中國佛教會設計委員及弘法委員 (1965); a professor and dean of academic affairs at the Oriental Buddhist College 東方佛學院 at Mount Fuguang 佛光山; a lecturer of the Seminars of Buddhism for the University Students at Songshan Monastery 松山寺大專佛學講座; the head instructor at the Seminars of Buddhism for University Students at the Chinese Buddhist Association of Taiwan 中國佛教會大專院校佛學講座 (1972); a Buddhist research fellow at the Chinese Academia Institute 中華學術院佛學研究員; a professor and editor of the Association of Buddhist Sutras, Commentaries and Translations of Taiwan 台灣佛經注釋譯會教授及編譯委員 (1973); a professor in the Philosophy Department at the Chinese Culture University; a professor of the Spiritual Living Course for East Asian Catholics 天主教東亞精神生活研習所 at Fu Ren University (1975); the president of the Chinese Inner Learning College 中國內學學院院長 (1977); and the president of the Chinese Pure Land Practice Research Institute 中國淨土宗實踐研究院 (1979). 79

Recently, "he has lectured at numerous universities, including the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University in Singapore; the University of Minnesota, the University of Texas, and the University of Hawaii in the U.S.; Melbourne University, Bond University, Curtin Technology University, and Monash University in Australia; Fu Ren

Catholic University, the Chinese Culture University, Cheng Gong University, and Chong Shan University in Taiwan, and other institutions of higher learning.”

All of these positions reflect the Master’s long time association with Buddhist education both in Taiwan and abroad. This list also reveals that master Jingkong’s teaching skills and knowledge of Buddhism were initially recognized only by Buddhist groups, but later by others as well.

In addition to his teaching skill, the Master is also known for his ability to lead. His achievements can be traced from as early as in 1962 when he founded the Huazang Dharma Giving Association (Hwa Dzan Dharma Giving Association). Moreover, he was the abbot of Huazang Monastery (Hwa Dzan Monastery) and has been the founder, teacher and advisor of Huazang Buddhist Audio-Visual Library (Hwa Dzan Buddhist Audio-Visual Library), the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation in 1985, the Board at Huazang Pure Land Learning Center (Hwa Dzan Pure Land Learning Center), Washington D. C. Buddhist Association, Dallas Buddhist Association, the Amitabha Buddhist Society of Singapore, and various Pure Land Learning Centers throughout the world. However, as mentioned in the guidelines, he has insisted that he is merely a leader in name, and urges that each organization should be operated autonomously so that the needs of people of different places can be properly met.

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In 1985, Master Jingkong immigrated to the United States. This act only made his teaching tours in the United States and other overseas cities more convenient. He keeps giving talks and lectures in various cities and universities within and without the United States. During this time, he became aware of the impact of cultural diversity. Having noticed such phenomenon of diverse races, cultures, and religions, he has then advocated the importance of harmonious interaction among different groups. He deems that “true sincerity” and “equality of mind” are the starting points for such interaction. This suggestion is based on the belief that a truly enlightened person will give rise to “the unconditional compassion and kindness” because he/she understands that “all beings are oneself, that the whole universe is one’s hometown, that the universe and oneself [are] a perfect entity.”

He practices what he preaches, and his effort finally caught attentions of various authorities. For example, in 1995, his remarkable achievements in race relations, and morality and peace promotion won him awards from both the city of Dallas and the state of Texas as an Honorary Citizen. Other examples are that he was granted Doctor Honoris Causa degree by Griffith University, Australia in August, 2002 and that he was invited to address the conference of the MultiFaith Forum held by the Multicultural Affairs in Queensland, Australia, where leaders from different racial groups, religions and academia meet monthly to exchange...
ideas on creating a better society. After discussions, possible solutions are recommended to the government.\textsuperscript{86}

More examples can be seen in Singapore after the Master moved there for the training of lecturers in 1997. Since then, he has led members of Buddhist groups in actively paying visits to other social and religious organizations and helping them whenever they meet with difficulties. The outcomes can be highlighted by the eye-catching banquets organized jointly by the Singapore Kulapati [Buddhist] Lodge and the Singapore Pure Land Learning Center on January the 1\textsuperscript{st} in 2000 and 2001, in which all representatives of nine main religions joined together to pray for the peace of the world (see figure 8-9). In addition to this symbolic gathering, with the Master in the lead, these religious groups have frequently held joint activities and even invite the Master and his students to give their followers lectures.\textsuperscript{87}

His sensitivity to his surroundings also lets him realize the capability of the modern technology. Having realized that the world, not to mention Chinese societies, has been rapidly changed due to the speedy development of technologies, the Master points out that in order to cope with the changes and revive Buddhist learning for the new generation, the equipment for transmission should be correspondingly modernized. This pioneer insight has led to the use of radio and TV broadcasting, satellites, the Internet (web-sites and live broadcast of talks) and other forms of multi-media in Buddhist teaching. Other activities like the worldwide free


\textsuperscript{87} "Qianxinian wenxin wanyan xianci 千禧年溫馨晚宴獻辭 (Congratulatory Message at the Warm Millennium Banquet)," 6 Dec. 2000 <http://www.amtb.org.tw/zhici/qianxi.htm>.
distribution of over three million books, audio-tapes, video-tapes, CD, VCD and DVD regarding the practice of Pure Land Buddhism are also noticeable.\textsuperscript{88}

Accordingly, Master Jingkong maintains that any newly established Pure Land Learning Center should use the free distribution of Buddhist materials as its primary tool for illuminating people that Buddhism is an educational philosophy and a way of life, and not to be mistaken for a polytheistic religion. To show the practicability of his notions, he takes the lead in sponsoring the printing and free worldwide distribution of the \textit{Dazangjing 大藏經} (the Great Buddhist Canon), \textit{Sishu 四書} (the Four Books), and \textit{Wujing 五經} (the Five Classics [of Confucianism]) as well as books and tapes on Buddhism, morality and ethics, and Chinese culture. In 1998 alone, there were more than twenty-eight thousand cartons of over one million seven hundred thousand books distributed to more than two hundred groups throughout the world.\textsuperscript{89}

Furthermore, out of his belief that Buddhism is an education with a high level of artistry, he also sponsors the free distribution of over a million reproductions of visual art material, such as Chinese calligraphy done by prominent Buddhist teachers, and prints of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. He clarifies that every Buddha’s and Bodhisattva’s image as well as every ceremony and offering are perfect expressions of various Buddhist teachings. All Buddhas’, Bodhisattvas’, Arhats’ and Heavenly Guardians’ names and characteristics are full of symbolic meanings, which actually represent infinite and profound qualities of Buddha’s nature or self-nature. For instance, when entering a conventional Buddhist monastery, in the center of the


Hall of Heavenly Guardians, one will first see the statue of Maitreya Bodhisattva, who is marked by his big smile and huge belly. As explained by the Master, the implicit meaning of this image being put in the entrance is that those who want to learn and practice Buddhism should first learn to be cheerful and broadminded as shown from the big smile, and to be tolerant, considerate and impartial to other people as shown from the huge belly.90

The same kind of symbolic meanings can be applied to the images seen in other halls such as the Four Heavenly Guardians and eighteen Arhats, as well as those items found on the offering table like water, incense, lamps, flowers and fruits. Each of them provides additional teachings to remind Buddhists of the right path and attitude of practice. Therefore, the Master emphasizes that those who burn incense, worship and prostrate themselves before the images merely hoping for wealth or a promotion are superstitious; they do not understand the principles and the goal of Buddhism.91

Recently, the Master has been living in Singapore, where he has focused on the training of lecturers in the Xinjiapo jushitin (the Singapore Kulapati [Buddhist] Lodge; see figure 10-14b); most of his students are from China, Taiwan, Singapore and the United States.92 Undoubtedly, the founding of the Pure Land Learning Center, the application of technology and the approach of global and multi-cultural development imply that a new generation has gradually grown up from the soil that has been enriched by the Taizhong Lotus...
Society. In short, the Taizhong Lotus Society is the link between the Pure Land lianshe traditions of the past and the Pure Land Learning Center of today.

Nevertheless, among all his accomplishments, master Jingkong is best known for his teaching about Buddhism. As mentioned, the Master received preliminary ordination in 1959 and since then, for over forty years, he has continuously given talks on the Jingtu wujing, Flower Adornment Sūtra, Lotus Sūtra, Śūrangama Sūtra, Complete Enlightenment Sūtra, Diamond Sūtra, Earth Treasure Sūtra, Fanwang jing, Qixin lun, Qixin lun (Awakening of Faith Sastra), Liuzu tanjing, Six Patriarch, Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch [of the Chan School], and many more. Such ceaseless teaching has been deemed extraordinary among present-day Buddhist groups. However, the Master gives his teachers credit for his successful teaching career. In his lectures, the Master has repeatedly emphasized that he could manage to lay a solid foundation for comprehending Buddhism only because of approximately thirteen years’ learning from Professor Fang Dongmei, the Tibetan Buddhist master Zhangjia, and Mr. Li Bingnan.

3. Master Jingkong’s History of Buddhist Education

The following information is re-organized on the basis of information found on the Internet and master Jingkong’s own writing in memory of Mr. Li in 1996. Although it is impossible to investigate systematically all the topics that the Master had learned from all these individuals, the core of their teachings can still be traced through the Master’s recollections, in which he highlights what he deems to be most influential and beneficial to his own study and practice.
First of all, from the Master's own account, we know that when he was in China in his youth, he was neither a Buddhist nor from a Buddhist family; on the contrary, he disliked Buddhism very much at that time:

When I was a young student in Nanjing, I did not believe in any religion. I went to church with some classmates to learn about Christianity. Although I tried to understand it, I could not find a way to accept it. My favorite religion at that time was Islam, because its emphasis was on moral principles and ethics, and I thought that this was rare among religions. When I encountered Buddhism back then, the monks were not very convincing. Therefore, I could not accept Buddhism either, and it was the one I resisted the most. I was too young at that time and had not met a true practitioner.

In fact, to a certain extent, his interest in Buddhism was simply fortuitous. It was all because of his longing for learning; he had never expected that such desire of knowledge would lead him to the field that he "resisted the most."

In 1953, he began his study of philosophy under the guidance of Fang Dongmei, a prominent professor who lectured at National Taiwan University at that time. By the

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94 Fang Xun 方 琬, zi Dongmei, a native of Tongcheng 桐 城 County, Anhui 安 徽, was graduated at the Jinling 金陵 University of Nanjing 南 京. He soon went to the United States to further his study at University of Wisconsin and received his Ph.D. degree when he was 26. Then, he started his teaching career as a professor and visiting professor in many different universities, including Taiwan National University 國 立 台 灣 大 學, Catholic Fu Jun University 輔 仁 大 學, Michigan State University, University of Missouri, and University of South Dakota. For many years, he spared no effort in the study of Mahayana Buddhism, particularly the philosophy of the Flower Adornment Sutra 華 喪 經 (Avatamsaka-sūtra), on which he held original views. His

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Master's own account, before learning from the Professor, he had considered Buddhism superstitious and never perceived it philosophically:

After I arrived in Taiwan, I heard of Professor Dong-Mei Fang [Dongmei Fang], who was then a famous philosopher and a professor at the National Taiwan University. Having become an admirer of his, I wrote him a letter asking about taking a class from him at the university. Professor Fang was only in his forties at that time. He invited me to his house and told me, “Nowadays in school, professors do not act like professors, and students do not act like students either. If you come to the university and expect to learn something, you will be sorely disappointed.” When I heard this, I was pretty upset since he had basically poured cold water [on] my plans. Finally, he told me: “Well, why don't you come to my house every Sunday, and I will give you personal instruction for two hours.” I could not believe that he was so compassionate towards me. I learned about philosophies at Professor Fang’s small table in his little living room, one on one. This was extremely precious to me. He introduced the philosophies of the West, China, India and finally Buddhism. He taught me that Buddhism is the pinnacle of the world's philosophies and that it provides the greatest enjoyment for humanity.

What he told me was fascinating[,] and soon I realized that Buddhism contained something magnificent. I started to visit the temples in Taipei. However, the monks I met in those temples just could not clearly explain Buddhism to an intellectual skeptic.

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like me. However, the monks are much better in teaching Buddhism today. Then I set my first sight on [the] Shan-Dao-Si [Shandao Monastery], which was a large temple in Taipei with a vast collection of sūtras. During that period of time, the wide publication and circulation of Buddhist books was very rare. The monks at [the] Shan-Dao-Si were extremely kind to me as they allowed me to borrow many of the precious and rare sūtras. This was a great help to me.\footnote{Jingkong, “To Understand Buddha’s Teaching,” 4-5, 9 Dec. 1999 <http://www.amtb-dba.org/buddedu2.doc>.

Obviously, it is Professor Fang who first let him know that the philosophy of Buddhism was at the peak of the world’s philosophies, and that to learn and practice Buddhist teachings was the greatest enjoyment of the life. Having been moved by these remarks, master Jingkong’s interest in learning Buddhism was at once initiated. These remarks also drop a hint that the Master’s emphasis on assimilating Buddhist practice with present daily life is connected with the greatest-enjoyment-of-the-life attitude. Furthermore, it is very possible that Professor Fang’s disappointment in the educational system sowed the seeds of reviving the traditional teaching method in the mind of the young Master.

Moreover, we also know that, from this time on, the Master frequently visited monasteries looking for available Sūtras. The one he found holding lots of Sūtras was the Shandao Monastery 善導寺 in Taipei, which was the biggest Buddhist monastery at the time. Before long, the Master made himself known to the monks of the monastery and thus borrowing Sūtras became more convenient for him. As the Master recalls, at this early stage of Buddhist learning, reading Sūtras helped him a lot.
In the same year, almost within the same month, by the recommendation of his neighbor Min Mengjing 敏孟經, a Mongolian aristocrat during the late Qing, master Jingkong was introduced to his second teacher, master Zhangjia, a well-accomplished practitioner of Tantric Buddhism. Likewise, they met two hours every week in a one-to-one tutorial session for three years until the death of master Zhangjia. According to master Jingkong, right at their first meeting, master Zhangjia had seriously mentioned that, in order to learn and practice Buddhism efficiently, one had to first learn how to kanpo 看破 (see through) and fangxia 放下 (let go), which should begin by practicing bushi 布施 (giving). Moreover, he deemed that, for every Buddhist, chijie 持戒 (observing precepts) was significant to cultivating a pure mind, while chanhui 慎 悔 (repentance) was the best way to cleanse karma. Accordingly, it is clear that master Zhangjia placed special stress on xing 行 (practice), through which idle talk could be avoided and written teachings substantiated. In fact, the same kind of practicability can be discerned in master Jingkong’s teachings. To take his explanation of repentance as an example, he claims that verbal and ritual repentances are not true repentances; a true one is that one can discover one’s wrongdoings and will never commit them again. At this point, aside from the

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96 Master Zhangjia, or Zhangjia Hutuktu 姚嘉呼圖克圖, one of the Four Great Hutuktu, was the chief Living Buddha of the Yellow Sect 黃 教 of the Tibetan Buddhism in the Inner Mongolian Region. Zhangjia is the Chinese transliteration of Tibetan name Lcan Lcan-skya, which is a name of a place in Tibet. Hutuktu, Xutuqtu in Mongolian, means a holy person 聖者. Therefore, the title of Zhangjia Hutuktu means a holy person from the place Zhangjia. He was usually called Lcan-skya gegen 姚嘉格根 or gegen 格根 (this Mongolian word gegen means an illuminated person 光明者) and considered as the metamorphic body of Maijuṣrī 文殊化身. This position had long been respected by the Qing royal family as well as the government of the Republic of China. He had successively held the posts as a committee member of The Committee of Mongolia and Tibet 蒙藏委員會, the envoy of propaganda and transformation of Mongolian and Banners 蒙旗宣化使, the Director of The Committee of Chinese Buddhism 中國佛教會理事長, and a consultant of the Presidential Palace 總統府資政. See Foguang dacidian (Gaoxiong: Foguang wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1988) 4837.
characteristic of practicability, a strong sense of ordinariness emerges, which suggests that, in a way, an assimilation of Buddhist practice with daily life is achieved in the Master’s teachings.\(^{97}\)

As a whole, this early stage of his Buddhist education is characterized by master Jingkong as a period of seedtime and germination while the following ten years as an important, preparatory period for both his teaching career and personal seeking of spiritual sublimation in the future.

In 1957, through Mr. Zhu Jingzhou 朱鏡宙 (1889-1985), the founder of Taiwan Sūtras Publications 台灣印經處, master Jingkong was introduced to Li Bingnan. According to the Master, by then he had been studying Buddhism for quite a while, he understood that Buddhism was “the truth of the Universe and life” and decided to specialize in Buddhism.\(^{98}\) In order to concentrate on this study, he resigned from his job in Taipei and went to Taizhong to learn from Li. Shortly after he arrived there, he was assigned as the librarian in the newly established Compassion Light Library.\(^{99}\)

At the time, Li gave public lectures on Sūtras every Wednesday in the library and taught a Sūtra Learning Class every Friday in the Taizhong Lotus Society. This Sūtra Learning Class was, in fact, a special class of less than thirty students, which was operated strictly for training lecturers on various Sūtras. A session of learning was to learn to lecture on a complete sūtra. One of the features of this Sūtra Learning Class is that the teaching method employed by Li was 小座複講 (to repeat a lecture in a small forum), a traditional Chinese Buddhist teaching method used in Buddhist lecturers’ training. As the term literally suggests, this kind of class should be a small one, after the teacher goes through a sūtra once, students are requested, one by one, to imitate the teacher’s pedagogy and teaching approach, by which,

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under the supervision of the teacher, students can practice how to lecture on the same sūtra in
front of the whole class. Therefore, if there are twenty students in the class, after the teacher
finishes a sūtra, there will be totally twenty times of repeated lectures on the same sūtra.
However, this is not all. Students are then requested to lecture on the whole sūtra once in
public, which is supposed to be the only way to prove that they can teach a sūtra. Such public
teaching is called *jiangdazuo* (to lecture in a big forum). Only those who have
lectured in public can be considered to have completed the whole session of training on “that”
sūtra and only these students can start a new cycle of training to learn another sūtra.\(^{100}\)

Beyond master Jingkong’s expectation, instead of being merely one of Li’s audience
attending public lectures, he was convinced by Li to go to the lecturer training class. After that
he maintained this close tie with the teacher for ten years, which means that he spent ten years
to learn a variety of sūtras. He started his teaching career soon after he received preliminary
ordination in 1959 while he still managed to attend all the teacher’s lectures, not to mention the
Sūtra Learning Class. Moreover, during the ten years of close ties with the teacher, the Master
had already established his teaching career outside the Taizhong area.

It is also during this time that the Master was given a copy of the compiled *Infinite Life*
Sūtra by Li. Surprisingly, Li only lectured on it once in 1950 at the Fahua Monastery 法華寺,
Taizhong. Later in 1971, several years after the ten-year training, master Jingkong wanted to
give a series of lectures on the compiled sūtra at the request of Ms. Han Ying 韓金英 (1922-
1997; see figure 15), who had frequently attended the Master’s lectures in Taipei and later
became the most important and influential patron for the development of the Master’s teaching
career. However, when the Master asked for Li’s advice, Li told him that the time for lecturing
on this sūtra had not yet arrived, and urged him to wait patiently for the coming of that moment.

Li then told the Master that he had been anticipating the propagation of Pure Land teachings and the popularization of the compiled sūtra throughout the world. Together with the presenting of the personal copy of the sūtra to the Master, Li’s remark undeniably signified a typical transmission of lineage and expectation.

The right time finally came in 1980’s by the requests of audiences in Taiwan and overseas. In the following decade, the Master gave ten series of lectures on that sūtra, which made a notable impact on the transmission of Mahāyāna, and marked a milestone in the development of Pure Land Buddhism.

Actually, in the case of Li Bingnan’s teaching method, the Sūtra Learning Class is only part of it; there are other interesting methods and characteristics, which are highlighted by the Master as follows:

1) For the lecturer-trainees’ convenience, master Jingkong reduces Li’s pedagogy into four basic principles: a) Simple and not complicated 簡而不繁; b) easy and not difficult 易而不難; c) plain and not profound 淺而不深; and d) clear and not vague 明而不昧. In short, for beginners, to clearly convey Buddhist teachings to audiences is the essential factor in success. This is also one of the reasons that the Master’s teachings can be understood by a wide range of people, from illiterates to intellectuals.

2) The Master points out that there was one occasion that Li gathered all students of the lecturer training class and discussed with them their strengths and weakness in teaching in a carefree, relaxed manner. Corresponding to each person’s personality

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and comportment, Li advised different techniques to each of them. This incident
reflects that the teacher's abilities of observation and discernment correspond to the
Buddhist ideas of *qieji* 契機 (meeting [one's] capability) and *qieli* 契理 (meeting
[Buddhist] truth).\(^{103}\)

3) The Master discloses the methods he learned from Li, which are totally different
from those of his classmates:

a) *Zhichenggantong* 至誠感通, literally means that practicing utmost sincerity
leads to response. For being an outstanding lecturer on Buddhism, one has to be
knowledgeable in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist fields, but it is impossible for a
person to learn all of these simply by reading and doing research. The only way is
to invite the response from Buddha and Bodhisavtta by cultivating one's ultimate
sincerity.\(^{104}\)

b) Master Jingkong was the only one in the training class not allowed to write
notes while listening to the teacher's lectures on sutras. Li's explanation is that
jotting notes would distract attention and, thus, one could not fully concentrate on
listening to the lectures. Li further pointed out that for those who know how to
"listen," they listen to the *jiaoli* 教 理, the truth of the teachings; once the truth is
fully understood, then all sutras can be comprehended simultaneously because the
teachings are from one single source, the self-nature, or the Buddha's nature. But
for those who are not able to do so, they at least should know from listening to the
*jiaoyi* 教 義, the meanings of the teachings, which is different from simply
memorizing the meanings of terms. The reason behind this theory is that Buddhist


lecturers need to put Buddha’s teachings into practice; their level of
“enlightenment” will directly affect the content and the profundity of their lectures.
The higher the level of enlightenment a lecturer obtains, the more profound and
comprehensive the lecture will be. Hence, writing notes becomes unnecessary.105
c) Yimenshenru — 門深入, which means, literally, specializing in one method.
In terms of pedagogy, both Mr. Li and the Master consider that to learn from “one”
teacher is a very important step for beginners. At this point, the Master recalls that,
when he first met Li in Taizhong, Li brought forward three requests. The first one
is that once he decided to learn from him, the Master was not allowed to attend or
listen to any lectures on sūtras by others. The second one is that the Master could
only read those written materials, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, that had been
approved by Li. The last one is that all the teachings the Master learned before
were all considered invalid by Li, which means that the Master should deem himself
as a mere beginner. Out of admiration for Li, the Master agreed to observe these
precepts for five years even though the requirements seem to be too harsh.
However, before long, the Master found out that these precepts were beneficial to
his study and practice, so he prolonged the period of observation for another five
years. The Master believed that by following these rules, his mind could avoid
being disturbed and distracted by confused and unsystematic self-learning and
reading so that the mind has become purer and clearer. A pure mind is the
prerequisite of gaining wisdom.106

Furthermore, appreciated by the Master, all of these teaching and learning strategies actually functioned as precepts for him that were advantageous to the foundation of his ding 定 (concentration) and hui 慧 (wisdom). Besides, from Li’s special treatment of the Master, it is not difficult to understand that why the Master has been revered as one of the most competent Buddhist lecturers. Above all, recently, his reputation is not only limited to “a competent lecturer,” but also as “a competent trainer” after the establishment of the Buddhist Educational College in Singapore.

4. Master Jingkong as a Trainer of Buddhist Lecturers

As for Master Jingkong’s teaching history in Singapore, he was first invited by Mr. Li Muyuan 李木源 (Lee Bock-Guan) to give talks there in 1987. His talks were so remarkable that since then several Buddhist organizations have successively invited him to give lectures every year. In May of 1995, aside from the regular invitation for Buddhist talks, the Singapore Kulapati (Buddhist) Lodge and the Amitabha Buddhist Society came up with a new idea: they wanted to invite the Master to hold classes to train future lecturers. Shortly after the Master consented to the plan, students were recruited. There were nine student-monks from China in the first class. After the completion of the class, all of them returned to China where they started to teach in modern Buddhist training schools and to give talks by invitation. All students were proved to be competent and quite successful in their teaching. Thus, word of the success of this training class diffused and much interest was generated among Buddhist communities in China.107

Consequently, when the second class was announced in the following year, the number of applicants was far beyond the number of available spaces. Finally, spaces were increased to thirty and applicants were accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. The second class was opened in 1996 and, again, the student-monks were from different cities and provinces throughout China. The third and the fourth classes were begun in September of 1997 and March of 1998 respectively and students were both monks and lay Buddhists from China, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, the United States and the Philippines.  

The immediate impact of the popularity of the training class is that it led to the establishment of the Buddhist Educational College in Singapore, which is the first Buddhist school founded in the peninsula. Its mission is “to learn to be a good teacher and a role model for all (學為人師，行為世範),” which is a conventional Chinese ideology for literati. As for the immediate impact of the establishment of this College is that it led to the cooperation with the Buddhist Association of China 中國佛教協會, P.R.O.C., in working out “The Class for the Training of Qualified Buddhist Lecturers on Sūtras and Dharma Transmission (佛教講經弘法人才培訓班).” A Protocol or an agreement (yixiangshu 意向書) was signed in Singapore on April the 26th of 2000 by representatives of both parties. The two sides have agreed to run this one-year training class once a year. Every year, a recruiting


examination is held to choose thirty students, who are supposedly to study in Singapore for six months and return to China for another six months as practical training. After the agreement was signed, an examination was soon held in August and the first class began in December of 2000. However, since the course principles, content and teaching methods are quite different from other regular Buddhist colleges found in the present day, this college can be considered as the first of its kind in the modern era.

In terms of pedagogy, the school aims to combine the characteristics of Chinese traditional teaching method with the contemporary educational structure. Three levels of courses are offered, with the first year as preparatory classes, the next three years as degree classes, and the final three years as post-graduate classes. Similar to the Sūtra Learning Class operated by Li Bingnan, students attending this college will study only one sūtra, unit by unit. Students can choose their primary sūtra, but the sūtra cannot be changed once it is selected. After completing one course unit, with the teacher’s approval, students can proceed to the next course unit.

This method allows students to engage in in-depth research study solely on their chosen sūtra. Unlike other usual classes, teachers do not explain everything, whereas students are expected to study the course materials, write drafts, give talks, listen to comments from classmates and revise the drafts by themselves. In the beginning, students only give talks to their classmates who study the same sūtra but they are allowed to audit classes on other sūtras. Once they finish the revision of the drafts with comments from classmates, they are required to present the formal talks to the public, which is the final section of a course unit. Upon

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finishing the public talks, the teacher gives marks to determine if they are ready for the next course unit.\textsuperscript{112}

Undoubtedly, this is the traditional Chinese method of teaching inherited by Li from China which has been adapted by the Master for the contemporary Buddhist school. According to the Master, the purpose of setting up this Buddhist Educational College is to train a new generation of lecturers and act as a role model for other Buddhist colleges.\textsuperscript{113} To accomplish these goals, other than the application of the traditional pedagogy, the Master urges students to study other cultures and languages and master the application of modern technology. This is why students are spending their spare time to study English and to learn to use computers (see figure 16). Again, the goal is hope that the education of Buddhism can be brought to people around the world.\textsuperscript{114}

Conclusion

To conclude, the Pure Land Learning Center is a contemporary organization that succeeds to the conventional Pure Land traditions and lineage. In addition to the transmission of Buddha’s teachings, it also functions as a charity group like most Buddhist organizations: donating food, money, clothing, etc. to those in need and awarding scholarships to poor students, particularly to those in China. However, what makes it different from the old traditions is that the Learning Center’s modernization of methods for transmission of teachings


and its practicability of doctrines and ways of practice. These features successfully help the Center break new paths. Such timely changes are due to the leadership of master Jingkong.

As a whole, the Master’s development in learning and teaching Buddhism can be divided into three main stages, those of the student, the teacher and the trainer:

1) The Stage of Education (1953-1966). This learning period has been discussed above for comprehending the Master’s Buddhist background, he considers that those key points he specializes in are essential to the growth of his Buddhist knowledge and cultivation. He refers to the learning period under the guidance of Professor Fang and master Zhangjia as the period of seedtime and germination while the ten years of learning from Li successfully helped him grow into a “small tree.”

2) The Stage of Teaching (1967-1997). Although the Master had started teaching soon after he became a monk, the time for him to be a full-time Buddhist lecturer was in 1967, after he graduated from Taizhong. As mentioned by the Master, the most important person regarding his teaching career is Ms. Han Ying. After the Master moved to live with her family, she, other than simply providing financial support, started to look for places for him to give lectures, and invited audiences to attend these talks. Thus, the Master could practice his teaching skills everyday, which is very important to a young, inexperienced lecturer. Besides, he also remarks that when later he was invited by audiences in the United States, it was Ms. Han Ying who finally found a government-recognized organization to back him up for applying for a passport to leave the country. At that time, due to political reasons, to leave the country was not as easy as nowadays in Taiwan. Particularly for

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religious purpose like this, the Master needed to apply for a passport with some documents from the Chinese Buddhist Association of Taiwan; however, the Master’s plan to teach abroad was not supported by this association. Therefore, as appreciated by the Master, he emphasizes that, without Ms. Han Ying, he even might not be a monk today, not to mention having a career in teaching Buddhism. With her aid, the Master has grown into a “tall, strong tree.”

3) The Stage of Training Lecturers (1996-present). Parts of the credit for the development of this recent stage should give to Li Muyuan (Lee Bock-Guan; see figure 17), who is the leading figure of the Singapore Kulapati (Buddhist) Lodge and the Amitabha Buddhist Society. With Li Muyuan’s assistance, the Master’s individual effort in propagating Pure Land Buddhism has been transformed into a powerful network of transmission. Such powerful network can be reflected by the example that, during the Master’s recent five-year sealed confinement (started in December of 2001), he lectures four hours each day in a studio in Australia for audio and video recording, and live internet transmission.¹¹⁷ According to the strong response from Buddhist communities of countries like China, Malaysia, etc. to the development of the Buddhist Educational College, its impact on Buddhist development in these places in the near future is worth notice. Hence, borrowing the Master’s parable, I think, this stage can be called the period of florescence and fruit bearing.

However, the Master’s present success is not totally free of obstacles and adversities. When he had finished his study in Taizhong, he moved back to Taipei but was unsure where to


go because no monastery wanted a mere lecturer, since they preferred to keep those who could conduct religious rites, which was a good source of income. However, he “firmly believed that the basic responsibility of monks and nuns is to pass on the proper teachings of the Buddha, and not just to conduct religious rites and ceremonies.” Obviously, his “notion” was viewed offensive by some “established” monasteries at the time and he was thus misunderstood and slandered.\(^\text{118}\)

According to him, he was in such a dilemma that he had only two alternatives: he could either give up the status of monk or conduct religious rites. If he chose to uphold his goal as a lecturer to exert himself to propagate Buddhism, he would not be accepted in any monastery at that time, which means that he could hardly continue his monkhood and would need to return to the lay life. If he wanted to maintain his status and to live in a monastery, he had to force himself to conduct religious rites to which he had long been opposed. It was at this crucial moment that he was invited by Ms. Han Ying and her husband to live in their house. To make sure this move met with Buddhist precepts, master Jingkong deliberately asked Mr. Li for approval. With Li’s approval and the Master’s own enthusiasm for propagating Buddhism, he finally accepted the offer and lived with that family for seventeen years until the establishment of the Huazang Buddhist Library. As expected, this decision resulted in gossip and censure from the majority of Buddhist groups. Nonetheless, Ms. Han Ying’s thirty-year patronage and the Master’s diligence and endurance have helped him survive these difficult situations.\(^\text{119}\)

To further comprehend his influence on the Learning Center, this thesis will continue to explore his Buddhist beliefs and advocacy in the next two chapters.


CHAPTER THREE

The Relation between the Pure Land Teachings Advocated by Master Jingkong and Other Pure Land Patriarchs

Some Basic Knowledge of the Pure Land Teachings

Before focusing on the topic, it is necessary to make clear the general belief of the Pure Land School first in this opening section. For the convenience of such clarification, a brief introduction of the teaching and practice of Pure Land Buddhism is given below by quoting a passage from Holmes Welch’s *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900-1950*:

According to the fundamental sūtra of the Pure Land school, the Sukhāvatīvyūha, there was once a monk, Dharmakara, who resolved that he would only become a Buddha on the condition that his Buddha realm had the following characteristics. It would be full of sweet smells, clouds of music, showers of jewels, and every other beauty and joy. All who were reborn there would be able to stay indefinitely and to attain their nirvana. Most important of all, anyone could be reborn there who called upon his name ten times, or even once only. After making this resolve, Dharmakara went on to become the Buddha Amitābha (O-mi-t'o-fo [Emituofo]). The realm that he had made a precondition of Buddhahood was thereby created. It lay in the West and so was called the Western Paradise. Since it was without pain or sin, it was also called the Pure Land. Amitābha still presides over it, assisted by two Bodhisattvas known in Chinese as Kuan-yin [Guanyin] and Ta-shih-chih [Dashizhi] (Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprpta).
Since we are living in the age of the decay of the dharma, it is difficult, as mentioned in the last chapter, to reach nirvana here through our own efforts. Therefore most Buddhists in China prefer to get the help of Amitābha by reciting his name (nien-fo [nianfo]). That is, they repeat the words “homage to the [B]uddha Amitābha” (na-mo O-mi-t‘o-fo [namo Emituofo]) in the belief that if they do so wholeheartedly they will be reborn in the Western Paradise. “Wholeheartedly” means making their minds “whole and still” (i-hsin pu-hian [yixin buhui]), so that nothing is there but Amitābha. He is in their mouths (as they recite his name), in their ears (as they listen to the recitation), and in their minds (as they visualize him). This is called “perfect concentration in reciting [B]uddha’s name” (nien-fo san-mei [nianfo sanmei]). It corresponds to a degree of enlightenment achieved in the meditation hall. Achieving it does not necessarily mean that one goes to the Western Paradise when he dies, unless he dies at once. Otherwise it is possible to slide backwards.

Entry into the Western Paradise requires no enlightenment at all. ... There are nine grades (chiu-p‘in [jiupin]). ... Residents of the Western Paradise who are approaching [B]uddhahood may choose to return to the world of men. They do not have to, since they have been permanently released from the cycle of birth and death, but they may decide to be reborn here in order to follow the [B]odhisattva ideal of compassionate help to all sentient beings.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{120} Holmes Welch, \textit{The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900-1950} (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967) 89-90.
According to Welch, "[e]xcept for the first paragraph, the picture given above is based entirely on conversations with Chinese Buddhists of different sects."  

In other words, his interviews provide information about the general understanding among Chinese Buddhists of the notion and the practice of the Pure Land School during the first half of twentieth century. From his summary, several accounts are worth elaboration here:

1. In addition to the *Wuliangshou jing* (the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra; the Infinite Life Sūtra) mentioned above, the teachings of the Pure Land School were also developed on the basis of two other sūtras, titled in Chinese as the *Foshuo Amituo jing* (the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra; the Amitābha Sūtra) and *Foshuo guan Wuliangshoufo jing* (the Amitayur-dhyana-sūtra; the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra). They are known as *Jingtu sanjing* (the Three Pure Land Sutras) whereas another similar term *Sanjing yilun* (the Three Sūtras and One Treatise) refers to the combination of these three sūtras and the *Wangsheng lun* (the Rebirth Treatise), an important upadeśa, or dogmatic treatise, on the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra, on which the practice of *wunian men* (the five devotional ways) of the Pure Land School is based.  

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122 The full title of this Treatise is the *Wuliangshoujing youpotishe yuansheng ji* (the Gāthā of Resolving to be Reborn [in Praise of] the Upadeśa of the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra; Sukhāvatī-vyūhopadesa), and the five devotional ways are:

1. *libai men* (vandana; the way of worship): to worship Amitābha with one’s body so as to remind one to resolve to be reborn in the Western Pure Land;
However, with the promotion of the Puxianpusa xingyuanpin (普賢菩薩行願品; a chapter of the Avatamsaka-sūtra; the Chapter on the Conduct and Vows of the Universal Worthy Bodhisattva [Samantabhadra]), and the Dashizhipusa nianfo yuantongzhang (大勢至菩薩念佛通章; a chapter of the Śūrangama-sūtra 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經; the Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Great Strength Bodhisattva [Mahāsthāma] through Buddha Name Recitation) by the famous Qing scholar-official Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857, zi Moshen 默深) and the School’s thirteenth Patriarch, Shengliang (Yinguang), respectively, the number of sūtras for the School has changed and renamed as Jingtu wujing (淨土五經; the Five Pure Land Sutras) and Wujing yihun 五經一論 (the Five Sutras and One Treatise).123 Theoretically speaking, studies and commentaries of these

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(2) zantan men 讚歎門 (stotra; the way of praise): to chant the name of Amitābha and praise the Buddha’s accomplishments with one’s mouth in the hope that such practice corresponds to the Buddha Nature;

(3) zuoyuan men 作願門 (pranidhāna; the way of making vows): resolve to be reborn in the Pure Land with one’s whole mind in the hope that such practice corresponds to the attainment of samatha, or calmness of mind and absence of passion;

(4) guancha men 觀察門 (pravicaya; the way of contemplation): to discern the wonders and advantages of the Pure Land and the merits and virtues of Amitābha and residents of that land in the hope that such practice corresponds to the attainment of vipaśyanā, or contemplation;

(5) huixiang men 退向門 (the way of dedicating merits): to dedicate one’s merits like works of supererogation to the salvation of all sentient beings in order to achieve mahākarunā, or the great pity mind.


works are critical to the understanding of the School’s teachings and practices.

Probably for the same reason, every time when Master Jingkong gives a lecture, he frequently cites many quotations from these sūtras and their commentaries to expound the School’s teachings. Thus, to a large extent, such selected quotations reveal Jingkong’s ideology and its connection with traditional teachings of the School, which are the focuses of this chapter and will be discussed in the following section.

2. In terms of Buddhist practice, there are two types of power, *zīlì* 自力 (self-power) and *tālì* 他力 (other-power). To attain salvation and Buddhahood, all other Chinese Buddhist schools rely solely on self-power to eliminate afflictions (*duān fānnao* 断煩惱), but with the practices of the Pure Land School one can attain salvation and Buddhahood easier by relying on both powers to overcome afflictions (*fǔ fānnao* 伏煩惱). That is, all Pure Land practitioners not only rely on their own effort but also on the power of Amitābha, who is considered to have attained Buddhahood by fulfilling his forty-eight vows, with which he created the Western Pure Land for those who wished to transcend reincarnation within the Six Realms, and in which the perfection of the Pure Land lies. It is also believed that those who are reborn into the Pure Land will become Bodhisattvas at once, never regress in their practice until they become Buddhas, and learn all the ways to help other sentient beings to attain Buddhahood. Hence, the practices of the Pure Land School are known as *jīnglu* 徑路 (a shortcut) and *yìxing* 易行 (an easy-to-do way).

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125 All practices of *nianfo* are considered the shortcut to salvation, while *chiming* 持名 (to recite the name [of Amitābha]), one of the *nianfo* methods, is praised to be *jīngzhǒng jīng* 徑中徑 (the shortcut within a shortcut; other similar terms are 徑中之徑, 徑中又徑, and 徑而又徑). See Shandao 善導, “Quanhua jīnglu xìuxíng 67"
3. The terms *yixin buluan* — 心不乱 (one mind undisturbed; *i-hsin pu-luan*) and *yixiang zhuannian* — 向 專 念 (to recite devotionally and consistently) are the principal guidelines for the Pure Land practices.\(^{127}\) The former can only be found in the *Amitābha Sūtra*\(^{128}\) while the latter in the *Infinite Life Sūtra*.\(^{129}\)


\(^{127}\) See Sangghavarman 康僧鑑 (Kangsengkai), trans., *Foshuo wuliangshou jing 佛說無量壽經 [The Infinite Life Sūtra]*, TT 12, no. 360: 272b; and Xia Lianju 夏蓮居, ed., *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjin pingdeng jue jing 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經 [The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School]* (Taipei: Huazang jingzongxuehui, reprint 1992) 66-68.\(^{130}\)

\(^{130}\) To properly explain the concept of *dushe liugen* (to assimilate the six sense organs), it is necessary to first explain several related concepts, *liushi 六識 (the six sense), liujing 六境 (the six objective fields of sense), liuchen 六塵 (the six guanas, inherent qualities), and their inter-relationships:
Diagram 1. Concepts of and Inter-relationships among the Six Sense, the Six Objective Fields of Sense, and the Six Gunas, Inherent Qualities

The six sense organs are yan (eye), er 耳 (ear), bi 鼻 (nose), she 舌 (tongue), shen 身 (body), and yi 意 (mind). From the six sense organs, there exist six corresponding senses, which are jian 見 (see), wen 聽 (hear), xiu 嗅 (smell), wei 味 (taste), jue 觸 (touch), and si 思 (think). When the six senses have contacted the six objective fields (se 色, form; sheng 聲, sound; xiang 香, scent; wei 味, taste; chu 腴, texture; and fa 法, ideas), the six inherent qualities are developed because of the Three Afflictions discussed in footnote 132 (in general, they are also called fenbie 分別 (discriminatory thoughts), zhizhuo 執著 (attachment), and wangxiang 妄想 (erroneous thoughts)). These six qualities are described by the word chen 墮 (dust, or dirt) and are the cause of all impurity that pollutes the six sense organs. Since the origin of the six senses and the six inherent qualities is the six sense organs itself, the six sense organs is described by the word gen 根 (root).

To assimilate the six sense organs is to prevent discriminatory thoughts and attachment so that the six inherent qualities are not developed during the interaction between the six senses and the six objective fields. By practicing nianfo, all focuses are diverted from the six objective fields back to the recitation so that pure thought persists.

131 Paramiti 般剌蜜帝 (Bocimidi), trans., “Dashizhipusa nianfo yuanlouzi zhang 大勢至菩薩念佛圓通章 [The Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Great Strength Bodhisattva (Mahāsthāma) through Buddha Name Recitation],” Dafoding ruilai mivin xizheng lei zhipusa wenhang shoulengyan jing 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 [The Śūraṅgama-Sūtra], TT 19, no. 945: 128b.
5. There are three levels of *nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧 (*nianfo samādhi*; Welch calls it “perfect concentration in reciting Buddha’s name;”) that is, the mind fixed and undisturbed through reciting Buddha’s name) in the Pure Land practices, from the elementary to the advanced levels, namely, *gongfu chengpian* 功夫成片 (efforts that have reached constant mindfulness), *shi yixin buluan* 事一心不亂 (one mind undisturbed in mindfulness), and *li yixin buluan* 理一心不亂 (one mind undisturbed in enlightenment). 132 The level of constant mindfulness, an attainable state for all sentient beings, is described as the state in which one does not have discriminatory thoughts and attachments. Once this level is attained, it is believed that all afflictions are overcome and the rebirth to *Fansheng tongju tu* 凡聖同居土 (the Land Where Mortals and Sages Dwell Together) of the Pure Land is ensured. Those who attain the level of one mind undisturbed in mindfulness are said to have eliminated one of the three main types of afflictions. 133 Under such conditions, the practitioner can be reborn into *Fangbian youyu tu* 方便有餘土 (the Land of Expediency and Remaining [Afflictions]). However, it is the level of one mind undisturbed in enlightenment that is

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132 Zhixu. *Amituojing yaojie* [Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra], 1645, TT 37, no. 1762: 371b.

133 San fannao 三煩惱 (the Three Afflictions), also known as *sanhuo* 三惑 (the Three Delusions), *sanlou* 三漏 (the Three Leakages), *sangou* 三垢 (the Three Dirtinesses), and *sanjie* 三結 (the Three Bonds), are:

1) *jian si fannao* 見思煩惱 (afflictions arise from things seen and thought) refers to illusions from faulty perception;

2) *chensha fannao* 慈沙煩惱 (afflictions arising from [being unable to comprehend ways of saving sentient beings which are as numberless as] dust and sand) refers to the afflictions of Bodhisattvas, which are the illusions and temptations that arise when they face the vast amount of detail in knowledge and operation required for the immense variety of duties in saving sentient beings;

3) *wuming fannao* 無明煩惱 (afflictions arising from [primal] ignorance) refers to the illusions and temptations arise from failing to realize the Reality, the truth of the mean between realism and nihilism.
considered to be the equivalent level that "corresponds to a degree of enlightenment achieved in the meditation hall." \(^{134}\) It is believed that as a certain degree of enlightenment is attained, the practitioner can be reborn into *Shibao zhuangyan tu* (the Magnificent Land of True Retribution) and partially experience *Chang ji guang tu* (the Land of Eternity, Tranquility, and Light [of Wisdom]). \(^{135}\) In

\(^{134}\) For example, in Zhuhong’s work *Changuan cejin*, on the term *yixin buluan*, or one mind undisturbed, he comments that many people have overlooked the fact that the level of *yixin buluan* is equivalent to that of Chan (只此一心不亂四字, 參禪之事畢矣, 人多於此忽之). See Zhuhong, *Changuan cejin* (Encourage to Make Progress in the Sealed Confinement of Chan), 1600, TT 48, no. 2024: 1107a.

\(^{135}\) These four Lands are the four Buddha-ksetra, or realms. They are in reality four-in-one, existing in the Land of Eternity, Tranquility, and Light (of Wisdom), and are only separated for the sake of convenience in teaching. For further details, see Ding Fubao, *Foxue dacidian* (Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching), 1920 (Taipei: Huazang Fojiao shiting tusluiguan, reprint 1989) 750-751.

The following table shows the relationship between the levels of *nianfo sanmei*, the statuses of attainment, and these four Lands:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>念佛三昧 (Perfect Concentration in Reciting Buddha’s Name)</th>
<th>圆教品位 (The Statuses of the Attainment in Perfect Teaching’s System)</th>
<th>西方四土 (The Western Four Lands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>功夫成片 (Efforts that have reached constant mindfulness)</td>
<td>阿羅漢 (Arhat; the highest attainment in Hinayana Buddhism)</td>
<td>凡聖同居土 (The Land Where Mortals and Sages Dwell Together)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>事一心不亂 (One mind undisturbed in mindfulness)</td>
<td>方便有餘土 (The Land of Expediency and Remaining [Afflictions])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>理一心不亂 (One mind undisturbed in enlightenment)</td>
<td>初住菩薩以上 (The first of the Ten Stages, or the fortieth section, in the fifty-two sections of the enlightenment attained by Bodhisattvas)</td>
<td>實報莊嚴土 (The Magnificent Land of True Retribution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>常寂光土 (The Land of Eternity, Tranquility, and Light [of Wisdom])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The Relationship between the Levels of *Nianfo Sanmei*, the Statuses of Attainment, and the Western Four Lands

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addition, the classification of the “nine grades”\textsuperscript{136} is in fact a further subdivision according to the attained level of nianfo sanmei, or, in other words, to the amount of remaining karma. For such reason, rebirth is also termed as daiye wangsheng 帶業往生 (reborn with [corresponding] karma).\textsuperscript{137}

6. It is said that a Pure Land practitioner can be reborn into the Pure Land on condition that the so-called san ziliang 三資糧 (the Three Provisions), xin 信 (faith), yuan 頌 (vow), and xing 行 (practice), have been prepared. That is, the practitioner must have faith in the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism, be willing to be reborn to Amitābha’s Pure Land, and practice what has been taught. The first two are considered to be the prerequisite: the faith and vow determine whether one will be reborn in the Pure Land. Whereas the level of attainment determines into which land a practitioner will be reborn,

\textsuperscript{136} Jiupin 九品 (nine grades) refers to the nine different levels of concentration or enlightenment attained by those who can be reborn into the Pure Land, with shangshang 上上 (upper superior) as the highest type of incarnate resident, and xiaxia 下下 (lower inferior) the lowest. According to William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1982) 16, “[e]ach grades may also be subdivide into nine, thus making a list of eighty-one grades, with similar further subdivision ad infinitum.”

\textsuperscript{137} See Zhixu 智旭, Amitojing yaojie 阿彌陀經要解 [Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sutra], 1645, TT 37, no. 1762: 365a and 370c; and Shen Fu 沈福, “Jingtu yuanliu 淨土源流 [The Origin and Development of Pure Land (Buddhism)],” Jingtuzong shilun [On the History of the Pure Land School], ed. Zhang Mantao 張曼濤 (Taipei: Dacheng wenhua chubanshe, 1979) 11. The point of “being reborn with corresponding karma” is one of the three reasons why the Western Pure Land is claimed to be better than the others suggested by Jingkong; the other two reasons are “maintaining the stage of non-regression” and “becoming a Buddha in one life after being reborn there.” The original passage reads as follows: “西方世界唯一能超越其他世界之處，第一是帯業往生，第二往生不退，第三往生以後，一生成佛，此是西方世界第一殊勝之處。” See Liu Chengfu 劉承符, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingde jing qinwenji [A Record of What I Have Heard about the Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School] (Taipei: Sanbao dizi, 1999) 201.
the classification of the lands is based on the amount of remaining karma. With heavier
karma, one is said to be reborn into a lower level of land; with lighter karma, a higher
level of land. Thus, it does not matter if the practitioner only recites ten times, or even
once, the name of Amitābha Buddha as long as he/she has faith and vows, and has
achieved a certain level of concentration or a certain degree of enlightenment.138

7. Most of the rituals and practices, such as the five devotional ways, ten-recitation
method and Seven [Days] Nianfo Dharma Gathering, were developed and have been
observed according to various Pure Land sūtras in order to achieve those goals
described above.

The Four Divisions: Faith, Comprehension, Practice and Realization

Although a vast amount of records of Master Jingkong’s lectures on a variety of sūtras,
moral books and Buddhist works has conserved, this chapter does not attempt to reorganize and
analyze Jingkong’s teaching based on information collected from all these lectures. This study
concentrates solely on lectures about the compiled version of the Infinite Life Sūtra, or Foshuo
dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴平等覺
經 (The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and
Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School; 1935), because this core sūtra of the Pure Land
Learning Center has been warmly advocated by Jingkong since 1987 when he gave his first
lecture on it.

To date Jingkong has lectured ten times on this sūtra, but only three of them are used
here as the sources of the discussions. The reason for this selection is that one of them is the

138 For further details, see Zhuhong, Amituo jing shuchao [Phrase-by-Phrase Commentary on the Amitābha Sūtra],
1584, Xuzangjing, vol. 33: 218, 227, and 244.
most recent series of lectures on the sutra that began in 1998, while the other two are chosen for their convenience in the textual study because they have been transcribed, edited and published as two sets of books, titled as the Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清净平等覺經講記 (Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sutra; 1996) and Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing qinwenji 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清净平等覺經親聞記 (A Record of What I Have Heard about the Infinite Life Sutra; 1999). The transcriptions are based on the 1990 and 1992 series of lectures respectively; the 1990 lectures are particularly informative. 139

Moreover, information gathered from these oral and written materials is organized according to the categorization of four divisions which was first used to annotate the Flower Adornment Sutra by Chengguan 澄覲 (738-839; zi Daxiu 大休, hao Qingliang 清涼), who is well-known for his revelation of the Sutra’s profound teachings and ways of practice by using this category. Thus, his four divisions, xin 信 (faith), jie 解 (comprehension), xing 行 (practice) and zheng 證 (realization), are also known as huayan sifen 華嚴四分 (the four divisions of the Flower Adornment Sutra). 140 The major reason for this arrangement is that Jingkong also adopts this category in lecturing the Infinite Life Sutra. 141 However, this is not entirely his own innovation but, on the contrary, is an adoption of a traditional idea that these two sutras have

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139 Each session of the 1998 series lasts for two hours; the whole series has already had 132 sessions and still continues. In other words, this series has been lectured for 264 hours. As for the 1990 and 1992 series, each of their sessions lasts for one and a half hours; the latter has 60 sessions and its published transcription has 605 pages while the former has 107 sessions that produces a set of books containing four volumes and 2792 pages.


been considered as the “same” sutra in terms of their level of attainment, as shown at the end of the Flower Adornment Sūtra that Samantabhadra, Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, vows to be reborn into the Western Pure Land so that Buddhahood can be completed. Accordingly, the Flower Adornment Sūtra has also been called daben huayan 大本華嚴 (the large edition of the Flower Adornment Sūtra) while the Infinite Life Sūtra as zhongben huayan 中本華嚴 (the medium edition of the Flower Adornment Sūtra). Likewise, since the Infinite Life Sūtra and the Amitābha Sūtra has also been deemed as tongbu 同部 (the same area), that is, the “same” sutra, in terms of their content and doctrine, the Amitābha Sūtra has been called xiaoben huayan 小本華嚴 (the small edition of the Flower Adornment Sūtra). Such terms...

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142 This is usually stated as “the King of Ten Great Vows leads (practitioners) back to the Pure Land (十大願王，導歸|or 生|極樂).” For example, see Yuan Hongdao, Xifang helun 西方合論 [Combined Treatise on the Western (Pure Land)], 1599. TT 47. no. 1976: 408a.


144 See Zongxiao, ed., Lebang wenlei 樂邦文類 [Various Writings on the Land of Bliss], 1200, TT 47, no. 1969A: 150c. This is the reason why the Infinite Life Sūtra and the Amitābha Sūtra are also titled as the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra and the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra respectively.

145 Undoubtedly, for this reason Cizhou 慈舟 (1877-1957), one of the prominent Buddhist Masters in modern China, also applies the four divisions to annotating the Amitābha Sūtra, making him the counterpart of Jingkong and verifying that such application is simply a traditional means of interpretation. For details, see Cizhou, “Foshuo amituo jing ‘buke yi shao shangen fude yinyuan de sheng biguo’ de jianjie 佛說阿彌陀經「不可以少善根福德因緣得生彼國」 的解 [Opinions on “One Cannot Attain Birth in That Land with Few Roots of Goodness, Virtuous Merits, and Primary Causes” in the Buddha Speaks of the Amitābha Sūtra],” ed. Zhang Mantao 張曼濤. Jingtu dianji yanjiu 淨土典籍研究 [Studies on Pure Land Texts] (Taipei: Dacheng wenhua chubanshe, 1979) 337-344.
demonstrate nothing but the close connection between the *Flower Adornment Sūtra* and these two Pure Land sūtras.\(^{146}\)

Therefore, because of the importance of the *Infinite Life Sūtra* to the founding and development of the Learning Center as well as the way how Jingkong interprets it, the following sections completely rely on materials related to this Sūtra, and are arranged according to the sequence of the four divisions, of which each section discusses Jingkong’s ideas first and then compares them with similar arguments suggested by previous Pure Land advocates. However, since the purpose of this chapter is to reveal the Master’s own understanding of Pure Land Buddhism, only those who have always been mentioned by him are selected. Among them, the most influential ones are Shandao 善導 (613-681) and Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839) of the Tang, Zhuhong 株宏 (1535-1615) and Zhixu 智旭 (1599-1655) of the Ming, and Shengliang 聖量 (1860-1940) of the Qing.

Faith

\(^{146}\) Many Buddhists works were written to argue and explain such ideas. For example, in his essay “*Huayan nianfo sanmei lun* 華嚴念佛三昧論 [On the Samādhi on Nianfo from the Flower Adornment Sūtra],” Peng Jiqing 彭際清 explains the close relationship between the attainment described in the *Flower Adornment Sūtra* and the practice of *nianfo*. See Huang Nianzu 黃念祖, *Huayan nianfo sanmeilun jiangji* 華嚴念佛三昧論 [Lecture Notes of the Discussion of the Samādhi on Nianfo from the Flower Adornment Sūtra] (Taipei: Huazang jingzongxuehui, 1991) 5-31. Moreover, the idea of *tongbu* 同部 is quite important to the study of commentaries on the Pure Land sūtras since the *Amitābha Sūtra* and the *Infinite Life Sūtra* have been considered as “the same sūtra,” their commentaries have been used as cross reference; that is, commentaries on the former can be applied to similar idea in the latter and *vice versa*. Jingkong also adopts this tradition in teaching. See Jingkong 淨空, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jiangji* 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清净平等覺經講記 [Lecture Notes of the Infinite Life Sūtra] (California: Amitābha Buddhist Society of USA, 1996) vol. 1: 600 and 667.
In Chinese Buddhism, *xin*, or faith, is generally believed to be the source of the Way and the mother of meritorious virtue that brings forth all good deeds (信為道元功德母, 長養一切諸善法).\(^{147}\) According to Jingkong, *xin*, or faith, is the first requirement for those who want to convert to Pure Land Buddhism, but, contradictorily, it is difficult for most of them to “truly” believe in, or interiorize what Śākyamuni Buddha taught about the means of salvation promoted by the Pure Land School.\(^{148}\) He repeatedly mentions that faith is one of the Three Provisions that determines if a practitioner can be reborn into the Pure Land,\(^{149}\) and that once one’s faith is pure, one can experience Reality (信心清淨, 則生寶相) because pure faith is the solvent of doubt that assists the practice of *nianfo* to attain enlightenment.\(^{150}\)

Thus, Jingkong categorizes the faith of Pure Land practitioners into three major types according to their degree of understanding of the Pure Land teachings. The first type refers to those who convert to Pure Land Buddhism without a clear concept of the School’s teachings; such faith is said to be weak and unstable, and is called *mixin* 迷信 (superstition). The second type is *zhengxin* 正信 (proper faith), which refers to those whose faith is built on thorough understanding of the School’s teachings, while those who can put such understanding into practice in daily life are considered as *zhenxin* 真信 (genuine faith).\(^{151}\)

\(^{147}\) Siksānanda 實叉難陀, trans., *Dafangguang fohuayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 [The Avatamsaka-sūtra], 695, TT 10, no. 279: 72b.


\(^{149}\) Jingkong, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji* [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 516.


\(^{151}\) Jingkong, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji* [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 512.
Accordingly, to become a practitioner with genuine faith, one has to learn and recognize in advance the content of the teachings that builds the proper faith; the outline of these contents are introduced and listed below:

1. Firstly, a novice has to truly believe that there is a Buddha called Amitābha who created the Western Pure Land aiming to save all sentient beings from the reincarnation of the Six Realms, as stated in all Pure Land sūtras. Jingkong considers that once a practitioner has firm faith (shenxin 深信) in the existence of Amitābha and his Pure Land, naturally, he/she will sincerely vow (qieyuan 切願) to be reborn into that Land with no doubts, and that the possession of these two provisions is the “compass” that guides one to the correct way of practice (zhengxing 正行; i.e. nianfo), which leads to the Pure Land.\(^{152}\)

2. Secondly, all practitioners are urged to firmly believe in the idea of cause and effect, especially that practicing nianfo is the cause and becoming a Buddha is the effect (nianfo shi yin, chengfo shi guo 念佛是因, 成佛是果).\(^{153}\) In other words, becoming a Buddha is a direct result or effect of nianfo practice.

3. Thirdly, they should also believe in shengfo buer 生佛不二 (no difference between sentient beings and Buddhas),\(^{154}\) that is, all sentient beings are equal in their Buddha Nature, no matter whether they are enlightened or unenlightened. The only difference between sentient beings and Buddhas is that the mind of sentient beings is polluted but

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\(^{152}\) Jingkong, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji* [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 324.


that of Buddhas is pure. Therefore, the pure mind is the Buddha’s mind; to become a
Buddha means to completely purify one’s mind.\textsuperscript{155}

4. Lastly, they should believe that nianfo is the only method appropriate to all sentient
beings regardless of their capacity and mentality (sangen pupei, lidun quanshou 三 根
\textsuperscript{156}普 被, 利 頓 全 收) except those who do not believe in Pure Land teachings.\textsuperscript{157}

When comparing Jingkong’s notions about faith with those of Pure Land Patriarchs and
advocates, it is easy to notice that most of his notions arise from the idea of liuxin 六 信 (the
six faiths) suggested by Zhixu 智 旭 (1599-1655, zi Ouyi 藥 益, hao Lingfeng 靈 峰), the
ninth Pure Land Patriarch. According to Jingkong, Zhixu has been esteemed as a Bodhisattva
of responsive manifestation, and his work Amituojing yaojie 阿 弥 陀 經 要 解 (Essential
Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra; 1645) had been highly complimented\textsuperscript{158} and widely
promoted by Shengliang 聖 量 (1860-1940, zi Yinguang 印 光), the thirteenth Pure Land

\textsuperscript{155} Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the
Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 514.

\textsuperscript{156} Sangen 三 根 means the three grades of good “roots,” or capacities. The three grades are shang (superior),
zhong (medium), and xia (inferior) while gen refers to shangen (good root). See Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian
[Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 324. In Pure Land Buddhism, this term is usually used to describe all
beings’ capacities of understanding Buddhist teachings, putting teachings into practice, and attaining
enlightenment. See Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji

\textsuperscript{157} Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the
Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 50.

\textsuperscript{158} The compliment reads as follows: “理事各臻其極。為自佛說此經以來第一註解。妙極確極。
縷令古佛出世。重註此經。亦不能高岀其上矣。” Quoted from Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng
wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 606.
Moreover, Jingkong himself also has respect for Zhixu; he mentions that the

**Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra** is one of the three best and most prominent commentaries on the **Amitābha Sūtra** for those who want to deeply understand the profound teachings regarding Pure Land beliefs. Above all, he considers that the **Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra** to be the nucleus of Zhixu’s ideology and it is also in this work that the suggestions of six faiths and genuine faith (蓋無願無行不名真信) are found.

Cited below is the original passage regarding the six faiths; for convenience of comparison, it is divided into eight paragraphs and each of them is followed by its English translation:

此經以信願持名，為修行之宗要。非信不足啓願，非願不足導行。非持名妙行。不足滿所願。而證所信。經中先陳依正以生信。次勸發願以導行。次示持名以徑登不退。

This Sūtra takes the faith, vow, and [Buddha’s] name recitation as the essential object of practice. Nothing other than the faith can arouse the vow [of being reborn into the

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160 The other two are the *Amituo jing shuchao* 阿彌陀經疏釈 (Phrase-by-Phrase Commentary on the Amitābha Sūtra; 1584) by Zhuhong 侏宏 (1535-1615; zi Fohui 佛慧, hao Lianchi 蓮池), and the *Amituo jing yuan zhong chao* 阿彌陀經略解圓中釈 (Perfect Combined Middle-Way’s Phrase-by-Phrase Commentary on the Brief Commentary of Amitābha Sūtra) by Chuandeng 傳燈 (1554-1627; zi Wujin 無盡, hao Youxi 幽谿). See Jingkong, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji* [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 597.

161 Jingkong, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji* [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 64.

Pure Land. Nothing other than the vow can guide the practice [of recitation]. Nothing other than the wonderful practice of the recitation of [Buddha’s] name can fulfill what [one] has sworn and realize what [one] believes in. The content of the Sutra first states the dependent environment and the resultant Self\(^{163}\) [of the Western Pure Land resulting from Amitābha’s attaining of Buddhahood] to produce faith; then, [it] encourages [one] to make the vow that guides practice; and then, [it] shows the recitation of the [Buddha’s] name as a short cut to reach the [stage of] non-regression.

Faith refers to having faith in oneself, in the other, in the cause, in the effect, in phenomena, and in underlying principles. The vow refers to detesting and desiring to leave Sahā [, or the world,] and [refers to] gladly seeking after [being reborn into] the

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\(^{163}\) The words \textit{yi} 依 and \textit{zheng} 正 here refer to two Buddhist terms \textit{yibao} 依報 and \textit{zhengbao} 正報 respectively. They are “[T]he two forms of karma resulting from one’s past; 正報 being the resultant person, 依報 being the dependent condition or environment, eg. country, family, possessions, etc.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 249. Blum explains the term in greater detail; it “generally refers to the two aspects of one’s stature in any given lifetime as the karmic results (vipāka) from the previous lifetime. The first is the support or āśraya, which usually designates the country where one is born and the physical surroundings within which one lives. The second is the subject himself, that is, the mind and body of the person. Here it is used as an object of meditation in reference to these two aspects of the Buddha in his Pure Land. \textit{The term “surroundings” designates the buddhaksetra, specifically the physical environment and bodhisattva attendants of the Buddha in this particular realm known as Sukhāvatī; the “subject” is of course the Buddha Amida himself.”} See Mark L. Blum, \textit{The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen’s Fōdo Homon Genrushō} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 381n. 24.
Utmost Joy [, the Western Pure Land]. Practice refers to determinedly reciting the name of [Amitābha Buddha] to [the stage of] “one mind undisturbed.”

Those who have faith in their own selves believe that the present single thought of the [True] Mind is originally not a flesh roll [, or the heart], nor [the false mind that] interacts with shadowy phenomena, but has no earliness nor lateness in the process [of time], and no boundary in the extent [of space]; all day according with [ever changing] circumstances, yet all day immutable. The countries that are as numerous as molecules in the space of the ten directions are originally substances manifested from the single thought of our [True] Mind. Although we are dull, deluded, upset, and confused, if [our] single thought can return to the [True] Mind, we certainly can be reborn into the Utmost Joy held fundamentally in our [True] Mind, yet without doubts and anxiety. This is called having faith in oneself.

Those who have faith in the other believe that Śākyamuni Tathāgata definitely did not lie, the world-honored Amitābha definitely had no false vows, and the broad and long
tongues\(^{164}\) of all Buddhas of the six directions definitely say nothing else. [Those who have faith in the other] accord with all Buddhas’ true teachings, determine to seek after being reborn into [the Western Pure Land] and are without doubts and anxiety. This is called having faith in the other.

信因者。深信散亂稱名。猶為成佛種子。況一心不亂。安得不生淨土。是名信因。

Those who have faith in causation deeply believe that even to absent-mindedly recite the name [of Amitābha] can be the seed [or the cause] of becoming a Buddha, let alone [those who have reached the stage of] one mind undisturbed. How could [they] not be reborn into the Pure Land? This is called having faith in causation.

信果者。深信淨土。諸善聚會。皆從念佛三昧得生。如種瓜得瓜。種豆得豆。亦如影必隨形。響必應聲。決無虛棄。是名信果。

Those who have faith in the effect [of causation] deeply believe that, through perfect concentration in reciting Buddha’s name, all good [sentient beings] are reborn and gathered in the Pure Land. It is like [those who] plant melons and get melons, and sow beans and get beans; also, it is like the shadow that follows form and the echo responds to sound. [The cause and effect] are certainly not false. This is called having faith in the effect [of causation].

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\(^{164}\) The broad and long tongue is one of the thirty-two characters of a Buddha. It is said to be big enough to cover his own face, which symbolizes the characteristic of a Buddha that he never lie. See Ding Fubao, *Foxue dacidian* [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 2560; and William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 432.
Those who have faith in phenomena deeply believe that merely this single thought [of the True Mind] is boundless. [Therefore,] all worlds of the ten directions manifested by the [True] Mind are boundless as well, and there actually is the Land of Utmost Joy located beyond the ten thousand billion¹⁶⁵ [Buddhas'] worlds, which is extremely pure and majestic, different from the parable of Zhuangzi. This is called having faith in phenomena.

¹⁶⁵ According to the contents of various sutras, it is said that ancient Indians had different numeric system and thus the numeric unit of billion represented at least four different quantitative numbers: one hundred thousand as one billion, one million as one billion, ten million as one billion, and one hundred million as one billion. An example can be seen in the Flower Adornment Sutra, in which the number of billion refers to ten million. See Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 2602.

¹⁶⁶ Zhixu 智旭, Ouyidashi jingtuji 薛益大師淨土集 [Writings on the Pure Land by Master Ouyi], ed., Huixing 會性 (Hong Kong: Fojingliulongchu 佛經流通處, 1991) 30-31. This version is slightly different from the one in the Buddhist Canon Published in the Taishō Era (TT 37, no. 1762: 364b-364c), and is quoted here mainly because the Learning Center uses it as the standard copy and partly because the version in this Buddhist Canon has a few minor syntax errors. Aside from these errors, the two versions are basically identical. Appendix One is the version seen in the Buddhist Canon, in which the differences and errors are italic and underlined.
Those who have faith in underlying principles deeply believe that the ten thousand billion ['Buddhas'] worlds in fact do not go beyond their own present single transient thought of the [True] Mind for the reason that the single thought of the [True] Mind-Nature actually has no exterior. [They] also deeply believe that the dependent environment and the resultant Self [resulting from Amitābha’s attaining of Buddhahood] as well as the principal [, or Amitābha,] and the dependents [, or the residents,] of the Western [Pure Land] are all shadowy [phenomena] manifested from their present single thought of the [True] Mind. The whole of phenomena are the underlying principle; the entire false mind is the True [Mind]; the complete practice is the [Buddha] Nature; and all others are the Self. Our [True] Mind is omnipresent, Buddhas’ [True] Minds are also omnipresent, and all sentient beings’ [True] Mind-Nature are omnipresent as well. These are like a thousand lamps in a room where light [of each lamp] mutually shines, and reciprocally assimilate radiance as the radiance [of the lamps] is not blocked. This is called having faith in underlying principles.

Obviously, both master’s interpretations of faith have similarities, showing that Jingkong chooses to adopt those traditional teachings that have been recognized by the School for more than three hundred and fifty years instead of developing his own way of explanation.

The latter half of Jingkong’s first main point about faith and the first paragraph of Zhixu’s passage are alike, as both of them consider the elements of faith, vow, and practice as the core of the Pure Land teachings. The influence of Zhixu to Jingkong concerning these Three Provisions is easily discerned, for Jingkong quotes Zhixu’s idea to demonstrate the interrelationship between these Three Provisions and the rebirth: whether [one] can be reborn or not completely depends on whether [one] has the faith and vows, while the status of the
[nine] grades [in the Pure Land] completely depends on [the amount of] work [one] has put in to recite the name. Besides, the content of the first half of this first main point corresponds to Zhixu’s notions about having faith in the other and in phenomena. Both masters consider that all Pure Land practitioners should believe in what Śākyamuni Buddha said about the existence of Amitābha and his Pure Land.

Again, the idea of Jingkong’s second main point that becoming a Buddha is a direct result or effect of nianfo practice is similar to Zhixu’s two paragraphs on having faith in cause and effect. The third point emphasizes on the power and importance of the purity of mind for attaining enlightenment, which is in fact a simplified version of the profound meaning of the intimate relationship between the “single thought of the True Mind” and the Reality demonstrated in the paragraphs of having faith in oneself and in underlying principles.

According to these comparisons, Jingkong clearly agrees with Zhixu’s concept that the content of the faith about Pure Land belief contains ideas that are more profound than they appear to be. Such profundities not only justify the feasibility of Pure Land practices but also provide the School a theoretical base similar to other Buddhist schools. Therefore, having a proper understanding of these profundities becomes important for all Pure Land practitioners because clarified teachings can lead them to the right path of practice. This is also the reason why the logic of these profundities is worth explanation in detail in the next section.

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Comprehension

How influential is deepness of comprehension for Pure Land Buddhists in their practices for reaching their goal of rebirth? Jingkong quotes the concept of Chuandeng (1554-1627; zi Wujin 無 盡, hao Youxi 幽 謝) to demonstrate his opinion that all perfect and immediate ways of Buddhist practices should begin with perfect comprehension before carrying out prefect practice, so that the Three Afflictions can be eliminated and perfect enlightenment can be attained so as to reach the stage of non-regression (非退轉門) or must open up understanding and practice perfectly, and so as to resolve the three hungers and realize the stage of non-regression. In other words, perfect comprehension is essential to those who want to attain perfect enlightenment through perfect practice. In this case, since the teachings of both the Amitabha Sutra and the Infinite Life Sutra have been traditionally classified as yuan jiao (perfect teaching) and dun jiao（immediate teaching）by many Buddhist masters，the practice of nianfo has been

168 Generally there are three types of Butai, or non-regression. In this case, the term refers to an attained stage for Bodhisattva. It is said that, once one reached this stage, one would never retreat from the Bodhisattva-path. However, to reach this stage, one has to attain at least the eighth of the ten grounds of a Bodhisattva. For details, see Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 600.


170 This is the classification of panjiao (Division of the Buddha’s teaching). Two main types of panjiao in Chinese Buddhism are that of Tiantai 天台 and that of Huayan 華嚴; the former divides Buddha’s teaching into four teachings while the latter into five teachings:
The four teachings of Tiantai: zangjiao（Pitaka teaching), tongjiao（interrelated teaching; the first stage of Mahāyāna), biejiao（separate [Mahāyāna] teaching), and yuan jiao (perfect teaching).
The five teachings of Huayan: xiaocheng jiao 小乘教 (Hinayana teaching), dacheng shijiao 大乘始教 (primary Mahāyāna teaching), dacheng zhongjiao 大乘中教 (final Mahāyāna teaching), dun jiao 頓教 (immediate teaching), and yuan jiao 圓教 (perfect teaching).
considered as perfect practice, and, therefore, comprehension, in particular perfect
comprehension, is important to Pure Land Buddhism. Obviously, Jingkong’s emphasis on
comprehension is influenced by such Buddhist tradition.

Moreover, the importance of comprehension is enhanced by the belief that only a “true”
practitioner is able to observe practices constantly and sincerely so as to develop genuine faith.
As mentioned by Jingkong, whether a Pure Land practitioner is a true beginner with proper
faith depends on the thoroughness of this person’s understanding of the School’s teachings.
Hence, aside from helping a beginner to build up proper faith, true or perfect comprehension
also seems to be a critical element that differentiates between a mere Buddhist philosopher and
a sincere follower. Thus, this section aims to classify and disclose the content of those
teachings that are considered essential to all Pure Land practitioners:

1. First of all, in 1997, all representatives of the Pure Land Learning Centers joined the
first gathering (or conference) held in Singapore, at which a list of learning guidelines
and principles was consolidated. The resulting booklet is called the Jingzong tongxue
xiuxing shouze 淨宗同學修行守則 (Practice Disciplines for Students of the Pure
[Land] School; see figure 18). Before the standardization of the disciplines, the
Learning Centers did not have any regulations for their members to observe.
Nevertheless, the principles in this booklet can be traced to the “front matter” posted
on-line and printed on the very first page of some books published by the Centers. This
“front matter” is actually six brief statements suggested by Jingkong declaring the Pure
Land Learning Center’s objective and ideology:

171 For details, see Huang Nianzu. Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jie
a. Buddhism is the most perfect and wholesome education directed by the
Buddha towards all people.

b. The content of Śākyamuni Buddha's forty-nine years of teaching describes the
true nature of life and the universe. Life refers to oneself; universe refers to our
environment.

c. Those who are enlightened and possess wisdom are called Buddhas or
Bodhisattvas. Those who are not enlightened are called worldly people.

d. Cultivation is (a process) to rectify our erroneous ways of perception, thinking,
talking, and doing toward the life and the universe.

e. The guidelines for Buddhist cultivation are enlightenment, proper views, and
purity. Enlightenment is without delusion, proper views are without deviation,
and purity is without pollution. This goal can be achieved by observing (the

f. The guidelines for Buddhist cultivation are enlightenment, proper views, and
purity. Enlightenment is without delusion, proper views are without deviation,
and purity is without pollution. This goal can be achieved by observing (the

practice of) precepts, or self-discipline, concentration, and wisdom, the Three Studies.173

f. The Three Felicities174 are the foundation of study and cultivation. When interacting with people, accord with the Six Harmonies175, and when dealing with society, practice the Six Pāramitās176. Follow the anticipation of Samantabhadra177 to dedicate (one's) mind to the Pure Land. These complete the Buddha’s [teachings about] education.178


173 The Studies of Self-discipline refers to “learning by the commandments, or prohibitions, so as to guard against the evil consequences of error by mouth, body, or mind, i.e. word, deed, or thought”; the Studies of Concentration refers to learning “by dhyāna, or quietist meditation; and the Studies of Wisdom refers to learning “by philosophy, i.e. study of principles and solving of doubts.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 63.

174 The Three Felicities are the three sources of felicity. The term is quoted from the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra and also called sanzhong jingye (Three Kinds of Pure Karmas).

175 The term is cited from the Lindu ji jing 六度集經 (the Sutra of the Assembly of the Six Pāramitās); see Yiru 一如, Sauzang fashu 三藏法數 [Numerical Terminology of Dharma in the Buddhist Canon] (Taipei: Ciyun shanzhuang/sanhui xuechu, reprint 1996): 275.


177 The anticipation of Samantabhadra refers to the ten vows of this Bodhisattva from the “Puxianpusa xingyuanpin 普賢菩薩行願品 (The Chapter on the Conduct and Vows of the Universal Worthy Bodhisattva [Samantabhadra])” in the Flower Adornment Sūtra.

178 This is a modified translation based on the one found in one of the School’s website. “What is Buddhism,” 31, Jan. 2002 <http://www.amtb.org.tw/e-bud/WHAT.HTM>. Although the last entry talks more about ways of
Except for the last entry, which focuses on the area of practice, the rest of these brief statements aim to clarify some basic terms and concepts in simple, contemporary vocabulary so that the meanings are clear, precise, and up-to-date. This way of interpretation of Jingkong allows his followers adapt teachings and practices to contemporary society, lifestyle, and ways of thinking. Above all, it assists them in comprehension.

2. All Pure Land practitioners are urged to thoroughly understand the meaning of the forty-eight vows, which are the core of the Infinite Life Sutra and the teachings of Amitābha; they provide all information about the details of the Buddha’s realm and ideas and methods of how to become a Buddha.179

3. All must comprehend that, in terms of the theory of cause and effect, the recitation of Amitābha’s name is a method of effect (果法), not that of cause (因法). The name of Amitābha is to be the symbol of his own achievement and the essence of his nirvana or perfect enlightenment, hence, to recite his name is described as a practice that begins from the effect as the cause of practice that combines the cause and effect, and that the effect is attained at the moment of practice (果法即果).180 This is why the practice of nianfo is said to be too difficult to understand. For the same reason, the name of Amitābha is revered as wande hongming 萬德洪名 (the great name of myriad virtues).181

practice than comprehension, it is still quoted here for the completeness of this guideline. It will be discussed in the section on practice.

4. Pure Land practitioners are all urged to understand the meaning of “realizing the intellection of Buddhas by the mind that recites the name of Amitābha.” Jingkong elaborates this notion by saying that the *Infinite Life Sūtra* is a commentary on the name of Amitābha, while the *Flower Adornment Sūtra* is that of the *Infinite Life Sūtra*, and the whole Buddhist Canon is that of the *Flower Adornment Sūtra*; therefore, all teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha are meant to explain the significance of the name of Amitābha, and the content of the name of Amitābha covers the whole Buddhist Canon. Accordingly, the mind that recites the name (on the condition that nianfo is single-mindedly practiced) can realize the intellection of Buddhas.\(^1\)

5. All have to learn that only when one’s mind is pure is one’s living environment pure (心净则土净). When one’s mind is polluted, all one’s Buddhist practices become merely the merits and felicities of this world; if it is pure, all daily activities can lead to the enlightenment. Above all, the best purifier for one’s mind is the name of Amitābha.\(^2\)

6. Based on the above ideas, practitioners are told to learn that “this mind is a Buddha/ this mind becomes a Buddha (是心是佛/是心作佛).” “This mind is a Buddha” refers to Buddha Nature and implies that, originally, every being’s Buddha Nature is pure and perfect, which is described as *xingde* (the virtue of Nature). Whereas, “this mind becomes a Buddha” emphasizes on *xiude* (the virtue of practice), that is, the

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\(^1\) Jingkong, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji* [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 143-144.

power of practice and the vow to attain enlightenment or become a Buddha. This concept is further explained by the idea that all things come from the One Mind and all transformations are the result of the perceptive mind, accordingly, rebirth relies mostly on the quality of mind, which can be divided into three main types, the good mind, the bad mind, and the pure mind. Those who have the good minds, depending on their degrees of goodness, will be respectively reborn into the three better realms of the Six Realms. Likewise, those whose minds are bad will be respectively reborn into the three bad realms of the Six Realms. As for those whose minds are pure, their rebirth statuses are that of Arhat, Bodhisattva and Buddha. The logic of this is that the practice of nianfo is the only way to become a Buddha or to attain perfect enlightenment (念佛才能成佛). To prove the credibility of this conclusion, based on the contents of the Pure Land sutras, Śākyamuni Buddha is claimed to be the perfect model who also practiced nianfo.

7. Practitioners have to know that the name of Amitābha possesses three kinds of zhenshi 真實 (truth), stated in the combined version of Infinite Life Sūtra. They are namely zhenshi zhi ji 真實之際 (the True Nature), the true nature of Buddhas, zhenshi zhi li 真實之利 (the true benefit), the kinds of benefit that can only be obtained through the vows of Amitābha, and zhenshi zhi hui 真實之慧 (the true wisdom), the wisdom that

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185 Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 71 and 549.
originates from the True Nature. The name of Amitābha itself is said to represent the True Nature since this name is the direct result of Amitābha’s achievement in attaining Buddhahood; reciting this name is believed to be a way to accomplish the same achievement as Amitābha, and, for that reason, this way is an expression of true wisdom. Thus, by reciting this name, one can achieve Buddhahood as Amitābha did, and be free from rebirth in the Six Realms. Such achievement is considered to be the true benefit. Because of these qualities and correlations, these truths are deemed equal to those of Niepan sande (the Three Virtues of Nirvana). That is, the True Nature equals the virtue of the dharmakāya, or the Buddha’s eternal, spiritual body; the true wisdom equals the virtue of the Buddha’s prajñā, or wisdom, which knows all things in their reality; and the true benefit equals the virtue of the Buddha’s freedom from all bonds, and his absolute liberty. Hence, the nature and function of the name

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189 The first one can be seen in chapter two, the second in chapter three, and the last in chapter eight of the combined version. See Xia Lianju 夏蓮居, ed., Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjin pingdeng jue jing [The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School] (Taipei: Huazang jingzongxuehui, reprint 1992) 15, 18 and 41; also see Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjin pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sutra], vol. 1: 98-100.


191 According to the Niepan jing (Mahāpari-nirvāṇa Sūtra; first translated by Dharmaraksa in 423), the Three Virtues of Nirvana are fashen de (the virtue of the dharmakāya, or the Buddha’s eternal, spiritual body), bore de (it is traditionally pronounced as bore instead of banruo de; the virtue of the Buddha’s prajñā, or wisdom), and jietuo de (the virtue of the Buddha’s freedom from all bonds and his absolute liberty). They are called de, or virtue, because each of them has the four virtues, or qualities, of chang (permanence, eternity), le (bliss, joy), wo (personality, true self), and jing (purity). For further details, see Ding Fubao, Faxue dacidian [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 355-356; and William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 328-329.
of Amitābha is believed to be so profound that only Buddhas can completely recognize it. As for mortal practitioners, the only way to comprehend such profundity is to prove it themselves by becoming a Buddha through sincere, constant practice.

8. All practitioners should realize that the recitation of the name of Amitābha is a way to reach the state of *wuzhu shengxin* (無住生心, the mind that gives rise to [proper thoughts] and does not attach to [anything seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched, and thought of]) emphasized in the *Diamond Sūtra* (Jingbōng bo luomi jīng 金剛般若波羅蜜經; Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra). The reason given by Jingkong is that, during the recitation, all afflictions, and erroneous and discriminatory thoughts will be diminished and the attention will be drawn to one single thought, the name of the Buddha; in other words, the condition that all thoughts and afflictions are diminished is considered close or even equal to the state of *wuzhu*, or non-attachment, while paying all attention to the recitation is no different from the state of *shengxin*, or giving rise to proper thoughts. Hence, the enlightenment attained by *nianfo* is said to be equivalent to that of Chan School.¹⁹²

9. Likewise, practitioners need to understand that, simply by single-mindedly practicing *nianfo*, including the recitation of Buddha’s name, they can attain *Yi zhen fajie* (One True Dharma Realm), or *shixiang* (the Reality),¹⁹³ the perfect nirvana only experienced by Buddhas, of which the *Flower Adornment Sūtra* gives a detailed


The rationale is that the Western Pure Land has been considered to be a One True Dharma Realm because the four Buddha's lands there are said to be perfectly integrated, and the appearance and enjoyment of all residents and Amitābha are identical.

After carefully examining these nine groups of teaching on comprehension, it is clear that Jingkong emphasizes more the relationships between mind and the attainment of enlightenment. The focuses of the fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth groups are actually closely related to each other; they merely reveal the relationships from different angles. To summarize the content of these groups, apparently there are three main lines of reasoning, 1) the condition of Pure Mind is equal to that of Buddhahood, or that of the Reality, or that of the One True Dharma Realm, or that of the Pure Land, 2) the quality of the Mind governs one's existence and living environment of this and next lives, and 3) only the practice of nianfo, especially the recitation of Amitābha’s name, can effectively purify one’s mind to lead to enlightenment, and finally become a Buddha who lives in the One True Dharma Realm.

Again, traces of linkage traditions are discernible in these teachings. In addition to Zhixu, another patriarch who has influenced Jingkong is Zhuhong 朱 禧 (1535-1615, zi Fohui 佛 慧, hao Lianchi 蓮 池), the eighth Pure Land Patriarch. As one of the four prominent Buddhist masters of the late Ming dynasty, he was known for his influence on the ideas about the practice of nianfo, lay Buddhism, and monastic reform. The following are some parallel

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194 The Flower Adornment Sūtra is characterized by its philosophy of interpenetration, in which the Dharma Realm is interpreted as a universe consists of infinite realms that mutually contain each other.

Although Buddhahood is the ultimate [attainment], our [True] Mind is just it. Now, [we] hear about [Amitabha] Buddha’s name and persistently recite [it] single-mindedly; so it may be said that [this method] is extremely simple and easy, and that the practice is not complicated. As myriads of phenomena come from the [True] Mind, when the Mind is pure, what can not be done?

Buddha has immeasurable virtues but, now, simply the four-character Buddha’s name is [virtuous] enough to comprise these [virtues], for [the name of] Amitabha is the whole single-mind.

When sentient beings study Buddhism, there are immeasurable methods of practice as well. However, now, simply the method of recitation of [Amitabha’s] name is [complete] enough to comprise these [methods]. This is because to recite [Amitabha’s] name is to maintain this single-mind.
To concentrate on the name [of Amitābha] is to concentrate on the [True] Mind.

As [the stage of] one mind undisturbed is attained, [one] begins to know that the lotuses, rows of trees, and all sorts of majestic manifestations in the Western Pure Land are not beyond [one’s True] Mind.

To compare these opinions with those of Jingkong, it is not difficult to find out that these statements correspond to the first and third lines of reasoning mentioned above. The first passage clearly states that Buddhahood is no different from the Pure Mind and the practice of recitation is the simplest method to purify one’s mind. The second, third, and fourth passages further equate the merit of the name of Amitābha to all virtues of the Buddha, and the method of recitation to all ways of practice, and conclude that the name is the True Mind and, thus, concentrating on the name is same as concentrating on the True Mind. Consequently, the last passage reveals that, as a logical result, when one’s mind is finally purified and enlightenment is attained, all phenomena and manifestations are within the reach of the True Mind.

In order to show more traditional links in Jingkong’s interpretation of Pure Land teachings, the following passages are quoted from Zhixu’s *Amituojing yaojie* 阿彌陀經要解 (Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra, 1645) to see the similarities not only between Zhixu and Jingkong but also between Zhixu and Zhuhong:

信佛力。方能深信名號功德。信持名。方能深信吾人心性。本不可思議也。
[Only when we] believe in Buddha’s power can [we] deeply believe in the meritorious virtue of the name [of Amitābha]. [Only when we] believe in the recitation of the name [of Amitābha] can [we] deeply believe in our Mind-Nature, which is originally inconceivable.\(^{197}\)

一念相應。一念生。念念相應。念念生。妙因妙果。不離一心。

[When merely] a single thought corresponds to [the True Mind], [one can] be reborn into the Pure Land by [the effort of] this single thought. [When] every single thought corresponds to [the True Mind], [one can] be reborn into the Pure Land by [the effort of] every single thought. It is within this single-mind that the wonderful cause [brings about] this wonderful effect.\(^{198}\)

一聲阿彌陀佛。即釋迦本師。於五濁惡世。所得之阿耨多羅三藐三菩提法。今以此果覺全體。授與諸惡眾生。乃諸佛所行境界。唯佛與佛能究盡。

The recitation of Amitābha is the method of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, or unexcelled complete enlightenment, obtained by the Original Teacher Śākyamuni in the evil world of five impurities. Now, this whole resultant enlightenment is given to sentient beings of the evil [world] of [five] impurities. This is the realm that all Buddhas experience; [thus,] only Buddhas can completely comprehend it.\(^{199}\)


Apparently, the concepts and teachings of these three masters are comparable. The first passage actually can be viewed as a summary of Zhuhong’s second and third passages, which is equal to Jingkong’s first and third lines of reasoning. They do not mind taking the trouble to explain the omnipotence and omnipresence of the True Mind, or the Single-mind and its equivalent terms like Buddhahood, enlightenment, and the name of Amitābha. As the achievability of nianfo in attaining enlightenment is based on this rationale, such idea seems to be the foundation of comprehension in Pure Land Buddhism.

As for the second passage, since the term “wonderful effect” exactly refers to the phrase “all sorts of majestic manifestations in the Western Pure Land” mentioned in Zhuhong’s last passage, principles of these two passages are undoubtedly equivalent. The principle is even rationalized by the statement stressing the cause and effect relationship between the purified single-mind and the rebirth in the first half of this second passage. Besides, since this passage emphasizes the purity of mind as the means of rebirth, it corresponds to Jingkong’s second line of reasoning.

The last passage here is in fact a clarification of Jingkong’s third group of teachings on understanding that the recitation of Amitābha’s name is a method of effect (果法). According to this passage, after attaining Buddhahood, Śākyamuni Buddha learned that the practice of recitation was the method leading to perfect enlightenment; since then, such method has been considered as “a method of effect” that “only Buddha and Buddha can completely comprehend.”

One more feature needing to be pointed out here is that the second and seventh groups of Jingkong’s teachings regarding comprehension are based on the contents of the Infinite Life Sūtra, particularly the compiled version. This indicates the importance of this Sūtra for the development of the Pure Land Learning Center, for it provides a self-contained foundation for
the theory of Pure Land teachings and practices (more details about the contents of this Sūtra are discussed in the next chapter).

Practice

1. Nianfo

_Nianfo_ has been frequently mentioned by Jingkong as the best way for Pure Land practitioners to achieve the stage of _ding_ (Samādhi; composing the mind), or _qingjing_ (purity), which is regarded as the primary objective of all Buddhist practices. The term _nianfo_ was initially subdivided into four different ways of practice by Zongmi (779-841), the successor of Chengguan (738-839).201 “The four kinds of _nien-fo_ [nianfo] are enumerated in the following order: (1) _ch’eng-ming nien-fo_ [chengming nianfo] 称名念佛, or _chiming nianfo_ 持名念佛, or calling upon the Amitābha’s name in the manner prescribed in the _A-mi-t’o ching_ [Foshuo Amituo jing; the Amitābha Sūtra]; (2) _kuan-hsiang nien-fo_ [guanxiang nianfo] 觀像念佛, or concentrating one’s attention on a statue of Amitābha made of earth, wood, bronze, or gold; (3) _kuan-hsiang nien-fo_ [guanxiang nianfo] 觀想念佛, or contemplating the miraculous features of Amitābha with one’s mind’s eye in the manner described in the _Kuan-ching_ [Foshuo guan Wuliangshoufo jing; the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra]; (4) _shih-hsiang nien-fo_ [shixiang nianfo] 實相念佛, or contemplating Amitābha as no different from one’s own self-nature, since both Amitābha and self-nature transcend birth and extinction (_sheng-mieh_ [shengmie 生滅]), existence and

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201 Yu Chun-fang, _The Renewal of Buddhism in China_, 45 and note no. 43 on 277.
emptiness (y[u]r-k 'ung [you kong 有空, or kongyou 空有]), subject and object (neng-so [neng suo 能所]).

Among these four, Jingkong has recommended the first kind as many Pure Land advocates did, to support which he has cited quotations of Shandao (613-681), Zhixu and Yinguang. A two-sentence quotation of a popular poem by Shandao is one of Jingkong’s favorites, in which Shandao emphasizes that the recitation of the Buddha’s name is the only short cut to Buddhist practice (唯有徑路修行，但念阿弥陀佛). Other examples are citations from Zhixu and Yinguang, in which they explain why recitation is better than other methods; the first quotation cited below is from Zhixu and the second is from Yinguang:

阿弥陀佛，是萬德洪名。以名召德，聲無不盡。故即以執持名號為正行。不必更涉觀想參究等行。至簡易，至捷也。

Amitābha is the great name of myriad virtues; using this name to call on virtues and no virtue is excluded. Thus, persistently maintaining the name is regarded as the proper practice, which is extremely simple, easy, direct, and fast, so it is not necessary to deal with practices like visualization and abstract meditation.

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202 Yü Ch’in-fang, The Renewal of Buddhism in China, 45.
204 Zongxiao 宗曉, Lebang wenlei 樂邦文類 [Various Writings on the Land of Bliss], TT 47, no. 1969A: 219b.
For the method of *nianfo*, [one] should insist on sustaining [the recitation of] the name [of Amitābha Buddha]; [if one’s] mouth recites clearly and ears listen to [the recitation] clearly, for a long, long time, [the stage] of one-mindedness will be attained naturally. There is no need to practice visualization concurrently, for [if one] does not comprehend the teachings and theories [for visualization], [when] the phenomena [to be visualized] are subtle but the mind is inattentive, contrary [to one’s intentions], disadvantages will arise.\(^{206}\)

All these quotations clearly express that the recitation method is the fastest and easiest practice based on the virtuous nature of the Buddha’s name. Such declaration can be said as the core of what Jingkong has been promoting during these years.

In this case, he has also reminded his followers that giving rise to the Bodhi-mind (發菩提心) and reciting devotedly and consistently (一向專念) are two focal points for success in this practice.\(^{207}\) In fact, they are derived from the eighteenth and nineteenth vows of Amitābha’s forty-eight vows; the former is called the vow of being surely reborn by ten calls [of Amitābha’s name] (十念必生願), and the latter the vow of giving rise to the Bodhi-mind when hearing the name (聞名發心願).\(^{208}\)

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\(^{208}\) Details of these two vows can be found in chapter six of the Sūtra. See Xia Lianju 夏蓮居, ed., *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing* [The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of
In order to explain the profundity of the Bodhi-mind, Jingkong adopted the notion of sanxin (triple mind) in the *Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra* and the *Dacheng qixin lun* (Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra) as cross references. The triple mind in the former sūtra is described as *zhicheng xin* (perfect sincerity), *shenxin* (the deep mind), and *huixiang fayuan xin* (the mind that vows and dedicates merits) while in the latter as *zhixin* (the proper mind), *shenxin*, and *dabei xin* (the great compassionate mind). According to Jingkong, the meanings of these two sets of triple mind are parallel, in that perfect sincerity equals the proper mind, and the mind that vows and dedicates merits equals the great compassionate mind. He also has said that the triple mind is in fact One Mind (一心) for the former is simply a more detailed explanation of the latter: the proper mind or perfect sincerity refers to the quality of the noumenon of the One Mind, and the others are the descriptions of the two main functions of the One Mind—the term “deep mind” is used to illustrate the condition of self enjoyment (自受用), and the great compassionate mind or the mind that vows and dedicates merits is performed for the enjoyment of others (他受用).

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Diagram 2. The Notion of Triple Mind in the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra and the *Dacheng qixin lun* (Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra)

In addition to such clarification, Jingkong further claims that the key to achieve in "giving rise to the Bodhi-mind" were having a firm faith and taking the vow to be reborn into the Pure Land (深信發願)

while the essentials of “reciting devotionally and consistently” was to go deep into one single method (一門深入) and to gradually practice over a long

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period of time (長 時 薰 修).

The latter is further described as having “no doubts, no distractions, and no discontinuity (不 懷 疑。不 夾 雜。不 間 斷).

As expected, there are traces of traditional links in these interpretations. For instance, the idea of the two focal points can be seen in the *Chewuchanshi yulu* (Quotations from the Chan Master Chewu) by Jixing (1741-1810, zi Chewu 徽 悟, hao Natang 訥 堂 and Mengdong 夢 東), the twelfth Pure Land Patriarch: for the sake of solving the problem of life and death, [one] should give rise to the Bodhi-mind and maintain the recitation of [Amitābha] Buddha’s name with the firm faith and vows (真 爲 生 死。發 菩 提 心。以 深 信 願。持 佛 名 號).

In addition, Jingkong’s idea on the Bodhi-mind can be compared to what Zhixu says in his *Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra*, in which he claims that having a firm faith and taking a vow to be reborn into the Pure Land equals giving rise to the Bodhi-mind (發 願。即 無 上 菩 提). Jingkong has complimented this opinion as an answer to the situation that although some practitioners do not or cannot fully comprehend all the School’s teachings, they still can succeed in their practices as long as they can give rise to the Bodhi-mind, or have firm faith and make the vow to be reborn into the Pure Land, because the goal of all Buddhist teachings is to encourage practitioners to give rise to the Bodhi-mind.

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216 Quoted from Jingkong, *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji* [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 309.


Based on these notions, in addition to giving rise to the Bodhi-mind, nianfo has been undoubtedly the major traditional practice for Pure Land practitioners, but many other ways of practice and doctrines of conduct have also been suggested to followers of the Pure Land Learning Center. These doctrines are recommended on the basis of the key points and previously mentioned teachings on faith and comprehension, and meant to fit in with the needs and lifestyles of contemporary practitioners.\(^{219}\) Since this thesis devotes the whole Chapter Five to analyzing the practices of nianfo, the following discussions only focus on those practices and doctrines that are excluded from that chapter.

2. Other Practices

As mentioned, the first gathering (or conference) of the Learning Centers held in Singapore in 1997, at which a booklet called the Disciplines of Practice for Students of the Pure Land School was established, and has been treated since as the standard of disciplines for its followers. However, before talking about this booklet, a glimpse at its predecessors on the one hand can help to know more about the development of its doctrines from simple accounts to detailed guidelines, and, on the other hand, can help to reveal its unchanged, fundamental disciplines regardless of time and space.

According to the last two entries of the six statements in the “front matter” mentioned in the section of comprehension, there are five practice guidelines for Pure Land practitioners. They are Sanfu 三福 (Three Felicities), Liuhe 六和 (Six Harmonies; or Liuhejing 六和敬, Six Reverent Harmonies), Sanxue 三學 (Three Studies), Liudu 六度 (Six Pāramitās), and Puxian shiyuan 普賢十願 (Ten Great Vows of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva).

More detail of these guidelines can be found in a 1989 article titled “Jingzong xuehui yuanqi 淨宗學會緣起 [The Founding of the Pure Land Learning Center]” which was written by Ms. Han Ying 韓金英 (1922-1997), the most important patron of Jingkong and the former president of the Huazang Fojiao tushuguan 華藏佛教圖書館 (Hwa Dzan [Huazang] Buddhist Library), Huazang jingzong xuehui 華藏淨宗學會 (Hwa Dzan [Huazang] Pure Land Learning Center), and other affiliated associations in Taipei and the U.S. The following are the excerpts from the original Chinese article and its English translation “The History and Reasons for Establishment of [the] Amitâbha Society” printed in A Drop in Dharma Sea, one of the Learning Centers’ journals that was published in Dallas, Texas; for reading convenience, paragraphs of these two versions are rearranged so that the sequence of each Chinese paragraph and its English counterpart can be placed together:

Members of the Amitâbha Society [Pure Land Learning Center] must study and conform to the following doctrines: (1) Five Sutras of Pure-Land, (2) Ten Essence[s] of

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221 The name “Amitâbha Society” is another English translation of Jingzongxuehui. It has been commonly used by those Jingzongxuehui outside Taiwan before the 1997 gathering. Some Learning Centers maintain this English title for convenience.

Pure-Land, (3) The Sūtra of Infinite Life (the volume compiled by Venerable Mr. Shia [Mr. Xia]), in particular, (4) The True Essence of Amitābha Buddha, and (5) The Essence of Samantabhadra’s Vows. If there is extra capacity [If one has extra energy], one also can study other Mahāyāna Sūtras with similar objective[s] of Pure-Land. With [its] major emphases on understanding and practice, [the] Amitābha Society also concentrates on aligning the thought process, speech, and behavior.

Therefore, members should commit themselves to practice and should make joint vows from now to eternity to conform to the (1) Three Felicities, (2) The Six Points of Reverent Harmony or Unity in a monastery, (3) Three Lessons [Three Studies], (4) The Six Paramitas [Pāramitās], and (5) The Ten Great Vows.

三福：一者孝養父母，奉事師長，慈心不殺，修十善業。二者受持三皈，具足眾戒，不犯威儀。三者發菩提心，深信因果，讀誦大乘，勸進行者。

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223 Corresponding to the three types of karmas caused by the body, mouth, and mind, the Ten Good Karmas are subdivided into three main groups, physical, verbal, and mental. The physical good karmas aim to prohibit one from killing, stealing, and engaging in sexual misconduct; the verbal good karmas from lying, harsh speech, gossiping, and using enticing words; and the mental good karmas from greed, anger, and ignorance (不殺生. 不偷盜. 不邪婬. 不妄語. 不惡口. 不兩舌. 不綺語. 不貪. 不瞋. 不癡). For details, see Sikṣānanda 實叉難陀. trans., Shishanvedao jing 十善業道經 [The Ten Good Karmas Sūtra], TT 15, no. 600: 157c-159b.
The first of three felicities is to fulfill obligation of piety to our parents, to adore [honor and serve] our teachers, to have compassion and to commit no killing, as well as to cultivate the ten meritorious actions [the ten good karmas]. The second felicity is to take the three return-and-reliances [the three refuges], to accept all precepts, and not to violate the precepts. The third felicity is to induce the Bodhi-mind, to believe deeply in the law of causation, to read and recite Mahāyāna Sūtras, and to encourage and promote [the] participation of others.

六和者：一者見和同解，二者戒和同修，三者身和同住，四者口和無諍，五者意和同悅，六者利和同均。

The six points of reverent harmony are (1) harmonious opinions and perceptions by building a common understanding and interpretation of Dharma, (2) harmonious preservation of precepts by cooperative[ly] maintaining and practicing Buddha’s teachings, (3) harmonious living by sharing friendliness and developing the spirit of teamwork, (4) harmonious communication by good verbal interaction with no argument[s], (5) harmonious mind[s] by sharing happiness together, and (6) harmonious benefits by sharing all resources and good fortunes.

三學者：戒學，定學，慧學。

The Three Lessons [Three Studies] are the lessons of discipline [precept], concentration, and wisdom.

\[224\text{ Puti xin 菩提心} \text{ is “[t]he mind for or of bodhi; the awakened, or enlightened mind; the mind that perceives the real behind the seeming, believes in moral consequences, and that all have the Buddha-nature, and aims at Buddhahood,”} \text{ see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed.,} \text{ Dictionary, p. 388.}\]
The six paramitas [paramitas] or the six things that ferry one beyond the sea of mortality to nirvana are (1) dāna, charity, or giving, including the bestowing of the truth on others, (2) śīla, keeping the precepts or commandments, (3) ksānti, practice [patience?] under insult, (4) vīrya, zeal and progress, (5) dhyāna, meditation or contemplation, and (6) prajñā, wisdom, the power to discern reality of truth.

The ten great vows are (1) to revere all Buddhas, (2) to praise all Tathagatas, (3) to make extensive offerings, (4) to repent all evil deeds, (5) to rejoice [in] all conducts of virtue, (6) to request teachings from Buddhas, (7) to implore Buddhas [to reside] in the world, (8) to follow Buddhas’ teachings consistently, (9) to accommodate all sentient beings’ aspirations, and (10) to dedicate [one’s] merits to all sentient beings.

Our daily exercise must conform to the book of “[Direct path to Pure-Land practice” and “[Repentant method of the samādhi] of Amitābha.” 225 One must immerse [oneself]

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225 Both works are composed by Xia Lianju, the compiler of the present version of the Infinite Life Sūtra. The Repentant Method of the Samādhi of Amitābha is a text designed for practicing together the recitation, sūtra reading and private ritual of confession held at home. The Direct Path to Pure Land Practice (or the Shortcut to Pure Land Practice) is a kind of practice based on the principles of the five devotional ways advocated in the
deeply in reciting “Amitābha Buddha” without [a] single [additional] thought. One must believe in the Pure-Land practice with no suspicion[s], no discontinu[ity], and no distraction[s].

These five guidelines for practice begin with the twelve instructions of the Three Felicities, the three sources of felicity, declared in the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra. The first four instructions of the First Felicity are the kind of virtues said to prepare for being reborn into the realms of human and heavenly beings. The three instructions of the Second Felicity are considered a necessity for those who want to succeed in the studies of Hīnayāna, while the last four instructions of the Third Felicity are meant for those who want to become Bodhisattvas.

The second and third of the five practice guidelines are the Six Harmonies and the Three Studies. The former are meant for practitioners, both monks and lay Buddhists, to get along well with family, colleagues, communities, the Sangha, and in all kinds of human relationship in society. The three elements of the latter are said to be arranged in order for

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Wuliangshoujing yuopotishe yuansheng ji 無量 奉 法 前 生 菩 薬 (the Gāthā of Resolving to be Reborn [in Praise of] the Upadeśa of the Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha-sūtra: Sukhāvati-vyūhapadeśa) by Vasubandhu, for which this book is also called Wunian jianke 五念 簡 課 (Simple Course of the Five Devotions). The major content of this book consists of thirty short passages of quotations cited from the Infinite Life Sūtra, which involves worship, visualization, and the recitation of the Buddha’s name and the quotations.

226 Sangha, or sengjie 僧伽, is the third of the trinity of the Triratna. Formally speaking, it is a group of four or more monks “under a chairman, empowered to hear confession, grant absolution, and ordain.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 420. When the short term seng 僧 is used, it means a monk, or monks in general. In the case of this School, Sangha means “a group of four or more who properly practice the teachings.” “Glossary,” 31 Jan. 2002 <http://www.amtb-dba.org/English/Text/Glossary.html>.

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practice: “precepts keeping leads to deep concentration that gives rise to wisdom.” 227 The reason for such order is that keeping precepts settles one’s mind, which, with the help of focusing on one single method of practice, develops deep concentration that, if the practice persists, eventually uncovers the innate wisdom. 228 Moreover, these three elements are also said to be interrelated with the Three Felicities: the First Felicity embodies the Lesson of the Precepts, the Second Felicity embodies that of concentration, and the Third Felicity embodies that of wisdom. 229

The Six Pāramitās and the Ten Great Vows of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva are the fourth and fifth of the five guidelines for practice. Although these two guidelines have been traditionally considered the major standards of practice for Bodhisattvas, Jingkong encourages all followers to learn from and abide by the spirit of these standards so that they know how to remedy their major afflictions. Accordingly, the Six Pāramitās, giving, keeping the precepts, patience, diligence, contemplation, and wisdom are the respective remedies for greed, wickedness, anger, sloth, a distracted mind, and ignorance, while the ten vows are ten categories of conduct, by which all practitioners learn to broaden their minds by vowing to and trying to benefit all sentient beings.

Before the influential 1997 gathering, for nearly eight years since the publication of this article, it had been widely circulated among followers of the Learning Centers. After this meeting, the Pure Land Learning Center has experienced a new age of development as better organized structures were established and a set of more standardized disciplines was proclaimed. The content of the first half of the booklet is disciplines that were initially advised by the Master, and the second half is a total of forty-four sentences and short passages

Disciplines of Practice for Students of the Pure [Land] School

Understanding kindness and repaying kindness: repaying the four kinds of kindness above and relieving the sufferings of those in the Three Paths [Realms] below.

Be a teacher of humans in learning, and a model for the world in performance.

一、教依

(1) 總依淨宗五經一論

230 The four kinds of kindness refers to those of one's parents, the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), the founders of the nation/enlightened temporal leaders, and all sentient beings. The last one is based on the idea that "all men were my fathers, all women my mothers" in past lives. "A Buddhist Glossary," 20 Jan. 2002 <http://www.amtb-m.org.my/eindex.htm>.

231 The Three Realms are the Realm of the Animals, of the Hungry Ghosts, and of the Hells. They are the three of the Six Realms of reincarnation.

232 These two sentences come of the passage of Dedication of Merit printed on the last page of each work published by the Learning Center. The original passage reads as follows: May the merit and virtues accrued from this work adorn the Buddha's Pure Land, repaying the four kinds of kindness above, and relieving the sufferings of those in the Three Paths below. May those who see and hear of this, all bring forth the heart of Understanding [or Bodhi-mind], and live the Teachings for the rest of this life, then be born together in The Land of Ultimate Bliss (願以此功德 莊嚴佛净土 上報四重恩 下濟三途苦若有見聞者 悉發菩提心 當此一報身 同生極樂國). See “Dedication of Merit,” 19 Jan. 2002 <http://www.amtb.org.tw/e-buda/COPYR1.HTM>.
(2) 專依無量壽經夏會集本
佛說阿彌陀經鶴益要解
普賢行願品清涼疏鈔
(3) 淨宗祖師語錄 印光大師文鈔

1. Teachings to be relied on:

(1) Generally follow the Five Sūtras and One Treatise of the Pure Land School;

(2) Specifically follow the compiled version of the Infinite Life Sūtra, the Essential Annotation of the Buddha Speaks of the Amitābha Sūtra by Ouyi [Zhixu], and the Phrase-by-Phrase Commentary on the Chapter on the Conduct and Vows of the Universal Worthy Bodhisattva (Samantabhadra) by Qingliang [Chengguan];

(3) Utterances of patriarchs of the Pure Land School and Collected Essays by Master Yinguang [Shengliang].

二、理依

(1) 信依要解六信，受持如來甚深法藏，護佛種性，常使不絕。233

(2) 十界一真，世出世法，唯心所現，唯識所變，觀法如化，三昧常寂，通諸法性，達衆生相。234

(3) 住真實慧，開化顯示真實之際，惠以真實之利，於諸衆生，視若


234 The last four sentences are quoted from the same sutra; the former two are from the eighth chapter and the latter two sentences from the second chapter. Xia Lianju, ed., Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjin pingdeng jue jing (Taipei: Huazang jingzongxuehui, reprint 1992) 14 and 42.
2. Principles to rely on are:

(1) [One’s] faith [should be] based on the six forms of faith in the Essential Annotation [of the Buddha Speaks of the Amitābha Sūtra]. [One should] accept and maintain the profound Dharma-store of Tathāgata as well as preserve the seed and nature of Buddhahood so that they are constantly not allowed to become extinct;

(2) The Ten [Dharma] Realms, the One True [Dharma Realm], ordinary truths, and ways of leaving the world [or enlightenment] are manifested by the Mind and changed in accordance with mental discernment. [Therefore, one should] visualize all these truths, methods, and phenomena as illusions, and constantly [maintain] the tranquility of perfect concentration so that [one] can thoroughly understand the Nature [noumenon] of all truths and recognize all phenomena related to sentient beings.

(3) [One should] stay in [the realm] of the true wisdom so that [one can] teach and transform [sentient beings] by clearly directing [them] to the True Nature, [by which]
they can be favored with the true benefit. [One should] regard sentient beings as oneself so that every thought benefits all living beings and every [thought of the]
Mind flows into the Ocean of Enlightenment.

(4) [One should] destroy and eliminate all attachments and erroneous thoughts by the
true sincerity, purity, equality, proper understanding, and compassion of [one's]
mind and by the practice of seeing through, letting go, being carefree, according
with conditions, and being mindful of Amitābha Buddha.238

(5) [One should] gives rise to the Bodhi-mind, recite “Amitābha” devotionally and
consistently, and decide to be reborn, to not regress, and become a Buddha in this
life.

三、行依

(1) 睹經三福—一者孝養父母，奉事師長，慈心不殺，修十善業。
二者受持三皈，具足眾戒，不犯威儀。三者發菩提心，深信因果，讀誦大乘，勸進行者。

(2) 六和敬—見和同解，戒和同修，身和同住，口和無諂，意和同
悦，利和同均。

(3) 三無漏學—起心動念，遠離三毒惡惱，必與清淨 (戒)、平等 (定)、

238 The detailed meaning of these ten points can be seen in “A Path to True Happiness,” 20 Jan. 2002 <http://www.amtb.org.tw/e-bud/PATH.HTM>. They are clarified as follows: True Sincerity [towards other] / Purity Of Mind [within] / Equality [in everything we see] / Proper Understanding [of ourselves and our environment] / Compassion [helping others in a wise and unconditional way] / See Through [to the truth of impermanence] / Let Go [of all wandering thoughts and attachments] / Freedom [of mind and spirit] / Accord With Conditions [go along with the environment] / Be Mindful Of Amitābha Buddha [wishing to reach the Pure Land and follow in His Teachings].
3. Practices to rely on:

(1) The Three Felicities of the *Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra*—the first of three felicities is to be filial and to take care of parents, to respect teachers, to have compassion and to commit no killing, and to cultivate the ten good karmas; the second felicity is to take the three refuges, to accept all precepts, and not to violate the respect-inspiring deportment [of the precepts]; the third felicity is to give rise to the Bodhi-mind, to deeply believe in cause and effect, to read and recite Mahāyāna Sūtras, and to encourage other practitioners to advance [in cultivation].

(2) Six Reverent Harmonies—opinions and perceptions [should be] harmonious by [building a] common understanding and interpretation [of Dharma]; observation of precepts [should be] harmonious by cooperative practicing; living [should be] harmonious by cooperative residence; communication [should be] harmonious by interacting with no arguments; [one’s] mind [should be] harmonious by sharing happiness together; and benefits [should be] harmonious by sharing all benefits.

(3) Three Studies of No Leaks [or Three Studies of Passionless]—[if] whenever one’s
mind is moved and thoughts arise, [one can] stay away from the evil afflictions of Three Poisons [i.e. greed, anger, and ignorance], [one] definitely can be in accordance with purity (precept), equality (concentration or composing the mind), and proper understanding (wisdom).

(4) The Six Pāramitās of Bodhisattva—[one should] constantly teach, to convert sentient beings by giving, keeping the precepts, being patient under insults, zeal and progress, composing one’s mind, and wisdom, and the practices of the Six Pāramitās, [so that they will] stick to the true, unsurpassed Way.

(5) The Ten Great Vows of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva [Samantabhadra]—all should observe and practice the virtues of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva together: the first is to revere all Buddhas; the second is to praise all Tathāgatas; the third is to make extensive offerings; the fourth is to repent all evil deeds; the fifth is to rejoice in all virtuous conduct; the sixth is to request the turn of the Law-wheel [teachings from Buddhas]; the seventh is to implore Buddhas to reside in the world; the eighth is to follow Buddhas’ teachings consistently; the ninth is to accommodate [the aspirations of] all sentient beings; and the tenth is to dedicate all one’s merits to all sentient beings. [One should] learn from the Bodhisattva to practice ceaselessly these Great Vows, to be mindful of them all the time with no discontinuity, and to [carry out them] unflaggingly with [one’s karma of] deeds, words, and thought.

四、果求

(1) 實踐四好：存好心、說好話、行好事、做好人，成就自身，莊嚴眾行，規範具足。

(2) 效法華嚴五十三善友，誓作世間衆生、家庭、工作、社團之好模範。
4. Results sought are to:

(1) Live up to the Four Goodness so as to cherish good intentions, say good words, do good things, and be a good person so that [one can] achieve them oneself because all conduct is dignified and all precepts are observed.

(2) Model oneself on the fifty-three good friends in the Flower Adornment Sūtra, pledging to be a fine example of sentient beings, families, [places of] working, and communities of the world.

(3) Be in amity with all races, religions, and cultures so that, by reserving differences while seeking common ground, all can coexist and prosper.

(4) Stabilize society, advocate virtuous [conduct], promote benevolence, and mutually aid and cooperate with each other so that all people are in perfect happiness and they [will] share wealth, cheer up and benefit each other, and encourage and urge on eternal peace on earth.

(5) Believe deeply in cause and effect, recite the Buddha’s name with faith and vows, and seek to be reborn into the Pure Land, where [one can] meet with all superior good [residents] together at Amitābha’s Oceanic Vow of the One Vehicle.

以上四綱要謹貢獻給
首屆淨宗聯誼會諸上善人參考指教
釋淨空敬獻 一九九七年十二月

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I sincerely dedicate the above four doctrines to

All superior good people at the First Conference of the Pure Land School for reference and comment

Sincerely yours,

Jingkong Shi December, 1997

The major portion of the above contents expresses opinions on the practices for followers of the Pure Land Learning Center, and the rest includes some information regarding areas of faith, comprehension, and realization. Nevertheless, based on these doctrines, some information is worth noticing here. First of all, from the commentaries he recommends for his followers in the first principle, Jingkong reveals the names of three Pure Land advocates, Zhixu, Chengguan, and Yinguang, whose influences on Jingkong have been previously demonstrated in this chapter. Moreover, the relationship between his ideas on faith and Zhixu’s six faiths is even openly pointed out by him from the very beginning of the second principle. Thus, his recommendation not only provides this study a very good evidence to clarify the sources of his ideology but also supports the argument regarding his emphasis on the traditional lineage of Dharma teachings.

More significance can be seen in the second principle that a large part of the content is excerpted from the compiled version of the Infinite Life Sutra, as indicated in corresponding footnotes. This further supports that the teachings and practices of the Learning Center rely heavily on this Sutra. Besides, as suggested by Jingkong to his followers as the standard of mentality, the five qualities of the mind (true sincerity, purity, equality, proper understanding, and compassion) in the fourth entry are the five main categories of the virtues of the True Mind, or Buddha Nature, of all sentient beings; to conform to these qualities in conduct, he advises
the five groups of corresponding attitudes and practices (seeing through, letting go, being
carefree, according with conditions, and being mindful of Amitābha Buddha).\footnote{Jingkong, Dacheng wuliangshoujing zhiguì 大乘無量壽經指歸 [Guidance of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Mahāyāna Buddhism] 1996, tape no. 9.}

As for the principles of practice, it is not surprise to see that the content of the third
principle is identical to those guidelines mentioned in the article by Ms. Han Ying. This
indicates that, in addition to nianfo, the Three Felicities, Six Reverent Harmonies, Three
Studies, Six Pāramitās, and Ten Great Vows, the five guidelines of practice are the focus of the
Mahāyāna practices for followers of the Learning Center.

It is a surprise that in the fourth principle only the last of the five entries talks about the
goal of rebirth while the majority concern individual ethics and behavior, as well as a variety of
interrelationship between humans, families, races, and countries. In fact, such advocacy can be
traced back to Yinguang, who had insisted that those who learn Buddhism and want to become
a Buddha should 1) promote harmonious human relations and fulfill one’s duty; 2) avoid evil
thoughts and preserve sincerity; 3) not to do any misdeeds but pursue all good deeds; and 4)
not only carry out all these suggestions but also transform others so that every one can practice
Pure Karma\footnote{“Pure Karma” refers to the Pure Land practice here.} together (學佛之人。必須敦倫盡分。閑邪存誠。諸惡莫作。眾善
奉行。自行化他。同修淨業).\footnote{Li Bingnan, “Yinguang dashi yuanji shizhounian jinian huiyilu,” Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji, ed. Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong: Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 412.} Obviously, Jingkong agrees with Yinguang’s belief that
such Confucian-style ethical rules are the foundation of Buddhist studies and the solution to

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Response and Retribution of the Most High, 1164)\textsuperscript{243} and the Liaofan sixun 了凡四訓 (Liaofan’s Four Admonitions) by Yuan Liaofan 袁了凡 (1533-1606) of the Ming dynasty.\textsuperscript{244}

Although the second half of the Disciplines of Practice for Students of the Pure Land School contains many quotations selected by Jingkong as important guidelines for all Pure Land practices, this section is not discussed here, because its key points are similar to those discussed above. In addition to this booklet, a modern version of the Gongguo ge 功過格 (the Ledger of Merits and Demerits; see figure 19), an old type of morality book, designed by one of the Learning Centers in Taiwan, is also included in Appendix Two to provide additional information about the School’s encouragement of Confucian values as the basic requirements for those who want both to be respected citizens in society and true Buddhists.

Realization

Based on the theory of practicing nianfo as the cause and becoming a Buddha is the effect (nianfo shi yin, chengfo shi guo 念佛是因. 成佛是果), Jingkong firmly believes that being reborn into the Western Pure Land to become a Buddha through perfect concentration in reciting Buddha’s name (念佛三味) is the ultimate goal of Pure Land Buddhism.\textsuperscript{245} Such an achievement is also explained as attaining the corresponding condition of a Tathāgata 入如來

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{244} One source claims that Yinguang published more than one million copies of Liaofan’s Four Admonitions during the early decades of the twentieth century, not to mention the quantity of the publications of other moral books and Buddhist sutras. “Gaizao mingyun, xinxiang shicheng 改造命運. 心想事成 [To Change Your Fate and Everything Accomplished as One’s Wish],” 25 Jan. 2002 <http://www.amtb.org.tw/zongjiao/4shint1.htm>.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{245} Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 18, 353, 374-377, and 474.}
果地)，or perfectly realizing Reality (圓證實相)。246 In other words, in order to reach this ultimate goal of realizing one’s Self-Nature, or Reality, or the True Mind, as every Buddha does, the immediate goal of realization is to attain an elementary level of perfect concentration in reciting Buddha’s name in hope of being reborn. Hence, Jingkong tells his followers that they can ensure their rebirth and decide to be reborn at any time they like once they reach the elementary level of perfect concentration, so they do not need to wait until the moment of death to know whether or not they can be reborn.247 He even said that one can realize changes and differences in one’s mind, body, and living environment in three to six months, and that one can attain the elementary level of perfect concentration in three to five years if one can follow all instructions recommended by the School discussed in this chapter.248

As for why practitioners should choose the Western Pure Land, he provides three major reasons to explain why this Pure Land is better than all of the other Buddha Pure Lands: firstly, one can be reborn there with remaining karma; secondly, those who are reborn there can maintain the stage of non-regression; and thirdly, one can become a Buddha in one life after being reborn there (西方世界...唯能超越其他世界之處。第一是帶業往生。第二往生不退、第三往生以後，一生成佛。此是西方世界第一殊勝之處)。249

Clearly, the most important focus for Pure Land practitioners here is the condition that they can be reborn to the Buddha’s Pure Land without troubling themselves about eliminating all afflictions, as Hinayāna Buddhists do. In short, trying their best to get themselves into the Pure Land is the most immediate and important goal for followers of the Learning Center.

There are two kinds of those who are said to be reborn into the Pure Land. The first refers to the general situation for most followers who follow the instructions for practice and succeed in the perfect concentration in reciting Buddha’s name. The second refers to those who never heard about Pure Land teachings during their lifetime but are told on their deathbed and immediately believe in the teachings, follow what they are told to do, and successfully reach the level of perfect concentration by simply reciting for several days or even one to ten times before dying.

These categories are actually similar to the idea of Shandao, the second Patriarch of the Pure Land School. In his work Wangsheng lizan ji [Gatha of Worship and Compliment of the Rebirth], Shandao mentions that those who recite with faith can be reborn to the Pure Land with the help of the vow power of Amitābha, regardless of the duration of their practice, which can vary in length from one to ten times of recitation to a whole life time of observation (但使信心求念。上盡一形下至十聲一聲等。以佛願力易得往生).\(^{250}\)

However, for the second category, Jingkong has warned his followers that they should not expect to luck through without effort because for those who can succeed in this category, there are three necessary conditions: (1) one should remain conscious when dying; (2) at this moment, one has to encounter someone talking to him/her about Pure Land Buddhism; and (3) after learning the teachings, one has to instantly believe what has been said, sincerely vow to be

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reborn in the Pure Land, and enthusiastically recite the Buddha’s name.\footnote{Jingkong, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji} [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sutra], vol. 1: 109 and 357.} Since one cannot ensure one’s condition at death, Jingkong advises that it is better not to waste the good opportunity to practice when one is in good health.\footnote{Jingkong, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji} [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sutra], vol. 1: 109 and 357.}

In addition to these categories, Jingkong mentions the conditions in which a practitioner can be confirmed to have been successfully reborn. Traditionally, one is declared to be reborn if (1) one sees and is greeted by the trinity of Amitàbha, Avalokitesvara and Mahàsthàmaprâpta (三 聖 來 迎); (2) one knows about the date and time of dying in advance (預 知 時 至); (3) the crown of one’s head is the last part of the body to cool down (頭 頂 溫 熱);\footnote{It is also said that one would be reborn into the Realm of the Heavens if the face is the last part of the body that cools down; would be reborn into the Realm of Humans if the heart is the last part; would be into the Realm of Animals if the knees are the last parts; would be into the Realm of Ghosts if the abdomen is the last part; and into the Realm of the Hells if the soles of the feet are the last parts.\footnote{Jingkong, “Lecture on \textit{Amituojing shuchao yanyi},” 25 Jan. 2002 <http://www.Amitabha.org/master_ck/mt-content/mt-content-122.htm>.}} (4) after death, one’s body remains soft and the face looks alive as if one is asleep or is in meditative concentration (全 身 柔 軟 如 入 禪 定); (5) auspicious phenomena appear (瑞 相; including extraordinary aroma and radiance emitted from the body as well as the image of a lotus seen by the dying person and/or other people); and (6) there are Sarîra, relics or ashes, left after cremation of the body (燒 出 舍 利). However, Jingkong has said that only seeing and being greeted by the trinity of Amitàbha, Avalokitesvara and Mahàsthàmaprâpta is reliable enough to tell if the rebirth is successful, because some of the above conditions can also happen to those who are reborn into the Realms of the Heavens and Humans.\footnote{Jingkong, “Lecture on \textit{Amituojing shuchao yanyi},” 25 Jan. 2002 <http://www.Amitabha.org/master_ck/mt-content/mt-content-122.htm>.}
Finally, one last point that has to be mentioned here is that Jingkong has explained the profound stage of realization in the simple terms that once one’s mind, vow, comprehension, and conduct are rectified and become identical with those of Buddhas, one is no longer a mortal but an enlightened Bodhisattva. Such a simple way of explanation indeed corresponds to one of his statements in the “front matter” that “cultivation is a process to rectify our erroneous ways of perception, thinking, talking, and acting toward life and the universe.” Obviously, he attempts to simplify and modernize traditional Buddhist terms to popularize the teachings; this approach seems to be beneficial to the development of the Pure Land Learning Center.

Conclusion

As we have seen, instead of promoting or inventing new interpretations, Jingkong has adopted selected traditional teachings to explain Pure Land Buddhism even though he chooses to modernize Buddhist terms as a way to promote the School’s teaching for the new generation. His decision actually corresponds to his emphasis on the importance of the lineage of Dharma transmission to Buddhist teachings, and can be treated as the evidence that the Learning Center is proposed to be a modern successor of the previous Lotus Society. This is also why most of his quotations are cited from famous Pure Land advocates of different Buddhist schools. Chengguan’s methodical system of the four divisions helps Jingkong to understand that Pure Land Buddhism is self-contained in its methodology, which means that it has its own theory, methods of practice, and goals of realization, or enlightenment. This understanding undoubtedly inspired Jingkong to systematically organize his teaching. Shandao, Zhuhong, 

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and Zhixu all seem to be his favorite teachers to reveal the profound meaning in the 
Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra and the Amitābha Sūtra, while Yinguang is 
his mentor for the promotion of Confucianism and morality books, and the idea of setting up a 
monastery with a tradition of twenty-four-hour ceaseless recitation of the Buddha’s name. In 
b brief, the ideology of Jingkong comes from his broad and accurate grasp of traditional Buddhist 
teachings interpreted by early Pure Land advocates. However, from the way he explains what 
Pure Land follower should do, it is better to say that he has assimilated these teachings rather 
than merely saying that he was influenced by them.

On the whole, the center of Jingkong’s thought is his belief in the theory that 
consistently and single-mindedly reciting the name of Amitābha and sincerely vowing to be 
reborn into the Western Pure Land can enable one to enter this Land of the One True Dharma 
Realm, where nine grades of residents (ranked according to their efforts) enjoy and experience 
as Buddhas. Therefore, the term nianfo is the axis of the four divisions; the divisions of faith 
and comprehension focus on the clarification of the term nian and fo — what and why, and the 
divisions of practice and realization deal with the method and goal of nianfo. Finally, the 
whole formula is justified by the notion of cause and effect, one of the fundamental principles 
of Buddhism, that nianfo shi yin, chengfo shi guo 念佛是因, 成佛是果 (practicing nianfo is 
the cause and becoming a Buddha is the effect). Having rationalized such theory, Jingkong 
concludes that the magnificence of Pure Land Buddhism is the flexibility of the practice of 
recitation that can be carried out along side daily activities, so that one can attain enlightenment 
without neglecting social behavior (不離佛法，而行世法，不廢世法，而證佛法).\(^{256}\)

\(^{256}\) For further details, see Liu Chengfu, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing qinwenji [A Record of What I Have Heard about the Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School] (Taipei: Sanbao dizi, 1999) 28-29.
which are important concerns for those in contemporary society in which time and space for devotion to religious practice are far more limited than the past.

Likewise, the same interrelationship can be found between the four divisions and the Pure Land sūtras. For instance, the division of faith can be explained by the Amitābha Sūtra, in which Śākyamuni Buddha urges sentient beings to believe in what he said, and the division of practice is based on the Infinite Life Sūtra, from which originate the two focal points on giving rise to the Bodhi-mind (發 菩 提 心) and reciting devotedly and consistently (一向 專 念). Besides, such interrelationships are not limited to the four divisions and the teachings of the School, but also involve other Mahāyāna sūtras promoted by the Pure Land Learning Center. For example, the division of comprehension can be simplified as the one main idea of wuzhu shengxin 無 住 生 心 (the mind that gives rise to [proper thoughts] and is not attached to [anything seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched, and thought of]), a principle of the Diamond Sūtra, and the division of realization can be elaborated on by the ideas of One True Dharma Realm and mutual correspondences between practice and comprehension demonstrated in the Flower Adornment Sūtra. Above all, from the fact that Jingkong has made use of these Mahāyāna sūtras as cross references to illustrate the Infinite Life Sūtra, this Sūtra can be considered as the one that includes all the four divisions.257

In fact, these interrelationships can reveal more. They support the conclusion that Pure Land teachings and the seemingly simple recitation method are actually not as simple and easy as they appear to be. Instead, the principles all practitioners of the Learning Center required to observe are logical, philosophical, and methodological. In addition, these interrelationships disclose the intimate connections between Pure Land teachings and a variety of Mahāyāna

Sūtras, which have been valued by other Buddhist schools. In this case, Jingkong has earnestly lectured on many different Mahāyāna sūtras for decades just to explain the meanings behind such connections. Why does the Master take the trouble to give explanation in these years? What are his answers? What would these answers mean to Pure Land practitioners? These are a part of the questions to be answered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
The Roles of Some Major Pure Land and Mahāyāna Sūtras in Formulating the Doctrinal Structure of the Pure Land Teachings

Questions Arise about Jingkong’s Advocacy

After decades of lecturing on Buddhism, owing to his comprehensive study of the subject, Jingkong is reputed for (1) his mastery at revealing the profound meanings of a wide range of Buddhist sūtras and (2) his incomparable effort and determination in popularizing Pure Land Buddhism.

A noticeable characteristic of Jingkong’s skill in lecturing is his free application of quotations from different Mahāyāna sūtras as cross references to annotate and elaborate the content and meaning of the Pure Land works. However, some of these Mahāyāna sūtras like the Diamond Sūtra have been considered outside the mainstream of the Pure Land textual lineage. Obviously, to Jingkong’s understanding, as long as the doctrines of any Mahāyāna sūtra are relevant to the theories and practices of Pure Land Buddhism, these texts can be used to contribute to the understanding and the spread of the Pure Land beliefs. Most likely, this is the reason why, in addition to major Pure Land sūtras, the Master’s talks cover a more extensive range of Buddhist texts. According to an internet source,\(^\text{258}\) the data of which are reorganized in Appendix Three in table form, Jingkong has lectured sixty-six times on the Pure Land texts, with emphasis on the Five Sūtras and One Treatise, thirty-eight times on other

\(^{258}\) "Jingkong fashi zhuangji 淨空法師專集 (Special Collection of Dharma Master Jingkong),” 6 Jun. 2002 <http://www.amtb-dba.org/Audio/index.html>. On this web site a collection of recorded talks of the Master are posted so that those interested in his lectures can listen to these talks whenever they want to and download them into their computers for free.
Mahāyāna sūtras, ten times on prominent Buddhist masters’ works, and eighty-eight times on morality books and chosen topics on Buddhist teachings and practices. Although the lectures posted on-line shown in Appendix Three are only a portion of the complete collection of Jingkong’s talks, the frequencies of these subjects indicate that Jingkong has given considerable attention to sūtras which have been traditionally valued by other Buddhist schools, such as the Flower Adornment Sūtra of the Huayan (Flower Adornment) School and the Diamond Sūtra of the Chan School.

Hence, in a sense Jingkong’s wide interests in Mahāyāna sūtras appears to be contradictory to his own effort in popularizing Pure Land Buddhism, of which his advocacy can be characterized by his call to go deep into one single method (yimen shenru 一門深入) and to practice and preach solely Pure Land Buddhism (zhuanxiu zhuanghong 専修専弘). These principles are further justified by his idea that once a practitioner, regardless of school affiliation, can thoroughly comprehend and grasp the principles of a sūtra by studying and practicing according to its theories, one will spontaneously and completely comprehend the content of all sūtras; the reason is that the common principles of Sākyamuni’s teachings that are supposed to be shared with all sūtras have been realized (yi jing tong yiqie jing tong 一切經通). In other words, to understand Buddhist teachings, his followers do not need to study as many sūtras as they could but to focus their study solely on one sūtra, of which the Master recommends Xia Lianju’s compiled version of the Infinite Life Sūtra as the best and most appropriate choice for contemporary practitioners. At this point, questions arise: how could the Master urge his followers to concentrate on one sūtra yet his talks provide such a big

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reservoir of choices? Does Jingkong contradict himself? Is there any particular link between his “contradictable” advice, his manner of exegesis, and his call to zhuanxiu zhuanhong? If so, what is the position of this link within the network of Pure Land doctrine and practice?

Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to bring more light to this issue so that the central doctrines promoted by the Pure Land Learning Center can be viewed from a different angle. Special attention is given to the exploration of the roles played by various Pure Land sūtras and some other Mahāyāna sūtras in formulating the doctrinal or philosophical structure of the Pure Land teachings Jingkong advocates. Based primarily on Jingkong’s talks, this chapter first reviews the roles of the Pure Land sūtras, and then of selected Mahāyāna sūtras that the Master has frequently mentioned. In order to follow Jingkong’s approaches and interpretations without causing much difficulty and confusion, contextual descriptions are also included for a better understanding of the contents of the sūtras in question. In the final section, tentative answers for the Master’s intentions are provided, from which a sketch of a Chinese Buddhist tradition in interpreting Pure Land teachings and practices is presented as well.

The Interrelationships between the Three Pure Land Sūtras

That the Three Pure Land Sūtras form the basis of doctrine and practice for the Pure Land School is an indisputable fact. Their importance in providing the rationale for the Pure Land belief that affects the development of Chinese Buddhism have attracted the attention of many Buddhist experts, from early Buddhist commentators to modern scholars. The coverage of their topics ranges from traditional contextual analyses to comparative studies with interdisciplinary approaches. Since the content, focus, and history of transmission of the Three Sūtras are dissimilar in degree and in kind, a number of modern scholars tend to study them
Different from this approach, in their exegeses and related works, many Pure Land advocates prefer to interpret the Three Sūtras as a triplex scripture, in which the amalgamated philosophical thinking represent the entirety of the Pure Land teachings. In other words, while skeptical scholars stress on examining the details and differences found in these Three Sūtras, Pure Land advocates devote their energies to clarifying their intrinsic connections in a macroscopic manner. This tendency of interpretation has developed a pattern of annotation seen in some Pure Land exegeses, in which the exegete juxtaposes quotations from the Three Sūtras to cross reference details and definitions; by so doing, the exegete easily identifies the philosophical links between these texts that most researchers have been unaware of.

For examples, see Kenneth K. S. Ch’en, Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964) 338-340 and 342; Shun’ei Tsuboi 崇井俊男, “Jingtu sanjing gaishuo 淨土三經概說 [Introduction to the Three Pure Land Sūtras],” ed. Zhang Mantao 張曼濤, Jingtu dianji yanjiu 淨土典籍研究 [Studies on Pure Land Texts] (Taipei: Dacheng wenhua chubanshe, 1979) 1-240; Meiji Yamada, direct, trans. and annotated by The Ryukoku University Translation Center, The Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life as Expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1984); Hisao Inagaki, The Three Pure Land Sutras: a Study and Translation from Chinese (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995); and Luis O Gómez, The Land of Bliss: the Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light: Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996). Among these examples, the works of Tsuboi and Inagaki cover the Three Sūtras and aptly demonstrate the argument here that many modern scholars tend to investigate these sūtras one by one, which differs from Buddhist advocates in their treatment of the relationships among these texts.

Examples can be seen in a number of Buddhist works:

(1) Amituo jing shu 阿彌陀經疏, TT. 37, no. 1757: 311b, 313a, 313b, 319c, and 326b;

(2) Amituo jing tongzaishu 阿彌陀經通贊疏, TT. 37, no. 1758: 339b;

(3) Guan nian Amituofo xianghui sanmei gongde famen 觀念阿彌陀佛相海三味功德法門, TT. 47, no. 1959: 28a;

(4) Shi jingtu quanyi lun 釋淨土群疑論, TT. 47, no. 1960: 39b, 54a, 57c, 58a, and 60a;

(5) Jingtu shiyi lun 淨土十疑論, TT. 47, no. 1961: 78c;
In this case, Master Jingkong is no exception. As Jingkong has been greatly influenced by his predecessors, he chooses to handle these texts in the same manner. He even takes the trouble to restate these intrinsic relations in modern terminology to help his followers to begin their devotion with a clear idea of how this kind of traditional judgment works to integrate the teachings.\footnote{Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sutra], vol. 1: 488.}

The Infinite Life Sutra is a conspectus of the [Western] Pure Land, which introduces the origin, history, and circumstances of the Western World of Utmost Joy [the Western Pure Land] in great detail. The shorter version of the Amitābha Sutra focuses on the persuasion of [having] faith, [making] vows, and [carrying out] practices. The Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra is the additional remarks of the

\begin{itemize}
\item (6) Jingtu lun 淨土論, TT. 47, no. 1963: 86c, 88c, and 101a;
\item (7) Xifang yao jue shi yi tong gui 西方要決釋疑通規, TT. 47, no. 1964: 109a;
\item (8) Nian fo jing 念佛經, TT. 47, no. 1966: 122a and 124b;
\item (9) Wang sheng lian ji 往生禮讚偈, TT. 47, no. 1980: 439c and 447c;
\item (10) Ji zhui jing lichan yi 集諸經禮懺儀, TT. 47, no. 1982: 467b and 474b.
\end{itemize}
Infinite Life Sūtra: [it] talks about the theories of Pure Land that actually are not confined to the Pure Land School but [the essentials] from which all teachings of Buddhism cannot deviate. It [the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra] contains theories and [ways of] practice, and, even more important, it describes the causation of the four lands, three ranks, and nine grades of the Western World in great detail; [hence, this Sūtra] and the Infinite Life Sūtra can be consulted together.

This statement is brief yet clear enough to reveal Jingkong’s intention to characterize the common doctrines of these three texts as the indicator of their intrinsic associations. In other words, they are not merely treated as three independent talks on the same subject given by the Buddha in three separate occasions but as if a set of textbooks on the subject of Pure Land Buddhism. Unsurprisingly, Patriarch Shengliang (Yinguang), one of Jingkong’s mentors, gave a similar yet more detailed account on the same subject; cited below is the original passage from the preface of the Jingtu wujing 淨土五經 (the Five Pure Land Sūtras) published in 1933.²⁶³ For convenience of comparison, this account is divided into three paragraphs and each of them is followed by its English counterpart:

佛在摩竭提國靈鷲山中，說阿彌陀佛最初因地，棄國出家，發四十大願。又復久經長劫，依願修行，迨至福慧圓滿，得成佛道。所感之世界莊嚴，妙莫能名。十方諸佛咸讚歎，十方菩薩與回小向大之二乘，具足懾業之凡夫咸得往生，等蒙攝受。是為無量壽經。

²⁶³ This publication is included in the 1989 Jingtu wujing duben 淨土五經讀本 (A Textbook of the Five Pure Land Sūtras) published by the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, one of the affiliates of the Learning Center. The quotation of Master Yinguang’s account is also from the 1989 book; see Jingtu wujing duben (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijinhui, 1989) 5-6.
The Buddha, in Spiritual Vulture Peak [Grdhrakūta] of the Kingdom of Magadha, explained the primal fundamental cause of Amitābha Buddha, who renounced the throne, became a monk, and made the forty-eight vows. Additionally, [he] had practiced according to these vows for a long period of kalpas; wait until [his] virtue and wisdom had been perfectly completed, and the Way of Buddha was achieved. [As a result,] the realm activated by him is magnificent and so wonderful that no words can describe it. All Buddha of the ten directions highly praised [Amitābha for such achievement]; all Bodhisattvas as well as the two vehicles [of Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha] who turn from Hinayāna to Mahāyāna and mortals full of all illusive deeds are able to be reborn and received equally [there]. This is what the Infinite Life Sūtra is.

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264 “Grdhrakūta, Vulture Peak near Rājagrha, the modern Giddore, so called ... probably because of its shape, or because of the vultures who fed there on the dead; a place frequented by the Buddha; ...” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 488.

265 “A kingdom in Central India, the headquarters of ancient Buddhism up to A.D. 400; the holy land of all Buddhists, covered with viharas and therefore called Bahar, the southern portion of which corresponds to ancient Magadha.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 436.

266 Yindi (the causal ground, or fundamental cause) refers to the initial state of Buddhist practicing which leads to the guodì or resulting stage of attaining the Buddhahood, the common goal of all Buddhist disciplines. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 205 and 264.

267 Ercheng (the two vehicles) here refers to the vehicles of shengwen (Śrāvaka; “a hearer, a term applied to the personal disciples of the Buddha”) and pizzhiho (Pratyekabuddha; the one who attains “enlightenment alone, independently of a teacher, and with the object of attaining nirvāṇa and his own salvation rather than that of others”). For respective details and quotations of these two terms, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 414 and 462.

268 The words xiao (small) and da (big) here are the shorten forms of the terms xiaocheng (Hinayāna) and dacheng (Mahāyāna) respectively.
於摩竭提國王宮中，說淨業三福，十六妙觀。俾一切眾生，悉知是心作佛，是心是佛，詔佛正遍知海，從心想生。則是心作眾生，是心是眾生。眾生煩惱業海從心想生之義，便已彰明校著。果能深明此義，誰肯枉受輪迥。末明九品生因，以期各修上品。是為觀無量壽佛經。

[The Buddha,] in the Palace of the Kingdom of Magadha, explained the Three Felicities of Pure Karmas [and] the sixteen wonderful [methods of] visualization so that all sentient beings know [the truth] that “[when] this mind becomes a Buddha, this mind is a Buddha, [so] the True Oceanic Omniscience of all Buddhas arises from the thoughts of the mind.” Then, the meaning of [the parallel concept] that “[when] this mind becomes a sentient being, this mind is a sentient being, [so] the ocean of afflicting karma of sentient beings arises from the thoughts of the mind” is very obvious. If the meaning [of this truth] can be deeply understood, who can be willing to senselessly suffer from rebirth? In the end [the Buddha] clarified the causation of the rebirth of the nine grades so as to expect everyone to practice for the superior grades. This is what the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra is.

在舍衛國給孤園中，說淨土依正妙果令生信，勸諸聞者應求往生以發願，復令行者執持名號以立行。信願行三，為淨土法門之綱宗。具此三法，或畢生執持，已得一心。或臨終方聞，止稱十念。均得蒙佛接引，往生西方。是為阿彌陀經。

269 These sentences are cited from the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra. See TT. 12, no. 365: 343a.

270 See footnote no. 134 of Chapter Three.
In Jetavana\textsuperscript{271} of the Kingdom of \textit{Śrāvastī}\textsuperscript{272} [the Buddha] explained the wonderful dependent environment and the resultant Self [Amitābha] of the Pure Land to make [practitioners] give rise to faith, urged all hearers to seek rebirth by making vows, and instructed practitioners to persistently maintain [the recitation of] the Buddha’s name to establish their practice. The triplex of faith, vows, and practice are the principles of the Pure Land method [for enlightenment]. [Those who] possess these three principles, either persistently maintaining [the recitation] for the whole life achieving the [stage of] Single-mindedness or hearing of it only on the deathbed reciting only ten times, can all be received by the Buddha, and reborn into the Western [Pure Land]. This is what the \textit{Amitābha Sūtra} is.

When comparing this passage with that of Jingkong, it is not difficult to find out that some descriptions here can be taken as the detailed comments of that of Jingkong. For examples, regarding the \textit{Amitābha Sūtra}, Jingkong’s simple accounts like “the origin, history, and circumstances” of Amitābha Buddha and his Pure Land, and “the persuasion of [having] faith, [making] vows, and [carrying out] practices” are more concretely illustrated in the first and third parts of Yinguang’s passage respectively. Besides, through this comparison, the unidentified essential theories in the \textit{Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra}

\textsuperscript{271} "Jetavana, a park near \textit{Śrāvastī}, said to have been obtained from Prince Jeta by the elder Anāthapindika, in which monasterial buildings were erected, the favourite resort of Śākyamuni. Two hundred years later it is said to have been destroyed by fire, rebuilt smaller 500 years after, and again a century later burnt down; thirteen years afterwards it was rebuilt on the earlier scale, but a century later entirely destroyed.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 310.
\textsuperscript{272} \textit{Śrāvastī}, literally means “the city of famous things, or men, or the famous city,” “was a city and ancient kingdom 500 li north-west of Kapilavastu, now Rapetmapet south of Rapti River.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 279.
mentioned by Jingkong are conveniently projected; that is, the quotation "[when] this mind becomes a Buddha, this mind is a Buddha, [so] the True Oceanic Omniscience of all Buddhas arises from the thoughts of the mind" is the answer to "the theories of Pure Land that actually are not confined to the Pure Land School but [the essentials] from which all teachings of Buddhism cannot deviate." Undoubtedly, this answer corresponds to the principles of Jingkong's teachings which have been elucidated earlier in the Comprehension section of Chapter Three, and, simultaneously, reconfirms the argument that the Master's teachings inherit the traditional Dharma lineage established and imparted by his predecessors.

However, even though passages by previous Pure Land advocates like this one describe and discuss the central themes and essentials in the three sūtras that govern ways of practice for the rebirth, they do not directly touch the idea of the intrinsic relations between these sūtras. At this point, Jingkong's decision to explicitly delineate such connections differs him from his mentors. By so doing, the immediate impact is that Jingkong's employment of cross reference in lecturing can be effortlessly legitimated, and under which his unprecedented support of Xia Lianju's compiled edition of the Infinite Life Sūtra becomes sensible because its rich details excel the surviving editions of the Infinite Life Sūtra in clarity and comprehensiveness, making it the best Pure Land "textbook" for the Learning Center in teaching, and for its practitioners in recitation.

In fact, according to the information from these two passages, it is apparent that the coverage of both the intrinsic relations and the cross reference method is not limited to the Pure Land texts but extends to include all Buddhist sūtras. The earlier discussions by Yinguang and Jingkong of the essential theories in the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra has revealed that, in a macroscopic view, Jingkong asserts that fundamental Buddhist principles seen in any Pure Land sūtra should not be understood as separate cells out of the whole body of
Buddhism, but as a kind of common principles shared by all Buddhist schools. Again, this is
not a new concept; its spirit can be traced back to Shandao’s (613-681) declaration that the
“Tathāgata [the Buddha] appeared in the world only for the sake of preaching Amitābha’s
oceanic original vows (Rulai suoyi xingchushi / wei shuo Mituo benyuanhai 如來所以興出
世 / 唯說彌陀本願海),”274 which means that the sole purpose for the Buddha’s teachings is
to introduce and promote the methods of salvation developed by Amitābha. Hence, all
Buddhist texts can be used to support and annotate any Pure Land theory because all Buddhist
sūtras originated from the same principles towards one single common goal — to seek rebirth
in the Pure Land of Amitābha. For a better knowledge of this suggestion of reciprocal
interpretation and its line of reasoning, two accounts from the above mentioned 1933 preface
by Yinguang are worthy of further scrutiny. Likewise, for convenience of comparison, the first
account is divided into five short paragraphs, with each of them followed by its English
counterpart:275

(1) 淨土法門，其大無外。三根普被，利鈍全收。九界眾生，捨此則上
無以圓成佛道。十方諸佛，離此則下無以普度群萌。一切法門，無不
從此流。一切行門，無不還歸此法界。

[The salvation extent] of the Pure Land method [to enlightenment] is the most extensive
one without limitation, covering universally the three grades of the source [of natural
capacity] and receiving all [those whose organs and their powers are] penetrative or dull.

273 Examples of passages by previous Pure Land advocates are listed in footnote no. 258.
274 Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the
Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1:1.
275 Jingtu wujing duben, p. 4 and 6.
[If] sentient beings of the nine realms\footnote{There are ten dharma-worlds, or states of existence, namely, the six realms of the reincarnation, the two realms or vehicles of Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha, the realm of Bodhisattva, and the realm of Buddha. Nine realms refer to all the realms of the sentient beings except the tenth and highest, the realm of Buddha. For details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 18 and 51.} abandon this [method], there is no other way by which [they can] ascend to perfectly attain the way of Buddha. [If] all Buddhas of the ten directions depart from this [method], there is no other way by which [they can] descend to universally save all ignorant and undeveloped beings. All salvation methods, without exception, originate from the realm of this method; all [goals of] the ways of practice, without exception, lead back to the realm of this method.

If according to what had been seen by those whose fundamental qualities were of Mahāyāna,\footnote{According to Ding, the term \textit{daji} 大機 refers to the kind of natural capacity of sentient beings who maintain the practice of Mahāyāna methods and reach the stage of Bodhisattva 阿僧伽 (Vajra), see Ding Fubao, \textit{Foxue dacidian [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching]}, p. 428.} the commencement [of this method] actually started in the period of Avatamsaka,\footnote{The period of Avatamsaka is the first of \textit{wushi} 五時, the five periods of Śākyamuni’s teachings, as defined by the Tiantai School for the \textit{Avatamsaka-sūtra [the Flower Adornment Sūtra]} was delivered by the Buddha immediately after his enlightenment; it was delivered in three divisions each of seven days. The other four periods are \textit{layuan shi} 麟苑時 (the deer park period), in which the Buddha preached the Āgamas in the deer park for twelve years; \textit{fangdeng shi} 方等時 (the period of Broad and Equal [Doctrines]), in which the Buddha preached Mahāyāna-cum-hinayāna doctrines for eight years; \textit{bore shi} 般若時 (the period of \textit{prajñā}, in which the Buddha preached the teachings of \textit{prajñā} or wisdom for twenty-two years; and \textit{fahua niepan shi} 法華涅槃時 (the period of the \textit{Lotus Sūtra} and the \textit{Nirvāna Sūtra}, in which the Buddha preached the \textit{Lotus Sūtra} and the \textit{Nirvāna Sūtra} for}\textit{142} the Buddha.} during which [the Buddha told the story about how] Sudhana\footnote{The period of Avatamsaka is the first of \textit{wushi} 五時, the five periods of Śākyamuni’s teachings, as defined by the Tiantai School for the \textit{Avatamsaka-sūtra [the Flower Adornment Sūtra]} was delivered by the Buddha immediately after his enlightenment; it was delivered in three divisions each of seven days. The other four periods are \textit{layuan shi} 麟苑時 (the deer park period), in which the Buddha preached the Āgamas in the deer park for twelve years; \textit{fangdeng shi} 方等時 (the period of Broad and Equal [Doctrines]), in which the Buddha preached Mahāyāna-cum-hinayāna doctrines for eight years; \textit{bore shi} 般若時 (the period of \textit{prajñā}, in which the Buddha preached the teachings of \textit{prajñā} or wisdom for twenty-two years; and \textit{fahua niepan shi} 法華涅槃時 (the period of the \textit{Lotus Sūtra} and the \textit{Nirvāna Sūtra}, in which the Buddha preached the \textit{Lotus Sūtra} and the \textit{Nirvāna Sūtra} for} sought
instructions from all intimates and, in the end, [because of] receiving additional help from Samantabhadra’s awe-inspiring [power of] spirit while under his guidance, what [Sudhana] realized was equivalent to that of Samantabhadra as well as to those of all Buddhas and [what he became] was called the Samyak-sambodhi Bodhisattva.

普賢乃以十大願王勸進善財，及與華藏海眾四十一位法身大士，回向往生西方極樂世界，以期圓滿佛果，而為華嚴一經歸宗結頂之法。

Then, Samantabhadra urged Sudhana and the oceanic assembly of the forty-one stages of Dharmayaka Bodhisattvas in the [Realm of the] Lotus-treasury to proceed by eight years and for a day and a night respectively. For details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 119-120 and 387.

279 Sudhana, translated in Chinese as Shancai or Shancai tongzi, is a disciple mentioned in the Flower Adornment Sutra.

280 The term dengjue (Samyak-sambodhi) here refers to the fifty-first stage in the enlightenment of a Bodhisattva, the attainment which precedes the final stage, miaojue (wonderful enlightenment) or Buddhahood. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 235 and 385.

281 According to the Tiantai School, there are totally “fifty-two stages in the process of becoming a Buddha; of these fifty-one are to bodhisattvahood, the fifty-second to Buddhahood.” That is, during the development of a Bodhisattva into a Buddha, there are fifty-two phases; they are shixin wei (ten stages of faith), shizhu wei (ten stages of abidance), shixing wei (ten stages of practice), shihuixiang wei (ten stages of dedication of merits), shidi wei (ten stages of ground), dengjue (Samyak-sambodhi), and miaojue (Buddhahood). Hence, the forty-one stages of fashen dashi (Bodhisattva) mentioned here refers to the forty-one intermediate stages ranging from the ten stages of abidance to Samyak-sambodhi, excluding the beginning ten stages of faith and the final stage. Such exclusions are based on the idea that Dharmayaka Bodhisattvas are those Bodhisattvas who have realized Dharmakāya, the absolute or spiritual body; therefore, the first ten stages are deemed not to have reached the status while the final stage is the stage of...
dedicating their merits to [the goal of] seeking rebirth into the Western World of Utmost Joy so as to perfectly complete the state of Buddhahood.\footnote{283}{This is the most fundamental and ultimate method in the \textit{Flower Adornment Sūtra}.} In that way, since the \textit{Flower Adornment Sūtra} explicates the method by which [one can] become a Buddha in one’s life and concludes that seeking rebirth into the [Western] Pure Land is the source [of such method], it can be known that the Pure Land method is the sole greatest method by which all Buddhas of the ten directions and three periods\footnote{285}{The ten directions refer to space of all directions while the three periods refer to time as past, present, and future.} can accomplish from starting the conversion of sentient beings [by instruction, salvation into Buddhism] to finishing the perfection of the way of Buddha.


\footnote{282}{The term \textit{huazang} (lotus-treasury) here refers to the \textit{Huazang shijie} (the Lotus-world or Lotus-store or Lotus-universe), the Pure Land of Vairocana. Since this world is described as “[a]bove the wind or air circle is a sea of fragrant water, in which is the thousand-petal lotus with its infinite variety of worlds,” the meaning of the term is “the Lotus which contains a store of myriads of worlds.” Generally speaking, this term also refers to the Pure Land of all Buddhas in their \textit{baoshen} (sambhogakāya; reward bodies), in which they enjoy the reward of their labors. For more details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 77, 269, 369, and 388.}

\footnote{283}{\textit{Foguo} (Buddhaphala) literally means the Buddha fruit, which refers to the state of Buddhahood.}

\footnote{284}{These two terms, \textit{guizong} (return to the origin or source, or the principal aim or purpose) and \textit{jieding} (conclude as the best), are treated as adjective here.}
This is what most likely had been seen by those whose fundamental qualities were of Mahāyāna, which was not even seen and heard of by the two vehicles [of Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha], let alone those mortals with all bonds [of illusion]. Wait till the assembly in the [period of] Broad and Equal [Doctrines], [the Buddha] specifically preached the three sūtras of the Pure Land particularly for [them] so that all [sentient beings], mortals or saints [of the two vehicles], can maintain practicing together and cooperate with each other\(^{286}\) so as to leave this [world of] five kasāya periods of turbidity and ascend to the nine [grades of] lotus [throne] there [in the Pure Land] in this present life.

All those Mahāyāna sūtras that mention the Pure Land [of Amitābha] in passing are countless. And the Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Mahāsthāma through Buddha Name Recitation of the Śūrangama-sūtra is in fact the most wonderful

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\(^{286}\) The term tongshi 同事 (samānārhatā; cooperate with and adaptation of oneself to others) is one of the si she 事 she 四攝法 (catuh-samgraha-vastu; four all-embracing virtues [of Bodhisattva]), by which Bodhisattvas lead others into the truth. They are bushi 布施 (dāna; giving what others like), aiyu 愛語 (priyavacana; affectionate speech), lixing 利行 (artha-kṛtya; conduct profitable to others), and tongshi. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 204.
instruction on the [practice of] Buddha name recitation. If sentient beings can recite [in accordance with the principle of] “assimilating all the six sense-organs so that pure thought persists,” how could it be impossible “to be sure to see Buddhas at present and in the future,” to attain soon the perfect complete realization, and accomplish the way of Buddha in the future?

By outlining the goal and function of the Pure Land practice, the first account provides a rationale to explain why this practice has been considered so critical to all sentient beings. First, the first short paragraph introduces the powerfulness and universality of the method in terms of its practicability. Second, in order to authenticate these characteristics, the second, third, and fourth paragraphs trace the beginning of the practice back to the period of Avatamsaka, reconfirming that (1) seeking rebirth into the Western Pure Land is the subject matter and method emphasized in the Flower Adornment Sutra by which sentient beings, including Bodhisattvas, can attain Buddhahood in their lives, and (2) all Buddhas rely on this method to salvage all sentient beings by leading them to enlightenment. Undoubtedly, Yinguang’s message can be understood as an elaboration of Shandao’s declaration that the

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288 The Śūraṅga-ma-Sūtra, TT 19, no. 945: 128b.
289 According to the Śūraṅga-ma-sūtra, there are twenty-five Bodhisattvas who are said each to have acquired a special knowledge of one of the twenty-five kinds of perfect complete realization of the truth, which are the liuchen 六塵 (“the six guṇas, qualities produced by the objects and organs of sense, i.e. sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and idea”), liugen 六根 (“the six ādhiśeṣas or sense-organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind”), liushi 六識 (the perceptions and discernments of the six organs of sense), and qida 七大 (the seven elements of the universe, i.e. earth, water, fire, wind, space or ether, sight, and perception). For more details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 11, 22, 83, 134, 135, and 473.
“Tathāgata [the Buddha] appeared in the world is only for the sake of preaching Amitābha’s oceanic original vows.” Finally, the last paragraph explains why, during the period of Broad and Equal Doctrines, the Buddha took the trouble to specifically give talks on Amitābha and his Pure Land, which are now known as the Three Pure Land Sūtras. This explanation is in fact based on the belief that, immediately after his enlightenment, the Buddha revealed the Flower Adornment Sūtra during the time when he entered into samādhi, or meditation, for which the assembly was held in the condition that only Dharmayaka Bodhisattvas could attend. Hence, those whose levels of meditation were not as high as those of Dharmayaka Bodhisattvas could not attend and had no other way to learn about such method of salvation. In a more sensible way, it is also said that “because the contents of the sūtra were so profound and abstruse, the audience merely sat with blank faces, unable to comprehend their philosophical ramifications.

290 According to Inagaki, samādhi refers to “a specific state of mind attained by concentration,” and the reason for the Buddha to reveal the truth he experienced in such an extraordinary situation is because, “[s]peaking from the Buddha’s side, the most profound and subtle truth, which is itself inconceivable and indefinable, is transmitted to Bodhisattvas and accommodated to unenlightened beings through various samādhis. Just as a number of channels and pipes are laid and connected to a reservoir in order to make use of its water for drinking or irrigation, so the Buddha’s supreme virtues are given conceivable and perceptible forms, on which one can concentrate, and these forms are presented in samādhis.” Inagaki also mentions that “[t]he samādhis of the Buddhas and those of Bodhisattvas should be rigidly distinguished, and corresponding to different Bodhisattvas stages there are different grades of samādhis,” and “of all kinds of samādhi that of the Buddha is the highest.” In other words, Buddhas’ samādhis are the highest, followed by Bodhisattvas’ and then the two vehicles’; therefore, those communication channels opened particularly to Bodhisattvas are not accessible to the two vehicles of Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha. Since the content of the Flower Adornment Sūtra is about the realm of enlightenment, which is incomprehensible to the two vehicles, the Buddha needed to preach the teachings from the primary level. Hisao Inagaki, The Three Pure Land Sutras: a Study and Translation from Chinese (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995) 13-14.
As a result the Buddha decided to change tactics and to preach, instead, the more simple Hinayāna sūtras,\textsuperscript{291} which were then followed by Mahāyāna teachings.

To reinforce the above arguments, the second account emphasizes the fact that, other than those major sūtras advocated by the Pure Land School, there are numerous Buddhist sūtras that support the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism. In order to further explain this reinforcement, an example regarding the instruction on the principles of the recitation method and the expected result in attaining Buddhahood mentioned in the Śūrangama-Sūtra is given.

Accordingly, both the subjective theoretical arguments demonstrated by various Pure Land advocates of past generations and the objective textual evidence shown in the Buddhist Canon support the idea that such intrinsic interrelatedness is not only present among the Pure Land sūtras but also between these sūtras and other Mahāyāna sūtras. In order to explore these issues, the following sections are devoted first to studies of major Pure Land sūtras and then to some selected Mahāyāna sūtras that are traditionally considered by the Pure Land School as influential and closely related to its practices and teachings. Although emphasis is placed on the intrinsic interrelatedness between texts so as to recognize the School’s teachings in a macroscopic view, considerable attention is also paid to the content and features of each Buddha’s Pure Land and Mahāyāna text so that a more concrete analysis of their linkages can be made in accordance with textual and theoretical evidence.

The Role of the Amitābha Sūtra

In the history of Chinese Buddhism, the Amitābha Sūtra has long been the most influential Pure Land text among Chinese Buddhists.\textsuperscript{292} After being translated by Kumārajīva 鸠摩羅什 (circa 344-413) in 402 during the reign of Yao Qin 姚秦 (384-417), this Sūtra has

\textsuperscript{291} Kenneth K. S. Ch’en, Buddhism in China, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{292} See Kenneth K. S. Ch’en, Buddhism in China, p. 339.
been recited by many Buddhists in rituals and as daily practices. To a large extent, Shandao should be given credit for beginning such long lasting popularity, as he juxtaposed this Sūtra with the other two major Pure Land texts in his commentary on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra concerning the five kinds of zhengxing 正行 (proper practice). 293

Likewise, during the Ming dynasty, as a result of the efforts made by Zhuhong (1535-1615) and Zhixu (1599-1655) in reviving Pure Land Buddhism, the popularity of this Sūtra reached an unprecedented peak. 294

In addition to receiving high-profile support from prominent Buddhist Masters, the Amitābha Sūtra also attracts Buddhists’ attentions with some of the contextual elements that help to publicize and characterize its uniqueness. For instance, in the Pure Land tradition, the Amitābha Sūtra is often referred to as the “small edition (xiaoben 小本)” for its short length as compared with the Infinite Life Sūtra as well as the Flower Adornment Sūtra; this reference in function demonstrates their intimate doctrinal association — tonghu 同部 (the same area, or the “same” sūtra) 295 — and reveals that the subject matters of these three sūtras are identical.

Besides, the genre of the Amitābha Sūtra also can help to legitimatize it as one of those sūtras that convey profound theories behind a mythical appearance. In terms of the twelve divisions of the Mahāyāna canon (Shier bu jing 十二部 經), 296 this text is classified as udānas

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295 See this thesis’ Chapter Three under the section of “The Four Divisions: Faith, Comprehension, Practice and Realization” for more details.

296 Twelve divisions of the Mahāyāna canon 十二部 經: (1) sūtras 契經 / 長行, the Buddha’s sermons; (2) geyas 應誦 / 重誦, metrical pieces; (3) gāthās 謂頌 / 孤起頌, chants or poems; (4) nidāna 因緣, primary cause; (5) ityuktas, or itivrttakas 本事, biographical narratives of the deeds of disciples and others in previous lives; (6) jātakas 本生, stories of former lives of Buddha, etc.; (7) abhuiya-dharmas, or abhidharmas 未曾有,
(wu wen zi shuo 無問自説), the Buddha’s unsolicited or voluntary addresses, as it contains no interlocution; that is, the lecture given by the Buddha is a spontaneous speech, not his replies to questions raised by his followers. What does this mean to Buddhists? Based on an early definition given by the prominent Tiantai Master Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597), only in two kinds of situation did the Buddha would give a spontaneous speech: (1) when the teachings were too profound for the audience to raise questions; and (2) when the Buddha recognized that the mentality of the audience was ready (無問自説有二種。一理深意遠人無能問。二非不可問。但聽者宜聞。佛為不請之師)。297 In short, the Buddha would give a spontaneous speech whenever the teachings were considered profound and important to his followers, as known in the case of this Sutra. In this regard, what is the actual role played by this feature? Taking Zhixu’s (1599-1655) Amituojing yaojie 阿彌陀經要解 (Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sutra; 1645), one of the three best and most prominent commentaries on the Amitābha Sutra,298 as an example, in this work, even though the recitation method is regarded as inconceivable and beyond belief, Zhixu still takes the opportunity to

miracles, etc.; (8) avadāna 比喩, parables or metaphors; (9) upadeśa 論義, dogmatic treatises; (10) udānas 無問自説, the Buddha’s unsolicited or voluntary addresses; (11) vaipulyas 方廣, expanded sūtras, etc.; (12) vyākaranas 授記, prophecies. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 19, 44, 186, 189, 329, 444, 481; and Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 188-189.

297 Zhiyi’s definition can be found in his commentary on the Lotus Sūtra, the Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi 妙法蓮花經玄義 [Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra]. See TT 33, no.1716: 752c.

298 These three commentaries has been mentioned in the section of “Faith” in Chapter Three; they are the Amituojing shuchao 阿彌陀經疏鈔 (Phrase-by-Phrase Commentary on the Amitābha Sutra; 1584) by Zhuhong 住宏 (1535-1615), the Amituojing yuan zhong chao 阿彌陀經略解圈中鈔 (Perfect Combined Middle-Way’s Phrase-by-Phrase Commentary on the Brief Commentary of Amitābha Sūtra) by Chuandeng 傳燈 (1554-1627), and the Amituojing yaojie 阿彌陀經要解 (Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra; 1645) by Zhixu 智旭 (1599-1655).
justify this method as the best for all sentient beings when he mentions the usage of *udānas*.\(^{299}\)

This is how easily and successfully Zhiyi’s definition and the genre classification work to evolve the profundity of the *Amitābha Sūtra*, through which the legitimacy and the convincingness of the Pure Land teachings are supported. Similarly, many other annotated works, such as the other two prominent commentaries, have adopted the same line of interpretation to characterize the *Amitābha Sūtra*.

Moreover, the simple, straightforward and systematically arranged structure of the *Amitābha Sūtra* also lends a hand to popularize the teachings. In a trilogy-like structure and with the name of Śāriputra as a paragraph marker,\(^{300}\) the Buddha describes the environment and residents of the Pure Land, names Buddhas in other worlds to confirm the truth of his message, and reasserts his message by explaining how difficult it is to preach the inconceivable message of the Sūtra in this world of five kasāya periods of turbidity after attaining Buddhahood here.

Meanwhile, in accordance with the divisions of the story, the Buddha urges the audience to

\(^{299}\) In this comparative short commentary, Zhixu goes so far as to cite *udānas* five times, through which the importance of the classification to the authorization of the Sūtra is successfully stressed. The following quotations are cited from Zhixu, *Amituojing yaojie* [Essential Annotation of the Amitābha Sūtra], TT 37, no. 1762: 365a, 365b, 371c, 372b, and 374b; the term *wu wen zi shuo* is in italic for easy recognition:

(1) 惟此持名一法收機最廣下手最易。故釋迦慈尊於此經中無問自說。

(2) 此是大乘菩薩藏攝。又是無問自說。徹底大悲之所加持。能令末法多障有情依斯徑登不退。

(3) 當知執持名號雖復簡易直捷。仍復至頓至圓。... 可謂横該八教豎徵五時。所以徹底悲心無問自說。且深欽其難信也。

(4) 此無上法門甚深難信。故既無問自說以爲發起。復引六方諸佛廣長舌相問爲證明。以廣流通。

(5) 法門不可思議難信難知。故無一人能發問者。佛智慧機知機已熟。故無問自說令得四益。

\(^{300}\) During his speech in the *Amitābha Sūtra*, Śākyamuni frequently called the name of Śāriputra, the leader of his disciples, at the beginning of every new section of teaching. Hence, this is a good indicator for analyzing the structure of the Sūtra.

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prepare for the so-called *san ziliang* 三資糧 (the Three Provisions), which are faith, vows, and practice.

In the first major part of the Sūtra, Śākyamuni Buddha focuses on introducing the environment and residents of the Pure Land. This part can be subdivided into three small sections. In the first section, the Sūtra begins with a historical sketch, saying that the lecture was taking place in north-east India at the ancient city of Śrāvasti, where 1250 monks as well as numerous Heavenly Beings and Bodhisattvas converged. Then, by defining the term *jile* 極樂 (Utmost Joy), the name of Amitābha Buddha’s Pure Land, the Buddha describes that (1) those who live there enjoy everything without suffering, and (2) all constructions and the natural environment there are made of four kinds of jewels.  

The second section concentrates on the expression of *gongde zhuangyan* 功德莊嚴 (the magnificence of meritorious virtue) by giving details on (1) the superb environment of the Pure Land, (2) activities of its residents, (3) unique preaching channels through birds’ warbling and sounds from trees and nets caused by breezes, and (4) specialties of the residents, including the infinity of light, lifespan, population, and the number of Bodhisattvas of non-regression (who are assured of attaining Buddhahood); and ends with persuading to have faith and make vows.  

To reify the feasibility of this persuasion, the last section continues to urges the audience to observe the practice of *zhichi minghao* 執持名號 (persisting in maintaining [the recitation of] the name [of Amitābha Buddha]) for one to seven days.  

Hence, the last section can be taken as the conclusion of this first major part, emphasizing on the preparation of the Three Provisions.

While the first major part uses over half the Sūtra to illustrates a clear picture of the life of the residents and living environment in the Pure Land so as to persuade all followers to

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301 *The Amitābha Sūtra*, TT12, no. 366: 346c.
303 *The Amitābha Sūtra*, TT12, no. 366: 347b.
prepare for the Three Provisions, the second and last major parts respectively use one third and one sixth the length of the Sūtra to authorize the message for the same purpose. In the second major part, Śākyamuni Buddha names Buddhas in other worlds of the six directions, in the sequence of the East, South, West, North, above and below, to confirm the truth of his message. Its concluding section defines and connects an alternative title for the Sūtra, Yiqie zhufuo suou hunian jing —一切諸佛所護念經 (Sūtra of Being Guarded and Cared for by All Buddhas), to the urgency of preparing the Three Provisions. Similarly, in the last major part, the Buddha declares again the necessity of the Three Provisions for attaining Buddhahood, with an emphasis on the value of having faith to the teaching, which is also known as yiqie shijian nan xin zhi fa —一切世間難信之法 (the method that is unbelievable in all realms); in the end, he takes his own experience as an example to reinforce the message.

When comparing this analysis with both Yinguang’s and Jingkong’s statements regarding the interrelatedness between major Pure Land sūtras, it is obvious that the outcome of the analysis and both Masters’ opinions is identical. As quoted, Jingkong considers that “[t]he shorter version of the Amitābha Sūtra focuses on the persuasion of [having] faith, [making] vows, and [carrying out] practices,” and Yinguang also deems that “[t]he triplex of faith, vows, and practice are the principles of the Pure Land method [to enlightenment].” Both Masters agree that the promotion of the Three Provisions is the axis of the Sūtra, which can be verified by the above analysis that this keystone indeed runs through the entire lines of story and discussion. Thus, the role of the Amitābha Sūtra within the macroscopic system of the Pure Land teachings is self-evident, and the contextual factors like the concision and

305 The Amitābha Sūtra, TT12, no. 366: 348a.
systematical organization of this short lecture definitely make teaching easier and, as a result, accelerate and extend the spread of the Sūtra.

To sum up, it was the combination of the internal structure of the text and the external influence from the promotion of prominent Buddhist Masters that paved the way for this *Amitābha Sūtra* to enter into countless Chinese Buddhists’ religious lives during the imperial era.

**The Role of the Infinite Life Sūtra**

Regardless of different focuses, the five existing translated versions of the *Infinite Life Sūtra* distinguish “it” from the *Amitābha Sūtra* and the *Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra* by providing detailed information on the origin, history, and circumstances of the Western Pure Land. However, this study does not intent to examine these versions one by one but simply concentrates on their combined edition compiled by Xia Lianju 夏蓮居 (1882-1965) in the early 1930s for its comprehensiveness that is appropriate for contextual analysis and its being vigorously promoted by the Pure Land Learning Center as its guide line. Since the section of “Mr. Xia Lianju and the newly compiled *Infinite Life Sūtra*” in Chapter Two has elucidated the biography of Xia and the background and transmission of this version, this section only focuses on the examination of the text. Besides, as this *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing* (The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School; the compiled version of *Wuliangshoujing* 無量壽經, the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra, or the Infinite Life Sūtra) is a newly compiled edition that has not been academically studied, the following discussion proceeds with brief descriptions of its forty-eight chapters.
Generally speaking, the four-character title given by the compiler to each chapter is illuminative enough to reveal each chapter's central theme. For examples, the titles of the first two chapters, “Fahui shengzhong 法 會 聖 景 (The mass of saints in the Dharma assembly)” and “De zun Puxian 德 遵 普 賢 (Virtues modeled on Samantabhadra),” clearly imply that the content of these chapters includes the assembly, its participants, and their features — the assembly took place in Vulture Peak, near the ancient Indian city of Rājagrha, and the audience included twelve thousands enlightened monks, five hundred nuns, seven thousands male lay Buddhists, five hundred female lay Buddhists, all Heavenly beings, Bodhisattvas Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī, and Maitreya, and all Bodhisattvas of the period of Bhadrakaipa (xianjie zhong yiqie pusa 贤 劫 中 一切 菩 薩) .

In the second chapter, a special focus is given to Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. This is a comparatively long chapter, in which the course of (1) attaining enlightenment to the level of Samyak-sambodhi (the fifty-first stage in the enlightenment of a Bodhisattva), (2) self-realization and the acquired powers and wisdoms, and (3) the salvation of sentient beings are

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307 “Rājagrha was surrounded by five hills, of which Grdhakūṭa (Vulture Peak) became the most famous. It was the royal city from the time of Bimbisāra ‘until the time of Asoka.’ Its ruins are still extant at the village of Rājgir, some sixteen miles S.S.W. of Bihār; they ‘form an object of pilgrimages for the Jains’.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 164.

308 The term xianjie 貴 劫 (Bhadra-kāṇḍa) refers to the present period; the last was the zhuangyanjie 善 堅 劫 (the glorious kalpa) while the next is to be the xingxiujie 星 宿 劫 (the constellation kalpa). “A Bhadrakaipa has 1,000 Buddhas, hence its name ‘the good kalpa.’ also called 善 劫 [shanjie]. ... Śākyamuni is the fourth of the present kalpa, Maitreya is to follow and 995 to succeed him.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 444.

described in great detail. Of these details, according to Jingkong, much emphasis is being put on the ideas of "xiangong zunxiu Puxian dashi zhi de (all model on and practice the virtues of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva)," "zhu Puxian xing (attaching to the practices of Samantabhadra)," "suishi wuru Huayan sanmei (can enter at all times into the [kind of] samādhi [described] in the Flower Adornment [Sūtra])," and "kaihua xianshi zhenshi zhi ji (teaching and illustrating the true nature [of Buddhas])." These ideas are understood as: since Samantabhadra is a Bodhisattva of Samyak-sambodhi, both his virtues and practices are worth learning by all Bodhisattvas, and the result of such practices is the attainment of the Huayan samādhi, through which Bodhisattvas are able to teach sentient beings the True Nature. In terms of intrinsic interrelationship, these ideas are important as they (1) verify the close relationship between the Infinite Life Sūtra and the Flower Adornment Sūtra that has long been proclaimed by many Pure Land advocates; (2) correspond to Yinguang’s early account that in the finale of the Flower Adornment Sūtra, Samantabhadra leads all other Bodhisattvas to seek rebirth into the Pure Land so that the Buddhahood can be perfected; and (3) reveal that the level of samādhi attained in the Western Pure Land is no different from that of attained in the Pure Land of Vairocana. Based on these interpretations, the inclusion of the Puxianpusa xingyuanpin (a chapter of the Avatamsaka-sūtra; the Chapter on Conduct

311 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, p. 13.
312 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, p. 15.
313 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, p. 15.
314 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, p. 15.
and Vows of Samantabhadra) into the Pure Land canonical collection seems to be merely a matter of time. Detailed descriptions of this kind regarding the conditions and activities of Bodhisattvas can also be seen in some later chapters.

The third chapter, titled “Dajiao yuanqi 大教缘起 (The origin of the great teaching),” attributes the cause for the delivery of this lecture to Ānanda’s discovery of Śākyamuni Buddha’s unusual radiant and serene appearance at that day. As Ānanda understood, it was due to Śākyamuni’s own practice of mediation on Buddhas, so he wanted to know which of the Buddhas Śākyamuni actually had in mind. Śākyamuni’s reply was so detailed that it occupies the length of the next six chapters.316

These chapters, namely, “Fazang yindi 法藏因地 (The fundamental cause [of Buddhahood] for Fazang),”317 “Zhixin jingjin 至心精進 (Complete sincerity and essential advance),”318 “Fa dashiyuan 發大誓願 (Make the great vows),”319 “Bi cheng zhengjue 必成正覺 (Definitely will attain Buddhahood),”320 “Jigong leide 積功累德 (Accumulate merits and build up virtues),”321 and “Yuanman chengjiu 圓滿成就 (Perfect achievement),”322 focus on the causation of and conditions for Amitābha’s enlightenment and the establishment of his Pure Land. Replying to Ānanda’s question, Śākyamuni says that, many kalpas ago, there was a

315 Ānanda, the younger brother of Devadatta, was the cousin and disciple of Śākyamuni. He “was noted as the most learned disciple of Buddha, and famed for hearing and remembering his teaching, ... after the Buddha’s death he is said to have compiled the sūtras in the Vaibhāra cave, ... where the disciples were assembled in Magadha.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 294.
316 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 16-19.
317 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 19-23.
318 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 23-26.
319 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 26-38.
320 Zhengjue 正覺 (sambodhi; a Buddha’s wisdom or omniscience) refers to the Buddhahood here. Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 38-40.
321 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 40-43.
monk called Dharmākara (Fazang 法藏), who was the former incarnation of Amitābha Buddha before he attained Buddhahood. After learning the teachings from Lokesvararāja Buddha (Shijianzaiwangle 世間自在王佛), Dharmākara, who at the time was still a king, decided to become a monk and resolved to carry out practices of Bodhisattva and attain Buddhahood for the salvation of all sentient beings. In front of Lokesvararāja Buddha, he made the solemn vow to create a wonderful world, where reincarnate sentient beings could enjoy happiness and attain Buddhahood effortlessly. In order to fulfill Dharmākara’s vow, Lokesvararāja Buddha taught and manifested the magnificence and meritorious virtues of all Buddhas’ worlds for him so that he could model his world on the very best he had seen in the manifestation of other Buddhas’ worlds. After making the decision on the design of his world, Dharmākara then characterized the features of his world by generalizing them in the form of forty-eight specific vows. After many kalpas of self-cultivation and bringing salvation to others, Dharmākara was completely enlightened and became Buddha Amitābha; the corresponding resultant Pure Land of his accumulated meritorious virtues was established as a world free of every cause of suffering and prepared with surroundings necessary for the salvation of its residents.

Aside from the main story line, two significances of these chapters also need to be pointed out. First, similar to the second chapter, chapters four, seven, and eight are full of descriptions regarding the principles of self-cultivation and practices of salvation as well as the corresponding results in self-realization. Second, it is noticeable that chapter six\(^\text{323}\) has been

\(^{322}\) Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 43-45.

\(^{323}\) According to the Pure Land School, the forty-eight vows are very important to the establishment of its theories and ways of practice. However, this study does not intend to examine them in the main body but to include them in Appendix Four as a reference, in which the Chinese text of Sanghavarman’s version is shown along with two versions of translation by Hisao Inagaki and Luis O. Gómez quoted from their works The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation from Chinese (pp. 241-249) and The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light (pp. 166-172) respectively.
regarded by the Pure Land advocates as the center of the Sūtra, of Pure Land Buddhism, and even of the whole Buddhism.\textsuperscript{324} As its title stated, chapter six relates the forty-eight vows made by Dharmākara, who promised to not attain Buddhahood unless all his vows were fulfilled; theoretically speaking, Dharmākara is believed to have kept his promise and become Amitābha, so these vows now become the guarantee of the practicability of the Pure Land teachings. Moreover, according to Jingkong, the core message of these vows is the eighteenth vow, “the vow of definitely being reborn [in the Pure Land] by ten recitations (shinian bisheng yuan 十念必生願),”\textsuperscript{325} with which the universal salvation of all sentient beings can truly be achieved (如果沒有十念必生，就不能普度法界一切眾生).\textsuperscript{326} Jingkong adds that the forty-eight vows can be used as the commentary to explain the title “Amitābha,” and the whole Infinite Life Sūtra can be used to illustrate these forty-eight vows; similarly, the Flower Adornment Sūtra can be used to annotate the Infinite Life Sūtra because of the close philosophical relationship between these two texts discussed earlier and in the section of “The Four Divisions: Faith, Comprehension, Practice and Realization” in Chapter Three of this thesis. Likewise, as mentioned in the footnote of wushi 五時 (the five periods of Śākyamuni’s teachings) that Śākyamuni hierarchized his teachings according to the comprehensibility of sentient beings after he recognized that his first lecture of the Flower Adornment Sūtra was too profound to be comprehended and realized by most sentient beings, Jingkong, based on this

\textsuperscript{324} Liu Chengfu, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing qinwenji [A Record of What I Have Heard about the Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School], pp. 211-212.

\textsuperscript{325} Liu Chengfu, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing qinwenji [A Record of What I Have Heard about the Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahāyāna School], pp. 211-212.

\textsuperscript{326} Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 2: 432.
belief, regards the whole Buddhist Canon as the commentary of the Flower Adornment Sūtra. Therefore, the conclusion of this reasoning is that the only essential meaning of the whole Buddhist Canon is the name of Amitābha, by which the significance of the teachings of Amitābha is underlined.

Besides, in Jingkong’s lectures, the eighteenth vow is often juxtaposed with the nineteenth vow, the vow of giving rise to the [Bodhi-]mind after hearing the name [of Amitābha] (wenming faxin yuan 聞名發心願), in the discussion of the key criteria “fa putixin / yixiang zhuannian 發菩提心 / 一向專念 (giving rise to the Bodhi-mind and reciting devotionally and consistently) shared by those practitioners of the three categories (sanbei 三輩) who successfully attain the rebirth. The eighteenth vow relates to “reciting devotionally and consistently” and the nineteenth vow concerns “giving rise to the Bodhi-mind.”

The above discussions plainly demonstrate how other Mahāyāna sūtras like the Flower Adornment Sūtra can be used to elucidate the philosophical dimension and profundity of theories in the Pure Land sūtras. Such disclosed intrinsic connections undeniably justify the


328 Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sutra], vol. 2: 422. For more details on the discussion of these criteria in this thesis, see the section of “Practice” in Chapter Three.
application of the cross-reference method and characterize the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism as a huge theoretical network.

After hearing about the biography of Amitābha and the history of the Pure Land, in the tenth chapter, titled as ‘Jie yuan zuofo 皆願作佛 (All vow to become a Buddha),’ a prince and five hundred great householders among the audience immediately resolved to attaining Buddhahood. Then, Śākyamuni continued the address by giving the audience a very detailed description of selected features of the Pure Land, which occupies twelve chapters, from the eleventh to the twenty-second. The focuses of these chapters are as follows:

(1) The eleventh chapter, “Guojie yanjing 國界嚴淨 (The Magnificent purity in the realm of the country [of the Pure Land]),” provides the causes for the extraordinary purity of the Pure Land and introduce this Land by comparing it with this world.331

(2) The twelve chapter, “Guangming bianzhao 光明遍照 (The light shines everywhere),” highlights the omnipresence and infinitude of the light of Amitābha by comparing it with the light of other Buddhas. The unique qualities of Amitābha’s light represent this Buddha’s universal salvation.332

(3) The thirteenth chapter, “Shouzhong wuliang 壽眾無量 (The crowd of immortals is limitless),” reveals the infinite life of Amitābha and of the residents.333

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329 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 45-46.
330 The term zhangzhe 長者 (Gṛhapati; a householder) here refers to the “one who is just, straightforward, truthful, honest, advanced in age, and wealthy.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 284.
331 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 46-47.
332 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 48-50.
(4) The fourteenth chapter, “Baoshu bianguo 寶樹遍國 (Jeweled trees are everywhere in that land),” describes the features of the jeweled trees.\textsuperscript{334}

(5) The fifteenth chapter, “Puti daochang 菩提道場 (The arena of the Dharma Way),” specifically introduces the wondrous appearance of the Bodhi-tree (\textit{putishu} 菩提樹) in the arena of the Way (\textit{daochang} 道場) and its functions in Dharma teaching.\textsuperscript{335}

(6) The sixteenth chapter, “Tang she lou guan 堂舍樓觀 (The main rooms, houses, storied buildings, and high towers [of the Pure Land]),” briefly describes the constructions of the lecture hall and the religious activities of the residents seen there.\textsuperscript{336}

(7) The seventeenth chapter, “Quanchi gongde 泉池功德 (The meritorious virtues of the spring and pond),” depicts the scenes, significances, and functions of Dharma teaching of the springs and the ponds of the eight meritorious virtues (\textit{bagongde} 八功德) beside the lecture hall. The title of “Utmost Joy” is also shown here in connection with the lotus flowers inside which the residents are reborn without suffering.\textsuperscript{337}

(8) The eighteenth chapter, “Chaoshi xiyou 超世希有 (The world-surpassing uniqueness),” stresses on the identical marvelous appearance of all residents by comparing them with a variety of Heavenly beings.\textsuperscript{338}

\textsuperscript{333} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, pp. 50-51.
\textsuperscript{334} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, pp. 51-53.
\textsuperscript{335} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, pp. 53-55.
\textsuperscript{336} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, pp. 55-56.
\textsuperscript{337} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, pp. 56-58.
\textsuperscript{338} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, pp. 58-60.
(9) The nineteenth chapter, “Shouyong juzu 受用具足 (Furnished with all enjoyments),”\(^{339}\) depicts the pleasure enjoyed by the residents.\(^{340}\)

(10) The twentieth chapter, “Defeng huayu 德風華雨 (The virtuous wind and the rain of flowers),” introduces the virtuous wind’s special functions in Dharma teaching and the comfortable, colorful flower-made carpet of the Pure Land.\(^{341}\)

(11) The twenty-first chapter, “Baolian fuguang 寶蓮佛光 (The jeweled lotus flowers and the Buddhas’ light),” reveals some special phenomena produced by the jeweled lotus flowers especially the appearance of thousands of manifested Buddhas who give off thousands of rays of light while teaching the wondrous truth to sentient beings of the ten directions.\(^{342}\)

(12) The twenty-second chapter, “Juezheng jiguo 決證極果 (Resolve to realize the ultimate result),” confirms, with a closing statement about the time and space of the Pure Land, that all residents there resolve to attain the Buddhahood.\(^{343}\)

After such a long presentation, in the twenty-third chapter, “Shifang fozan 十方佛讚 (Praised by the Buddhas of the ten directions),”\(^{344}\) Śākyamuni convinced the audience by emphasizing the fact that, aside from him, all Buddhas of the ten directions have promoted the

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\(^{339}\) The term shouyong 受用 literally means “received for use” but here refers to “enjoyment.”

\(^{340}\) Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 60-62.

\(^{341}\) Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 62-63.

\(^{342}\) Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 63-64.

\(^{343}\) Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 64-65.

\(^{344}\) Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 65-66.
teachings, then, in the following two chapters, “Sanbei wangling 三顒往生 (The three categories of the rebirth)”\(^{345}\) and “Wangsheng zhengyin 往生正因 (The proper cause for the rebirth),”\(^{346}\) he talked about the criteria for the rebirth, scenes at the moment of death, and rebirth conditions in the Pure Land of the residents of the three (upper, middle, and lower) categories. Here, the core message is the repeatedly mentioned idea of “giving rise to the Bodhi-mind and reciting devotionally and consistently.”

In the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh chapters, the content of Śākyamuni’s talks is primarily concerned with the salvation of Bodhisattvas, as they are promised in the last two vows of Amitābha that they can accelerate the process for the perfection of enlightenment in the Pure Land.\(^{347}\) The juxtaposition of these two chapters indeed presents a contrast; the former chapter, “Ligong tingfa 祀供聽法 (Worship, offer, and listen to Dharma talks),”\(^{348}\) describes how every Bodhisattva of the worlds of ten directions goes to the Pure Land to worship, offer, and listen to Amitābha’s Dharma talks, while the latter chapter, “Ketan fode 歌頌佛德 (Sing the praises of the Buddha’s virtues),”\(^{349}\) expounds how Bodhisattvas of the Western Pure Land go to every world of the ten directions at the same time in manifested bodies to worship, and then gather back in the lecture hall to listen to Amitābha’s Dharma talks. Such contrast reveals how powerful those Bodhisattvas in the Pure Land could be and thus brings out a lot more related information in the five following chapters. Similar to the kind of elaboration seen in the second, fourth, seventh, and eighth chapters, these five chapters, “Dashi shenguang 大士神光 (Bodhisattva’s miraculous light),”\(^{350}\) “Yuanli hongshen 願力宏深

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\(^{345}\) Xia Lianju, ed. *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing*, pp. 66-69.

\(^{346}\) Xia Lianju, ed. *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing*, pp. 69-72.

\(^{347}\) See Appendix Four.

\(^{348}\) Xia Lianju, ed. *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing*, pp. 72-76.

\(^{349}\) Xia Lianju, ed. *Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing*, pp. 76-78.

\(^{350}\) *Dashi* 大士 (Mahāsattva) refers to a Bodhisattva here; it also means “a great being” and “a leader of men.”
(The strength of the vows is deep and magnificent),”352 “Pusa xiuchi 菩 萨 修 持 (The
maintained practices of Bodhisattvas),”353 “Zhenshi gongde 真 實 功 德 (The true meritorious
virtue),”354 and “Shoule wuji 壽 業 無 極 (Infinite lifespan and joy),”355 specifically focus on
the lifestyle of Bodhisattvas about their activities of salvation, self-cultivation, and enjoyment
and experiences of the enlightened state; particular attention is also paid to the Land’s two
greatest Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

After all these wonderful depictions of the Pure Land and its residents, Śākyamuni
began to urge the audience to advance their practice and to seek rebirth into there, considering
that this world of turbidity was full of afflictions and sufferings. The persuasion occupies five
chapters, namely, “Quanyu cejin 勸 諮 策 進 (To persuade, instruct, and encourage to
advance),”356 “Xin de kaiming 心 得 開 明 (The mind can be initiated into wisdom),”357
“Zhuoshi eku 濁 世 惡 苦 (The wickedness and suffering of the world of turbidity),”358
“Chongchong huimian 重 重 詣 勉 (Repetitious teachings and encouragements),”359 and “Ru
pin debao 如 貧 得 寶 (As the poor obtain treasures).”360 In addition to recounting a variety of
sufferings in this world, in these chapters, Śākyamuni also revealed the consequences he had
expected after teaching sentient beings to devote to Buddhist practices; for examples:

人 能 自 度，轉 相 拯 濟。

351 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 78-79.
352 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 79-81.
353 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 81-83.
354 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 83-86.
355 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 86-88.
356 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 88-92.
357 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 92-94.
358 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 94-101.
359 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 102-103.
People can save themselves and in turn rescue and help each other.\textsuperscript{361}

我今於此作佛。教化群生。令著五惡。去五痛。離五燄。降化其意。令持五善。獲其福德。

Now I become a Buddha here to teach and transform all sentient beings, making [them] give up the five vices,\textsuperscript{362} remove the five pains,\textsuperscript{363} and leave the five burnings\textsuperscript{364} as well as to overcome and transform their thoughts, making [them] maintain the five good [deeds]\textsuperscript{365} so that [they can] acquire their felicitous virtues.\textsuperscript{366}

汝等得佛經語。熟思惟之。各自端守。終身不怠。尊聖敬善。仁慈博愛。當求度世。拔斷生死眾惡之本。當離三塗。憂怖苦痛之道。

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\textsuperscript{360} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, pp. 104-106.

\textsuperscript{361} Xia Lianju, ed, \textit{Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing}, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{362} \textit{Wue} 五惡 (the five vices) refers to \textit{shasheng} 殺生 (killing), \textit{toudao} 偷盜 (stealing), \textit{xieyin} 邪淫 (adultery), \textit{wangyu} 妄語 (lying), and \textit{yinjiu} 飲酒 (drinking intoxicants). In order to against these vices, the five precepts (\textit{wujie} 五戒, \textit{pañca-\textit{vakara}mī}) are established. “They are binding on laity, male and female, as well as on monks and nuns. The observance of these five ensures rebirth in the human realm.” Besides, the idea of the five dull temptations (\textit{wudunshi} 五濁; \textit{pañca-\textit{klesa}}), that is, \textit{tan} 貪 (desire), \textit{chen} 聲 (anger), \textit{chi} 痴 (foolishness), \textit{man} 慢 (arrogance), and \textit{yi} 疑 (doubt), can be found along with the five vices in these chapters. “Overcoming these constitutes the \textit{pañca-sīla}, five virtues.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 118 and 129; and Ding Fubao, \textit{Foxue dacidian} [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 559 and 560.

\textsuperscript{363} \textit{Wutong} 五痛 (the five pains), the resulting sufferings for the infraction of the five precepts, include state punishments in this life and the rebirth to the hells in the next. See Ding Fubao, \textit{Foxue dacidian} [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 560; and William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 122.

\textsuperscript{364} \textit{Wushao} 五照行 (the five burnings) is the descriptive term for the five pains. See Ding Fubao, \textit{Foxue dacidian} [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 578.

\textsuperscript{365} Another term for the five precepts.
As all of you have acquired the teachings from Buddhist sutras, [you should] reflect on them by heart. Each of you [should] properly maintain [them] diligently for your whole life, respect the saints and those who are good, and be benevolent and humanitarian. [You] should strive for the salvation of the world to eradicate the origins of life and death and all vices and leave the three evil paths of reincarnation, the roads to sorrow, fear, suffering, and pain.  

我於此世作佛。以善攻惡。拔生死之苦。令獲五德。升無為之安。 I become a Buddha in this world, combating the wicked with the good to eradicate the suffering of life and death so that [sentient beings can] acquire the five virtues and advance to spontaneous tranquility.  

Obviously, the differences between the Pure Land and this world of turbidity enhance the persuasiveness of Śākyamuni’s arguments. He then told the audience in the thirty-eighth chapter, “Lifo xianguang 禮佛現光 (Illumination after worshipping the Buddha),” that those who wish to see Amitābha should face to the western direction, respectfully worship, and recite Amitābha’s name. After hearing about this, Ananda immediately requested to see Amitābha with his own eyes so as to advance his felicitous virtues. To answer Ananda’s request, Amitābha emerged suddenly; the vision was so overwhelming that Ananda instantly told Śākyamuni that he resolved to be reborn into Amitābha’s Pure Land. At this moment, infinite light was emitted from the palm of Amitābha and shone over all Buddhas’ worlds.

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366 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 94-95.
367 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, p. 103.
368 There are many definitions for the five virtues; here it refers to the five precepts.
369 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 105-106.
370 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 106-110.

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including this world; through Amitābha, the audience saw all these worlds before their eyes at the same time. Serving to verify the existence of Amitābha and his Pure Land, the rest of this chapter turns to depict what the audience witnessed as this world was transfigured by the presence of Amitābha, merging with the vision of the Pure Land.

What followed is a dialogue between Śākyamuni and Maitreya, through which the visions were orally proven by Maitreya. However, in this chapter, “Cishi shu jian 慈氏述見 (The compassionate one describes what he sees),” the topic of biandi 邊地 (margin land), the outskirts of the Pure Land, is the actual focus. As the margin land is a place for those who observe the Pure Land practices with doubt, the fortieth and forty-first chapters, “Biandi yicheng 邊地疑城 (The city of doubt in the margin land)” and “Huo jin jian fo 惑盡見佛 (The Buddha is seen [when] the doubt is eliminated),” explain the causes for being reborn into there, the residents’ lifestyles and living conditions, and how these residents can leave for the Pure Land. This dialogue ends in the chapter “Pusa wangsheng 菩薩往生 (The rebirth of Bodhisattvas)” with the revelation of the quantity of reincarnate Bodhisattvas by listing a number of examples.

As the concluding section of this compiled Sūtra, the last six chapters can be taken as Śākyamuni’s final persuasion, with various focuses. The forty-third chapter, “Feishi xiaocheng 非是小乘 (Not the small vehicle),” urges the audience to learn and transmit the teachings, and emphasizes that Pure Land practitioners do not simply observe the practices for their own

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371 Another name of Maitreya.
372 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 110-112.
373 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 112-115.
374 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 115-118.
375 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 118-121.
376 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 121-122.
salvations. The forty-fourth chapter, “Shou puti ji 受 菩 提 記 (Receive the predestination)” ensures that future sentient beings can attain Buddhahood by engaging the same practices as long as they have faith and their practices are persistent. The forty-fifth chapter, “Du liu ci jing 獨 留 此 經 (Leave behind only this Sūtra),” reveals that this teaching is difficult to be believed but its power of salvation make it the last Sūtra to vanish before the extinction of Buddhism. The forty-sixth and forty-seventh chapters, “Qinxiu jianchi 勤 修 堅 持 (To practice diligently and persistently)” and “Fuhui shi wen 福 慧 始 聞 ([Those who have] the felicity and wisdom will hear [this teaching]),” encourage the audience and conclude that only those who have acquired felicities and wisdom will understand and believe in this teaching. Finally, the last chapter, “Wenjing huoyi 聞 經 獲 益 (Benefit from hearing the Sūtra),” ends this Sūtra by reporting the conditions of various groups of beneficiaries as they advance their practices and levels of enlightenment after attending this talk.

This is indeed a very comprehensive Sūtra covering the history, causation and condition of the Pure Land as explained earlier by Jingkong. Such comprehensiveness is undoubtedly part of the reasons why, ever since he gave the first lecture on the compiled version, Jingkong has encouraged his followers to recite it twice daily so that their faith can be substantialized and advanced from mixin 迷 信 (superstition) to zhengxin 正 信 (proper faith). Moreover, in

377 Shouji 受 記 means to “receive from a Buddha predestination (to become a Buddha); the prophecy of a bodhisattva’s future Buddhahood;” thus, this chapter can also be titled as “Receive the predestination of [attaining] Buddhahood.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 252.


379 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 125-126.

380 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 126-127.

381 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 127-130.

382 Xia Lianju, ed, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing, pp. 130-132.

383 Definitions of and discussions on these terms can be seen in the section of “Faith” in Chapter Three.
the case of those whose work schedules are not flexible enough to arrange for two daily
recitations, Jingkong suggests that they can recite the sixth chapter and the name of Amitābha
as their morning practice, and recite the passages from the thirty-third to thirty-seventh chapters
as evening practice; in addition to the recitation, Jingkong urges his followers to concurrently
make the same forty-eight vows during the morning practice as well as to reflect on what they
had done in the past during the evening practice (...我勸大家早晚課念《無量壽經》。
如時間不許可，早課念第六品四十八願，念佛號，念得愈多愈好，晚課念
三十三品到三十七品，此五品是戒律。念第六品要發願，把阿彌陀佛的四
十八願變成自己的願。三十三品至三十七品是阿彌陀佛處世待人的態度，學阿彌陀佛的行為，我們的行就同佛)。384 He explains that, by so doing, the
practitioners can model on the attitude and behavior of Amitābha because the sixth chapter
represents Amitābha’s mind and resolution and the passages of the five chapters relate to
human conducts and their corresponding consequences in this and next lives; as a result, a
successful practitioner is expected to have developed the same mind, given the same vows,
acquired the same comprehension, and carried out the same practices as Amitābha did and does
(tongxin 同心, tongyuan 同願, tongjie 同解, and tongxing 同行)。385

384 Liu Chengfu, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing qinwenji [A Record of What
I Have Heard about the Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment
of the Mahāyāna School], p. 338.
385 Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the
Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 3: 512-513. The original passage reads as follows: “我勸同修們，早課念本經的
第六品四十八願。念了之後好好想想，我的心、我的願、跟阿彌陀佛一樣不一樣？跟他比一比。...早課得的利益，是與彌陀同心、同願。晚課念三十三品到三十七品，這五品，佛
把我們的過失、病根都說出來。念了之後，反省反省，我有沒有犯這些過失？如果有，趕
緊改過來，希望與阿彌陀佛同解、同行。...我們的思想、見解、言語、造作能跟阿彌陀佛
相同相應，這是修行，即《憶念西方阿彌陀佛》。”
Therefore, in considering the instruction for the practices of the Pure Land Learning Center, the descriptions of daily demeanor and religious practice in this Infinite Life Sutra are indeed far more detailed than that of the Amitabha Sutra. Certainly, this is one of the reasons why the Center pays more attention to the promotion of this Sutra.386 In this regard, although the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra is as detailed as this Sutra, its content focuses more on the explanation of nianfo practices and their philosophical principles. Generally, this fact corresponds to Jingkong’s statement in which the Visualization Sutra is regarded as additional remarks on this Sutra.

The Role of the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra

It is believed that the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra was translated by Kālayāsa in the fifth century.387 The full name of this Sutra is called Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing (The Buddha Speaks of the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra) and is more commonly known as Guan jing (the Visualization Sutra).


387 Since no Sanskrit version or Tibetan translation of this Sutra has been found, many scholars have tried to determine its authenticity and history of transmission before migrating to China. However, no consensus or conclusive suggestion has been made. Examples of these researches can be seen in: Shun’ei Tsuboi, "Jingtu sanjing gaishuo (Introduction to the Three Pure Land Sutras)," ed. Zhang Mantao, Jingtu dianji yanjiu [Studies on Pure Land Texts] (Taipei: Dacheng wenhua chubanshe, 1979) 111-115; and Meiji Yamada, dir., trans. and annotated by The Ryukoku University Translation Center, The Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life as Expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1984) xii-xiv.
Similar to the above cases, the widespread influence of this Sutra can be attributed to the active promotion of famous Buddhist Masters, particularly that of Shandao. After the emergence of this Visualization Sutra, a number of Buddhist masters did their best to publicize it by giving lecturing and writing exegeses, such as Tanluan (476-542), Huiyuan (523-592) of the Jingyin Monastery, Zhiyi (538-597), Jizang (549-623), Daochuo (562-645), Shandao (613-681), Zhili (960-1028), and Yuanzhao (1048-1116); they were all considered prominent in their time. In considering the study of this Sutra in the history of Pure Land Buddhism, all of these masters certainly have their positions of importance in revealing its profundity; however, Shandao is the one who reached the peak. His eminent commentary, Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing shu (Commentary on the Buddha Speaks of the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra, also known as Guan jing si tie shu 四帖疏 (Four Volumes of Commentary on the Visualization Sutra) for its fourfold structure), has been deemed as the most important among many. Probably for this reason Jingkong gave at least nine series of lectures on this work, with four of them on the whole work and the rest on selected topics related to the Three Felicities of the Pure Karma and the upper superior grades of those who have attained rebirth. In accordance with this, the Pure Land Learning Center has constantly

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389 For example, (1) Tanluan concentrated on the ideas of yixing dao (an easy-to-do way) and tali (other-power), and declared that true nianfo should be accompanied by the true mind of faith; whereas (2) Daochuo is known for his suggestions that the Nianfo Samādhi is the best of all samādhis and the Pure Land is both a xiàngtu 相土 (land of form) and wuxiàngtu 無相土 (non-form). See Hisao Inagaki, The Three Pure Land Sutras, pp. 84, 87, 89, and 91-93.

390 These talks were given within years from 1988 to 1993 in Taipei, Dallas, and San Jose. For more details, see “Guan wuliangshoufo jing,” 25 Jul. 2002 <http://www.amtb-dba.org/Audio/index-C.html>.
published this work as the most reliable commentary on the Sūtra. Undoubtedly, Jingkong tends to follow Shandao’s traditional teachings in interpreting the Visualization Sūtra and uphold Shandao’s extraordinary support for the recitation method. Hence, in order to understand the position of the Visualization Sūtra in the macroscopic structure of the Pure Land teachings disseminated by the Learning Center, it is necessary to consult Shandao’s commentary as well.

Besides, contextual evidence is another factor responsible for the spread of the sūtra. Different from the sermonic Amitābha Sūtra, this Sūtra begins with a dramatic royal tragedy, which prompts Śākyamuni Buddha to introduce the Three Felicities and the sixteen stages of visualization for sentient beings of later generations who resolve to seek rebirth and attain Buddhahood. More than that, in this Sūtra, the features of the Western Pure Land are described in detail, instructions on how to visualize the Land and the trinity of Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta are offered, and the qualifications and encounters for reborn residents of the nine grades at the moment of death and after death are illustrated. The following paragraphs are a textual analysis of these aspects (the Three Felicities, sixteen stages of visualization, four kinds of nianfo, and nine grades) and their interrelationships so that the philosophical position of the Sūtra in the macroscopic system of the Pure Land teachings can be simultaneously revealed.

As shown in the Sūtra, the signal for the Buddha to deliver was a request from Queen Vaidehī who wanted to be liberated from the suffering of a series of family crises. The preface helped to contrast her suffering with the peaceful scene of the Pure Land of “Utmost Joy” and bring out the importance of the jingye sanfu 淨業三福 (Three Felicities of the Pure Karma), which is now one of the five practice guidelines for the Pure Land practitioners of the Learning Center. The following is an outline of this opening statement:
At one time the Buddha Śākyamuni was staying on the Vulture Peak together with 1,250 monks and 32,000 Bodhisattvas. Incited by Devadatta, Prince Ajātaśatru imprisoned King Bimbisāra and, later, the queen, too, who brought food and drink to the king. In utter despair she requested the Buddha to help her. The Buddha immediately sent two disciples to her, and afterwards himself appeared in the prison where she was confined. As she wished to be reborn in a land of no sorrow, he showed her many Buddha-lands to let her make her choice. To the Buddha’s satisfaction, she chose the Pure Land of Amitāyus [Amitābha]. Vaidehī was thus able to visualize the Pure Land through the Buddha’s power. For the sake of later generations, the Buddha expounded a method of contemplation in 13 stages ... 391

As for why the prince would do such heartless things to his parents, the answer can be found in Shandao’s commentary on this Sūtra, in which a detailed description of the remote causes of the event is given. 392

Śākyamuni had a cousin, Devadatta by name, who was greedy for fame and wealth. Seeing the Buddha receive many offerings from King Bimbisāra, he wanted to take over the leadership of the Sangha. He first learnt some supernatural power from Ānanda, which he displayed to prince Ajātaśatru, and thus won the respect of the prince and also received sumptuous offerings from him. Devadatta then approached Śākyamuni and suggested his retirement, but was rebuked for his stupidity. Angered by this, he next incited Ajātaśatru to usurp the throne. Seeing that the prince hesitated, Devadatta pointed at his broken little finger and told him the following story.

A long time ago King Bimbisāra was anxious to have an heir. Having heard from a sooth-sayer that a certain hermit living in the mountain would be reborn as his son three years later, the king immediately sent him a messenger asking him to terminate his own life, but the hermit refused to do so. The angry king ordered the messenger to kill him if he still refused to commit suicide. The hermit thus died determined to take revenge.

Soon Queen Vaidehī became pregnant. The king rejoiced, but was horrified to hear from the sooth-sayer that she would bear a boy who would do harm to the king. So he told the queen to give birth to the baby on the roof of the tower and let it drop to the ground. She did as told, but the baby miraculously survived with only damage to his little finger.

Devadatta told Ajātasatru that the king thus tried to kill him for the second time. Enraged to hear this, the prince confined the king, leaving him to die in the prison.393

This story clearly reflects the belief of causation and retribution and confirms that even the social status is as high as a royal family still unable to escape from such law. Finally, the queen understood all about this, asked for the liberation and decided to devote to Buddhist practices so as to be reborn into the chosen Pure Land. Then, the Buddha responded to the queen’s request by instructing (1) the Three Felicities of the Pure Karma and (2) the sixteen stages of visualization, the former is considered as the basics for the Pure Land practitioners (as discussed in Chapter Three) and the latter, because of its rich and informative content, is regarded as an illustration of three kinds of nianfo practice by the School.

392 Shandao, Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing shu 佛說觀無量壽佛經疏 [Commentary on the Buddha Speaks of the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra], TT 37, no. 1753: 253b-254b.
393 Hisao Inagaki, The Three Pure Land Sutras, pp. 6-7.
The importance of the Three Felicities to the Pure Land teachings can only be found in this Visualiza\_tion Sutra. Many Pure Land advocates were able to give this idea considerable attention despite that it is in fact easily overshadowed by the eye-catching detailed instructions of visualization. Nevertheless, the Buddha did highlight its importance. According to the text, after the queen asked for instructions on practice, the Buddha told her that, “Do you know that Amitābha Buddha is not far away from here? You should attentively visualize and persistently hold in memory those who have completed the pure karma in that Land (汝今知不，阿弥陀佛去此不遠。汝當繫念，諦觀彼國淨業成者),” and right before instructing the practices of visualization, the Buddha reminded again that “those who desire to be born in that Land should practice the Three Felicities … these three deeds are called the pure karma … these three kinds of deeds are the true cause of pure karmas [practiced and attained by] all the Buddhas of the three periods, the past, present, and future (欲生彼國者，當修三福……如此三事，名為淨業……此三種業，乃是過去、未來、現在，三世諸佛，淨業正因),” hence, in less than ten sentences, the significance of the Three Felicities is revealed as the true cause for the rebirth in the Pure Land like “those who have completed the pure karma” there. As the Buddha added that, in addition to the Three Felicities, practitioners should as well visualize “those who have completed the pure karma in that Land,” for this reason, in an orderly and detailed manner, the Buddha proceeded to teach the practices of visualization.

To the Pure Land School, the sixteen stages of visualization not only provide instructions on how to visualize the trinity host (Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta), the Land, and all its features, but also include the ideas of the four kinds of nianfo and the nine grades as well as the School’s determinant theory “shixin shi fo / shixin zuo fo 是心是佛 / 是心作佛 (this mind is a Buddha/ this mind becomes a Buddha).”
The most common classification of the practices of nianfo is the four kinds of nianfo (sizhong nianfo 四種 念 佛), which can be found in this Visualization Sutra. The first twelve stages belong to the guanxiang nianfo 観 想 念 佛 (perceptive visualization of [Amitābha] Buddha) and are listed and briefly introduced as follows:394

(1) The perception of the sun (rixiang 日 想) or the preliminary visualization (chuguan 初 観): attentively perceive the setting sun as if it is a drum suspended in the sky until one has a clear vision of it, whether the eyes are closed or opened.

(2) The perception of the water (shuixiang 水 想), the second visualization (dier guan 第 二 観), or the rough perception of the ground of the Land of Utmost Joy (cujian jile 粗 見 極 樂 地): attentively perceive in mind that the Pure Land is flooded by clean and pure water, which then turns into ice, and later into beryl and becomes the ground of beryl with manifestations of golden paths, jewel-built borders and platforms, pavilions, flower-banners, musical instruments, pure breezes, and sounds of the truth projected and arisen from lights of five hundred colors.

(3) The perception of the ground (dixiang 地 想), the third visualization (disan guan 第 三 観): attentively perceive in mind the rough image of the ground of the Pure Land

394 Translations of the terms used in describing the sixteen stages of visualization are based on the following materials: Hisao Inagaki, The Three Pure Land Sutras: a Study and Translation from Chinese (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995); William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1982); and Meiji Yamada, dir., trans. and annotated by The Ryukoku
until attaining the state of *samādhi*, during which all minute details on and under the ground of the Land can be clearly observed that one is not able to delineate every thing in full detail.

(4) The perception of the trees (*shuxiang* 樹 想), the fourth visualization (*disi guan* 第四 觀): attentively perceive in mind the details of the jeweled trees in the Pure Land from the extraordinary height to ornaments, to manifested flower palaces, children, and colorful lights, to leaves, flowers, and fruits, and to light-formed banners and canopies manifested with thousands of Buddhas in their worlds.

(5) The perception of the water of the eight ponds of meritorious virtue (*bagongdeshui xiang* 八 功德 水 想), the fifth visualization (*diju guan* 第五 觀): attentively perceive in mind the eight ponds which are filled with soft jewels, huge jeweled lotus flowers, and water and light-manifested birds that can proclaim Buddhist teachings.

(6) The perception of overall visualization (*zongguan xiang* 總 觀 想), the sixth visualization (*diliu guan* 第六 觀), or the rough perception of the jeweled trees, jeweled ground, and jeweled ponds in the World of Utmost Joy (*cujian jile shijie baoshu baodi baochi* 粗見 極樂 世界 寶 树 童 地 寶 池): attentively perceive in mind every world of every realm, where all Heavenly beings play heavenly music in pavilions and musical instruments in the sky spontaneously produce sounds of the truth.

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University Translation Center. *The Sūtra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life as Expounded by Sākyamuni Buddha* (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1984).

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(7) The perception of flower throne (huazuo xiang 花座想), the seventh visualization (diqi guan 第七観): attentively perceive in mind the detailed magnificent features of the lotus flower and its dais on the jeweled ground. Succeeding in this perception is a prerequisite for those who desire to perceive Amitābha.

(8) The perception of the image [of the Buddha] (xiangxiang 想像), the eighth visualization (diba guan 第八観), or the rough perception of the World of Utmost Joy (cuxiang jian jile shijie 粗想見極樂世界): attentively perceive in mind the images of the trinity host, who sit on the flower thrones surrounded by all features of the Pure land. Those who succeed in this visualization will see the same features, hear wonderful sounds of the truth, and, above all, attain the nianfo samādhi (nianfo sanmei 念佛三昧).

(9) The comprehensive perception of all physical features [of the Buddha] (bianguan yiqie se xiang 遍観一切色想), the ninth visualization (dijiu guan 第九観), or the visualization of all Buddhas’ bodies (guan yiqie foshen 観一切佛身), or nianfo sammei: attentively perceive in mind the physical features and their manifested wonders of Amitābha so that Amitābha and all other Buddhas can be seen in person. Such attainment is called nianfo samādhi.

(10) The visualization of the external appearance of the true physical body of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (guan guanshiyinpusa zhenshi seshen xiang 観観世音菩薩真寶色身相), the tenth visualization (dishi guan 第十観): attentively perceive in mind the physical features of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and their manifested wonders.
(11) The visualization of the external appearance of the physical body of Mahāsthāmaprāpta (guan dashizhi seshen xiang 觀大勢至色身相), the eleventh visualization (dishiyi guan 第十一觀), or the perceptive visualization of Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta (guanjian dashizhipusa 觀見大勢至菩薩): attentively perceive in mind the physical features of Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta and their manifested wonders. Upon perfection of this stage, it is called the complete visualization of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (juzu guan guanshiyin ji dashizhi 具足觀觀世音及大勢至).

(12) The perception of comprehensive visualization (puguan xiang 普觀想), the twelfth visualization (dishier guan 第十二觀), or the perception of Amitābha and the World of Utmost Joy (jian wuliangshoufo jile shijie 見無量壽佛極樂世界): attentively perceive in mind as if one is in the Pure Land, sitting cross-legged inside a lotus flower, illuminating by rays of colored light emitted from the flower, seeing all features in the Pure Land, and listening to sounds of the truth.³⁹⁵

According to Jingkong, only these twelve stages are the perceptive visualization of [Amitābha] Buddha while the thirteenth stage and the sixteenth stage are the guanxiang nianfo 觀像念佛 (visualization of [Amitābha] Buddha by concentrating one’s attention on his statue) and the chiming nianfo 持名念佛 (visualization of [Amitābha] Buddha by maintaining the recitation

The thirteenth stage, called the *zaxiang guan* 杂想观 (the visualization of assorted perception), or *dishisan guan* 第十三 觀 (the thirteenth visualization), refers to the attentive perception of a sixteen-foot statue of the Buddha on the surface of a pond following the sequence of visualization that is similar to the previous instructions on the trinity. The sixteenth stage, called the *xiabeisheng xiang* 下輩生想 (the perception of the rebirth of the Lower category), or the *dishiliu guan* 第十六 觀 (the sixteenth visualization), refers to the sincere recitation of Amitābha’s name, the method described as being used by reborn sentient beings of the last three grades out of the classification of the nine grades. As for the *shixiang nianfo* 實相念佛 (visualization of [Amitabha] Buddha by experiencing the True Nature), Jingkong explains that once the practices of the above three kinds of *nianfo* successfully lead the practitioners to attain the state of enlightenment that is equal to any of the last forty-one stages of *fashen dashi* 法身大士 (Dharmayaka Bodhisattva), the experience of such enlightened state is the practice of *shixiang nianfo*. Apparently, the *shixiang nianfo* is the highest and most difficult type among the four but the most important point from Jingkong’s explanation is that the function of the seemingly simple recitation method is considered the same as the other two. Such equivalence undoubtedly indicates that the recitation method is the most effective shortcut to the path of enlightenment, which is exactly

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397 *Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing*, TT12, no. 365: 344b-344c.
398 *Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing*, TT12, no. 365: 345c-346a.
what has been vigorously promoted by the Pure Land advocates of different generations and discussed in the section of “Practice” in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Moreover, that the recitation method became the mainstream for the majority of the Pure Land practitioners should also be attributed to the concluding statement made by Śākyamuni at the end of the Sūtra. According to the last part of the story, when Ānanda asked for instructions on how to maintain the teaching (dāng yünhe shǒuchí 當云何受持), the Buddha, regardless of his earlier comprehensive instructions on visualization sequences and techniques, told him to hold in mind the name of Amitābha Buddha (chi wuliangshoufo ming 持無量壽佛名). 400 hence, the recitation practice apparently is the key message of this lecture. It looks like the thirteen stages of visualization were quoted only to contrast them with the uniqueness and convenience of the practice of recitation.

The second significance of the sixteenth stages of visualization to the Pure Land School is its detailed descriptions on the jiupin 九品 (nine grades), the nine divisions of reborn residents in the Pure Land of Amitābha, which are deemed as additional remarks on the classification of the sanbei 三輩 (the three categories) on the same subject in the Infinite Life Sūtra. That is, the classification of the nine grades (jiupin 九 品) are the subdivision of the three categories (sanbei 三輩), with the shangshang 上 上 (upper superior), shangzhong 上 中 (upper medium), and shangxia 上 下 (upper inferior) as the shangbei 上 輩 (upper category); the zhongshang 中 上 (middle superior), zhongzhong 中 中 (middle medium), and zhongxia 中 下 (middle inferior) as the zhongbei 中 輩 (middle category); and the xiashang 下 上 (lower superior), xiazhong 下 中 (lower medium), and xiaxia 下 下 (lower inferior) as the xiabei 下 輩 (lower category). Thus, these two terms are frequently mentioned side by side as sanbei jiupin

400 Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing, TT12, no. 365: 346b.
三輩九品 (the nine grades of the three categories) to refer to reincarnate sentient beings.\textsuperscript{401}

According to this Sūtra, the upper, middle, and lower categories are respectively illustrated in the sections of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth visualizations, in which the Buddha distinctly revealed the differences between each grade regarding the causes for the rebirth that are based on both worldly and religious acts in this life and the corresponding situations at the moment of death as well as after being reborn into the Pure Land.\textsuperscript{402}

Another significance of the sixteenth stages of visualization to the School is the idea of “this mind is a Buddha/ this mind becomes a Buddha,” by which the practicability of all nianfo practices is justified. As discussed previously and in the section on “Comprehension” in Chapter Three, this idea is crucial because it is not only the central theory for the Pure Land School but also for the whole of Buddhism. In other words, it is the backbone of the whole philosophical network of Buddhism since being enlightened and becoming a Buddha are the final goals for every Buddhist practice. Based on this intercommunity, theoretically speaking, the ideas and the selections of sūtras advocated by different Buddhist schools become interchangeable; the differences between them are simply the result of the adaptation to the learners’ ranges of mentality and comprehension, and so, setting rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha as the final goal for Buddhist practices is simply a matter of course. Accordingly, the inclusion of the chapters of the Flower Adornment Sūtra and the Śūrangama-sūtra into the Pure Land canonical collection is very logical since the former relates to the persuasion of seeking rebirth into the Pure Land and the latter provides the keys for the recitation method. In order to reveal more about this interrelationship between the Pure Land teachings and other Mahāyāna sūtras like those mentioned here, the following sections focus on them.

\textsuperscript{401} Ding Fubao. 	extit{Foxue dacidian |Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching|}. pp. 160-161.
\textsuperscript{402} Foshuo guan wuliangshoufo jing, TT12, no. 365: 344c-346a
The Role of the Diamond Sūtra

The Diamond Sūtra was first translated in Chinese by Kumārajīva in 403. Commonly abbreviated in Chinese as the Jingang jing 金剛經, the full title of this Sūtra is Jingang bore boluomi jing 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (Vajracchedikā- prajñāpāramitā-sūtra). In fact, including Kumārajīva’s translation, there are six Chinese translations in existence; other translation titles are Foshuo nengduan jingang bore boluomi jing 佛說能斷金剛般若波羅蜜經 and Jingang nengduan bore boluomi jing 金剛能斷般若波羅蜜經. However, it is Kumārajīva’s translation that later became the most popular version among devotees in particular those of the Chan School. According to the history of Chinese Buddhism, this Sūtra began to gain popularity after being connected with and promoted by the Chan School as the School’s fifth Patriarch Hongren 弘忍 (602-675) gave a lecture on it for his student Huineng 慧能 (638-713), who dramatically attained enlightenment during the lecture and was thus chosen to succeed as the sixth Patriarch.

This Sūtra was delivered during the bore shi 般若時 (the period of prajñā), in which the Buddha preached the teachings of prajñā or wisdom for twenty-two years. Prajñā is the wisdom described as “supreme, highest, incomparable, unequalled, unsurpassed,” and being able to extinguish afflictions and lead to enlightenment; the acme of it is called prajñāpāramitā in Sanskrit, which is the highest of the six pāramitās as “the principal means, by its enlightenment, of attaining to nirvāṇa, through its revelation of the unreality of all things.” Since attaining to nirvāṇa so as to permanently leave the cycle of rebirth is the crucial purpose of Buddhism, the Sūtra explained the essence of enlightenment which is the apex of Buddhist teaching. The Sūtra’s name itself, “Diamond Sūtra,” reflects the qualities of the prajñāpāramitā: precious and incomparable, like the precious diamond.

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403 The characters of the name “慧能” are also commonly written as “慧能”.


for all Buddhist practices, principal teachings concerning prajñā like those conveyed in the
Diamond Sūtra have been viewed as the common basics that run through all theoretical system
of Buddhist practices. In the case of the Diamond Sūtra, ideas of “wuzhu shengxin” and “all
phenomena are illusions” are among those notions of prajñā are repeatedly mentioned in
Jingkong’s talks in clarifying and characterizing the Pure Land theories as well as in deepening
and reifying the theoretical dimension of the nianfo practices.

To the Pure Land School, according to Jingkong, the prajñā idea of wuzhu shengxin 無
住 生 心 (the mind that gives rise to [proper thoughts] and does not attach to [anything seen,
heard, smelled, tasted, touched, and thought of]) is the core message of the principles for
Buddhist practices that, when adopted, is certainly beneficial to the nianfo practices. In
function, the theory of wuzhu shengxin acts as a guideline for practitioners to examine and
rectify their improper attachments to either the concept of fa 法 (phenomenal) or that of feifa
非法 (non-phenomenal; noumenal), or the concept of you 有 (existing; material) or that of
kong 空 (empty; immaterial). In this theory, a proper state of mind is said to be beyond the
knowledge of eternal substantial existence and annihilation, understanding that “the
phenomenal has no reality in itself” and “the noumenal is not void.” How can a Pure Land
practitioner achieve such state of mind by the recitation of Amitābha’s name? Jingkong
declares that, as previously discussed in the section of “Comprehension” in Chapter Three,
when a high degree of concentration occurs during the nianfo practices, all afflictions and
discriminatory thoughts are correspondingly diminished to a minimum level at which only the

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407 Jingkong, Wuzhu shengxin ji 無 住 生 心 集 [Works on Non-attachment and Giving Rise to Proper Thoughts]
(Taipei: Jingzong xuehui jing, reprint 1997) 17; and Jingkong, “Jingang bore yanxi baogao 金剛般若研習報
408 Jingkong, Wuzhu shengxin ji [Works on Non-attachment and Giving Rise to Proper Thoughts], p. 17.
single thought of the name of Amitābha is left; that is, the state in which all thoughts and afflictions are diminished is close or even equal to the state of wuzhu, or non-attachment, and the ceaseless absorption in the recitation is no different from the state of shengxin, or giving rise to proper thoughts.

In addition to wuzhu shengxin, the notion of “all phenomena are illusions” is another prajñā idea in the Diamond Sūtra that claimed to have assisted the nianfo practices. As openly addressed in one of his lectures on the Diamond Sūtra, Jingkong believes that there are two main reasons for those who fail the nianfo practices, which are (1) kan bu po 看不破 (cannot see through [to the truth of impermanence]) and (2) fang bu xia 放不下 (cannot let go [of all wandering thoughts and attachments]).

To overcome these obstacles, the Master encourages the practitioners to interiorize the idea of “all phenomena are illusions.” In this case, two quotations in the Sūtra are often cited in his talks on a variety of Buddhist texts to elaborate this idea — the transient nature of all things, both visible and invisible — which are (1) all phenomena are unreal and false (凡所有相，皆是虛妄) and (2) all phenomena should be visualized and conceptualized as if they are a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a shadow, dew, and lightning (一切有為法，如夢幻泡影。如露亦如電。應作如是觀).

Jingkong considers that once the practitioners realize all things in this world are of transient nature, they will let go everything, including every tiny thought, affliction, and attachment so that their True Mind can be rediscovered and thus they will observe their practices sincerely and diligently so as to seek rebirth into the Pure Land where permanence is promised.

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411 The Diamond Sūtra, TT 8, no. 235: 749a.

412 The Diamond Sūtra, TT 8, no. 235: 752b.

Obviously, in Jingkong’s macroscopic view, the principles in the Diamond Sūtra not only can be applicable to the Chan School but also can serve as a supplement to the doctrinal network of Pure Land Buddhism. These universal principles provide the Pure Land teachings a standard of awareness as a means to advance the nianfo practices. Simultaneously, while these prajñā ideas focus more on the dimension of mentality, the Pure Land Learning Center also follows other sūtras’ criteria to direct the approach of the practices, of which the criterion of dushe liugen / jingnian xiangji 都攝六根 / 淨念相繼 (assimilating all the six sense-organs so that pure thought persists) from the Śūraṅgama-sūtra is of the utmost importance.

The Role of the Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Mahāsthamā through Buddha Name Recitation

Translated in 705 by Paramiti 菩戒蜜帝 (fl. 705), the ten-volume Dafoding rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhupusawanhang shoulengyan jing 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 (the Śūraṅgama-sūtra) is noted for its elaboration on the noumenon of the mind-nature⁴¹⁴ (xinxing benti 心性本體) and has been praised to be “the crucial door of Buddhist learning (xuefo zhi yaomen 學佛之要門)” for the fact that both its writing and meaning are wondrous and that all methods for salvation are included in it, by which sentient beings of all ranges of capacity are guided (文義皆妙...無法不備，無機不攝).⁴¹⁵ Nevertheless, to the Pure Land School, the central message of the Śūraṅgama-sūtra is the short passage in the fifth volume commonly known as the Dashizhipusa nianfo yuantongzhang 大勢
The subject matter of the fifth volume is the knowledge of the twenty-five groups of *yuantong* (perfect complete realization). In this volume, twenty-five Bodhisattvas were asked by the Buddha to give the audience a presentation on their special knowledge of perfect complete realization of the truth, which are the *linchen* (the six *gunas*, qualities produced by the objects and organs of sense, i.e. sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and idea), *liugen* (the six *indriyas* or sense-organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind), *liushi* (the perceptions and discernments of the six organs of sense), and *qida* (the seven elements of the universe, i.e. earth, water, fire, wind, space or ether, sight, and perception).

Thus, the main body of the fifth volume is comprised of twenty-five different short passages on the practices that can lead to the perfect complete realization; the Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Mahāsthāma through Buddha Name Recitation is the last one in sequence.

As the passage’s title stated, Mahāsthāma attained his perfect complete realization by observing the practice of Buddha name recitation. Undoubtedly, this is the reason why Yinguang had regarded Mahāsthāma’s presentation as the most wonderful instruction on the practice and thus deliberately added this passage to the Pure Land canonical collection, even though it is composed of merely two hundred and forty-four Chinese characters.

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416 Liu Chengfu, *Dashizhipusa nianfo yuantong zhang qinwen* [A Record of What I Have Heard about the Chapter on the Perfect Complete Realization of Mahāsthāma through Buddha Name Recitation] (Tainan: Tainan jingzong xuehui 1996) 1.


418 *Jingtu wujing duben*, p. 6.
Mahāsthāma’s presentation begins with an introduction to Buddha Amitābha, the one who, many kalpas ago, taught the *nianfo samādhi* to him as well as to his fifty-two groups of fellow Bodhisattvas of different stages of enlightenment, who also attended this presentation. With the help of two parables about the reciprocal recollections between two people and between a mother and a son, Mahāsthāma explained the theory behind the achievability of such practice as the mutual response between Tathāgata of the ten directions and sentient beings. Based on this understanding, Mahāsthāma continued his presentation by giving details on the resulting stage of enlightenment and the essence of his practice:

If the minds of sentient beings recall and meditate on Buddha, they certainly will see Buddhas [or Buddha-nature] at present and in the future. Since [their minds] do not far away from the Buddha[-nature], they will be spontaneously initiated into wisdom without depending on any expedient method [*upāya*]; this is like those fumigators, whose bodies are fragrant. This is called the magnificence of the fragrance [of samādhi] and the light of [wisdom].

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419 An alternative term of “Buddha” defined as he who comes as do all other Buddhas; or as he who took the 如 chen-ju [zhenni] or absolute way of cause and effect, and attained to perfect wisdom; or as the absolute come; one of the highest titles of a Buddha.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 210.

420 According to the symbolic meanings of “fragrance” and “light” in Buddhism, fragrance is the representation of the pervading influence of the virtues acquired and the state of samādhi attained by observing precepts and practices (*jiede* 或 *jieding* zhénxiāng 戒定真香) and light is the manifestation of perfect
original fundamental cause [of Buddhahood] to enter into the enlightened state of no-birth, or immortality. Now I gather and receive those who recite and meditate on the Buddha in this realm to return to the Pure Land. [Therefore,] when you, Buddha, ask about the [practice of] perfect complete realization, I choose nothing other than — to assimilate all the six sense-organs so that pure thought persists and *samādhi* is acquired — this is the best.

This passage clearly describes the way, the result, and the key of Mahāsthāma’s practice. Apparently, the recitation, recollection and meditation on Buddha are Mahāsthāma’s practices; seeing Buddhas or Buddha-nature at present and in the future, being spontaneously initiated into wisdom, entering into the enlightened state of no-birth, and acquiring *samādhi* are the corresponding outcomes, which are different expressions of the same achievement of enlightenment or Buddhahood. As for the key to *nianfo* practice, it is “to assimilate all the six sense-organs so that pure thought persists,” the importance of which to the *nianfo* practice has been enhanced by Jingkong’s declaration that the mental or spiritual condition of this key point

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writings (zhiguang 智光). Ding Fubao, *Foxue dacidian* [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 998, 1107, and 2200. Here, based on the exegesis of Yuanying 因瑛 (1876-1951?), the meaning refers to the Buddha-nature of those practitioners who recite the name of Amitābha and whose minds meditate on the Buddha become interpenetrated and glorified by the fragrance of the Dharmakīya, the absolute or spiritual body and the wisdom light of the Buddha (今則念佛，以佛法身香，智慧光，莊嚴自己本覺心佛，故曰香光莊嚴). See Yuanying, *Dafoding shoulengyan jing jiangyi* 大佛頂首楞嚴經講義 [Lecture Notes of the Sūrangama-sūtra] (Texas: Yuan Miaw House 圓妙精舍, 1999) 860.

421 The level of *wushengren* 無生忍 or *wushengfaren* 無生法忍 refers to the enlightened state of Bodhisattvas of the forty-eight stage.

422 *Sammo-di* 三摩地 is one of the Chinese translated terms for the Sanskrit *samādhi*.

423 The *Sūrangama-Sūtra*, TT 19, no. 945: 128a-128b.
is equivalent to that of *wuzhu shengxin* in the *Diamond Sūtra*. This juxtaposition represents that the spiritual achievements attained by following the directions of these two notions are identical; hence, Jingkong’s declaration has easily and successfully characterized Mahāsthāma’s experience as one kind of *prajñā* practice. At the same time, in order to prove that such declaration is not his own invention as well as to stress that the Pure Land practices are more remarkable than the others, Jingkong, like his predecessors, takes the vows of Samantabhadra in the *Flower Adornment Sūtra* as the evidence to show that seeking rebirth into the Pure Land is necessary for every Buddhist practitioner including Bodhisattvas of *Samyak-sambodhi* (the fifty-first stage in the enlightenment of a Bodhisattva).

The Role of the Chapter on the Conduct and Vows of Samantabhadra

This is the final chapter of the *Dafangguang fohuayan jing* 大方广佛華嚴經 (the Avatamsaka-sūtra; the Flower Adornment Sūtra), which is one of the major and most influential texts in Chinese Buddhism. Of which three Chinese translations with the same full title has been made. The first version was completed around 420 by Buddhabhadra 佛陀跋陀羅 (359-429) of Kapilavastu, India, who arrived in China circa 406-408; in sixty volumes, it was also known as the Jin jing 興 經 (the Jin sūtra), jiujing 興 經 (the old sūtra), liushi Huayan 六十華嚴 (the sixty[-volume] Flower Adornment Sūtra), and jiuyi Huayan 興譯華嚴 (the old translation of the Flower Adornment Sūtra). The second version was completed in around 699-700 in eighty volumes by Śiksānanda 實叉難陀 (652-710), a Khotanese monk who arrived in China about 695; it is also known as the Tang jing 唐 經 (the Tang sūtra), xinjing 新 經 (the new sūtra), bashi Huayan 八十華嚴 (the eighty[-volume] Flower

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424 Jingkong, *Wuzhu shengxin ji* [Works on Non-attachment and Giving Rise to Proper Thoughts], p. 62.

425 The *Flower Adornment Sūtra*, TT 9, no. 278: 395a-788b.
Adornment Sūtra), and xinyi Huayan 新 譯 華 嚴 (the new translation of the Flower Adornment Sūtra). The third version was completed in forty volumes in around 798-800 by Prajñā 普 若 (fl. 781-811), a monk from Kabul, Afghanistan; it is also known as the sishi Huayan 四十華嚴 (the forty[-volume] Flower Adornment Sūtra), and houyi Huayan 後譯華嚴 (the late translation of the Flower Adornment Sūtra).

In fact, the last, forty-volume Flower Adornment Sūtra is the detailed extension of the last chapters, the Ru fajie pin 入法界品 (the Chapter on Entering the Dharma Realm), of the other two early comprehensive translations, in which Sudhana 善財童子 (Shancaitongzi) course of realizing and entering the Dharma Realm is described. Because of this, the Flower Adornment Sūtra is also referred to as the Inconceivable Liberation Sūtra (Busiyi jing 不思議經; Busiyi jietuo jing 不思議解脫經; Bukesi jietuo jing 不可思議解脫經), and is highly valued by all schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, since universal liberation is one of their major concerns. This concern is also well reflected in the subtitle of this version, the Dafangguang fohuayan jing ru busiyi jietuo jingjie Puxian xingyuan pin 大方廣佛華嚴經入不思議解脫境界普賢行願品 (the Chapter of the Conduct and Vows of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva [Samantabhadra] on Entering the Inconceivable Realm of Liberation of the Flower Adornment Sūtra), which is usually known as Puxian xingyuan pin 普賢行願品 (the Chapter on Conduct and Vows of Samantabhadra).

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426 The Flower Adornment Sutra, TT 10, no. 279: 1a-444c.

427 The Flower Adornment Sutra, TT 10, no. 293: 661a-848b.

428 The Flower Adornment Sutra, TT 9, no. 278: 676a-788b; and the Flower Adornment Sutra, TT 10, no. 279: 319a-444c.

429 Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 587 and 593.
However, this subtitle has long been referred to the last (fortieth) chapter of this version,\textsuperscript{430} in which Samantabhadra, represented as the final stage in the course of Bodhisattva’s practice for attaining Buddhahood, told Sudhana about the ways he practiced, which are called the \textit{Puxian shiyuan} 普賢十願 (the Ten Vows of Samantabhadra), and also taught Sudhana to seek rebirth in the Pure Land as the true means to complete the course, which is usually stated as “\textit{shida yuanwang daogui jile} 十大願王導歸極樂 (the King of Ten Great Vows leads [practitioners] back to the Pure Land).” It is exactly for these reasons that this chapter was finally added to the canonical collection of the Pure Land School by Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857), a famous Qing scholar-official. This was an important addition because it effortlessly redirects the final destination of the courses in self- and universal liberations mentioned in the \textit{Flower Adornment Sūtra} to Amitābha’s Pure Land; that is, the perfect stage of enlightenment for the the Pure Land School is logically proven to be no different from that of the Huayan School.

Besides, discussions in this and the last Chapters of this thesis have clearly revealed the intrinsic interrelatedness between this \textit{Chapter on Conduct and Vows of Samantabhadra} and other Pure Land sūtras within the macroscopic system of the Pure Land teachings. Discussion topics like the \textit{tongbu} 同部 (the same area), the \textit{Yi zhen fajie 一真法界} (One True Dharma Realm), Jingkong’s application of the four divisions of the \textit{Flower Adornment Sūtra} in annotating the \textit{Infinite Life Sūtra}, and the content of the \textit{Infinite life Sūtra} have illustrated the contextual connections between this Chapter and both the \textit{Amitābha Sūtra} and \textit{Infinite Life Sūtra}. Such intimate connections explain clearly why the Ten Vows of Samantabhadra are one of the five practice guidelines for the Pure Land Learning Center as mentioned in the section of “Other Practices” in Chapter Three of this thesis. To the Learning Center, these ten categories

\textsuperscript{430} Ding Fubao, \textit{Foxue dacidian} [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], p. 382.
of conduct are not only meant for Bodhisattvas but also for its followers; they are included to encourage all practitioners to learn to broaden their minds by vowing to and trying to benefit all sentient beings.

Answers to Questions about Jingkong’s Advocacy

Different from the simple, superficial yet more widely known formulation of the theories of Pure Land Buddhism, this thesis Chapter presents a more complicated yet comparatively true interpretation of the philosophy preached by generations of Pure Land advocates. Without question, the Three Pure Land Sūtras are the mainstay of the teachings; they provide the framework as well as many necessary details to delineate the causation and principles of the only easy way of salvation claimed in the history of Chinese Buddhism. However, since the supernatural elements of the story have been overemphasized, its symbolic connotation and philosophical dimension shared with other Mahāyāna sūtras have been overlooked. Through the examination of and comparisons between major Pure Land texts and selected Mahāyāna sūtras, a real, live picture of the teachings is depicted corresponding to both the traditional and living beliefs of the School.

Based on a macroscopic view, it is not difficult to find out that the philosophy of Pure Land Buddhism is in fact a systematic network covering all the crucial theories that run through the whole of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In general, this network can be understood as a cross-reference relationship between the Pure Land canonical collection and the Buddhist Canon — the former as the main body and the latter as its commentary. The patterns of the interpretation and organization of this network are exceptionally well-knit; in addition to the structure suggested by the two latest prominent Pure Land advocates, the approach of the Pure Land sūtras can be simplified under the classification of the Three Provisions, the faith, vow, and practice. Even though each of these sūtras contains all of these three elements, the
emphasis these sūtras place on each of these elements are not the same. Apparently, the Amitābha Sūtra focuses more on the need of having faith; the Infinite Life Sūtra calls the practitioners’ attentions to the forty-eight vows of Amitābha and the vow made by Ānanda to seek rebirth in the Pure Land; and the Visualization Sūtra places more emphasis on the four kinds of nianfo practices. As for the approach of the other Mahāyāna sūtras, based on the manner they have been employed in verifying and elaborating the philosophy of Pure Land Buddhism, they can be categorized under the four divisions of the Flower Adornment Sūtra. Selected sūtras discussed here are clearly related to three of the four divisions of the Flower Adornment Sūtra, namely, the divisions of comprehension, practice, and realization: quotations from the Diamond Sūtra are cited to assist practitioners in comprehending the underlying profundity of the Pure Land teachings; Mahāsthāma’s perfect complete realization from the Śūrangama-sūtra is taken as a special key for the recitation practice; and, as the conclusion for the teachings, the stress on the Chapter on Conduct and Vows of Samantabhadra of the Flower Adornment Sūtra is quoted to recommend to practitioners a perfect place for attaining Buddhahood.

Having understood this theoretical network, the answer to the question whether Jingkong’s advocacy is contradictory is simple. In Jingkong’s eyes, the Buddhist Canon is an entity of one single philosophy aiming to publicize the nianfo practice as the best way for salvation. Hence, in function, Jingkong’s lectures on a wide variety of Mahāyāna sūtras are taken as voluminous supporting materials established for the preaching of Pure Land Buddhism instead of being treated as the promotion of other Buddhist schools’ teachings. In short, there is no contradiction between a school of specialty and its library of rich collections. Moreover, discussions here also show that the cross-reference style of interpretation is not Jingkong’s own invention; on the contrary, such style is a long tradition adopted and elaborated by generations of Pure Land advocates.
However, as indicated above, such traditions in interpreting the teachings of the Pure Land School have not always had sufficient supporting materials; to deal with this problem, Pure Land advocates have frequently cited eminent Buddhist masters of different schools, who observed *nianfo* practices and promoted Pure Land teachings along with their own schools' studies, to support the above arguments. Examples of distinguished Buddhist masters include Zhiyi (538-597), Zhanran (711-782), Shengchang (959-1020), Zhili (960-1028), Zunshi (964-1032), Zhixu (1599-1655), Guxu (1858-1932; Dixian and Tanxu (1875-1963) of the Tiantai School; Chengguan (738-839), Zongmi (780-841), and Cizhou.

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432 Zhiyi was the founder of the Tiantai School.

433 Zhanran was the sixth Patriarch of the Tiantai School.

434 As a Song period Tiantai monk, Shengchang was also respected as the seventh Patriarch of the Pure Land School.

435 Zhili, an important Song period Tiantai monk, was known for his reviving of the Tiantai School.

436 Zunshi was a famous Song period Tiantai monk.

437 As a Ming period Tiantai monk, Zhixu was also respected as the ninth Patriarch of the Pure Land School.

438 Guxu, the forty-third Patriarch of the Tiantai School in the modern China, was famous for his reviving the Tiantai School.

439 Tanxu was the forty-fourth Patriarch of the Tiantai School in the modern China.

440 Established by Zhiyi of Mount Tiantai, the Tiantai School is known for its theory of perfect interpenetration of the triple truth, namely, the truth of emptiness, truth of temporariness, and truth of the mean.

441 Chengguan was the fourth Patriarch of the Huayan School.

442 Zongmi was the fifth patriarch of the Huayan School.
(1877-1957) of the Huayan School; Yanshou延壽 (904-975), Mingben明本 (1263-1318), Weize惟則 (fl. 1341), Fanqi梵奇 (1296-1370), Zhuhong禪宏 (1535-1615), and Deqing德淸 (1546-1623) of the Chan School; and Yuanzhao元照 (1048-1116) and Hongyi弘一 (1880-1942) of the Vinaya School.

Coming along with these examples is another line of reasoning about the differentiation between the ideas of jiao (the teaching) and xing (the practice) — the objective of teaching is to reveal the principle, on which the practice is based. According to previous discussions, all Buddhist teachings are supposedly taught to reveal common principles on which the nianfo practices are based; hence, regardless of school affiliation, the purpose of

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443 Cizhou, an eminent monk in the modern China, was recognized for his transmitting of the teachings of the Huayan School.

444 Establishing during the Sui-Tang period, the most valuable contributions of this school on the Buddhist philosophy were the doctrines of interpenetration and mutual containment perceived in the Huayan jing, the Flower Adornment Sutra.

445 As the Dharma successor of the Fayan lineage of the Chan School, the Song Yanshou was also respected as the sixth Patriarch of the Pure Land School.

446 Mingben, an eminent Yuan monk, was the twenty-third generation of the sixth Patriarch of the Chan School.

447 Weize was a Yuan period Chan monk from the lineage of Mingben (Zhongfeng 中峰).

448 Fanqi was an enlightened Yuan period Chan monk.

449 As a Ming period Chan monk, Zhuhong was also respected as the eighth Patriarch of the Pure Land School.

450 Deqing was a Ming period Chan monk from the Linji lineage.

451 Founded by an Indian monk named Bodhidharma, the legendary twenty-eighth Patriarch in a lineage back from the Buddha, through a series of Chinese patriarchs, the new form of Buddhist teachings he taught — "outside of the texts" — was transmitted to Chinese Buddhists.

452 Yuanzhao, a prominent Song monk, was the sixteenth Patriarch of the Nanshan lineage of the Vinaya School.

453 Hongyi, a famous monk in the modern China, was well-known for his reviving of the Vinaya School.

454 As its title stated, the Lü or Jiéli or Vinaya School specializes in interpreting the Buddhist precepts.
every school’s teachings is to clarify and teach its followers the principles of the practices for salvation, of which the nianfo practices are the best; thus, theoretically, the nianfo practices are compatible with any Buddhist teachings and can be observed by any Buddhist practitioner.

Descriptions of such argument are similar in writing pattern, such as “jiao chan Tiantai / xing xiu Jingtu 教 闡 天 台 行 修 淨 土 (teach and explain the Tiantai teachings and carry out the practice of the Pure Land [School]),”

jie zong Faxiang / xing gui Jingtu 解 宗 法 相 行 歸 淨 土 (follow the comprehension of the Faxiang or Dharmalaksana [School] and return to the Pure Land practice);”

jiao shang Faxiang / xing zai Mituo 教 尚 法 相 行 在 彌 陀 (advocate the teachings of the Dharmalaksana [School] and practice [what] Amitābha [taught]);”

jiao zong Xianshou / xing zai Mituo 教 賢 首 行 在 彌 陀 (follow the teachings of the Xianshou or Huayan [School] and practice [what] Amitābha [taught]);”

455 Tanxu 伏虚 (1875-1963). Yingchen luiyi lu 影塵 回憶 錄 [Memoirs of Illusions] (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijinhui, 1992) 174. The statement was quoted from one of the principal rules for those who wanted to stay in the Zhanshan Monastery 湛山 寺 in Qingdao 青島, Shandong 山 東, China, during the first half of the twentieth century.

456 Founded by Xuanzhuang 玄奘 (600-664), this School based on the doctrines of the voluminous texts of weishi 唯識 (consciousness-only) brought back to China. It is said that this School was the extension of the Indian Yogācāra tradition (Yuqinxing pai 瑜伽行 派).

457 Kuanlu 宽津, Jindai wangsheng suiyenlu 今代 往 生 隨 閱 錄 [Records of People Who Achieved Rebirth in the Pure Land in the Modern Times] (Taipei: Fotou jiaoyu jijinhui, 1998) 60. This description refers to the teachings and practices advocated and observed by the influential lay Buddhist Fan Gunong 范 屋 (1881-1951).

458 Li Bingnan, Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji, ed. Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong: Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 370. This account refers to the teachings and practices advocated and observed by the renowned lay Buddhist Mei Guangxi 梅 光 炫 (b.1879), who earned a complimentary title, “nan Mei bei Xia” (the South Mei and the North Xia) with his friend Xia Lianju.

"jiao shang Huayan / xing shang Mituo 教尚華嚴 / 行尚彌陀 (advocate the teachings in the Huayan [Sutra] and the [recitation] practice of Amitābha);"\textsuperscript{460} "jiao zong Bore / xing zai Mituo 教宗般若 / 行在彌陀 (follow the teachings of prajñā and practice [what] Amitābha [taught]);"\textsuperscript{461} and "jiao zong Lengyan / xing zai Mituo 教宗楞嚴 / 行在彌陀 (follow the teachings in the Śūraṅgama[-sutra] and practice [what] Amitābha [taught])."	extsuperscript{462}

Such arguments can be further supported by textual evidence from the Buddhist Canon. As Pure Land advocates have long upheld Shandao’s idea that the “Tathāgata [Śākyamuni Buddha] appeared in the world is only for the sake of preaching Amitābha’s oceanic original vows,” they have frequently stressed that the importance of the teachings regarding Amitābha, his Pure Land, and the niènfó practices can be seen in Śākyamuni’s numerous talks on these subjects in the Buddhist Canon. Some of these advocates even took the trouble to edit collections of these sūtras to verify their arguments, of which Zongxiao’s 宗曉 (1151-1214) Lebang wenlei 樂邦文類 (Various Writings on the Land of Bliss), published in 1200 during

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{460} Li Bingnan, Xuehulaoren jingtu xuanji, ed. Xuehulaoren jingtu xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong: Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 370. Similar description in different characters refers to the same subject of Yang Renshan.
\textsuperscript{461} Jingkong, “Jingang bore yanxi baogao [Study Report on the Diamond Wisdom],” audio-tape, 1996: v. 1. Jingkong used this statement to refer to the teachings and practices advocated and observed by the noted lay Buddhist Jiang Weinong 江味農 (1872-1938), who was well-known for his exceptionally comprehensive researches on the Diamond Sūtra.
\textsuperscript{462} Jingkong, “Dafangguang fohuayan jing 大方廣佛華嚴經 [The Flower Adornment Sūtra],” audio-tape, 2001 (30 Dec.): v. 551. Jingkong used this account to praise Hongwu 弘悟 (1876-1951; Yuanying 圓瑛), the famed Buddhist master in the modern China, for his Pure Land practices and teaching on the Śūraṅgama-sūtra.
\end{footnotes}
the Song dynasty, is an excellent example. At the beginning of this work, in the section "Jing (Sūtras)," Zongxiao points out that, including different translations of major Pure Land sūtras, there are forty-six entries of sūtras and Upadeśa, or treatises, in the Buddhist Canon that specifically talk about Pure Land teachings (大藏 専 深 藤 經 論); sūtras other than those that have been discussed here are the Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法 蘭 華 經 (the Saddharma-pundarika-sūtra; the Lotus Sūtra), Beihua jing 悲花 經 (the Compassionate Flower Sūtra), Chusheng pusa jing 出 生 菩 薩 經 (the Sūtra on the Birth of Bodhisattvas'), Mituo ji jing 彌陀 僧 經 (the Sūtra on the Gāthā of Amitābha), Guyinwang jing 鼓音 王 經 (the King of the Rolling of Drums Sūtra), Pusa chutai jing 菩 薩 處 胎 經 (the Sūtra on the Bodhisattva who Abides in the Womb), Wenshu shuo bore jing 文殊 說 胎 楞

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463 Zongxiao, Lebang wenlei. TT 47. no. 1969A: 148a-231b.
464 Zongxiao, Lebang wenlei. TT 47. no. 1969A: 149c-150a. According to Jingkong, a more recent publication titled as the Jingtu jinglun hekan 淨 土 經 論 合 聯 (the Combined Issue of Sūtras and Treatises on the Pure Land) shows that there are more than two hundred and forty Buddhist works in the Buddhist Canon relate to the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism; for details, see Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 32, and 623-624.
465 The Compassionate Flower Sūtra, TT 3. no. 157: 167a-233c.
466 The Sūtra on the Birth of Bodhisattvas' [Dharma], TT 19. no. 1017: 698b-702c; this is the shortened title of the Foshuo yixiang chusheng pusa jing 佛 說 一向 出 生 菩 薩 經 (the Buddha Speaks of the Birth of the Undistracted Bodhisattvas' [Dharma] Sūtra).
467 The Sūtra on the Gāthā of Amitābha, TT 12. no. 373: 364b-364c; its full title is the Houchu Amituofo ji 後 出 阿彌陀 佛 僧 (the Later Appeared Gāthā of Amitābha).
468 The King of the Rolling of Drums Sūtra, TT 12. no. 370: 352b-353b; its full title is the Amituo guinyinshengwang tuoluoni jing 阿 彌 陀 鼓 音 聲 王 陀 羅 尼 經 (the Dhāraṇī of Amitābha as the King of the Rolling of Drums Sūtra).
469 The Sūtra on the Bodhisattva who Abides in the Womb, TT 12. no. 384: 1015a-1058b; it is the shortened title of the Pusa cong Doushutian jiangShenmutai shuo guangpu jing 菩 薩 從 妙 術 天 降 神 母 言 廣 普 經 (the
若經 (the Mañjuśrī Speaks of Prajñā Śūtra),\(^{470}\) **Bozhou jing** 般舟經 (the Pratyutpannasamādhi-śūtra; the Present [of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions] Śūtra),\(^{471}\) **Fangdeng daji jing** 方等大集經 (the Mahāvaipulya-mahāsamnipātā-śūtra; the Śūtra on the Great, broad, and universal Collection),\(^{472}\) **Dabaoji jing** 大寶積經 (the Mahāratnakūta-śūtra; the Great Collected Precious [Dharma] Śūtra),\(^{473}\) **Suiyuan wangsheng jing** 隨願往生經 (the Śūtra on Rebirth in Accord with Vows),\(^{474}\) **Daji Rizang jing** 大集日藏經 (the [Section of] Śūrya-prabhāsana in the Mahāvaipulya- mahāsamnipātā-śūtra),\(^{475}\) **Mulian suo wen jing** 目連所問經 (the Śūtra on Maudgalyāyana’s Enquiries),\(^{476}\) **Shi wangsheng jing** 十往生經 (the Descent of Bodhisattva’s Spirit from Tusita Heaven into Māyā’s Womb to speak of the Broad and Universal [Dharma] Śūtra).

\(^{470}\) The **Mañjuśrī Speaks of Prajñā Śūtra**, TT 8, no. 232: 726a-732c; its full title is the **Wenshushili suo shuo mohe bore boluomi jing** 文殊師利所說摩訶般若波羅蜜經 (the Mañjuśrī Speaks of the Great Highest Prajñā Śūtra).

\(^{471}\) The **Pratyutpannasamādhi-śūtra**, TT 13, no. 418: 902c-919c; the shortened title of the **Bozhou sanmei jing** 般舟三昧經 (the Śūtra on the Samādhi of the Present [of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions]).

\(^{472}\) The **Mahāvaipulya-mahāsamnipātā-śūtra**, TT 13, no. 397: 1a-407a. It is commonly known as the **Dajijing** 大集經 and the full title is the **Dafangdeng daji jing** 大方等大集經.

\(^{473}\) The **Mahāratnakūta-śūtra**, TT 11, no. 310:1a-658a.

\(^{474}\) The **Rebirth at Will Śūtra**, TT 21, no. 1331: 528c-532b; it is in fact the eleventh chapter of the **Foshuo guanding jing** 佛說灌頂經 (the Buddha Speaks of the Inauguration Śūtra) and its full title is the **Foshuo guanding suiyuan wangsheng shifang jingtu jing** 佛說灌頂隨願往生十方淨土經 (the Buddha Speaks of the Inauguration for [Anyone Who] Vows to be Reborn into the Pure Lands of the Ten Directions).

\(^{475}\) The [Section of] **Śūrya-prabhāsana in the Mahāvaipulya-mahāsamnipātā-śūtra**, TT 13, no. 397: 233a-297c; comprised of thirteen chapters, this “śūtra” is a section of the **Mahāvaipulya-mahāsamnipātā-śūtra**.

\(^{476}\) The **Śūtra on Maudgalyāyana’s Enquiries**, TT 24, no. 1468: 911b-912a; its full title is **Foshuo Mulian suo wen jing** 佛說目連所問經 (the Buddha Speaks of the Enquiries of Maudgalyāyana Śūtra).
Ten Sutras on the Rebirth,477 *Guanfo sanmei jing* 觀 佛 三 味 經 (the Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha Sūtra),478 *Wenshu fayuan jing* 文殊 發願 經 (the Sūtra on the Vows Made by Mañjuśrī),479 *Ru Lengqie jing* 入 楞 伽 經 (the Lankāvatāra- sūtra; the Entry of Lanka Sūtra),480 *Shanxin Moqing jing* 善 信 摩 親 經,481 and *Shouhu guojiezhi jing* 守護 國 界 主 經 (the Guardianship of the Lord of the Kingdom Sūtra).482 Although this list of textual evidence is quoted from only one source, the variety and quantity of them are overwhelming enough to support the School’s long time proclamation — “*Qianjing wanlun / chuchu zhigui* 千 經 萬 論 / 處 處 指 歸 (All aspects of thousands of sutras and myriads of treatises point at a return [to the Pure Land of Amitābha]”483 — with such support from the abundance of such

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477 The full title of the Ten Sutras on the Rebirth is *Shi wangsheng Amituofo guo jing* 十 往 生 阿 徕 陀 佛 國 經 (the Ten Sutras on the Rebirth into Amitābha’s Country). Only the title of this Sūtra is included in three bibliographical works in the Buddhist Canon (TT 55, no. 2153: 474b; TT 55, no. 2154: 678a; and TT 55, no. 2157: 1022c).

478 The *Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha Sūtra*, TT 15, no. 643: 645c-697a; it is the shortened title of the *Foshuo guanfo sanmeihai jing* 佛 說 觀 佛 三 味 海 經 (the Buddha Speaks of the Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha Sūtra).

479 The *Sūtra on the Vows Made by Mañjuśrī*, TT 10, no. 296: 878c-879c; the *Wenshushili fayuan jing* 文殊 師 利 發 盡 經 is an alternative title of this Sūtra.

480 The *Lankāvatāra-sūtra*, TT 16, no. 671: 514c-586b; the Dharmalaksana and Chan Schools use it as a text to explain their basic teachings.

481 This Sūtra is not seen in the Buddhist Canon.

482 The *Guardianship of the Lord of the Kingdom Sūtra*, TT 19, no. 997: 525a-557a; its full title is the *Shouhu guojiezhu tuoluoni jing* 守護 國 界 主 陀 羅 尼 經 (the Dhāranī of the Guardianship of the Lord of the Kingdom Sūtra).

483 Quoted from the *Quan fa putixin wen* 勸 發 菩 提 心 文 (The Essay on the Persuasion of Giving Rise to the Bodhi-mind) by Shixian 寶 賢 (1686-1734, zi Siqi 恩 齊, hao Shengan 省 懷), the eleventh Pure Land Patriarch, this is a common statement frequently used by Jingkong to refer to the proclamation discussed in this chapter.
sources, the argument about the central position of Pure Land Buddhism within the whole
Buddhist theoretical system seem to be self-evident.

Having explored the philosophical system advocated by the Pure Land Learning Center
in the dimensions of (1) the Dharma lineage of Jingkong in the last chapter and (2) the
scriptural exegesis tradition in this chapter, it is the time to examine what kinds of nianfo
practices this School advises its followers to integrate theory with practice, which will be
discussed in the next chapter.

Examples see Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture
Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 624; Jingkong, Lengyanjing qingjinggaominghuizhang qinwenlu/ xingcedashi
jingtujinghua jiangji 楞嚴經清淨明诲章觀聞録/行策大師淨土精華講記 [Record of What I Heard
about the Chapter of the Pure and Bright Teaching of the Śūrangama-sūtra/ Lecture Notes on the Essence of the
Pure Land by Master Xingce], ed., and transcript Liu Chengfu (Taipei: fotuo jiaoyu jijinhui, 1995) 127; Liu
Chengfu, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing qinwenji [A Record of What I Have
Heard about the Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra of Majesty, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the
Mahāyāna School], p. 590; and Jingkong, “Jingang bore yanxi baogao [Study Report on the Diamond Wisdom],”
CHAPTER FIVE

A Variety of Recitation Methods Recommended by the Pure Land Learning Center for Its followers to Put Theories into Practice

The Flexibility of the Recitation Method

There can be no objection to the argument that reciting Amitābha’s name is the simplest, most popular and influential method among the four categories of nianfo practices. After Shandao’s (613-681) strong advocacy in the seventh century, a number of recitation methods have been developed in accordance with the content and principles of major Pure Land texts.\textsuperscript{484} For examples, the collective practice of Foqi 佛七 (the Seven-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]) are based on the content from the Amitābha Sūtra that one can be reborn into the Pure Land if one continuously recite Amitābha’s name for one to seven days\textsuperscript{485} and the Shinian fa 十念法 (the Ten Recitation Method) was developed in accordance with Amitābha’s eighteenth vow mentioned in the Infinite Life Sūtra, in which Pure Land practitioners are promised to be

\textsuperscript{484} The developments of practices of the other three categories of nianfo are similar. An excellent example can be seen in the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra, which has been discussed in the last chapter. Other examples can be found in the Wenshu bore jing 文殊普若經 (the Mañjuśrī’s Prajñā Sūtra; TT 8, no. 232: 726a-732c) and the Bozhou sanmei jing 般舟三昧經 (the Pratyutpannasamādhi-sūtra; TT 13, no. 418: 902c-919c), on which the practices of yixing sanmei 一行三昧 (the samādhi of single practice) and bozhou sanmei 般舟三昧 (the pratyaipanrasamādhi) are based, of which the latter is particularly known for its ninety-day ceaseless recitation and circumambulation. According to the texts, successful practice of either samādhi enables the practitioner to see the Buddhas of the ten directions simultaneously.

\textsuperscript{485} Kumārajīva, trans., Foshuo amituo jing (The Buddha Speaks of the Amitābha Sūtra; 402) TT 12, no. 366: 347b.
As the quantity of Pure Land texts is abundant, established recitation methods are varied ranging from comparatively simple methods like the *Foyi* 佛一 (the One-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]), the *Zhuiding nianfo fa* 追頂念佛法 (the Chase and Follow Recitation of Buddha’s [Name] Method), the *Liushi chenhun nianfo famen* 六時晨昏念佛法門 (the Six Periods of the Day and Night Recitation of Buddha’s [Name] Method), and the *Libaifa* 禮拜法 (the Method of Worship) to more complicated ways such as methods that were ceremonialized by combining with the *Nianfo qizhi yi* 念佛起止儀 (the Beginning and Ending Rite for the Recitation of Buddha’s [Name]). The diversity of these methods included into the category


487 It was advocated by Sanfeng 三峰, an early Qing Chan monk. He suggested that one should recite the name continuously one after another and as closely as possible to shorten the intervals between each call so that the mind can highly concentrate on one single thought without distraction. For details, see Jineng 淨能, ed., *Jiaohu ji* 角虎集 (Horned Tiger Collection; 1770) in *Xuzangiing* 禪藏經 (Continuation of the Buddhist Canon), vol. 109: 258-259. For English translation of a part of Sanfeng’s suggestion on the practice (p. 259), see Appendix Five.

488 “The six ‘hours’ or periods in a day, three for night and three for day, i.e. morning, noon, evening, night, midnight, and dawn.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 135.

489 *Zhou Kefu* 周克復, ed., *Jingtu chenzhong* 淨土晨鐘 (Morning Bell of the Pure Land; 1659) in *Xuzangiing*, vol. 109: 116. It is a comparatively simple ritual, which combines the practices of visualization, recitation, worship, and reading and particularly emphasizes daily regularity. For its English translation, see Appendix Six.

490 *Wukai* 步開 (d. 1830), ed., *Jingye zhijin* 潔業知津 (Knowing the Path to Pure Karma; 1829) in *Xuzangiing*, vol. 109: 396-397. This method combines the practices of worship and recitation; the latter includes reciting Bodhisattvas’ names. See Appendix Seven for its English translation.

491 *Yiren* 逸人, ed., *Chongding Xifang gongju* 重訂西方公據 (Re-edition of Mutual Warrant of the West; 1930) in *Xifang gongju* (Taipei: Huazang jingzong xuehui, 1996) 16-19. This text represents one kind of liturgical formula on how to elaborate or ritualize the practice of recitation by adding more related elements such as
of recitation reveals one important characteristic — flexibility, which enables the practice of reciting Amitābha’s name to spread quickly among people of different needs and abilities. To give an idea of this characteristic, two passages are quoted here:

(1) 念佛，有默持，有高聲持，有金剛持。然高聲覺太費力，默念又易昏沉，只是綿綿密密，聲在脣齒之間，乃謂金剛持。又不可執定，或覺費力，則不妨默持，或覺昏沉，則不妨高聲。如今念佛者，只是手打魚子，隨口叫喊，所以不得利益。必須句句出口入耳，聲聲喚醒自心。譬如一人濃睡，一人喚云，某人，則彼即醒矣。所以念佛最能攝心。

For the recitation of Buddha’s [name], there are the silent recitation, loud recitation, and diamond recitation. However, it is felt that reciting loudly takes too much energy, and reciting silently easily causes drowsiness; [when] the sound [of reciting] is unbroken and heard only amid the lips and teeth, it is called the diamond recitation. Also, [one] should not be inflexible, if [one] feels it too difficult, then [one] might as well recite silently; if [one] feels drowsy, [one] might as well recite loudly. Nowadays, those who recite Buddha’s name simply shout absent-mindedly as their hands strike wooden fishes and thus do not gain benefit. [To recite properly,] each name must be recited from the mouth and heard by the ears and each call must awake the Self-Mind. For example, [it is like] a person in deep sleep, [when] another person calls, “So and so,” then that

as the poetry and gāthā seen in this example. See Appendix Eight for its English translation and Appendix Nine for another typical formula suggested by Master Yinguang.
person awakes immediately. Therefore, reciting Buddha’s [name] is the best [method] to concentrate the mind. 492

(2) 舉目動口。無不是佛。一串數珠不離手。一句彌陀不離口。高聲念。低聲念。六字念。四字念。緊念。緩念。朗念。默念。合手念。低聲跪膝念。面佛念。朝西念。打板念。敲魚念。掐珠念。行道念。禮拜念。獨自念。同眾念。在家念。在外也念。閒也念。忙也念。行也念。住也念。坐也念。臥也念。連夢中也念。纔是真念。

[Whenever] the eyes are raised [to see] and the mouth is opened [to speak], none are not the Buddha. A string of rosary beads is not far from the hands and the name of Amitābha is not far from the mouth. [One can] recite aloud, recite in a low voice, recite the six characters, recite the four characters, recite quickly, recite slowly, recite sonorously, recite in silence, recite with the palms put together, kneel and recite in a low voice, recite while facing the [image of a] Buddha, recite while facing west, recite while striking the [incense] board, recite while striking the wooden fish, recite while counting with the rosary, recite while circumambulating, recite while worshipping, recite alone, or recite with the crowd. Only [when one] not only recites at home but also recites while being outside, during the spare time and busy hours, when walking, standing, sitting, lying, and even dreaming, can this be called genuine recitation. 493

492 Guo Hanzhai 郭涵齋, ed., Shiman fajie lu 聘門法戒録 (Record on the Dharma and Precepts of the School of Śākyamuni; 1937) in Xifang gongju 西方公據 (Mutual Warrant of the West) (Taipei: Huazang jingzong xuehui, 1996) 81.


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The first passage is the sixth entry of the “Jingzhong batiao 警眾 八條 (Eight Entries for Alerting the crowd)” by Zhuhong 袁宏 (1535-1615) of the Yunqi Monastery 靈棲 寺, Hangzhou 杭州, in the Yunqi biechao 靈棲 別 鈔 (New Collected Writings of Yunqi) and the second passage is an excerpt of an entry titled “Xifang gongju nianfo shuo 西方公 據 聲 佛 說 (Discussion on Nianfo in the Mutual Warrant of the West) in a 1825 publication edited by Zhang Shicheng 張師誠, a high government official of the Qing dynasty. The common characteristic found in these two short passages is the authors’ emphasis on the flexible choice of reciting speed and intonation, physical gesture and motion, time and space, and assisting tools in recitation. In addition, to avoid the content being misunderstood or practitioners being too loose in daily practices, the authors also give brief accounts on the standard of correct and wrong ways of recitation and the reason why the recitation “is the best [method] to concentrate the mind.” Apparently, the central message here is that it is the internal mental state, not the external physical style, of recitation that determines the success or failure of the practice. This explains why different generations of Pure Land advocates have continuously created and modified methods of recitation yet simultaneously they have retained and passed on the fundamentals on which those created and modified methods are based. In other words, owing to the recitation method’s high adaptability to change and compatibility with other practices and activities, it was purposely chosen out of the four kinds of nianfo by these advocates to provide needed styles and conveniences for their own contemporaries.

These essentials without doubt have contributed to make this method become the mainstream of the Pure Land School and its most recent successor, the Pure Land Learning Center, is no exception. In order to focus on the subject, this chapter discusses solely those recitation methods that has been adopted or modified and recommended by the Learning Center. Based on the purpose, pattern, and scale of the practices, the discussion is divided into
three main sections, which are the daily or regular recitation, the collective recitation of the
Seven-day Dharma Gathering, and the practice in the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation.

The Daily or Regular Recitation: the Ten Recitation Method

1. Jingkong’s Essential Ten Recitation Method

As the name of this section indicates, the daily practice to be discussed here refers to
the recitation methods that are supposed to be practiced by individuals at their homes every day,
so it is also known as the zixin 自修 (self-practice) and dingke 定課 (fixed assignment). A
typical tradition can be seen in Appendix Nine, in which practitioners are recommended to
practice twice a day, which are called the zaoke 早 課 (the morning assignment) and wanke 晚
課 (the evening assignment) and are commonly referred together as the zaowangke 早 晚 課
(the morning and evening assignments). In the case of the Learning Center, Jingkong has
never attempted to set up any fixed rite or rule for the morning and evening assignments but
has managed to provide some suggestions on how to prepare for a successful recitation by
reciting the Infinite Life Sūtra as a preliminary mental training. He suggests that one can recite
aloud or silently the whole text three thousand times (thrice a day for three years, twice a day
for six years, or once a day for nine years) to train and cultivate one’s mind as well as to be
familiar with the content; if one’s time is not enough to finish the whole text a day, one can
either replace it by the alternative shorter Amitābha Sūtra or recite the sixth chapter of the
Infinite Life Sūtra as the morning assignment and another six chapters (from the thirty-second
to the thirty-seventh chapters) as the evening one.494

494 Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji (Lecture Notes on the
Infinite Life Sūtra), vol. 1: 286-287.
Nevertheless, it is known that Jingkong had once promoted one particular recitation method that was modified by him. The promotion of this method was primarily meant to answer the request of his followers who could not carry out other practices due to busyness. In 1994, for the first time and the only time so far, this modified method was written down, edited, issued, and circulated by the members of the Amitabha Buddhist Society of USA (Meiguo jingzong xuehui 美國淨宗學會), Sunnyvale, California, USA. The title for this practice is called the Jingyao shinian fa 精要十念法 (the Essential Ten Recitation Method):

精要十念法

谨提議以 淨空法師宣說之簡要必生十念法，為淨宗學人今後之一般自修與共修之常規。茲說明於後：

自修者，即是日中九次之念十聲佛號法，是晨起與睡前各一次，日中三餐各一次，午前開工及收工各一次，午後開工及收工各一次，共計九次。每次念念十聲四字或六字彌陀名號，原有日常定課可照常行之。

共修者，凡講經、開會、聚餐等無特定儀軌之集會，在共同行事之始，而行此十念法，亦即是約同大眾合掌同聲稱念十聲「南無阿彌陀佛」，而後始進行講經、開會、用餐等活動事宜。按此自修與共修之十念法，有其特殊之法益，試舉如下：

一、此法簡單易行，用時少而收效宏，確實切要，可久可廣。
二、為「佛化家庭」之具體有效方法。例如：於家庭中三餐時行之，

495 Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji (Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra), vol. 1: 317.
則舉家之成員或信或不信皆蒙攝持不遺。且有佛化親朋鄰里，
普及社會之大利益。

三、以簡單易行，一日九次，從早到晚，佛氣不斷。一日生活之中，
佛念相繼，日復一日。久能如斯，則行人之氣質心性將呈逐漸清
淨，信心與法樂生焉，福大莫能窮。

四、如能隨順親和，稱念十聲佛號，便有祛除雜染，澄淨心念，凝聚
心神，專心務道，以及所辦易成，所遇吉祥，蒙佛加佑，不可思
議等等之功德。

五、自修與共修，相資相融，資糧集聚，個人之往生在握，而共同之
菩提大業，亦共成焉。

六、此法可以二法名之。試姑名之。

一為「淨業加行十念法」，是對已有行修定課者言，因此法是在
原有之課業上加行之故。

一為「簡要必生十念法」，是指適於目前以及今後淨業學人中
大部分無定課者言。因現今社會遞變，匆忙無暇，局礙多難
故。而此法易集資糧，信願行之，平易圓具。而「都攝六根，淨
念相繼」之標準，亦甚符合無缺。

因每次念佛時間短，易攝心及不懶怠故。又以及九次念佛之功
行，均衡分布貫穿於全日，全日之身心，不得不佛。亦即全日生活念
佛化，念佛生活化。

總而言之，此法簡要而輕鬆，毫無滯難之苦，如此法大行，則淨
業學人幸甚！未來眾生幸甚！諸佛歡喜。

南無阿彌陀佛

一九九四年諸佛歡喜日美國淨宗學會四眾同倫敬勸
The Essential Ten Recitation Method

[We] sincerely propose to take the Concise Sure Rebirth Ten Recitation Method explained and publicized by Dharma Master Jingkong as the common practice for the learners of the Pure Land School in general self-practice and collective practice henceforth. Following is the explanation:

For those who [observe] self-practice, it is the method of reciting ten times the Buddha’s name for nine rounds in a day, which means to [recite] once upon waking up in the morning and at bedtime, once at each of the three daily meals, once before work and at lunch break before noon, and once after lunch break and after work in the afternoon that add up to nine rounds. For each round recite ten times the four-character or six-character name of Amitābha, and the original daily fixed assignment can be practiced as usual.

For those who [observe] collective practice, this Ten Recitation Method is practiced before acting collectively at all assemblies with no fixed ritual [such as] sutra lecturing, meetings, and meals. It is also means agreeing with the crowd to recite ten times “namo Amituofo [turn to and rely on Amitābha]” collectively with palms put together; only then can activities about sutra lecturing, meetings, and meals proceed.

The Ten Recitation Method that is observed according to this [description] of self-practice and collective practice has its special Dharma benefits. [We] attempt to give examples as follows:

1. This method is simple and easily carried out, spends little time yet produces huge effects, is reliable, and to the point, [for which it is able to] last for a long time and be popularized extensively.

2. It is a concrete and effective method for “converting a family to Buddhism.”
instance, practice this with one’s family at home during the three meals, then all members of the whole family, believers or disbelievers, are able to be guided and protected with no one left behind. Moreover, it has the great benefit of converting relatives, friends, and neighbors to Buddhism and publicizing Buddhism in society.

3. Since [this method is] simple and easily carried out nine rounds a day from morning to night, Buddhist influence do not cease. Thoughts on Buddha continue during the whole day of life, [and then] day after day. [If one can practice] like this for a long time, then the practitioner’s temperament and the nature of the mind will gradually be purified so that his/her faith and Dharma joy will be generated; the [resulting] felicity is great and inexhaustible.

4. If [one] can become docile, kind, and amiable, reciting ten times the name of Buddha [Amitābha one] can have inconceivable meritorious virtues of having impurities and pollutions cleansed, thoughts of the mind purified, and the spirit of the mind gathered so that [one is able to] concentrate on devoting efforts to the Way [of Buddhism], whatever one does is easily completed, and whatever one encounters is auspicious with bliss from the Buddha.

5. Self-practice and collective practice mutually support and contain each other to assemble and accumulate the provisions [for attaining rebirth] so that individual rebirth [can] be within grasp and the collective great work of Bodhi or enlightenment [can] also be accomplished.

6. This method can be seen as two methods, which [we] attempt to do.

One is called the “Ten Recitation Method as an Additional Pure Karmic Practice” for those who have practiced fixed assignments, since this method is added on to the practice of the original assignment.
Another one is called the “Concise Sure Rebirth Ten Recitation Method,” which is appropriately for the majority of Pure Karma learners, at present and in the future; those who have no fixed assignment since contemporary society is changing continually, [making people] hasty and busy, which limits, obstructs, and frequently troubles [Buddhist practices]. Besides, this method can easily assemble and perfectly complete the provisions of faith, vows, and practice and flawlessly accord with the standard of “assimilating all the six sense-organs so that pure thought persists.”

Since the time for each round of [this] Buddha’s name recitation is short, it is easy to concentrate one’s mind and avoid being lazy [in continuing the practice]. Moreover, since the practice of nine rounds of Buddha’s name recitation [can] be evenly distributed and run through a day, one’s mind and body cannot but be influenced by Buddhism for a whole day, which means that the whole day is assimilated with Buddha’s name recitation and Buddha’s name recitation is incorporated into a daily life.

In sum, this method is concise and easy with no hardship of stagnancy and difficulty; if this method is greatly popular, then Pure Karma learners are very fortunate indeed! Future sentient beings will be very fortunate indeed! All Buddhas are delighted.

Turn to and rely on Amitābha Buddha.

[This method is] respectfully recommended by the four types of Buddhist followers of the Amitabha Buddhist Society of USA on the Delightful Day of All Buddhas in 1994.498

496 The four groups are referred to the groups of Buddhist monks, Buddhist nuns, male lay Buddhists, and female lay Buddhists.
Aside from introducing how to practice this Ten Recitation Method by reciting the name of Amitābha Buddha ninety times a day upon waking up, at breakfast, before work, at lunch break, at lunch, after lunch, after work, at dinner, and at bedtime, this announcement also provides some background information about the promotion of this method, throwing light on why the Learning Center recommends this method to its followers as an effective way to put theory into practice for the final goal of attaining rebirth:

1. The simplicity and convenience of this method are certainly credited for allowing those busy contemporaries to maintain a practice that is consistent with the School’s comparative recondite theoretical criterion of “assimilating all the six sense-organs so that pure thought persists.” Persistent practice seems to be the key to quick success.

2. Two goals are mentioned in the passage regarding to the successful promotion of the method, which are the ideas of fohua 佛化 (converting to Buddhism) and shenghuohua 生活化 (incorporating into daily life). These are virtually two different ways of saying the same ideal about integrating modern lifestyle with ancient ways of religious practice. Thus, to practitioners, practicing this method not only means self-salvation but also fulfillment of

497 It is an alternative name of the fifteenth day of July in lunar calendar, which is the last day of the summer retreat for Buddhist monks. The successful completion of the retreat is said to delight all Buddhas. See Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian (Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching), p. 1180.

498 “Jingyao shinian fa (The Essential Ten Recitation Method),” 25 Sept. 2002 <http://www.amtb.org.tw/jkfs/fg.htm>. This declaration can also be found at the last page of many books published by the Learning Center; examples can be seen in Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji (Lecture Notes on the Infinite Life Sūtra), vol. 1: 711-712; and Jingkong, Lengyanjing qingjinghuizhang qinwenlu/ xingcedashi jingtujinghua jiangji (Record of What I Heard about the Chapter of the Pure and Bright Teaching of the Śūrāngama-sūtra/ Lecture Notes on the Essence of the Pure Land by Master Xingce), ed. and transcript Liu Chengfu (Taipei: fotuo jiaoyu jijinhui, 1995) 150-151.
the mission to publicize Buddhism.

3. "Inconceivable meritorious virtues" are promised only to those who observe the method under the condition that these practitioners are “docile, kind, and amiable.” It is clear that although the description of ethical qualities is minimized, they still play important roles here to characterize and standardize those whose practices are considered successful.

In fact, according to the history of Pure Land Buddhism, Jingkong’s method can be deemed as a result of the long term modification of the original Ten Recitation Method created by Zunshi (964-1032). Zunshi’s suggestion, the Shinian men 念門 (Ten Recitation Method) or Chenzhao shinian fa 晨朝十念法 (Morning Ten Recitation Method),\(^{499}\) has inspired Pure Land advocates of later generations to offer various methods of ten recitation as an adjustment to the needs of their contemporaries. Thus, an examination on this origin and its variations helps deepen and broaden our knowledge of the nature and significance of Jingkong’s version by recognizing the extent of changes he made.

2. Zunshi’s Ten Recitation Method

Zunshi, a noted Tiantai monk also known as Ciyunchanzhu 慈雲懺主 (literally Repentance Master Compassionate Cloud), was among one of many advocates of Pure Land Buddhism in the Song dynasty. He was particularly celebrated for his diligent personal practice of nianfo samādhi, and efforts in publicizing practices of repentance\(^{500}\) and nianfo and

\(^{499}\) As it is seen in Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214). Lebang wenlei 樂邦文類 (Various Writings on the Land of Bliss), TT 47, no. 1969A: 210b.

\(^{500}\) His efforts in building the Golden Brightness Repentance Hall (Jinguangming chantang 金光明懺堂) in the Lingshan Monastery 靈山寺, Hangzhou 杭州, composing, and carrying out the Jinguangming chanyi 金光明懺儀 (Golden Brightness Ceremonial Ritual of Repentance) earned him the title chanzhu 懺主 (the Repentance Master). Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian (Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching), p. 2904.
in organizing a society for collective *nianfo* practice.\(^{501}\) The *Shinian men* can be seen in his 1017 article, the *Wangsheng jingtu jueyi xingyuan ermen* 往生淨土決疑行願二門 (*Two Ways for Doubt Elimination of and Practice-Vows [Making] for the Rebirth into the Pure Land*), in which this method is found as the second of the four kinds of practices suggested in the section of *Xingyuan men* 行願門 (*the Way of Practice and Vows [Making]*).\(^{502}\) The translation of the passage is as follows:

第二十念門者。每日清晨服飾已後。面西正立合掌。連聲稱阿彌陀佛盡一氣為一念。如是十氣名為十念。但隨氣長短不限佛數。惟長惟久氣極為度。其佛聲不高不低。不緩不急調停得中。如此十氣連屬不盡。意在令心不散專精為功故。名此為十念者。顯是藉氣束心也。作此念已。發願迴向云

我弟子(某甲)一心歸命極樂世界阿彌陀佛。願以浄光照我慈誓攝我。我今正念稱如來名經十念頃。為菩提道求生浄土。佛昔本誓若有眾生欲生我國。至心信樂乃至十念。若不生者不取正覺。唯除五逆諂詖正法。我今自憶此生已來。不造逆罪不諂大乘。願此十念得入如來大誓海中。承佛慈力眾罪消滅無因增長。若臨欲命終自知時至。身不病苦心無貪戀。心不倒散如入禪定。佛及聖眾手持金臺來

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The second one is the Ten Recitation Method: each day in the morning, after dressing, stand properly, facing to the West, with palms put together, and recite [the name of] Amitābha repetitively and continuously in one breath, [which counts] as one time [of recitation]; ten breaths like this are called ten recitations. [Recite] only in pace with the length of the breath; there is no restriction on the number of times [reciting] the Buddha’s [name]. The length of time is measured by the limit of one breath. One’s voice for Buddha [recitation should] be adjusted so that it is neither too loud nor low and neither slow nor fast. The reason why [to recite] ceaselessly in ten breaths like this is to not distract attention so as to concentrate on the practice. Calling it the Ten Recitations is to demonstrate [its significance] of binding the mind by way of breathing. After finishing this recitation, make vows to dedicate merits [as follows]:

I, disciple (So-and-so), wholeheartedly devote [my] life to Amitābha of the World of Utmost Joy, wishing that [you] shine on me with your pure light and guide me with your compassionate vows. Now I rectify my thought to recite the Tathāgata’s name, in ten recitations, to seek to be reborn in the Pure Land for the Bodhi Way. [You Amitābha] Buddha’s original vows in the past [declared that] “if there are sentient beings who wholeheartedly believe in and adoringly desire to be reborn in my country, and [recite my name] up to ten recitations yet do not attain rebirth, I will not attain the
Buddhahood, except for [those who commit] the five rebellious acts\(^{503}\) and slander the truth or Buddhism.” Now I recall my life so far that I have not committed rebellious sins nor slandered Mahāyāna [Buddhism]. [Thus,] I wish these ten recitations enter into Tathāgata’s great ocean of vows, [by which] all sins can be eliminated by Buddha’s compassionate power and pure causation be increased. [Moreover,] if I am on my deathbed, I [wish that I will] know the coming of [my last] moment, that my body does not suffer from sickness, and that my mind does not cling to [anything]. [At this moment,] my mind will not be confused as if [I] enter samādhi; the Buddha and all saints come holding a golden platform to welcome me. In a moment as [short as] one recitation, I will be reborn in the Country of Utmost Joy. When the [lotus] flower opens [I] see the Buddha [so that I] immediately learn about the Vehicle of Buddha and instantly acquire the wisdom of Buddha to extensively save sentient beings and fulfill the Bodhi Vows (End after making this vow; there is no need to prostrate oneself. [This] must be [practiced] for the whole life and should not be given up [even] for one day. If one does not give [it] up, one can bind the mind and attain rebirth in that country).

Apparently, by reciting the above short essay, this original version was intended to combine with the rite of vowing to be reborn in the Pure Land, for which this essay alone has been excerpted to combine with other rituals regarding nianfo practices.\(^{504}\) Hence, according to its subject matter and position in a ritual, this essay can also be called by various titles such as the

\(^{503}\) Wùnǐ 五逆 (the five rebellious acts or deadly sins) is referred to “parricide, matricide, killing an arhat, shedding the blood of a Buddha, destroying the harmony of the sangha, or fraternity.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 128.

\(^{504}\) For examples, see Appendix Nine and Nianfo yigui 念佛儀規 (Ceremonial Ritual of the Recitation of Buddha’s Name) (Singapore: Amitabha Buddhist Society (Singapore), 1997) 19-20.
As for why the Shinian men was proposed in this way, Zunshi explained that it was used to dingxin chengxing (compose the mind and accomplish the practice) and, similar to seed sowing, the vow making was expected to cultivate the proper cause for rebirth. He added that this method must be practiced every day and should not be abolished because the ten recitations were the pure cause. Although Zunshi’s explanation is simple, is clear enough to be accepted and adopted by advocates of later generations. The following discussion on Zunshi’s method made by Yinguang is an example of this trend:

此名十念法門，乃宋慈雲懺主，為王臣政務繁劇，無暇修持者所立也。何以令僧一念心，以報生心散，又無暇專念。如此念時，借氣攝心，心自不散。然須隨氣長短，不可強使多念，強則傷氣。又止可十念，不可二十三十，多亦傷氣。以散心念佛，難得往生。此法能令心歸一處，一心念佛，決定往生。

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505 See Zongxiao, Lebang wenlei (Various Writings on the Land of Bliss), TT47, no. 1969A: 178b.
506 See Nianfo vigui (Ceremonial Ritual of the Recitation of Buddha’s [Name]), p. 19.
This is called the Ten Recitation Method, which was established by Repentance Master Compassionate Cloud of the Song dynasty for the nobles and government officials who have no time to maintain practices [because of] busy political affairs. Why asking [them] to recite within the limits of one breath? [The reasons are] that [generally] the minds of sentient beings are distracted and that [specifically these people] have no time to recite attentively. When [one] recites like this, [one] makes use of breathing to bind the mind so that the mind is not distracted. However, [one] must keep pace with the length of the breath and should not force [oneself] to recite more [since reciting by] force harms [one’s] breathing and vital energy. Moreover, [one] should [recite] no more than ten times: should not [recite as many as] twenty or thirty [times because too] many [reciting times] also harms [one’s] breathing and vital energy. [Given that] reciting Buddha’s [name] with a distracted mind makes it difficult to attain rebirth [in the Pure Land], this method can focus the mind at one area so that [one can] wholeheartedly recite Buddha’s [name] to ensure rebirth. 509

By and large, Yinguang’s impression of this method is positive. Aside from warning Pure Land practitioners to strictly follow Zunshi’s instruction on the length and times of the practice, Yinguang confirmed the value of this method for those who “have no time to maintain practices” as the one that “can focus the mind at one area” so that people of this kind can “wholeheartedly recite Buddha’s [name] to ensure rebirth” in the pure Land. This is probably the reason why Yinguang, like some of his predecessors, was also inspired to suggest a new recitation method to his followers.

509 Yinguang, Yinguangfashi jiayan lu 印光法師嘉言錄 (Record of Dharma Master Yinguang’s Praiseworthy Talks) (Taipei: Sanbao dizi, 1993) 68.
3. Yinguang’s Ten Recitation Method

Yinguang’s method is called *Shinian jishu fa* 十念記數法 (Ten Recitation Method Counting the Number). The key of this method is to concentrate the attention by memorizing and counting the number of the recitation ten at a time:

所謂十念記數者，當念佛時，從一句至十句，須念得分明，仍須記得分明。至十句已，又須從一句至十句念，不可二十三十。隨念隨記，不可掐珠，唯憑心記。若十句直記為難，或分為兩氣，則從一至五，從六至十。若又費力，當從一至三，從四至六，從七至十，作三氣念。念得清楚，記得清楚，聽得清楚，妄念無處著腳，一心不亂，久當自得耳。...但作事時，或難記數，則懇切直念。作事既了，仍復攬心記數。...此十念記數，行住坐臥，皆無不宜。臥時，只宜默念，不可出聲。若出聲，一則不恭，二則傷氣，切記切記。

The so-called Ten Recitation of Counting Number is that at the time when reciting Buddha’s [name], [one] should clearly recite and also clearly memorize it from the first time to the tenth. When up to the tenth, [one] has to [memorize] the recitation from the first time to the tenth again and should not count up to the twentieth or thirtieth. Memorize while reciting; should not [count by pinching] rosary beads but only memorize by heart. If it is difficult to memorize ten recitations continuously at a time, [one] can divide the memorization into two stretches, which are from the first [recitation] to the fifth and from the sixth to the tenth. If it is [still] arduous, it [can] be [divided] into three stretches, from the first to the third, from the fourth to the sixth, and from the seventh to the tenth. Recite clearly, memorize clearly, and listen clearly so that delusive thoughts have no place to stay and the one mind undisturbed will be
spontaneously attained after a long time [of practice]. ... If it is difficult to memorize the number at work, just earnestly keep on reciting. After finishing working, continue concentrating the mind to memorize the number again. ... [Practice] this Ten Recitation of Counting Number [during] walking, standing, sitting, and lying down are all not inappropriate. While lying down, only silent recitation is appropriate; should not voice it out loud. Voicing, first, it is not respectful and, second, it harms the breathing and vital energy. Be sure to keep this in mind; be sure to keep this in mind. 510

According to this passage, Yinguang’s method and its variations are actually quite different from Zunshi’s combination. Aside from the exclusion of the vow making rite, this method focuses solely on how to attentively recite ten times the name of Amitābha as a daily training for concentration, which can be practiced (1) at one stretch: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10; (2) at two stretches: 1-2-3-4-5 and 6-7-8-9-10; or (3) at three stretches: 1-2-3, 4-5-6, and 7-8-9-10. Besides, from the choice of terms, fenming 分明 (clearly) and qingchu 清楚 (clear) are frequently used to describe the process of reciting, counting, and listening to one’s reciting; these criteria seem to be the keys of the practice. Nevertheless, despite such differences, it is without question that Yinguang was aware of the influence and importance of Zunshi’s method at the time when he suggested his. Such an attitude is plainly reflected in Yinguang’s own comparison between these two methods:

須知此之十念，與晨朝十念，攝妄則同，用功大異。晨朝十念，儘一口氣為一念，不論佛數多少。此以一句佛為一念。彼唯晨朝十念則

510 Yinguang, Yinguangfashi jiayan lu (Record of Dharma Master Yinguang’s Praiseworthy Talks), p. 71-73.
One must know that [the function of] guiding away from delusive thoughts of this Ten Recitation, and the Morning Ten Recitation is the same but [the key area] for diligent practice is different. The Morning Ten Recitation regards the exhalation of one breath as one recitation, regardless of how many the number of the Buddha’s name, [while] this [method] takes one call of the Buddha’s [name] as one recitation. That [method] has to limit the recitation to ten times in the morning, if [up to] twenty or thirty [times], it will harm the breathing and vital energy and so result in illness. Whereas this [method requires that when one] recites one call the Buddha’s [name], [one’s] mind is aware of this; [so, when one] recites ten calls of the Buddha’s [name], [one’s] mind is aware of [these] ten calls. [That is,] from the first one to the tenth, from the first to the tenth... even if [one] recites several tens of thousand [times] a day, all should be memorized like this. [By so doing.] not only [can one] diminish delusive thoughts [but also] can particularly cultivate [one’s] spirit. [Besides, it can be recited] quickly or slowly as one pleases without any obstruction and is never inappropriate [for practice] from the morning to night.511

Yinguang’s discussion focuses on revealing the similarity and dissimilarities as well as the merits and demerits between “the reciting processes” of the two methods. Such emphasis apparently shows that Yinguang considered recitation as the soul of Zunshi’s method and, perhaps, it is the reason why he paid no attention to the ritual. Similarly, in this regard,

511 Yinguang, Yinguangfashi jiayan lu (Record of Dharma Master Yinguang’s Praiseworthy Talks), p. 72.
Jingkong also emphasizes on the ten calls of the Buddha’s name instead of the recitation in ten breaths. Such a tendency, however, was not initiated by Yinguang. Although it is not the intention here to chronically trace such change and its development, the investigation of the missing link is helpful to illuminate the background that is relevant to both Yinguang’s and Jingkong’s choices. In this case, the most possible and traceable pioneer who promoted the ten calls of recitation is Wang Rixiu 王日休 (d. 1173; zi Xuzhong 虚中, hao Longshujushiti 龍舒居士), a Song lay Buddhist who was born approximately one hundred and forty years after Zunshi.

4. Wang Rixiu’s Ten Recitation Methods

To say more accurately, the reason why Wang’s methods could be the missing link is because he actually combined the ten calls with the rite of vow making, a continuation of Zunshi’s combination of recitation and vow making. Two of Wang’s suggested methods are discussed in this section; they are quoted from his Longshu jingtu wen 龍舒淨土文 (Longshu’s Pure Land Essay), published in 1161, in which the two are the first two simplest forms among a number of Pure Land practices suggested for practitioners of different levels of capability and mentality. In fact, these two methods are very much the same in form and combination but are different in the degree of complexity. The first simplest one is a very short ritual intended partly for those who are illiterate.

512 Wang Rixiu 王日休 (d. 1173), Longshu zengguang jingtu wen 龍舒增廣淨土文 (Enlarged Edition of Longshu’s Pure Land Essay), TT 47, no. 1970: 251a-289c. According to its prefaces and postscript, before being included in the Buddhist Canon, this enlarged edition had been reprinted thrice in 1316, 1481, and 1594.

513 The essay mentions that “if the illiterate are taught with this gāthā, [they will] acquire great felicitous retribution (如不識字人教念此偈。得大福報).” Wang Rixiu, Longshu zengguang jingtu wen (Enlarged Edition of Longshu’s Pure Land Essay), TT 47, no. 1970: 261c.
Every morning, face to the West with palms put together, prostrate with the head at the floor and recite “namo Amituofo” ten times, and then prostrate with the head at the floor again and recite Great Compassionate Bodhisattva’s Vow Making Gāthā once, which says:

I Vow to be reborn in the Country of Utmost Joy together with people who recite Buddha’s [name]; after seeing the Buddha, [I] thoroughly know the phenomenon of life and death, [by which I can] save all as the Buddha does.

Prostrate with the head at the floor again and retire. As for [those who can be] completely sincere like this [vow], will all be reborn.

On the one hand, the parts of recitation and vow making are undoubtedly the same as those of Zunshi and, on the other hand, the suggestion of ten calls is the same as those of Yinguang and Jingkong. According to Wang’s own account, the simplicity of this method was designed for

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514 The term dingli is originally referred to the kind of prostration required “to prostrate oneself with the head at the feet of the one reverenced.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 366. However, since the passage does not mention about the usage of an image, this term is translated here as one “prostrates with the head at the floor” instead of “at the feet of the reverenced image.”

515 Dacipusa is one of Maitreya’s titles and his Vow Making Gāthā can be found in Wang’s edition of the Foshuo da amituo jing (The Buddha Speaks of the Larger Infinite Life Sutra; 1160), TT 12, no. 364: 327b. These four verses are just the last part of the Gāthā.

the illiterate who were supposed to be incapable of memorizing and understanding long
liturgical writings like the one composed by Zunshi. The following is Wang’s second simplest
form of nianfo practices; its combination of ten calls and vow making rite remains the same yet
the degree of complexity increases:

毎日早晨合掌向西頂禮念南無阿彌陀佛、南無觀世音菩薩、南無大
勢至菩薩、南無一切菩薩聲聞諸上善人各十聲。
復頂禮念大慈菩薩讚佛懺罪迴向發願全偈一遍云

十方三世佛 阿彌陀第一 九品度眾生 威德無窮極
我今大歸依 懺悔三業罪 凡有諸福善 至心用迴向
願同念佛人 感應隨時現 臨終西方境 分明在目前
見聞皆精進 共生極樂國 見佛了生死 如佛度一切
復頂禮而退。...頂禮時燒香作拜尤善。每日誠心如是，必中品生。

Every morning, face to the West with palms put together, prostrate with the head at the
floor and recite “namo Amitufo,” “namo Guanshiyinpusa [turn to and rely on
Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva],” “namo Dashizhipusa [turn to and rely on
Mahāsthamaprapta Bodhisattva],” and “namo yiqie Pusa Shengwen zhushangshanren
[turn to and rely on all Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas, and superior good people]” ten times
respectively.

517 The term shengwen 聲聞 (Śrāvakas), a hearer, is referred to “the personal disciples of the Buddha,
distinguished as mahā-śrāvakas; it is also applied to hearers, or disciples in general; but its general connotation
relates it to Hinayāna disciples who understand the four dogmas, rid themselves of the unreality of the phenomenal,
Prostrate with the head at the floor again and recite once the Great Compassionate Bodhisattva's whole Gāthā of Repenting Sins by Praising the Buddha, Dedicating Merits, and Making Vows, which says:

[Among] past, present, and future Buddhas of the ten directions, Amitābha is number one, [whose vows of] nine grades salvage sentient beings that [his] majestic virtues are inexhaustible. Now I completely turn to and rely on [him], repent the three karmic sins [of deed, word, and thought], and sincerely dedicate merits of all kinds of felicity and good [deed]. May people who recite Buddha’s [name and I] together have the manifestation of Buddha’s responses to [our] appeals and needs at any time; when [we are] on our deathbeds, may the scene of the Western [Pure Land] clearly appear before our eyes; all [those who] see and hear about [this will have their practices] advance effectively and will all be reborn in the Land of Utmost Joy; after seeing the Buddha, [we] thoroughly know the phenomenon of life and death, [by which we can] save all as the Buddha does.

Prostrate with the head at the floor again and retire. ... When prostrate with the head at the floor, burn incense to worship is even better. [Those who can be] completely sincere like this everyday should be reborn at the [three] middle grades [of the nine grades of those who are reborn in the Pure Land].

This second method is undeniably an extended version of the first one. The ten calls are extended from the name of Amitābha to those of Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas, and superior good people of the Pure Land, and Maitreya’s gāthā is extended to include the whole verse.

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However, the basic structure is still there, which is the combination of ten calls and the rite of making vows. The continuation of Zunshi’s tradition seems to be unavoidable since Wang lived only hundred and forty years after Zunshi, whose influences on the development of the Pure Land theories and nianfo rituals remained strong. Nevertheless, Wang managed to modify Zunshi’s method to certain degrees in various versions. As Wang, like Zunshi, has been one of the important figures in the history of Pure Land Buddhism, his methods were also adopted by later generations. For example, five centuries later, in the early Qing dynasty, this second simplest method was included in Zhou Kefu’s 周克復 Jingtu chenzhong (Morning Bell of the Pure Land; 1659) and was entitled the Shisheng nianfo songji famen (Method on the Ten Calls of Buddha’s [Name] Recitation and the Vocal Gāthā Recitation). Hence, even though such inclusion cannot entirely prove that Wang Rixiu’s methods had direct impact on Yinguang’s advocacy of ten recitations, it can show that part of Wang’s methods was still accepted during the seventeenth century.

On the whole, according to this background information and comparisons between several related ten recitation methods, it is obvious that the Ten Recitation Method of Jingkong is more closely related to that of Yinguang rather than to that of Zunshi. Jingkong’s method emphasizes exclusively the constant daily practice of ten calls of Amitābha, which is very different from Zunshi’s original advocacy of integrating the practices of repentance, vow making, and recitation that was initiated in the eleventh century and continued its influence during the twelfth century in the Song dynasty. In other words, what Jingkong emphasizes are constancy, simplicity, and attentiveness.

The underlying reason for Jingkong’s choice can be explained by his view of Pure Land Buddhism. Generally, his method is entirely in accordance with the eighteenth vow of

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Amitābha about the assurance of rebirth by the ten calls (十念必生願). In terms of the Master’s own understanding of the teachings, the spirit of his method is without question consistent with his instruction of yixiang zhuannian — 向 專 念 (reciting devotionally and consistently), which, according to him, can be achieved by going deep into one single method (一 門 深 入) and by gradually practicing over a long period of time (長 時 薰 修); those who can practice as so are described as having “no doubts, no distractions, and no discontinuity (不 懷 疑。不 灣 雜。不 間 斷)". His decision of removing the rite of repentance and vow making, as well as calling for reciting nine rounds per day aptly meets these criteria.

The Collective Recitation: the Seven-day Recitation of Buddha’s Name

The collective recitation is a kind of gongxiu 共 修, or collective practice, that focuses on reciting Amitābha’s name. It is referred to the practice that is arranged particularly for a group of Pure Land practitioners to collectively perform the recitation and related rituals at a specific location within a certain period of time, usually ranging from one to seven days. The names of such practice correspond to the time limit; that is, the practice can be called the foyi 佛 一 (One-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]), foor 佛 二 (Two-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]), fosan 佛 三 (Three-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]), fosi 佛 四 (Four-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]), fown 佛 五 (Five-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]), foliu 佛 六 (Six-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]), or foqi 佛 七 (Seven-day [Recitation] of Buddha’s [Name]) according to the set time. Among them, the most popular ones performed by the Pure Land Learning Centers are the foyi and foqi. 521

520 For details, see the first section, “Some Basic Knowledge of the Pure Land Teachings,” and the section of “Practice” in Chapter Three.

521 Occasionally, some Learning Centers have held the fosan 作为 the holiday permitted. An example can be seen in the Amida Society in Los Angeles, California, USA <http://www.amtb-la.org/main.htm>.
The foyi and foqi are different in many aspects. The foyi is credited for its convenience in choosing appropriate time for most, if not all, participators because having a day off from regular routine is comparatively easy. Hence, the foyi can be seen held on weekends or one-day public holidays in some Pure Land Learning Centers as a kind of collective activity. In addition, since the foyi has no specific rite or rule to follow, it can be and has been occasionally performed at home as a self-practice by some individual Pure Land practitioners. Different from the foyi, the foqi needs considerable preparation and regulation to facilitate practitioners’ performance during the entire period of activity. The preparation includes application screening, board and transportation arrangements, hygienic management, and other miscellaneous concerns about various supplies, fittings for the recitation hall, and etc. Regulations are set up to maintain order in the boarding house and the Learning Center especially inside the recitation hall during the foqi ceremony. For these reasons, the foyi can be regarded as the twenty-four-hour extension of the general self-practice of recitation that usually lasts for a few minutes or several hours while the foqi is indeed a typical collective practice that is more ritualistic and involves more people. Accordingly, this section focuses mainly on the foqi as the representative of collective practices upheld by the Pure Land Learning Centers; again, in order to provide a clearer picture of this tradition. Textual studies on some primary sources are included.

1. The Seven-day Time Limit

The choice of seven days as the time limit, the qiqi 七期, for Buddhist practices is not uncommon. The above mentioned foqi is a fine example for the Pure Land School, of which

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the seven-day time limit is attributed to the content of the Amitābha Sūtra, in which the method of ceaseless recitation with a duration ranging from one to seven days is suggested. Another kind of Buddhist practice commonly carried out in seven days is the chanqi (the Seven-day Chan [Mediation]) of the Chan School. Historically, the trend of the qiqi seems to have been fairly popular during the Song dynasty and was more closely associated with repentance rituals. Take Zhili 知禮 (960-1028) as an example; he was an important Song period Tiantai monk, who was known for his reviving of the Tiantai School. Based on the record in Zhipan’s 志磐 (1220-1275) Fozu tongji 佛祖統紀 (Record of the Lineage of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, 1269), Zhili was diligent in promoting and participating in a variety of seven-day repentance practices developed mainly from the Lotus Sūtra, the Jinguangming jing 金光明經 (Suvarna-prabhāsa-uttamārāja-sūtra), and the Pure Land sūtras. His activities included “practicing three rounds of the Seven-day Lotus Repentance for five times, the Seven-day Repentance of Brightness for twenty times, the Seven-day Repentance to Amitābha for fifty times, seven rounds of the Seven-day Repentance by Inviting Avalokiteśvara for eight times, and three rounds of the Seven-day Great Pity [Repentance] for ten times as well as gathering ten monks to practice the long term Lotus [Repentance] for three years, and ten monks to practice the Great Pity Repentance for three years (修法華懺三七期五遍。光明懺七

523 Kumārajīva, trans., Foshuo amituo jing (The Buddha Speaks of the Amitābha Sūtra; 402) TT 12, no. 366: 347b.
525 It was first translated by Dhammakṣema 瞿曇善 of the Northern Liang dynasty (421-439) and is also called the Jinguangming zuishengwang jing 金光明最勝王經. Buddhists have believed that wherever this sūtra is worshipped, the four Guardian Heavenly Deities will protect that state and benefit its people. For details, see the text in TT 16, no. 663: 335a-359b.
526 Zhipan, Fozu tongji (Record of the Lineage of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, 1269), TT 49, no. 2035: 193c.
Nevertheless, the development of the foqi can be traced back to as early as the seventh century in the Tang dynasty when Jiacai 迦才 (c. 620-680) promoted the method of reciting Amitābha’s name for seven days in his Jingtu lun 淨土論 (On the Pure Land).  

2. Jiacai and the Seven-day Recitation of Amitābha’s Name

Very little is known about Jiacai except for the fact that he was the contemporary of Shandao and that when he wrote the Jingtu lun he was living in the Hongfa Monastery 弘法寺 in Changan 長安, the capital of the Tang dynasty. Nonetheless, his Jingtu lun has been regarded as one of those early prominent Pure Land works that contributed to expounding the threefold body of Amitābha and its corresponding Pure Lands as well as the causation of rebirth for practitioners of three categories of capacities. The passage translated in the following is the third of the five practices Jiacai suggested for people of middle and lower levels of capacity:

五念阿彌陀佛名號，須別莊嚴道場。燒香散花幡燈具足。請一阿彌陀佛。安道場內，像面向東。人面向西。或七日（小阿彌陀經中明七日）或十日（鼓音聲王經清淨平等覺經明十日）或省睡眠，除去散亂。唯

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527 Zhipan, Fozu tongji (Record of the Lineage of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, 1269), TT 49, no. 2035: 193c.
528 Jiacai, Jingtu lun (On the Pure Land), TT 47, no. 1963: 83b-104a.
529 Jiacai, Jingtu lun (On the Pure Land), TT 47, no. 1963: 83b.
To attentively recite Amitābha’s name: [one] must solemnify another Arena of the Way, setting it up fully with burning incense, scattered flowers, banners, and lamps; fetch [an image of] Amitābha, place [it] inside the Arena of the Way, and set it facing east while one faces west. For either seven days (the Amitābha Sūtra mentions about seven days [as the time limit of the recitation]) or ten days (the King of the Rolling of Drums Sūtra and the Infinite Life Sūtra mention about ten days [as the time limit of the recitation]), [one must] omit sleep, remove delusive and confused [thoughts], and recite attentively and single-mindedly all along except for the moments of excretion and urination, and eating. When feeling drowsy, stand up to recite, no need to prostrate and circumambulate. It is anticipate that when [one] leaves the Arena of the Way after completing seven days of the recitation of the Buddha’s [name], [one should] recite [whenever one] walks, stands, sits, lies down, and is at leisure. Constantly reciting the Buddha’s name has three kinds of benefits: the first is because of constant recitation all bad perceptions and visions will never arise, which can also eliminate karmic obstructions; the second is because of constant recitation the root of goodness grows, which can also plant the causation of seeing the Buddha; and the third is because of constant recitation [one] is greatly edified and familiarized with [the practice] that when
[one is] on [one’s] deathbed, proper thoughts [or the recitation of Amitābha’s name can] arise at that very moment.  

Aside from the time limit, this passage reveals some features of the practice that have been followed by the later generations. The first feature is that a particular place has to be specially prepared for the practice; the second one is that the described foqi is a typical jingjin foqi (Essential and Advanced Seven-day [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [name]), which is required to be carried out for seven whole days and nights (that is, a total of 168 hours); the third one is that the participant is not supposed to sleep and talk but to recite at all times during the practice; and the last one is that the main purpose for this practice is to train the participant so that he/she can keep the recitation in mind not only during daily activities but also at his/her dying moment. In the case of the second feature, the classification of the jingjin foqi is named as such to differentiate it from the now more common foqi fahui (Seven-day Dharma Gathering for the [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [name]), which is more ritualized and does not require participants to carry on recitation during nighttime within the set

531 Jiacai, Jingtu lun (On the Pure Land), TT 47, no. 1963: 90a.

532 The mentioned features can also be found in various liturgical texts of foqi by Pure Land advocates of later generations, particularly of the Qing dynasty. The followings are two examples seen in the Volume 109 of the Xuzangjing (Continuation of the Buddhist Canon): Xingce 行策 (1628-1682), Qi yixin jingjin nianfo qiqi guishi 起一心精進念佛七期規式 (Rules for Holding a Single-mindedly, Essential, and Advanced Recitation of the Buddha’s [name] in Seven-day Time Limit), Xuzangjing, 109: 202-206; and Jineng 淨能, ed, Jiaolujia 虎集 (Horned Tiger Collection; 1770), Xuzangjing, 109: 289.

533 Noted that the foqi fahui can be translated as the “Seven [Days] Nianfo Dharma Gathering” when the nature of and the method used in the Dharma Gathering are not known. In this case, it is because the method used in the foqi mentioned here is the recitation that the term foqi fahui is translated as the “Seven-day Dharma Gathering for the [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [name].”
time. Although the Pure Land Learning Centers have performed both fōqi, the following
discussion focuses mainly on the Dharma Gathering type for its revelation to the rich liturgical
tradition of the Pure Land School.

3. The Seven-day Dharma Gathering for the Recitation of the Buddha’s Name

The liturgical schedule of the fōqi fahui used by the Pure Land Learning Center is not
an invention by Jingkong or his students but a continuation of the tradition set up by his
predecessors. Based on the comparison between the Jingzong gongxiu keben (Pure Land Collective Practices Textbook) distributed by the Learning Center and the
Fomen bibeikesongben (the Buddhist Essential Recitation Manual) used
by the Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society, an association affiliated with Li Bingnan, Jingkong’s
teacher, the ritual for the fōqi fahui observed by the Learning Center is based on the one that
was advocated by Li and is still being observed by the Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society. As
mentioned in the section of “Mr. Li Bingnan and the Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society” in
Chapter Two above, Li established the Taizhong Buddhist Lotus Society to substantiate the
teachings he learned from Master Yinguang; aside from transmitting Pure Land Buddhism to
Taiwan from China, one of this Lotus Society’s introductions was the collective practice of
fōqi. According to a statement in the Buddhist Essential Recitation Manual, the rules and the
schedule of both types of fōqi are copied from the one used in the Lingyanshan Monastery

534 Jingzong gongxiu keben (Pure Land Collective Practices Textbook) (Taipei: Jingzong xuehui, 1996) 10-63; and
Fomen bibeikesongben (A Buddhist Essential Recitation Manual) (Tai-chung: Ruicheng shuju, reprint 1982) 104-
119.

535 Li Bingnan, Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji, ed. Xuelulaoren jingtu xuanji bianji weiyuanhui (Taizhong:
Taizhongshi fojiao lianshe, 1996) 418.
Fortunately, this liturgy survives and is titled as the Lingyanshansi zhuanxiu jingtudaochang niansongyigui (the Chanting and Reciting Liturgy of the Specialized Pure Land Arena of the Lingyanshan Monastery; see figure 20); its postscript reveals that it was established by Master Miaozhen 焕真 of the Lingyanshan Monastery in 1938 under the guidance of Yinguang, the teacher of Li Bingnan. Therefore, although it is not known whether this Lingyanshan liturgy is based on any earlier sources, it is certain that the liturgical schedule of the foqi fahui used by the Pure Land Learning Center has a lineage that goes back to the early twentieth century.

The following is the content of foqi fahui in the Pure Land Collective Practices Textbook, which consists of three main sections: (1) Foqi yigui 佛七儀規 (Liturgy of the Seven-day [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [Name]); (2) Shanggong yigui 上供儀規 (Liturgy of Offering [to Buddha]); and (3) Zaowan sangui 早晚三皈 (Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones] in the Morning and Evening). Except for some sutras and mantras, these sections are listed sequentially and translated accordingly; for convenience of reading, numbers are also added to make an outline format so that each part of each section can be clearly differentiated:

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536 Fomen bibei kesongben. (Taizhong: Ruicheng shuju, reprint 1982) 104. According to the date mentioned on the title page of this manual, it is edited according to a 1954 version.


538 Except that a small section of this liturgy which can be traced back to the repentance rite designed by Zunshi of the Song dynasty in his Two Ways for Doubt Elimination of and Practice-Vows [Making] for the Rebirth into the Pure Land.
The Liturgy of the Seven-day [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [Name]

1. 蓮池讚
蓮池海會 彌陀如來 觀音勢至坐蓮台 接引上金階
大誓弘開 普願離塵埃 南無蓮池海會菩薩摩訶薩
南無蓮池海會菩薩摩訶薩 南無蓮池海會菩薩摩訶薩
南無蓮池海會佛菩薩 三稱

Lotus Pond Stotra

[Praise] the Oceanic Assembly of the Lotus Pond, where Amitābha Tathāgata, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta sit on the lotus platforms, guiding [sentient beings] to ascend the golden stairs, and making great vows in the hope that every [sentient being can] leave the dusty [world]. Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattvas of the Oceanic Assembly of the Lotus Pond. Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattvas of the Oceanic Assembly of the Lotus Pond. Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattvas of the Oceanic Assembly of the Lotus Pond.

Turn to and rely on Bodhisattvas of the Oceanic Assembly of the Lotus Pond ([recite] thrice).

539 The genre zan 詩 (stotra) is referred to hymn or praise. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 490.

540 The term mohesa 摩訶薩 (mahāsattva) means “‘great being,’ one with great compassion and energy, who brings salvation to all living beings; a Bodhisattva.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 437.

The body of Amitābha is in gold color; his physical marks are pleasant and

Praise Buddha Gāthā

The Buddha Speaks of the Amitābha Sūtra

Dhārani or Mantra on Uprooting the Root of All Karmic Obstacles to Acquire Rebirth into the Pure Land ([recite] thrice).


The term xianghao 相好 can also be interpreted as laksana-vyāhjana, “the thirty-two 相 or marks and the eighty 好 or signs on the physical body of Buddha.” It is said that the “marks on a Buddha’s sambhogakāya number 84,000. 相 is intp. as larger signs, 好 as smaller.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 309-310.
shining beyond comparison.

The ārṇā or curl of white hairs\(^{545}\) is [as big as] five Mount Sumeru\(^{546}\) and the dark purple eyes are as clear as the four great oceans.

Amid the light [of the Buddha] there are innumerable hundred of millions of transformed Buddhas as well as infinite crowds of transformed Bodhisattvas.

The forty-eight vows can save sentient beings and the nine grades enable all to reach the other shore [nirvāṇa].

Turn to and rely on the Western World of Utmost Joy's great compassionate Amitābha.

Turn to and rely on Amitābha (recite while circumambulating three times; then, the people return to their seats, sit down, and change the recitation to the four-character name of the Buddha).

Amitābha.\(^{547}\)

5. 迴向偈

願生西方淨土中 九品蓮華為父母
花開見佛悟無生 不退菩薩為伴侶
願以此功德 莊嚴佛淨土 上報四重恩 下濟三塗苦
若有見聞者 悉發菩提心 盡此一報身 同生極樂國

Merit Dedication Gāthā

[I] vow to be reborn into the Western Pure Land, where the nine grades of lotus

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\(^{545}\) It is referred to the *meijian baihao xiang*眉間白毫相 (ārṇā or the curl of white hairs between the eyebrows of the Buddha), which is one of the thirty-two marks on the physical body of Buddha. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 198 and 309-310.

\(^{546}\) It is said to be the central mountain of every world, which is surrounded by the four great oceans.

flowers will be [my] father and mother,

[I will] see the Buddha and awaken to no rebirth\textsuperscript{548} when the flower opens, and the never-receding Bodhisattvas\textsuperscript{549} are [my] fellows.

May these meritorious virtues [accumulated from recitation] solemnify the Buddha's Pure Land, repaying the four kinds of benefaction on the one hand, and relieving the sufferings of [those in] the [lowest] three paths [of the cycle of reincarnation] on the other hand.

May those who see and hear [of this] give rise to the Bodhi-mind, live [the teachings] for the rest of this retributive life, and [then] be reborn together in the Land of Utmost Joy.\textsuperscript{550}

6. 普賢菩薩警眾偈

是日已過命亦隨滅 如少水魚 斯有何樂 (維那人唱) 大眾 當勤精進 如救頭燃 但念無常 慎勿放逸

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's Gāthā on Alerting Sentient Beings

As today has passed, [our] life-spans are also on the decrease like fishes [in a place] with not much water; thus, what joy do you have? (Only the karmadāna or precentor\textsuperscript{551}

\textsuperscript{548} The Buddhist term wusheng 無生, or no rebirth, is referred to "nirvāṇa as not subject to birth and death, or reincarnation, and which negates them," or "the condition of the absolute." William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 380-381.

\textsuperscript{549} The Buddhist term butui(zhuan) 不退 (轉) (avaivartika, or avinivartanîya) means "[n]ever receding, always progressing, not backsliding, or losing ground; never retreating but going straight to nirvāṇa; an epithet of every Buddha." The term butui pusa 不退菩薩 here is referred to a "never-receding bodhisattva, who aims at perfect enlightenment." William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 109.

chants [the following]): Everybody should be diligent and make vital progress as if
[you are] saving [yourself] from fire on your hair and must keep in mind impermanence
and be careful not to relax.  

7. 三皈依

自皈依佛 當願眾生 體解大道 發無上心 拜·起
自皈依法 當願眾生 深入經藏 智慧如海 拜·起
自皈依僧 當願眾生 統理大眾 一切無礙
和南聖眾 拜·起·問訊·起

Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones]

I turn to and rely on the Buddha and wish that sentient beings comprehend the Great
Way [so that they] give rise to the unsurpassed mind
(prostrate [once and then] stand up).

I turn to and rely on the Dharma and wish that sentient beings penetrate sūtras in the
Tripitaka [so that they gain] the oceanic wisdom
(prostrate [once and then] stand up).

I turn to and rely on the Sangha and wish that all be well organized and without any
obstacles.

Pay homage to the sacred assembly (prostrate [once], stand up, make inquiry [by

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551 The Buddhist term weina 維那 (karmadāna) is referred to “the duty-distributor, deacon, arranger of duties,
However, in a ritual, karmadāna acts as a precentor.


553 Henan 和南 (vandana), a Buddhist term, means “[o]beisance, prostration, bowing the head, reverencing,
bowing and folding the hands], and straighten the back). 554

8. 大回向 師覺. 愼大眾和念。

弟子眾等 兩是生死凡夫 罪障深重 輪迴六道
苦不可言 今遇知識 得聞彌陀名號 本願功德
一心稱念 求願往生 願佛慈悲不捨 哀憐攝受
弟子眾等 不識佛身 相好光明 願佛示現 令我得見 及見觀音勢至
諸菩薩眾 彼世界中 清淨莊嚴
光明妙相等 令我了了 得見
阿彌陀佛 起立·出位·合掌·繞念。
南無阿彌陀佛 繞念一匝·鳴磬一聲·接念
南無觀世音菩薩 繞念一匝·鳴磬一聲·接念
南無大勢至菩薩 繞念一匝·鳴磬一聲·接念
南無清淨大海眾菩薩
南無清淨大海眾菩薩 繞念一匝·歸位·鳴磬·跪下·收聖號。
南無清淨大海眾菩薩 收聖號後·跪念下文時·當觀想彌陀恩德無量·自悲障
重·不獲見佛·須生懺愧·深自痛責·願見彌陀·鼓引
磬·一字一擊·隨念隨作此想願。

願我臨終無障礙·阿彌陀佛遠相迎
觀音甘露灌吾頜·勢至金臺安我足
一剎那中離五濁·屈伸臂頃到蓮池
蓮華開後見慈尊·親聽法音可了了

Great Merit Dedication

(The [karmadāna] master starts the tune, the crowd chants in chorus).

We, the crowd of disciples, are now mortals of life and death, with heavy obstructions of sin, reincarnating in the six paths, the bitterness of which cannot be described. Now, [since we] encounter good friends, [we can] hear of Amitābha’s name and [his] original vows’ meritorious virtues, recite single-mindedly [his name], and vow to seek rebirth [in his Pure Land]. May the Buddha be compassionate to not abandon [us], and have pity to guide and receive us. We, the crowd of disciples, do not apprehend the Buddha’s body, whose physical marks are pleasant\textsuperscript{555} and shining; may the Buddha be manifest, letting me see [you] and see Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthamaprapta, and all Bodhisattvas. [Also.] let me know clearly the purity, the magnificence, bright, wonderful phenomena, and such in that world, and see:

Amitābha (stand up, leave one’s seat, put palms together, circumambulate, and recite).

Turn to and rely on Amitābha (recite [this] while circumambulating once, ring an inverted bell\textsuperscript{556} once, and continue to recite):

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\textsuperscript{555} The term xianghao 相好 can also be interpreted as laksana-vyāhjana, “the thirty-two 相 or marks and the eighty 好 or signs on the physical body of Buddha.” It is said that the “marks on a Buddha’s sambhogakāya number 84,000. 相 is intp. as larger signs, 好 as smaller.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 309-310.

\textsuperscript{556} The term qing 聲 is a bowl-shaped copper Buddhist percussion instrument used in rituals. Ding Fubao, \textit{Foxue dacidian} (Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching), p. 2665 and 2919.
Turn to and rely on Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (recite [this] while circumambulating once, ring an inverted bell once, and continue to recite):

Turn to and rely on Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva (recite [this] while circumambulating once, ring an inverted bell once, and continue to recite):

Turn to and rely on all Bodhisattvas of Great Ocean of Purity

Turn to and rely on all Bodhisattvas of Great Ocean of Purity

(recite [this] while circumambulating once, return to seat, ring an inverted bell, kneel down, [start to] stop [reciting] the sacred name).

Turn to and rely on all Bodhisattvas of Great Ocean of Purity

(after [the recitation of] the sacred name stop, when [one] kneels and recites the following essay, [one] should visualize Amitābha’s infinite virtues and benefactions. [One should] bemoan that one’s obstructions [of sin] are heavy that [one] is not allowed to see the Buddha; [one] must grow ashamed, accuse oneself deeply, and resolve to see Amitābha. Strike a hand-bell once as one recites each word, and while reciting, one [should] make such a vow and visualization).

May I have no obstacle when I am on my deathbed, being welcomed by Amitābha from afar;

May Avalokiteśvara sprinkles sweet dew on my head and Mahāsthāmaprāpta supports my feet with a golden platform;

In an instant I leave the five [kṣaṇa] periods of turbidity, and arrive at the lotus pond within the moment of stretching out a hand;

After the lotus flower blows, I see the compassionate Superior One, and personally hear of and clearly comprehend his Dharma voice;

557 显清 also known as shouqing 手磬, is a hand-bell usually used to direct the attention in ceremonies.

Once [I] learn [the teachings], [I] immediately awaken to the Patience of No Rebirth\(^{558}\) so that [I can re-]enter Sahā-lokadhātu’s [or the world] while [at the same time I] am not separated from the Tranquil Nourishment [or the Pure Land];

With vibhāvana [or clear perception] and upāya [or expedient methods], [I] save sentient beings and subtly turn the trouble of the world [or the passions] into Buddhist affairs;

My vows are like this as the Buddha innately knows; after all, [I] will attain accomplishment in the future (stand up).

(This essay, in ancient and modern times, is highly efficacious; [some participants] either see various auspicious phenomena right at the moment of making vow or able to see Amitābha, who emits great light, amid sleep and dreams. Response to [our] appeals and needs [like these] are so frequent they cannot be completely described. Only those who strictly practice this will believe that it is not false).\(^{559}\)

9. 一心頂禮

一心頂禮宏揚淨樂土，釋迦佛如來，千百億化身，遍法界諸佛
一心頂禮常寂光淨土，阿彌陀如來，清淨妙法身，遍法界諸佛
一心頂禮寶莊嚴土，阿彌陀如來，微塵相海身，遍法界諸佛
一心頂禮方便聖居土，阿彌陀如來，解脫相嚴身，遍法界諸佛
一心頂禮西方安樂土，阿彌陀如來，大乘根界身，遍法界諸佛
一心頂禮西方安樂土，阿彌陀如來，十方化往身，遍法界諸佛
一心頂禮西方安樂土，教行理三經，及依正宣揚，遍法界尊法

\(^{558}\) It is also known as wusheng faren 無生法忍, which is referred to “the patient rest in belief in immortality, or no rebirth.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 381.

Single-minded Prostration with the Head at the Floor

Single-mindedly prostrate yourself with the head at the floor to Śākyamuni Buddha / Tathāgata and all Buddhas, in hundreds and thousands millions of transformed bodies, everywhere all over the Dharma Realm, who greatly promote the joyous Pure Land.

Single-mindedly prostrate yourself with the head at the floor to Amitābha Tathāgata in the Pure Land of Eternity, Tranquility, and Light [of Wisdom] and all Buddhas, in the pure, wonderful dhammakāya, or the Buddha’s eternal, spiritual body, everywhere all over the Dharma Realm.

Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to Amitābha Tathāgata in the Magnificent Land of True Retribution and all Buddhas, in the oceanic body of tiny dusty phenomena, everywhere in the Dharma Realm.

Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to Amitābha Tathāgata in the Sacred Dwelling Land of Expediency and all Buddhas, in the magnificent body of liberated phenomena, everywhere in the Dharma Realm.

Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to Amitābha Tathāgata in the Western Land of Peace and Happiness and all Buddhas, in the body of the Mahāyāna [good] roots realm,\textsuperscript{560} everywhere over the Dharma Realm.

\textsuperscript{560} The full term of dacheng genjie 大乘根界 is dacheng shangen jie 大乘善根界, which is referred to the “Mahāyāna good roots realm, a name for the Amitābha Pure-land of the west.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 83.
Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to Amitābha Tathāgata in the
Western Land of Peace and Happiness and all Buddhas, in the transformed body
of the ten directions, everywhere in the Dharma Realm.

Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to the superior Dharma all over the
Dharma Realm promoted by the three divisions of teaching, practice, and
document, and the dependent environment and the resultant Self of the Western
Land of Peace and Happiness.

Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva in
the Western Land of Peace and Happiness and Great Bodhisattvas all over the
Dharma Realm in tens of thousands of purple golden bodies.

Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva
in the Western Land of Peace and Happiness and Great Bodhisattvas all over the
Dharma Realm with bodies of infinite light and effulgence.

Single-mindedly prostrate with the head at the floor to the crowd of Great Ocean of
Purity in the Western Land of Peace and Happiness and the sacred crowd, in
two perfect magnificent bodies [Dharmakāya and Sambhogakāya], all over the
Dharma Realm.\textsuperscript{561}

10. 三皈依

自皈依佛 當願眾生 體解大道 發無上心
自皈依法 當願眾生 深入經藏 智慧如海
自皈依僧 當願眾生 統理大眾 一切無礙

(再禮佛三拜·維那師鳴大磬一聲·復接呼·)
Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones]

I turn to and rely on the Buddha and wish that sentient beings comprehend the Great Way [so that they] give rise to the unsurpassed mind.

I turn to and rely on the Dharma and wish that sentient beings penetrate sūtras in the Tripitaka [so that they gain] the oceanic wisdom.

I turn to and rely on the Sangha and wish that all be well organized and without any obstacles.

([the participants] prostrate thrice again; [at this time,] the karmadāna master or precentor\(^{562}\) rings a big inverted bell once; and, again, [the participants] call [the following]):

([If] on the perfect completion day or the last day of the Seven-day [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [Name], after the Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones], pay homage to Patriarchs; after paying homage to Patriarchs, followed by the [rite of] Each Person Do [It] in Place of [Another]).\(^{563}\)

11. 各人代為

各人代為父母師長暨歴劫怨親禮佛三拜求生淨土

各人高聲答阿彌陀佛，隨即拜下。再呼求生淨土，再答阿彌陀佛，拜下。三呼求生淨土，三答阿彌陀佛，拜下。（每逢佛字，皆敲大鐘一槌。）維那師再呼：

是日已過 命亦隨滅 如少水魚 斯有何樂 大眾


\(^{562}\) The Buddhist term weina 維那 (karmadāna) is referred to “the duty-distributor, deacon, arranger of duties, second in command of a monastery.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 427. However, in a ritual, karmadāna acts as a precentor.

Each Person Do [It] in Place of [Another]

Each one worships the Buddha by prostrating thrice on behalf of parents, teachers, and elders as well as for enemies and relatives of past kalpas so that they seek rebirth into the Pure Land.

(Each one loudly replies “Amitābha,” and then immediately prostrates. Then, call out “seeking rebirth into the Pure Land,” reply “Amitābha,” and prostrate. Call out “seeking rebirth into the Pure Land” the third time, reply “Amitābha” the third time, and prostrate. {Whenever see the word “Buddha,” strike a big bell once;} Then, the karmadāna master or precentor calls out):

As today has passed, [our] life-spans are also on the decrease as if fishes are [in a place] with not much water; thus, what joy do you have? Everybody should be diligent and make essential progress as if [you are] saving [yourself] from the fire on your hair and must keep in mind the impermanence and be careful not to be on the loose.

(The crowd replies “Amitābha,” makes inquiry [by bowing and folding the hands], and is dismissed). 564

12. 圓満日大回向後禮祖

佛七圓滿日，佛前大回向後禮祖。

三皈依畢，再三拜，鳴大磬三聲，維那師呼。

頂禮西天東土歷代祖師

頂禮天下宏揚佛法諸大善知識

頂禮初祖廬山東林遠公大師

Worship of Patriarchs after the Great Merit Dedication on the Perfect Completion Day

On the perfect completion day of the Seven-day [Recitation] of the Buddha's [Name], worship patriarchs in front of an [image of] Buddha after the Great Merit Dedication on the Perfect Completion Day.

([After] finishing the Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones], prostrate thrice and ring the big inverted bell thrice; the karmadāna master or precentor calls out:)

Prostrate with the head at the floor to patriarchs and masters of past generations in India
and China.

Prostrate with the head at the floor to all great good friends in the world who greatly promote Buddhism.

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the First Patriarch, Revered Master Yuan [Huiyuan 慧遠] of the Donglin [Monastery] on Mount Lu.


Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Third Patriarch, Revered Master Yuan [Chengyuan 承遠] of the Bore [Arena of the Way; Bore daochang 稣若道場] on Southern High Mountain [or Mount Heng 衢山].

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Fourth Patriarch, Revered Master Zhao [Fazhao 法照] of the Zhulin [Monastery] on [Mount] Wutai.

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Fifth Patriarch, Revered Master Kang [Shaokang 少康] on [Mount] Wulong in Xinding [or Yanzhou 嚴州, Zhejiang 浙江].

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Sixth Patriarch, Revered Master Shou [Yanshou 延壽] of the Yongming [Monastery] in Hangzhou.

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Seventh Patriarch, Revered Master Chang [Shengchang 省常] of the Zhaoqing [Monastery] in Hangzhou.

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Eighth Patriarch, Revered Master Hong [Zhuhong 詹宏] of the Yunqi [Monastery] in Hangzhou.


Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Tenth Patriarch, Revered Master Ce [Xingce
Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Eleventh Patriarch, Revered Master Xian [Shixian 寔賢] of the Fantian [Monastery] in Hangzhou.


Prostrate with the head at the floor to the thirteenth Patriarch, Revered Master Liang [Shengliang 聖量] of the Lingyan[shan Monastery 灑嚴山寺] in Suzhou.

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the Great Masters of the Lotus Societies in ancient and modern times.

Prostrate with the head at the floor to the upādhiṣṭa [or preceptor, or preaching monks],\(^{565}\) who directs [this] Seven[-day Recitation of Buddha’s Name].

Each one worships the Buddha by prostrating thrice on behalf of parents, teachers, and elders as well as for enemies and relatives of past kalpas so that they seek rebirth into the Pure Land.

(The crowd replies “Amitābha,” and then immediately prostrates. Then, call out “seeking rebirth into the Pure Land,” reply “Amitābha,” and prostrate. Call out “seeking rebirth into the Pure Land” the third time, reply “Amitābha” the third time, and prostrate. Then, the karmadāna master or precentor calls out).\(^{566}\)

13. 普賢菩薩警眾偈

眾答阿彌陀佛，問訊而散。

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s Gāthā on Alerting Sentient Beings

\(^{565}\) The position of upādhiṣṭa in ceremonies is referred to a Buddhist teacher who imparts the precepts to the practitioners. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 38 and 253.

(The crowd replies “Amitābha,” makes inquiry [by bowing and folding the hands], and is dismissed).\textsuperscript{567}

\section*{The Liturgy of Offering [to Buddha]}

1. 戒定真香

戒定真香 焚起稱天上 弟子虔誠 蒸在金鐘放
頃刻紛紜 即速滿十方 昔日耶輸 免難消災障
南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩 南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩
南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩

The Genuine Fragrance of the Samādhi [Acquired by the Observance] of the Precepts

The genuine fragrance of the samādhi [acquired by the observance] of the precept blazes up, soaring to the sky. [We,] your disciples, sincerely ignite it in the golden censer, which diffuses in a moment all over the ten directions. [Because of this.] Yasodhara\textsuperscript{568} of the past exempted from difficulties and eliminated obstructions [caused by] calamities.\textsuperscript{569} Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva Canopy of Fragrant Cloud.


\textsuperscript{568} The term Yeshu 耶輸 here is probably the shortened form of the name Yeshutuo 耶輸陀 (Yasodharā), or Yeshutuoluo 耶輸陀羅, or Yeshuduoluo 耶輸多羅, “the wife of Śākyamuni, mother of Rāhula, who became a nun five years after her husband’s enlightenment. She is to become the Buddha Raśmi-sata-sahasra- pari-pūrṇa-dhivaja.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 311.

\textsuperscript{569} The translation of this sentence is based only on contextual deductive inference; textual support has not been found yet.
Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva Canopy of Fragrant Cloud. Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva Canopy of Fragrant Cloud.\textsuperscript{570}

2. 煙香詣

爐香乍熏 法界蒙熏 諸佛海會悉遙聞 隨處結祥雲
誠意方殷 諸佛現全身 南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩
南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩 南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩

Censer’s Fragrance Stotra

Censer’s fragrance is just ignited and the Dharma Realm is fumigated [so that] all the Buddhas’ oceanic assemblies learn of [this] from afar and auspicious clouds gather everywhere; as [our] sincerity is just ardent, all Buddhas manifest [their] whole bodies.

Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva Canopy of Fragrant Cloud. Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva Canopy of Fragrant Cloud. Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva Canopy of Fragrant Cloud.\textsuperscript{571}

3. 靈山會上

南無靈山會上佛菩薩 三稱
南無常住十方佛 此以下，接連十七聖號，須週而復始，皆念三遍。
南無常住十方法
南無常住十方僧
南無本師釋迦牟尼佛
南無消災延壽藥師佛


In the Assembly of the Spiritual [Vulture] Peak [or Grdhrakūta]

Turn to and rely on all Bodhisattvas in the assembly of the Spirit [Vulture] Peak (recite thrice).

Turn to and rely on eternal Buddhas of the ten directions (the following seventeen successive sacred names must all be recited in three cycles).

Turn to and rely on the eternal Dharma of the ten directions.

Turn to and rely on the eternal Sangha of the ten directions.

Turn to and rely on the original teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha.

Turn to and rely on the Buddha of Medicine, who eliminates calamities and prolongs life-span.

Turn to and rely on Amitābha Buddha of the World of Utmost Joy.

Turn to and rely on the Revered Maitreya Buddha, who will be descended [from
Trayastrimsās] and reborned [in this world] in the future.

Turn to and rely on all Buddhas of the ten directions of the past, at present, and in the future.

Turn to and rely on Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva of great wisdom.

Turn to and rely on Samantabhadra Bodhisattva of great conduct.

Turn to and rely on Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva of great compassion.

Turn to and rely on Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva.

Turn to and rely on all Bodhisattvas of Great Ocean of Purity.

Turn to and rely on King Earth-store Bodhisattva of great vows.

Turn to and rely on Dharma protectors, Bodhisattvas of all heavens.

Turn to and rely on sacred crowd of Guardian Bodhisattvas [or Sanghārāma, or Sanghāgāra].

Turn to and rely on Bodhisattvas of Patriarch and Master of past generations (each of the above sacred names [should] all [be recited] in three cycles).\textsuperscript{572}

4. 變食真言

南無薩口縛怛他言我多口縛嚥秝帝 唎 三跋囉 
三跋囉口牛三遍或廿一遍

True Words [or Mantra] on Transforming Food (three times or twenty-one times).\textsuperscript{573}

5. 甘露水真言

南無蘇嚕婆耶怛他言我多耶怛姪他喚 蘇嚕 蘇嚕


\textsuperscript{573} Jingzong gongxiu keben (Pure Land Collective Practices Textbook), p. 43.
True Words of Sweet Dew

(three times or seven times).

The offering of the color, smell, and taste of this food ascends to Buddhas of the ten directions, be given with respect to all the sacred and the worthy, and descends to reach [those] in the Six Paths [of reincarnation]; the gifts are equal without discrimination and are full and satisfactory as wishes, which make the present giver acquire infinite perfections [or pāramitā].

Offer the three virtues⁵⁷⁴ and the six flavours [of bitter, sour, sweet, acrid, salt, and insipid] to Buddhas and Sanghas and universally offer [them] to [sentient beings or] those endowed with consciousness in the Dharma Realm

([recite] each of these twelve sentences once).⁵⁷⁵

6. 普供養真言

唵 言我言我彌 三婆口縛 伐日曜 斛 三遍或七遍

True Words on Universal Offering (three times or seven times).⁵⁷⁶

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⁵⁷⁴ According to A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, the term sonde 三德 means the “three virtues or powers, of which three groups are given below. (1) (a) 法身 [德] The virtue, or potency of the Buddha’s eternal, spiritual body, the dhammakāya; (b) 般若 [德] of his prajñā, or wisdom, knowing all things in their reality; (c) 解脱 [德] of his freedom from all bonds and his sovereign liberty.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 64.

Stotra on Wonderful Offering from the Kitchen of Heaven

The kitchen of heaven wonderfully offers the joy of *Samādhi*...

Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva Joy-store of *Samādhi*.

Great perfect *prajñā* [wisdom].

8. 長生祿位

南無消災延壽藥師佛 唱此佛號至牌位前

南無增福壽菩薩摩訶薩 三唱

南無消災延壽藥師佛 三唱

The Tablet of Longevity and Salary

Turn to and rely on the Buddha of Medicine, who eliminates calamities and prolongs life-span (chant this Buddha’s name [and circumambulate] until standing before the tablet).

Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva of Increasing Felicity and Longevity (chant thrice).

Turn to and rely on the Buddha of Medicine, who eliminates calamities and prolongs life-span (recite thrice).

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578 The word *wei* (seat, digit, throne, place, location, etc.) here is referred to the term *peiwèi* (tablet).
9. True Words on Baptism

南無薄伽伐帝 韓殺社 倶嚕薛琉璃 金本喇婆
喝囉閻也 怛他揭多也 阿囉揭帝 三藐三勃陀耶
怛姪他 唵 韓殺逝 韓殺逝 韓殺社 三沒揭帝娑婆訶 七遍

*True Words on Baptism*\(^{580}\) by the Buddha of Medicine (seven times).\(^{581}\)

10. The Light of Buddha Shines Concentratedly

The light of Buddha shines concentratedly over [our] life-stars\(^{582}\) [so that] the star of calamity withdraws and the star of felicity arrives, [of which] the nine luminaries, or

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\(^{580}\) The term *guanding* 淨頂 (baptism, or *abhisecana*, or *mūrdhābhisikta*) is referred to “inauguration or consecration by sprinkling, or pouring water on the head; ... Amongst the esoterics it is a rite especially administered to their disciples; and they have several categories of baptism, e.g. that of ordinary disciples, of teacher, or preacher, of leader, of office-bearer; also for special causes such as relief from calamity, preparation for the next life, etc.” For details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 483-484.


\(^{582}\) The term *benming yuanchen* 本命元辰 (the year of the birth-star or life-star) relates to two terms, the *benming xing* 本命星 and the *yuanchen xing* 元辰星; the former means “the life-star of an individual, i.e. the particular star of the seven stars of Ursa Major which is dominant in the year of birth,” and the latter is referred to a “star that controls the attainment of honours, and the riddance of sickness and distresses. The star varies according to the year star of the suppliant which is one of the seven stars in Ursa Major.” For details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 130 and 189.
Navagraha, sustain [our] longevity, so that the boundaries of [our] fate are in harmony and [full of] infinite felicity, life-span, health, and peace.\textsuperscript{583}

11. 迴向偈
願消三障諸煩惱 願得智慧真明了
普願罪障悉消除 世世常行菩薩道

Merit Dedication Gāthā

[We] vow to eliminate the three obstructions\textsuperscript{584} and all afflictions, vow to acquire the wisdom and true, complete enlightenment, and vow that universally all obstructions of sin [will be] eliminated [so that we can] constantly practice the way of the Bodhisattva for generations.\textsuperscript{585}

12. 往生蓮位
南無阿彌陀佛 唱此佛號至牌位前
南無清涼地菩薩摩訶薩 三唱
南無般若會上佛菩薩 三稱


\textsuperscript{584} The term \textit{sanzhang} 三障 (three obstructions or three vighna) can be referred to three groups of meaning: 
(1) (a) 煩惱 [障] the passions, i.e. 三毒 desire, hate, stupidity; (b) 業 [障] the deeds done; (c) 報 [障] the retributions.
(2) (a) 皮煩惱 [障]; (b) 肉 [煩惱障]; (c) 心 [煩惱障] skin, flesh, and heart (or mind) troublers, i.e. delusions from external objects, internal views, and mental ignorance. (3) 三重障 the three weighty obstructions: (a) self-importance, 我慢; (b) envy, 嫉妒; (c) desire, 貪欲." See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 80.

Lotus Tablets for [Those Who] Are Reborn

Turn to and rely on Amitābha (chant this Buddha’s name [and circumambulate] to the front of the tablets).

Turn to and rely on Great Bodhisattva of Pure [or Clear and Cool] Ground (chant thrice).

Turn to and rely on Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the Assembly of Prajñā [Wisdom] (recite thrice).⁵⁸⁶

13. 般若波羅蜜多心經

The Heart Sūtra⁵⁸⁷

14. 往生淨土神咒

南無阿彌多婆夜  哆他伽多夜 哆地夜他 阿彌利都婆毗 阿彌利哆 悉耽婆毗 阿彌喇哆 吐迦闍帝 阿彌喇哆 吐迦闍多 伽彌軌 伽伽那 枒多迦利 娑婆诃 三遍

Divine Mantra of Being Reborn in the Pure Land (recite thrice).⁵⁸⁸

15. 變食真言

三遍或廿一遍

True Words [or Mantra] on Transforming Food (three times or twenty-one times).⁵⁸⁹

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16. True Words of Sweet Dew

三遍或七遍

(True Words of Sweet Dew) (three times or seven times). 590

17. True Words on Universal Offering

三遍或七遍，如为施主作佛事，或某种法会，在此加念大乘常住三宝三遍，宜疏。

(True Words on Universal Offering)

(three times or seven times; if [in the case of] performing a Buddhist ritual for a donor of monastic food or [holding] a certain type of Dharma ceremony, the Eternal Three Precious Ones [of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha] of Mahāyāna should be] additionally recited thrice here, [and then] announce the memorial). 591

18. Great Stotra on Amitābha

Amitābha Buddha, the King of Great Vows, [whose] kindness, pity, joy, and almsgiving are immeasurable and light of ūrṇā or curl of white hairs constantly

592 The states of kindness, pity, joy, and almsgiving mentioned here is referred to the si wuliang xin (catvāri apramānāni; the four immeasurables, or infinite Buddha-states of mind), which means “慈無量心” (cūṇa and bhaññapañña).
emits from between his eyebrows, saves sentient beings to the Land of Utmost Joy, where nine grades of lotus flowers are in the Eight Virtues Pond and wonderful trees of seven jewels are in rows, if the sacred name of Tathāgata is announced, [those who learn of it will be] guided to the [Pure Land of the] West; if the sacred name of Amitābha is praised, [those who learn of it will] collectively vow to go to the [Pure Land of the] West.\textsuperscript{594}

19. 迴向偈

願生西方淨土中 九品蓮華為父母
花開見佛悟無生 不退菩薩為伴侶
南無阿彌陀佛（念佛至佛前歸位）
供佛已訖 當願眾生 所作皆辦 具諸佛法

\textbf{Merit Dedication Gāthā}

[I] vow to be reborn into the Western Pure Land, where the nine grades of lotus flowers will be [my] father and mother,

[I will] see the Buddha and awaken to no rebirth when the flower blows, and the never-receding Bodhisattvas are [my] fellows.

\footnotesize

\begin{itemize}
  \item boundless kindness, maitrī, or bestowing of joy or happiness; 悲 [無量心] boundless pity, karunā, to save from suffering; 喜 [無量心] boundless joy, muditā, on seeing others rescued from suffering; 捨 [無量心] limitless indifference, upeksa, i.e. rising above these emotions, or giving up all things, e.g. distinctions of friend and enemy, love and hate, etc.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 178.
  \item It is referred to the \textit{meijian baihao xiang} 眉間白毫相 (ūrṇā or the curl of white hairs between the eyebrows of the Buddha), which is one of the thirty-two marks on the physical body of Buddha. See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., \textit{Dictionary}, p. 198 and 309-310.
  \item Jingzong gongxiu keben (Pure Land Collective Practices Textbook), p. 54.
\end{itemize}
Turn to and rely on Amitābha (recite Buddha [Amitābha’s name while circumabulating] to the front of [the image of] the Buddha and [then] return to seat).

[When] the offering to the Buddha has finished, [we] should wish that all efforts made by sentient beings will succeed and that they will possess all Buddhist teachings.\(^{595}\)

20. 二時臨齋儀 (供養清淨法身)

此惟叢林下，早午二時會集齋堂食時用。維那師掌腔，大眾同念。

供養清淨法身毘盧遮那佛 圓滿報身盧舍那佛
千百億化身釋迦牟尼佛 極樂世界阿彌陀佛
當來下生彌勒尊佛 十方三世一切諸佛
大智文殊師利菩薩 大行普賢菩薩 大悲觀世音菩薩
大願地藏王菩薩 諸尊菩薩摩訶薩 摩訶般若波羅蜜
三德六味 供佛及僧 法界有情 普同供養 若飯食時 當願眾生
禪悅為食 法喜充滿 早粥則念下文 粥有十利 饒益行人 果報無邊
究竟常樂

如早食是飯或麪，則仍念前三德六味等八句。

The Liturgy [Performed] Just before the Two Periods of Fast (Offer to the Pure Dharmakāya)

(this is performed only at the two eating periods in the morning and at noon in the monastic dining hall. The karmadāna or precentor starts the tune, the assembly recites together):

Offer to Vairocana Buddha of the pure *dharmakāya*, Rocana Buddha of the perfect *sambhoga-kāya*, Śākyamuni Buddha of thousands of millions *nirmānakāya*, Amitābha Buddha of the World of Utmost Joy; Revered Maitreya Buddha who will descend [from *Trayastrīmśās*] and be reborn [in this world] in the future; all Buddhas of the ten directions of the past, present, and in the future; Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva of great wisdom; Samantabhadra Bodhisattva of great conduct; Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva of great compassion; King Earth-store Bodhisattva of great vows; and all Great Revered Bodhisattvas. Great perfect *prajñā* [wisdom].

Offer the three virtues and the six flavours [of bitter, sour, sweet, acrid, salt, and insipid] to Buddhas and Sanghas and universally offer [them] to [sentient beings or] those endowed with consciousness in the Dharma Realm. If at the time of eating rice, [we] should wish that sentient beings take the joy of *Samādhi* as food and be full of the joy of Dharma. (Recite the following text in the case of having congee at breakfast):

Congee has ten advantages, which richly benefit practitioners [that their] retributions for [good] deeds are infinite and that [they realize] ultimate eternity and bliss.596

(Still recite the above eight sentences of “offering the three virtues and the six flavours” if the breakfast is either rice or noodles).597

21. 結齋偈

薩多喃 三藐三菩陀 俱胝南 恒姫他 唃

折繚主隷準提娑婆訶

596 The qualities of *chang* (eternity) and *le* (bliss) are parts of the four *pāramitās* of knowledge, i.e. the four transcendental realities in nirvāṇa, which are eternity, bliss, personality (*wo* 我), and purity (*jing* 淨). William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., *Dictionary*, p. 349.

Gāthā on Ending the Fast

The almsgiver surely acquires the benefits [of giving], if [one] gives for pleasure, [one] surely gains ease and joy afterward. [When] the offering to the Buddha has finished, [we] should wish that all efforts made by sentient beings will succeed and that they will possess all Buddhist teachings.\(^{598}\)

早晩三飯

Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones] in the Morning and Evening

1. 四生九有

四生九有 同歸淨土法門 八難三塗 共入彌陀願海 早課誦此偈

The Four Forms of Birth\(^{599}\) and the Nine States\(^{600}\)


\(^{599}\) The term sisheng 四生, the four forms of birth (catur-yoni), means “(1) 胎 or 腹生 jarāyuja, viviparous, as with mammalia; (2) 卵生 andaja, oviparous, as with birds; (3) 淇生 or 寒熱和合生 sansvedaja, moisture, or water-born, as with worms and fishes; (4) 化生 aupapāduka, metamorphic, as with moths from the chrysalis, or with devas, or in th hells, or the first beings in a newly evolved world.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 178.

\(^{600}\) The term jiuyou 九有 is referred to the “nine realities, states, or conditions in which sentient beings enjoy to dwell,” which are “(1) 欲界之人天 the world and the six deva-heavens of desire in which there is variety of bodies (or personalities) and thinking (or ideas); (2) 梵界 the three brahma-heavens where bodies differ but thinking is the same, the first dhyāna heaven; (3) 極光淨天 the three bright and pure heavens where bodies are identical but thinking differs, the second dhyāna heaven; (4) 達淨天 the three universally pure heavens where bodies and thinking are the same, the third dhyāna heaven; (5) 無想天 the no-thinking or no-thought heaven, the highest of the four dhyāna heavens; (6) 空無邊處 limitless space, the first of the formless realms; (7) 識無邊
The four forms of birth and the nine states collectively return to the Pure Land doctrine and method; [those among] the eight difficulties and the [lowest] three paths [of the cycle of reincarnation] collectively enter Amitābha’s oceanic vows.

(recite this gāthā at the morning assignment).

2. 普賢菩薩警眾偈 晚課誦此偈

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s Gāthā on Alerting Sentient Beings

(recite this gāthā at the evening assignment).

3. 三皈依

自皈依佛 當願衆生 體解大道 發無上心 拜起
自皈依法 當願衆生 深入經藏 智慧如海 拜起
自皈依僧 當願衆生 統理大眾 一切無礙
和南聖眾 拜起問訊起

Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones]

I turn to and rely on the Buddha and wish that sentient beings comprehend the Great

— limitless perception, the second ditto; (8) 無所有處 nothingness, the place beyond things, the third ditto; and (9) 非想非非想 beyond thought of non-thought, the fourth ditto.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 18.

The term banan 八難 is referred to the “eight conditions in which it is difficult to see a Buddha or hear his dharma: in the hells; as hungry ghosts; as animals; in Uttarakuru (the northern continent where all is pleasant); in the long-life heavens (where life is long and easy); as deaf, blind, and dumb; as a worldly philosopher; in the intermediate period between a Buddha and his successor. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 41.


Way [so that they] give rise to the unsurpassed mind
(prostrate [once and then] stand up).

I turn to and rely on the Dharma and wish that sentient beings penetrate sūtras in the
Tripitaka [so that they gain] the oceanic wisdom
(prostrate [once and then] stand up).

I turn to and rely on the Sangha and wish that all be well organized and without any
obstacles.

Pay homage to the sacred crowd (prostrate [once], stand up, make inquiry [by
bowing and folding the hands], and straighten the back). 605

4. 施食文

法力不思議 慈悲無障礙 七粒遍十方 普施周沙界
唵度利益莎訶 (七遍。早齋出生。用此偈咒。)

大鵬金翅鳥 喧野鬼神眾 羅剎鬼子母 甘露悉充滿
唵 穆帝莎訶 (七遍。午齋出生。用此偈咒。)

汝等鬼神眾 我今施汝供 此食遍十方 一切鬼神共
唵 穆力陵莎訶 (侍者出生送食。默念此偈一遍。咒七遍。三彈指。
如無侍者。只送亦爾。晚課出生。用此偈咒。)

Food Giving Essay

As the power of Dharma [“to do away with calamity and subdue evil”] is
inconceivable and its compassion is without obstruction, [may] seven grains [of rice]


extend all over the ten directions and be universally bestowed on all the “worlds as numerous as the sands of the Ganges.”...

([Recite] seven times. Use these gāthā and mantra when giving monastic food at the morning fast).

The roc and Garuda [or the golden wings bird], the crowds of ghosts and deities in the wilderness, and Rāksasa [or malignant spirits] and Hāritī [or the mother of 500 demons] are all filled with sweet dew. ...

([Recite] seven times. Use these gāthās and mantras when giving monastic food at the noon fast).

You the crowds of ghosts and deities, I now give you the offering; this food spreads all over the ten directions, shared by all ghosts and deities. ...

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608 The term chusheng 出生 literally means “to be born,” or “to produce;” however, as a Buddhist term, it is referred to the kind of monastic food that is “superior as bestowed in alms,” for which it is also called chushengfan 出生飯 and shengfan 生飯. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 167.

609 The full name of this term is jinchiniaowang 金翅鳥王 (Garuda), which is “the king of birds, with golden wings, companion of Visnu; a syn. of the Buddha.” William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 283.

610 Rāksasa can be “described as the barbarian races of ancient India;” “as demons they are described as terrifying, with black bodies, red hair, green eyes, devourers of men. For details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 471.

611 Hāritī has two meanings: (1) a “woman who having vowed to devour all the babies at Rādjugriha was reborn as a Rākshasi and gave birth to 500 children, one of which she was to devour every day. Converted by Śākyamuni she entered a convent. Her image is to be seen in all nunneries;” (2) “another account is that she is the mother of 500 demons, and that from being an evil goddess or spirit she was converted to become a protectress of Buddhism.” However, the term guizimu 鬼子母 can also be referred to the term guizimushen 鬼子母神, a “rāksasi who devours men.” For details, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 341.
(When giving monastic food, the attendant silently recites this gāthā once, the mantra seven times, and [then] snaps the fingers thrice. If no attendant [is available], to only [perform] the giving is also all right. Use these gāthās and mantras when giving food at the evening assignment).  

5. 慈雲懺主淨土文

Pure Land Essay by Repentance Master Compassionate Cloud

These three main sections are the major components of the Seven-day Dharma Gathering for the recitation of the Buddha’s name practiced by the Pure Land Learning Centers. They can be arranged in different ways according to the timetable set by each Learning Center. In order to clearly explain this situation, the timetable used in the Dallas Buddhist Association, Texas, USA, one of the Learning Centers, is taken as an example.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00-7:30</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Morning Assignment (早課)</td>
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<td>7:40</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Breakfast (早餐)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The First Stick of Incense (第一枝香) 8:30-10:00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name (念佛共修)</td>
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<td>The Second Stick of Incense (第二枝香) 10:00-12:00</td>
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<td>Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name (念佛共修)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Noon Offering (午供) 11:00-12:00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>The Third Stick of Incense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(第三枝香)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>(念佛共修)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Three Periods of Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>(第一時)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>The First Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>2:00 - 3:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>The Fourth Stick of Incense</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>(第四枝香)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>(念佛共修)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Three Periods of Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>(第二時)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>The Second Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>4:15 - 5:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Medicinal Food (藥石)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>Three Periods of Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>(第三時)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>The Third Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>7:00 - 8:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Great Merit Dedication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>(大願向)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Great Merit Dedication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>(大願向)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Three Periods of Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>(第四時)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Tidy Up the [Ceremonial] Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>(整理會場)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>7:00 - 8:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Timetable of the Seven-day Dharma Gathering for the Recitation of the Buddha’s Name Practiced by the Dallas Buddhist Association, Texas, USA

Applying the above liturgy to this timetable, the course of the Dharma Gathering is as follows:

1. of the first section, the Liturgy of the Seven-day [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [Name], the first four parts are performed at the beginning of the First Stick of Incense of the Collective

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615 *Yaoshi* (藥石) (medicinal food), also known as *yaoshi* (藥食), is the evening meal of congee served in Buddhist monasteries. Since many monks observe the fast that confines eating after the noon meal, the evening meal is thus treated as a kind of medicine taken to heal the illness of hunger. See Ding Fubao, *Foxue dacidian* (Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching), p. 2837.
Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name while the rest of the first section is performed at the end of each day in the Great Merit Dedication; (2) as its title states, the second section, the Liturgy of Offering [to Buddha], is performed in the Noon Offering; (3) as for the third section, Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones] in the Morning and Evening, it is usually performed in the Morning and Evening Assignments during regular monastic practice; only those performed in the Morning Assignment still apply to the Dharma Gathering.

However, two major activities, the Three Periods of Attention and the Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name indicated in the timetable are not included in the liturgy. In fact, the Three Periods of Attention is a ritual performed to save the dead to the Pure Land of Amitābha, which is, out of compassion, an optional or supplementary rite for benefiting beings other than humans. Hence, as the nature of this rite is not entirely related to the practice of nianfo, it is only introduced but is not discussed in this study. Firstly, it is composed by Mingben 明本 (Zhongfeng 中峰), who was a Chan master of the Yuan dynasty. Secondly, the term “three periods” refers to (1) the times of morning, noon, and evening, and (2) the periods of real, unreal, and mean; each period contains the same set procedure of seven successive steps, which are sūtra reading, Buddha’s name recitation, sūtra lecturing, practice guiding, repentance, vow making, and stotra chanting. Finally, the term “attention” is referred to the practice of visualization, based on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra, by the body, words, and mind to yearn for rebirth to the Pure Land. In addition to this Three Periods of Attention, the Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name is another activity of the Seven-day Dharma Gathering that is not mentioned in the liturgy. Nonetheless, as the timetable indicates, this activity is actually the core of the ritual, occupying a large portion of time. Although it is such an important part, its course is very simple, and includes the rotations
of three common Buddhist practices, the recitation, meditation, and circumambulation, led by
the precentor. In order to further clarify all these arrangements, it is helpful to list them below
incorporated with the timetable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 - 7:30</td>
<td>Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones] in the Morning and Evening:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. The Four Forms of Birth and the Nine States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Food Giving Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Pure Land Essay by Repentance Master Compassionate Cloud</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7:40</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The First Stick of Incense</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>The Liturgy of the Seven-day Recitation of the Buddha’s Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Lotus Pond Stotra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The Buddha Speaks of the Amitābha Sūtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Dharani or Mantra on Uprooting the Root of All Karmic Obstacles to Acquire the Rebirth into the Pure Land</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Praise Buddha Gāthā</td>
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<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Noontime |
|---|---|
| The Second Stick of Incense |
| 10:00 - 12:00 | Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name |
| | Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation |

| Noon Offering |
|---|---|
| [The Liturgy of Offering [to Buddha]: |
| 1. The Genuine Fragrance of the Samādhi [Acquired by the Observance] of the Precepts |
| 2. Censer’s Fragrance Stotra |
| 3. In the Assembly of the Spiritual [Vulture] Peak [or Grdhrakūṭa] |

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Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name

Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation

4. True Words for Mantral on Transforming Food
5. True Words of Sweet Dew
6. True Words on Universal Offering
7. Stotra on Wonderful Offering from the Kitchen of Heaven
8. The Tablet of Longevity and Salary
9. True Words on Baptism by the Buddha of Medicine
10. The Light of Buddha Shines Concentratively
11. Merit Dedication Gāthā
12. Lotus Tablets for Those Who Are Reborn
13. The Heart Sūtra
14. Divine Mantra of Being Reborn in the Pure Land
15. True Words for Mantral on Transforming Food
16. True Words of Sweet Dew
17. True Words on Universal Offering
18. Great Stotra on Amitābha
19. Merit Dedication Gāthā
20. The Liturgy [Performed] Just before the Two Periods of Fast
   [Offer to the Pure Dharmakāya
21. Gāthā on Ending the Fast]

11:00 -- 12:00
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>The Third Stick of Incense</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00-4:00</td>
<td>Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Three Periods of Attention</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>The First Period</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00-3:50</td>
<td>Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Second Period</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15-5:30</td>
<td>Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00-5:30</td>
<td><strong>The Fourth Stick of Incense</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collective Practice of Reciting the Buddha’s Name</td>
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<td>Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation</td>
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<td><strong>Three Periods of Attention</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Second Period</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15-5:30</td>
<td>Rotations of recitation, meditation, and circumambulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30</td>
<td><strong>Medicinal Food</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Great Merit Dedication</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Liturgy of the Seven-day Recitation of the Buddha’s [Name]:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Merit Dedication Gāthā</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s Gāthā on Alerting Sentient Beings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. Great Merit Dedication</td>
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<td>9. Single-minded Prostration with the Head at the Floor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. Taking Refuge in the Three [Precious Ones]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. Each Person Do [It] in Place of [Another]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Worship of Patriarchs after the Great Merit Dedication on the Perfect Completion Day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s Gāthā on Alerting Sentient Beings</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Three Periods of Attention</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>The Third Period</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00-8:30</td>
<td>Tidy Up the [Ceremonial] Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00-9:00</td>
<td>Three Periods of Attention</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. The Detailed Timetable of the Seven-day Dharma Gathering for the Recitation of the Buddha’s Name Practiced by the Dallas Buddhist Association, Texas, USA
The Practice in the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation

As seen in the modified timetable, participants of the Seven-day Dharma Gathering spend almost seven hours per day reciting Amitābha’s name; in the case of **jingjin foqi** [Essential and Advanced Seven-day [Recitation of] the Buddha’s [name]], the time for recitation is 24 hours per day for seven days, which is difficult for modern people to spare. To deal with this problem, some Pure Land Learning Centers have adopted a more flexible way for those who want to observe the **jingjin foqi**-like practice by themselves for as long as they like. The following statement made by Jingkong can give a general picture of this method; for convenience of reading, the statement is divided into four short paragraphs:

念佛堂
念佛堂探二十四小時開放。堂內劃分三區：
(一) 拜佛區 — 佛像供在念佛堂中央，不靠牆(回字形)，佛像前面舖大
地毯，供拜佛用。
(二) 經行區 — 佛像的四周邊是繞佛經行用。
(三) 止靜區 — 靠牆的兩旁擺蒲團，供念累的人休息，只坐著聽佛號，
不念出聲，這是止靜區域。

The Hall of Buddha’s [Name] Recitation

The Hall of Buddha’s [Name] Recitation is open for 24 hours. Divide the hall into three zones:

1. **Zone of Prostration to the Buddha** — respectfully place a Buddha statue in the center of the Hall of Buddha’s [Name] Recitation, do not lean it on the wall ([arranged like] a 回-
(2) Zone of Circumambulation — the area around the statue is used for the circumambulation.

(3) Zone of Meditation — lay cushions against the walls on two sides for people who become tired after reciting to take a rest; [they need] merely sit [there] and listen to the [recitation of] Buddha’s name and do not recite out aloud; this is the Zone of Meditation.

All participants in these three zones need not be arranged and taken care of by others, all [arrangements are] as they themselves like: [if they] want to circumambulate, [they can] circumambulate [the statue of] the Buddha; [if they] want to recite while sitting, [they can sit] by the sides to recite silently; [if they] want to prostrate themselves to the Buddha, [they can] reverently prostrate to the Buddha in the center. There is no karmadāṇa or precentor and Please All in the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation, simply use the Buddha’s [name] [auto-]recitation apparatus to carry out [the recitation

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617 Please All, also called zhishi 知事 (karmadāna), is a Buddhist title “for the manager of affairs in a monastery.”
of the Buddha’s name; the tone of everyone follows the tone of the Buddha’s [name] auto-recitation apparatus consistently. To enter the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation, there is only one rule: [all] must not talk and greet [to anyone], even Dharma masters are no exception; [when one] sees [others, acts] as if [one] does not see, otherwise, [when one recites] “Amitābha, Amitābha … hi! Dharma master,” [one’s recitation of the] Buddha’s name is [thus] mixed up with a call of “hi, Dharma master,” which is [an act of] diversion.

飲食採自助餐式，一份份準備好，無需人通知，餓了就去吃。如此，佛堂才清淨、莊嚴，功夫才能得力。佛堂隔壁闢一間休息室，做成通鋪，累了就到裡面休息。

Use the buffet-style for meals, [at which] every share is prepared; one can eat whenever one is hungry and need not to be notified by others. Only like this can the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation be pure and magnificent and [one’s] efforts be effective.

By the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation, open up a drawing room, setting it up as a common plank bed; those who are tired can go in there to take a rest.

這樣念佛方式符合諸閉老法師的教誨，無論繞念、坐念，念累了就休息，休息好了接著再念，一醒過來，佛號就接續，多自在！這是真精進、真得力。所以一進入念佛堂，真正生歡喜心。歡喜念佛多久就念佛多久；歡喜何時離開就離開，不與任何人打招呼。這種念佛的方法好，毫無壓力，非常適合現代大眾。
This style of the Buddha’s [name] recitation accords with the teachings of old Dharma Master Dixian. Whether one recites while sitting or circumambulating, one should take rest whenever one becomes tired during the recitation; after the rest, one continues to recite; once one wakes up, one’s recitation of the Buddha’s name carries on, how carefree! This is a true, essential progress and a true, efficiency. Hence, once one enters the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation, one’s delightful mind will truly be given rise. One can recite as long as one likes, leave whenever one likes, and does not greet anybody. This kind of Buddha’s name recitation method is good; it exerts no pressure on the participant, which is very suitable for our contemporaries.

The main feature of this method is understandable. Obviously, this suggestion provides an ideal and appropriate location ready for contemporary practitioners to observe the recitation and other associated Pure Land practices. According to Jingkong’s own words, this method follows the idea of Master Dixian, who appeared to have stressed that reciting Buddha’s name was a carefree and constant activity, for which the Hall is designed to include a resting facility, allowing practitioners to freely join in and retire from the practice without worry. In short, Jingkong’s suggestion of this method continues to follow the principle of flexibility.

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618 Dixian (1858-1932), the forty-third Patriarch of the Tiantai School in the modern China, was famous for his reviving the Tiantai School.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, the advocacy of these three main types of recitation method is compatible with the theories and principles of the Pure Land School. Based on earlier discussions, it is apparent that the Ten Recitation Method is derived from Amitābha’s promise of rebirth by calling ten times of his name while the Seven-day Dharma Gathering is originated from the belief mentioned in various Pure Land sūtras. As for the establishment of the Hall, it is still not far from the essence of the School’s teachings that consistency and attentiveness are the keys to successful practice. More specifically, these types of recitation methods are based on the teachings that have been discussed in Chapter Three: (1) one is surely reborn by ten calls [of Amitābha’s name] (*shinian bi sheng* 十念必生),620 (2) the terms *yixin buluan* 一心不亂 (one mind undisturbed) and *yixiang zhuannian* 一向專念 (to recite devotionally and consistently) are the principal guidelines for the Pure Land practices,621 and (3) the essentials of “reciting devotionally and consistently” is to go deep into one single method (*yi men shenru* 一门深入)622 and to gradually practice over a long period of time (*changshi xunxiu* 長時薰

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which can be further described as having “no doubts, no distractions, and no
discontinuity (不懷疑。不夾雜。不間斷).”

In fact, other than these methods, there is one more type of recitation that has been
performed by many Pure Land practitioners, which is called the deathbed assistant recitation.
As this title states, this type of recitation is supposed to be carried out at a practitioner’s dying
moment with an additional emphasis on a series of restriction placed on recitation assistants
and relatives of the dead, which is very different from the significance of flexibility discussed
above. In comparison to the above mentioned methods, this supplementary recitation can be
treated as the final chance for a Pure Land follower to purify his/her mind with considerable
help from others. However, since the nature of this practice is not exactly the same as the other
three types of method in ensuring the goal of attaining the state of one mind undisturbed before
the last moment by one’s own effort, it is not included in the main text.

Nevertheless, for the reason that this practice is still a very special practice within the
tradition of the Pure Land School, this section intends to give a short account of the restrictions
concerning supplementary recitation as the conclusion of this chapter. The following
information is quoted from the website of the Amitābha Buddhist Society (Singapore), in
which are found details of various aspects of this recitation, including those suggested by
Master Yinguang and Mr. Li Bingnan.

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623 He Yun 何云, “Jingkongfashi Beijing fangwen ji 淨空法師北京訪問記 [The Record of Dharma Master
624 Jingkong, Foshuo dacheng wuliangshou zhuangyan qingjing pingdeng jue jing jiangji [Lecture Notes on the
Infinite Life Sūtra], vol. 1: 145.
625 “Zhuonian shengxi xuzhi 助念 生西 須知 (Vital information about Assisting the Dying to be Reborn into
助念須知

一、設備：

（一）先安設佛像香燭，位於西方為宜，但不要勉強。其病室內，原有彌陀像者，則不另設。香煙不宜過濃，免使病者呼吸有礙。

（二）佛像位次，以使病者看到為宜。

二、開始：

（一）助念者單念「阿彌陀佛」，只敲引磬，不用其他法器，亦不誦其他經典。

（二）助念者，達到病家時，倘病勢已至垂危，宜免除設備等儀式，可逕向前只敲引磬，念四字佛。

三、助念人數：

每班以二至五人合念，至多不得超過十人；每班助念，以二小時為度。

四、開示：

（一）如病者神識清楚，可由助念負責人，勸其放下萬緣，隨聲念佛；或從心念，或用耳聽。

（二）如病者有所依戀，由助念負責人，説解壽數未盡，可得速愈，壽數如盡，往生極樂之簡要語，使提正念。

五、預防障礙：

（一）病者家屬，須推一人，負護念之責，凡與病者有關之事，以便與助念團取得互相連絡。

（二）不問病者之家屬、親友，自開始助念，一概不得向病者前，擅越他事。如係知佛者，由護念人，向助念負責人，請求得允許後，可參加助念。

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六、禁忌：
（一）病者待自欲沐浴、更衣，须在助念前行之，由其家属负责。然
亦视其病状，缓急而定。其不欲者，不必强为，加其痛苦。
（二）开始助念以后，凡沐浴、更衣、移动等事，概禁之。
（三）不得向病者，閒谈杂事，情情安慰，询问遗嘱，悲伤哭泣，以免
引动感情，有礙往生。
（四）临终之时，或坐，或卧，侧卧，仰卧，皆随其便，不可强制。
（五）终後八小时內，不得移动、沐浴、更衣。如迟时久，关节强硬，
可用毛巾，溼净热水，圍於臂肘、膝弯，再以热水淋洗，不久即可
软和。
（六）终後八小时內，不得手触屍体，试其温度，更不得哭泣。

七、助念终了：
（一）病者终後，八小时內，不断佛号，過此时间，為助念任务终
了。
（二）助念團任務終了後，遗体沐浴、更衣、移动，及其眷属哭泣等
事，可任行之。

Vital [Information] about Supplementary Recitation

1. Facility:

(1) It is better to first install a statue of the Buddha, incense, and candles in the
western side but not confined to [this side]. Those who originally have a statue
of Amitābha in their sickroom do not [need to] install another one. The smoke
of the incense should not be too thick to avoid obstructing the patient’s
respiration.

(2) The position of the statue of the Buddha should be placed at where the patient
can see it.

2. Beginning:

(1) Those who assist the recitation [should] recite solely [the name of] “Amituofo [Amitābha],” strike only the hand-bell, and should not use other implements used in worship nor read aloud other sūtras.

(2) When those who assist the recitation arrive the house of the patient, if the illness has become serious, it is better to forego other rituals [like those mentioned in the section] of Facility and directly strike only the hand-bell and recite the four-character [name of] the Buddha in front [of the patient].

3. The Number of People Who Assist the Recitation:

Each shift [should] include two to five people to recite collectively, and should not exceed more than ten people at most; each shift of recitation [should] take at most two hours.

4. Instruction [on Dharma]:

(1) If the patient is conscious, he/she can be urged by the person in charge of the recitation to relax all attachments and follow the reciting voice to recite the [name of the] Buddha, [he/she] either [can] recite from the mind or listen to [the voice] by the ears.

(2) If the patient is concerned about something, he/she should be urged to give rise to correct thoughts by the person in charge of the recitation in a few words, about [the idea] that [one] can be quickly healed [if one’s] lifespan is not ended, and that [one can] be reborn in [the Pure Land of] the Utmost Joy [if one’s] lifespan is ended.

5. Obstruction Prevention:
(1) Family members of the patient should choose one person in charge of the [task of]
protecting the recitation, [taking care of] every affair relevant to the patient, so as
to conveniently make mutual contact with the Supplementary Recitation Group.

(2) Since the beginning of the recitation, all [people], irrespective of the family
members and relatives of the patient, should not discuss presumptuously other
affairs in front of the patient. If those are [people] who know about Buddhism,
[they] can join the recitation, through the person who protects the recitation, by
requesting and being approved by the person in charge of the recitation.

6. Taboos:

(1) If the patient himself/herself wants to take a shower and change, these should be
carried out before the recitation and be in charge by his/her family members;
however, the decision [should] also be made according to the seriousness of
his/her state of the illness. One need not force those who do not want to [do so],
which increases their pain.

(2) After the beginning of the recitation, every affair like taking a shower, changing,
and moving [the body] is prohibited.

(3) Do not chat trivially, console with secular sentiments, enquire about the will, sigh,
and weep, to avoid causing affections that obstruct rebirth.

(4) At the last moment, one should not constrain [the patient], [they can either] sit or
lie down, or either lie on the side or lie on the back, all [should be adapted] to
his/her convenience.

(5) After dying, within eight hours, [the body] should not be moved, cleansed, or the
clothing changed. If [the family members] worry that the joints would be
stiffened after long time, [they] can use a hot towel to wrap the elbows and knees,
and then pour hot water to wash [them]; by so doing, [the elbows and knees] can be softened before long.

(6) After dying, within eight hours, one should not touch the body to check its temperature and what is more one is not to weep.

7. At the End of the Recitation:

(1) After the death of the patient, [reciting the name of] the Buddha should not be stopped for eight hours; after this period, the mission of the recitation is ended.

(2) After the mission of the Supplementary Recitation Group is ended, allow the practice of affairs like changing, moving, and washing the body as well as the crying of family members as [they] wish.
CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Historically, the Pure Land Learning Center stands in the tradition of the Pure Land School as a reformed Lotus Society revived in the twentieth century; in this contemporary development, Master Jingkong is definitely the pivotal figure, who provides the “reform” a solid, profound, and comprehensive theoretical foundation and a feasible and explicit direction for the practice of recitation. More specifically, in the socio-historical context of the development of Pure Land Buddhism, the Learning Center undoubtedly inherits the past and ushers in the future. The Pure Land essentials remain unchanged yet the forms, including ways of practice, means of promotion, and structures of organization, develop according to the changes of time, of cultural needs, and of social circumstances; similar to those earlier advocates who enlivened and sustained the traditions of their own times, it is the Master’s efforts in preaching that sustain the essentials of Pure Land teachings, which by reforms he encourages to cope with contemporary needs.

Discussions in the second, third, and fourth chapters of this thesis give a preliminary picture of those Pure Land essentials that are sustained by the Learning Center, which include the lineage of this organization, the Dharma lineage of the teachings of Master Jingkong, and the integrated ideology of Pure Land Buddhism. Chapter Two delineates the profile of Jingkong about his Buddhist education and teaching history to trace his Dharma lineage to the traditional Pure Land School in China, and provides a basis for understanding that the Learning Center, aside from being a charitable group like most Buddhist organizations, is a modern association continuing to the Pure Land traditions in transmitting Pure Land teachings. In a
historical approach, Chapter Three analyzes the connection between the theories and rituals advocated by Master Jingkong and by previous Pure Land advocates. The analysis shows that the ideology of Jingkong comes from his broad and accurate grasp of traditional Buddhist teachings interpreted by early Pure Land advocates, and that, corresponding to his emphasis on the importance of the lineage of Dharma transmission to Buddhist teachings, he adopts selected traditional teachings to explain Pure Land Buddhism instead of promoting or inventing new interpretations. The same approach can also be seen in his quotations from famous Pure Land advocates of different Buddhist schools, especially Chengguan’s methodical system of the four divisions, which facilitates his understanding that the methodology of Pure Land Buddhism is self-contained with its own theory, methods of practice, and goals of enlightenment. Above all, the center of Jingkong’s thought is the consistent and single-minded recitation of the name of Amitābha and the sincere vow to be reborn into the Western Pure Land, both which are justified by the notion of cause and effect, with practicing nianfo as the cause and becoming a Buddha as the effect. By studying the Master’s lectures on Pure Land Sūtras and other Mahāyāna Sūtras, Chapter Four illuminates the intimate connections and the cross-reference style of interpretation between these Sūtras and Pure Land teachings, presents a more complex yet comparatively conventional interpretation of the philosophy, and demonstrates that, based on a macroscopic view, the School’s doctrines are in fact a systematic, integrated network covering all the crucial theories that run through the whole of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

However, on the basis of the Learning Center’s continuation of conventional Pure Land teachings, what makes it different from the old traditions and become a modernized twentieth century Lotus Society is that the Learning Center implements flexible practices, adopts modernized media and methods for preaching, and carries out self-reform without delay as the
situation requires. These characteristics successfully help the Learning Center to break new paths. Such timely changes are largely due to the insight and leadership of Master Jingkong.

Of the first characteristic of the implementation of flexible practices, three main types of recitation methods, the daily or regular recitation, the collective recitation of the Seven-day Dharma Gathering, and the practice in the Hall of Buddha’s Name Recitation, are introduced in Chapter Five, in which how the School’s principles are implemented through these practices is explained as well. The core of the argument is that the recitation methods advocated by the Master are flexible and compatible with daily activities, so that followers can attain enlightenment without neglecting social behavior which is important for present society in which time and space for devotion to traditional Buddhist practices are far more limited than in the past.

Besides, Jingkong’s wide vision also lets him realize the capability of the modern technology and its impact on the spread of Buddhism. He points out that the equipment for teaching and transmission should be correspondingly modernized to cope with social changes and revive Buddhist learning for the new generation, telling people that Buddhism is an education and a way of living, not to be mistaken as a polytheistic religion. This insight has led to the use of radio and TV broadcasting, satellites, the Internet (web-sites and live broadcast of talks) and other forms of multi-media in Buddhist preaching as well as the free worldwide distribution of books, audio-tapes, video-tapes, CD, VCD, DVD, and visual art materials about Pure Land Buddhism.\(^{626}\) Other helpful adjustments in teaching include the adoption of modern social, cultural, and scientific terms and concepts in explaining Buddhist language.

Another critical characteristic that effectively facilitates the development and expansion of the Learning Center is its prompt and proper responses to situations that call for reform. An outstanding example can be seen in the Master’s far-sighted awareness of the impact of cultural diversity and conflict. Since the 1980s, after noticing the condition of growing interactions among diverse races, cultures, and religions, Jingkong started to advocate the importance of harmonious communication among different groups. Based on the Buddhist belief that a truly enlightened person will give rise to the unconditional compassion and kindness, he considers that “true sincerity” and “equality of mind” are the starting points for cultural interaction. More than just saying words, in these years, the Master has led members of Buddhist groups actively paying visits to other social and religious organizations and helping them whenever they meet with difficulties. The effect of his efforts can be reflected by his being invited to address the conference of the MultiFaith Forum held by the Multicultural Affairs in Queensland, Australia, where leaders from different racial groups, religions and academia meet monthly to discuss bettering society. Other noticeable outcomes can be indicated by the unusual banquet jointly held by the Singapore Kulapati [Buddhist] Lodge and the Singapore Pure Land Learning Center on January the 1st in 2000 and 2001, in which representatives of the nine main religions in Singapore converged to pray for the peace of the world. Since then, these religious groups have frequently held joint activities with the aim to


help and understand each other. In this regard, it seems like Master Jingkong has led followers of the Learning Center not only to transcend their ordinary minds but also to transcend the boundaries of race, culture, and religion.

More examples of this third characteristic can also be seen in the most recent establishments of the Pureland Learning College (Jingzong xueyuan 淨宗學院) in Queensland, Australia and the Mituo cun 彌陀村 (Amitābha Village) in Singapore and Malaysia. The former can be considered as a renewed Buddhist institution which aims to merge the ideal of traditional spirit of monastic lifestyle and contemporary school structure, and the latter a Buddhist resthome for the elderly with emphases on learning Pure Land teachings and practicing recitation for rebirth.

In the case of training a new generation of lecturers, as discussed in Chapter Two, the Master insists on the application of the traditional pedagogy he learned from Li Bingnan who inherited it from China, which is called xiaozuo fujiang 小座複講 (to repeat a lecture in a small forum), the long-established Chinese teaching method used in training Buddhist lecturers. His idea came true in 1995 when he was invited to hold such classes to train lecturers by the Singapore Kulapati (Buddhist) Lodge and the Amitabha Buddhist Society. In 2000, these classes finally brought forth the establishment of the Buddhist Educational College in Singapore with the cooperation of the Buddhist Association of China, P.R.O.C. Of which a one-year training class was agreed to be run once a year. Different from this, the new Pureland Learning College offers ten nine-year programs (teachings of the Pure Land School, Chan

School, Tiantai School, Huayan School, Three Śāstra or Mādhyamika School, Faxiang or Dharmalaksana School, Lū or Vinaya School, Esoteric School, and Āgama School, and the management of monastic administration) with the objective to train students to be the ones who pay equal attention to comprehension and practice of Buddhism and have good moral character and scholarship (jie xing bingzhong / dao xue juyou 解行並重，道學俱優). For this, students are required to study for eight hours and to practice recitation or meditation for another eight hours per day. This development reveals an attitude of keeping improving to cope with the need to change, and also how determined Master Jingkong is in training qualified Buddhist lecturers for the future transmission of Buddhism, which are certainly part of the forces behind the rapid growth of the Learning Centers all over the world.

Likewise, this kind of improvement or transformation has also been carried out for the benefit of lay Buddhists, of which the most recent plan of the Amitābha Village is particularly for the elderly. The proposal of this institution originated from the Master’s visit to San Francisco, California, USA in 1983, where he gave lectures in an apartment complex for the elderly for seven days; finally, two structures for this proposal are now under construction in Singapore and Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. In addition to providing regular resthome care, the construction of this Village is intended to assist residents to pursue their religious goal by offering them a helpful, carefree, and appropriate living environment.

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632 The Sanlun zong (Three Śāstra School: Mādhyamika) “founded in India by Nāgārjuna, in China by 嘉祥 Chia-hsiang [Jiaxiang] during the reign of 安帝 An Ti [An], Eastern Tsin, A.D. 397-419. It flourished up to the latter part of the T’ang [Tang] dynasty. In 625 it was carried to Japan as Sanron.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 76.


Undoubtedly, the founding of the Pure Land Learning Center, the application of high technology, and the approach of global and multi-cultural development under the guidelines of adaptability and flexibility enliven and repackage traditional Pure Land teachings and practices. This pilot study attempts to portray a more complete picture of the teachings of the Pure Land School and disclose the causes, process, and background of the contemporary transformation by clarifying Pure Land doctrines and practices through investigation of and comparisons between Jingkong's lectures and the teachings of other masters. The practicability of the teachings shown in Buddhist practice and daily activity is also emphasized to reveal that one of the successful elements for the expansion of the School is its awareness of its surroundings. It is hoped that based on this study, the impact of the Pure Land Learning Center on the development of Pure Land Buddhism in recent times is clearly and accurately explained, which can help us to realize that a new generation of Pure Land practitioners has gradually grown up from the soil that has been enriched by the continued efforts of various predecessors. It is also hoped that based on this study, how the hidden influence of the Learning Center under the leadership of Master Jingkong leads followers to stride forward towards the world from scattered Chinese communities can inspire further research and discovery.
此經以信願持名為修行之宗要。非信不足於啓願。非願不足於導行。非持名妙行不足於滿所願而證所信。是故經中先說極樂依正以生信。次說應當發願以導行。次示七日持名以經登不退。信則信自。信他。信因。信果。信事。信理。願則厭離娑婆欣求極樂。行則持名號一心不亂。信自者。信我現前一心之本非肉團。亦非緣影。豈無初後。橫透邊涯。終日隨緣。終日不變。十方虛空微塵國土元我一念心中所現之物。我今雖復昏迷倒惑。苟能一心回心決定得生自己心生本具極樂。更無疑慮。是名信自。信他者。信彼釋迦如來決無詐語。彌陀世尊決無虛願。六方諸佛廣長舌決無二言。隨順諸佛真實教誨。決志求生更無疑惑。是名信他。信因者。深信散亂稱名猶為成佛種子。況況一心不亂安得不生淨土。是名信因。信果者。深信淨土善聚會皆從念佛三昧得生。譬如有種瓜得瓜。種豆得豆。亦如影必隨形。響必應聲。決無虛棄。是名信果。信事者。深信只今現前一心不可盡故。所以依心所現一切十方世界亦不可盡。實有極樂國土在十萬億土之外。最極清淨莊嚴不同莊生寓言。是名信事。信理者。深信極樂國土雖在十萬億土之邊。而實不出我今現前介爾一念心外。以吾現前一心性實無外故。又深信西方依若正若主伴皆吾現前一念妙明真心中所現影。全事即理。全妄即真。全修即性。全他即自。我心遍故佛心亦遍。佛心遍故一切眾生心性亦遍。譬如有室千燈光光互相遍。重重交攝不相妨礙。是名信理。
APPENDIX TWO

Checklist for One Hundred Faults

To improve ourselves, we need to constantly find and correct our faults. [If we do] this diligently, we will accumulate merits and virtues.

It is a Fault to:

1. Fail to feel ashamed or fail to constantly regret one’s faults.
2. Fail to reform. We are lucky to be able to have one breath within us for another day. Do not waste this precious day. Use it to discover your self-nature.
3. Fail to show filial piety to parents and cause them to worry or become angry.
4. Be ungrateful towards parents, teachers, and advisers.
5. Fail to show respect toward teachers and elders, or to be disloyal to siblings and friends.
6. Fail to have a kind, gentle, and compassionate heart.
7. Intentionally kill or injure any living beings.
8. Steal or take other’s belongings without their permission.
9. Seek profit by improper means.
10. Be dishonest.
11. Assist others in bad deeds.
12. Have improper relationships with the opposite sex such as adultery, premarital sex, etc.
13. Visit immoral places.
14. Watch or read pornographic materials, have thoughts of or indulge in sexual misconduct.
15. Lie [to] or hurt others and then not even feel remorse for having done so.
16. Say one thing and mean another.
17. Be untrustworthy and fail to keep one’s promises.
18. Seek relationship[s] with others with false intentions or practice Buddhism with false and bad intentions.
19. Have veiled, malicious intent in hurting others.
20. Treat others with arrogance and insincerity.
21. Speak rudely or use foul language.
22. Be impolite.
23. Speak at an inappropriate speed and volume.
24. Fail to speak gently with a friendly, [in a] modest and sincere manner.
25. Fail to speak appropriately[,] or to interrupt other’s conversation.
26. Cause discord among people by spreading rumors, causing arguments, etc.
27. Be meddlesome or engage in gossip.
28. Impulsively criticize or discuss the rights and wrongs of others on the basis of unsubstantiated rumors.
29. Talk nonsense or engage in pointless conversation.
30. Use false praises or compliments in a conciliatory tone to paint seductive images to entice others to do bad [wrong?]
31. Exaggerate or to seek attention or fame.
32. Cling to emotional attachments, fame and fortune.
33. Be self-indulgent.
34. Be selfish in every thought.
35. Desire to indulge oneself with possessions.
36. Waste food.
37. Have an extravagant lifestyle.
38. Like taking advantage of others.
39. Fail to uplift oneself from adversity and to give rise to greed.
40. Compete wrongfully or argue with others in the pursuit of gain.
41. Be angry [with] or despair over unpleasant circumstances.
42. Be impatient and unable to control one’s temper.
43. Be narrow-minded and unable to tolerate or forgive others.
44. Be irritated, resentful, or vengeful when adverse conditions arise.
45. Be displeased when things do not go as one wishes.
46. Be irritated with others and [with one’s] circumstances.
47. Be arrogant and conceited when successful and surpassing others.
48. Feel dejected or blame others for one’s failures or misfortune.
49. Be jealous of other’s achievement or joyful at other’s misfortune.
50. Not be happy when encountering good people or good deeds.
51. Indulge in frivolous behavior.

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52. Fail to constantly reflect on one's own faults while seeing the faults of others.
53. Fail to adopt the good qualities of others[,] and upon seeing the faults of others, fail to recognize that oneself has done the same previously.
54. Engage in or have the intention to engage in gambling, illegal activities, or speculation, instead of honest work.
55. Worry about personal gains and losses.
56. Be attached to desires or sensory enjoyments, and live with delusions.
57. Be jealous, skeptical or suspicious.
58. Fear being taken advantage of or to be concerned with things that are not important.
59. Be fond of praise and be flattered by compliments, to dislike or become angry upon hearing unpleasant remarks or unwanted advice, yet to be unable to reflect upon oneself to see the truth.
60. Fail to be thrifty.
61. Fail to be humble, modest, and courteous.
62. Fail to treat others as one wishes to be treated.
63. Fail to treat others with the utmost respect and sincerity.
64. Fail to be strict with oneself and lenient with others.
65. Fail to practice Buddhism diligently.
66. Fail to pay sincere respect to Buddha and Bodhisattva images, or to monks and nuns.
67. Slander the Triple Jewels of the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings of the Buddhas), and the Sangha (Buddhist community); or to destroy proper teachings.
68. Lead an unhealthy or irregular life.
69. Have bad habits such as drinking, smoking, or chewing tobacco.
70. Fail to observe traffic laws or public ordinances.
71. Fail to live in harmony with one's family.
72. Fail to meet one's responsibilities.
73. Be lethargic or inefficient in what we do.
74. Fail to maintain a neat appearance.
75. Litter, spit on the ground, or eat and walk simultaneously when it is inappropriate.
76. Ignore trash that should be picked up.
77. Allow one's home to get dirty and messy, or to the other extreme, be overly preoccupied with cleanliness.
78. Fail to understand the Law of Cause and Effect and fail to accept one's fate or to be anxious to possess undue gains.

79. Fail to be happy and chant "Amituofo" upon awakening, and maintain mindfulness throughout the day.

80. Fail to complete one's daily practice.

81. Fail to practice the Ten Recitation Method daily.

82. Fail to use time wisely in practice.

83. Be easily distracted and lack focus in one's practice.

84. Fail to reflect within then to chant the Buddha's name when wandering thoughts and worries arise.

85. Be constantly distracted with wishful wandering thoughts.

86. Live a disturbed and disorderly life, instead of concentrating on one's practice.

87. Fail to face each day calmly and objectively with a non-discriminatory mind.

88. Be overly fond of watching TV, reading newspaper, magazines, etc.

89. Fail to do one's best in helping people to learn Buddhism and other proper teachings when the opportunity arises.

90. Fail to do good deeds to benefit others or fail to cherish good fortune.

91. Fail to act or to give when appropriate.

92. Fail to do one's best when helping people.

93. Fail to do the smallest of good deeds and to commit even the smallest of faults.

94. Fail to be a friend to others or to lack team spirit.

95. Fail to greet others with a smile.

96. Fail to strengthen relations with neighbor or to help others when needed.

97. Fail to assist the disabled, elderly or children.

98. Fail to comfort others when they are upset.

99. Be stingy or feel regret after acts of giving.

100. Fail to have a calm and objective attitude when encountering criticism and gossip.

As human beings, we have innumerable faults, more than any list can contain. But if we correct our faults and have the compassionate heart to think only of others, we are awakened. In so doing, we will create a new future for ourselves and for all those who are touched by our concern and loving-kindness.
APPENDIX THREE

Master Jingkong’s Talks on Various Topics According to an Internet Source
(http://www.amtb-dba.org/Audio/index.html)

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APPENDIX FOUR

The Forty-eight Vows of Amitābha in the Infinite Life Sūtra (Sanghavarman’s Version) and the Two English Translations by Hisao Inagaki and Luis O. Gómez

1. Sanghavarman’s version: 設我得佛。國中有地獄餓鬼畜生者。不取正覺 (p. 267c).

Inagaki’s translation: If, when I attain Buddhahood, there should be in my land a hell, a realm of hungry spirits or a realm of animals, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 241).

Gómez’s translation: May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, my land should still have hells, hungry ghosts, or animals (p. 166).

2. 設我得佛。國中人天。壽終之後。復更三惡道者。不取正覺 (p. 267c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should after death fall again into the three evil realms, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 241).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any one among the humans and gods in my land return to one of the three unfortunate paths of rebirth after their normal life span has come to an end (p. 166).

3. 設我得佛。國中人天。不悉真金色者。不取正覺 (p. 267c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not all be the colour of pure gold, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 241).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the humans and gods in my land are not all the color of genuine gold (p. 166).

4. 設我得佛。國中人天。形色不同有好醜者。不取正覺 (p. 267c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not all be one appearance, and should there be any difference in beauty, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 241).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the

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636 The sequence of these texts is: Sanghavarman’s version (Sanghavarman, trans., Foshuo wuliangshou jing 佛說無量壽經 [The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sūtra] in TT 12, no. 360, 267c-269b), Inagaki’s translation, (Hisao Inagaki, The Three Pure Land Sutras: A Study and Translation from Chinese (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1995) 241-249), and Gómez’s translation (Luis O. Gómez, The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996) 166-172). Page numbers of each source are indicated in bracket at the end of each citation.
humans and gods in my land are not the same in their appearance and are either beautiful or ugly (p. 166).

5. 設我得佛。國中人天。不悉識宿命。下至知百千億那由他諸劫事者。不取正覺 (p. 267c)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not remember all their former lives, not knowing at least the events which occurred during the previous hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of kalpas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (pp. 241-242).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the gods and humans in my land do not know thoroughly their past lives, even to the extent of knowing the events of hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of past cosmic ages (p. 166).

6. 設我得佛。國中人天。不得天眼。下至見百千億那由他諸佛國者。不取正覺 (p. 267c)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not possess the divine eye of seeing at least a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of Buddha-lands, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 242).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the gods and humans in my land do not gain the divine eye, even to the extent of seeing into hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of buddha-lands (p. 166).

7. 設我得佛。國中人天。不得天耳。下至聞百千億那由他諸佛所說。不悉受持者。不取正覺 (pp. 267c-268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not possess the divine ear of hearing the teachings of at least a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of Buddhas and should not remember all of them, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 242).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the gods and humans in my land do not gain the divine ear, even to the extent of hearing what hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of buddhas are preaching, and if they cannot keep all those teachings in mind (p. 166).

8. 設我得佛。國中人天。不得見他心智。下至知百千億那由他諸佛國中衆生心念者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not possess the faculty of knowing the thoughts of others, at least those of all sentient beings living in a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of Buddha-lands, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 242).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the gods and humans in my land do not gain the knowledge of seeing into the minds of others, even to the extent of knowing the thoughts in the minds of living beings in hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of buddha-lands (p. 166).

9. 設我得佛。國中人天。不得神足。於一念頃下至不能超過百千億那由他諸佛國者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not possess the supernatural power of traveling anywhere in one instant, even beyond a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of Buddha-lands, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 242).
-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the humans and gods in my land do not gain miraculous powers, even to the extent that they will be able to travel to hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of other Buddha-lands and beyond in the interval of one moment of thought (pp. 166-167).

10. 設我得佛。國中人天。若起想念貪計身者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should give rise to thoughts of self-attachment, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 242).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the humans and gods in my land form in their mind the image or the idea of any object of desire, or crave for each other’s bodies (p. 167).

11. 設我得佛。國中人天。不住定聚。必至滅度者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not dwell in the Definitely Assured State and unfailingly reach Nirvana, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 242).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the humans and gods in my land are not assured of awakening, and without fail attain liberation (p. 167).

12. 設我得佛。光明有能限量。下至不照百千億那由他諸佛國者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, my light should be limited, unable to illuminate at least a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of Buddha-lands, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 242).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, my radiant light can have a limit, even if the limit is that it cannot shine on hundreds of thousands of millions of trillions of Buddha-lands (p. 167).

13. 設我得佛。壽命有能限量。下至百千億那由他劫者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, my life-span should be limited, even to the extent of a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of kalpas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 243).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, my life span has a limit, even a limit of hundreds of thousands of million of trillions of cosmic ages (p. 167).

14. 設我得佛。國中聲聞有能計算。乃至三千大千世界眾生緣覺。於百千劫悉共計校知其數者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, the number of the śrāvakas in my land could be known, even if all the beings and pratyekabuddhas living in this universe of a thousand million worlds should count them during a hundred thousand kalpas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 243).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the number of disciples in my land can be counted, even if their number is know only after all the living beings of the three-thousandfold, great-thousandfold world system become solitary buddhas with special powers and count together for hundreds of thousands of cosmic ages (p. 314).
15. 設我得佛。國中人天。壽命無能限量。除其本願修短自在。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should have limited life-spans, except when they wish to shorten them in accordance with their original vows, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 243).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the life span of any human or god in my land as a limit – except for those who by virtue of the vows they have taken in past times have developed the power to shorten their life span (p. 167).

16. 設我得佛。國中人天。乃至聞有不善名者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should even hear of any wrongdoing, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 243).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the humans and gods in my land should so much as hear that there is someone called ‘nonvirtuous’ (p. 167).

17. 設我得佛。十方世界無量諸佛。不悉諮嗟稱我名者。不取正覺 (p. 268a)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, innumerable Buddhas in the lands of the ten directions should not all praise and glorify my Name, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 243).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the innumerable buddhas in all the world systems in the ten regions of the universe do not in every way praise and proclaim my name (p. 167).

18. 設我得佛。十方衆生至心信樂。欲生我國乃至十念。若不生者不取正覺。唯除五逆誹謗正法 (pp. 268a-268b)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and call my Name even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five gravest offences and abuse the right Dharma (p. 243).
   -May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe should single-mindedly desire to be reborn in my land with joy, with confidence, and gladness, and if they should bring to mind this aspiration for even ten moments of thought and yet not gain rebirth there. This excludes only those who have committed the five heinous sins and those who have reviled the True Dharma (p. 167).

19. 設我得佛。十方衆生發菩提心修諸功德。至心發願欲生我國。臨壽終時。假令不與大衆圍遙見其人前者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。
   -If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient being in the lands of the ten directions, who awaken aspiration for Enlightenment, do various meritorious deeds and sincerely desire to be born in my land, should not, at their death, see me appear before them surrounded by a multitude of sages, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (pp. 243-244).
-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe resolves to seek awakening, cultivates all the virtues, and single-mindedly aspires to be reborn in my land, and if, when they approached the moment of their death, I did not appear before them, surrounded by a great assembly (p. 168).

20. 設我得佛。十方眾生聞我名號。系念我國。皆生信歡喜。不果遂者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who, having heard my Name, concentrate their thoughts on my land, do various meritorious deeds and sincerely transfer their merits towards my land with a desire to be born there, should not eventually fulfill their aspiration, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 244).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe hear my name, fix their thoughts on rebirth in my land, cultivate all the roots of virtue, and single-mindedly dedicate this virtue desiring to be born in my land, and yet they do not attain this goal (p. 168).

21. 設我得佛。國中人天。不悉成滿三十二大人相者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not all be endowed with the thirty-two physical characteristics of a Great Man, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 244).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the humans and gods in my land are not all fully endowed with those thirty-two marks of the superior person that adorn buddhas and bodhisattvas (p. 168).

22. 設我得佛。他方佛土諸菩薩眾來生我國。究竟必至一生補處。除其本願自在所化。為眾生故被弘誓錘。積累德本度脱一切。遊諸佛國修菩薩行。供養十方諸佛如來。開化恒沙無量眾生。使立無上正真之道。超出常倫。諸地之行。現修習普賢之德。若不爾者不取正覺 (p. 268b)。

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the Buddha-lands of the other directions who visit my land should not ultimately and unfailingly reach the Stage of Becoming a Buddha after One More Life, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment. Excepted are those who wish to teach and guide sentient beings in accordance with their original vows. For they wear the armour of great vows, accumulate merits, deliver all beings from birth-and-death, visit Buddha-lands to perform the bodhisattvas practices, make offerings to Buddhas, Tathāgatas, throughout the ten directions, enlighten uncountable sentient beings as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and establish them in the highest, perfect Enlightenment. Such bodhisattvas transcend the course of practice of the ordinary bodhisattva stages and actually cultivate the virtues of Samantabhadra (p. 244).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is not the case that all the assemblies of bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in the other nine regions of the universe gain rebirth in my land and there reach the culmination of the bodhisattva path, attaining without fail the stage in which only one birth separates them from full buddhahood – except for those who, because of the vows they took in the past to effortlessly bring all living beings to spiritual maturity, don the armor of the Great Vows, amass the roots of virtue, and liberate all these beings; and who, traveling freely to all buddha-lands, cultivate the bodhisattva practice, honor with offerings all the buddhas,
tathagatas, in the ten regions of the universe, instruct and transform numberless living beings, as many as the sands of the Ganges, establishing them on the unsurpassable, correct, true Way, and who have gone beyond the ordinary and have manifested the conduct of all the stages of the bodhisattva practice, cultivating the virtues of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, the Universally Virtuous (p. 168).

23. 23. 我得佛。國中菩薩。承佛神力供養諸佛。一食之頃不能遍至無量無數億那由他諸佛國者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in my land, who would make offerings to Buddhas through my divine power, should not be able to reach immeasurable and innumerable kotis of nayutas of Buddha-lands in as short a time as it takes to eat a meal, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (pp. 244-245).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land are not moved by the Buddha’s majestic power to honor all buddhas with offerings, and if they are not able to travel for this purpose everywhere in all the innumerable, countless, millions of trillions of buddha-lands and return in time for their one morning meal (p. 168).

24. 24. 我得佛。國中菩薩。在諸佛前現其德本。諸所求欲供養之具。若不如意者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in my land should not be able, as they wish, to perform meritorious acts of worshipping the Buddhas with the offerings of their choice, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 245).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land are not moved by the Buddha’s majestic power to honor all buddhas with offerings, and if they are not able to travel for this purpose everywhere in all the innumerable, countless, millions of trillions of buddha-lands and return in time for their one morning meal (p. 168).

25. 25. 我得佛。國中菩薩。不能演說一切智者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in my land should not be able to expound the Dharma with the all-knowing wisdom, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 245).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land should not be able to preach the truths known by the all-knowing knowledge of a buddha (p. 169).

26. 26. 我得佛。國中菩薩。不得金剛那羅延身者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, there should be any bodhisattva in my land not endowed with the body of the Vajra-god Nārāyaṇa, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 245).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land do not obtain the adamantine body of Narayana (p. 169).

27. 27. 我得佛。國中人天。一切萬物嚴淨光麗。形色殊特窮微極妙無能稱量。其諸眾生。乃至逮得天眼。有能明了數其名者。不取正覺 (p. 268b)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings should be able, even with the divine eye, to distinguish by name and calculate by number all the myriads of manifestations provided for the humans and devas in my land, which are glorious and resplendent and have exquisite
details beyond description, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 245).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the exact number of all the myriad objects in this field – objects that are adorned and pure, resplendent and orderly, their quality of form and color being so delicately fine that they cannot be named or counted – could be discerned and reckoned by any one of the humans or the gods in my land, or by any other living being anywhere else, even if it is a being with the power of the divine eye (p. 169).

28. 設我得佛。國中菩薩。乃至少功德者。不能知見其道場樹無量光色高四百萬里者。不取正覺 (pp. 268b-268c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in my land, even those with little store of merit, should not be able to see the Bodhi-tree which has countless colours and is four million lī in height, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 245).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, every bodhisattva in my land, even a bodhisattva of few merits, is not able to see clearly my Tree of Awakening in all its boundless radiance standing four million leagues high (p. 169).

29. 設我得佛。國中菩薩。若受讀經法諷誦持說。而不得辯才智慧者。不取正覺 (p. 268c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in my land should not acquire eloquence and wisdom in upholding sutras and reciting and expounding them, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 245).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land study the teachings of the sutras, recite them, memorize them, and expound them, but do not obtain the wisdom of inspired speech (p. 169).

30. 設我得佛。國中菩薩。智慧辯才若可限量者。不取正覺 (p. 268c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, the wisdom and eloquence of bodhisattvas in my land should be limited, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (pp. 245-246).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the bodhisattvas of my land find that the inspired speech, arising from their wisdom, can have a limit (p. 169).

31. 設我得佛。國土清淨。皆悉照見十方一切無量無數不可思議諸佛世界。猶如明鏡睹其面像。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 268c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, my land should not be resplendent, revealing in its light all the immeasurable, innumerable and inconceivable Buddha-lands, like images reflected in a clear mirror, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 246).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is not the cast that my realm is pure, reflecting completely all the innumerable, countless, inconceivable world systems of all the buddhas in the ten regions of the universe, just as one might see the reflection of one’s own face in a clear mirror (p. 169).

32. 設我得佛。自地以上至于虚空。宮殿樓觀池流華樹。國土所有一切萬物。皆以無著雜寶百千種香而共合成。嚴飾奇妙超諸人天。其香普薰十方世界。菩薩聞者皆修佛行。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 268c).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, all the myriads of manifestations in my land, from the ground
to the sky, such as palaces, pavilions, ponds, streams and trees, should not be composed both of countless treasures, which surpass in supreme excellence anything in the worlds of humans and devas, and of a hundred thousand kinds of aromatic wood, whose fragrance pervades all the worlds of the ten directions, causing all bodhisattvas who sense it to perform Buddhist practices, then may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 246).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is not the case that, from the earth up to and including the heavens, all the palaces, watchtowers, ponds, streams, flowering trees, and all the myriad things that are in my realm, are all made of innumerable variegated gems and fragrant substance of a hundred thousand kinds, and that the ornaments of my land are marvelously rare, surpassing all things human and celestial, and that their fragrance spreads over all the world systems in the ten regions of the universe, and that all the bodhisattvas who hear of this cultivate the conduct of a buddha (p. 169).

-If when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions, who have been touched by my light, should not feel peace and happiness in their bodies and minds surpassing those of humans and devas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 246).

-If when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions, who have heard my Name, should not gain the bodhisattva’s insight into the non-arising of all dharmas and should not acquire various profound dhāranis, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 246).

-If when I attain Buddhahood, women in the immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions who, having heard my Name, rejoice in faith, awaken aspiration for Enlightenment and wish to renounce womanhood, should after death be reborn again as women, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (pp. 246-247).

-If, when I attain Buddhatva, women in the immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions who, having heard my Name, rejoice in faith, awaken aspiration for Enlightenment and wish to renounce womanhood, should after death be reborn again as women, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 246).

-If when I attain Buddhahood, any woman in the measureless, inconceivable world systems of all the buddhas in the ten regions of the universe, hears my name in this life and single-mindedly, with joy, with confidence and gladness resolves to attain awakening, and despises her female body, and still, when her
present life comes to an end, she is again reborn as a woman (p. 170).

36. 設我得佛。十方無量不可思议諸佛世界諸菩薩眾。聞我名字。壽終之後常修梵行成佛道。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 268c)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions, who have heard my Name, should not, after the end of their lives, always perform sacred practices until they reach Buddhahood, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 247).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it should not be the case that all the assemblies of bodhisattvas in the measureless and inconceivable world systems of all the buddhas in the ten regions of the universe, upon hearing my name, and after their present life comes to an end, continuously live the chaste life of the renunciant until they realize the Way of a buddha (p. 170).

37. 設我得佛。十方無量不可思议諸佛世界諸天人民。聞我名字。五體投地稽首作禮。歡喜信樂修菩薩行。諸天世人莫不致敬。若不爾者。不取正覺 (pp. 268c-269a)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in the immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha-lands of the ten directions, who, having heard my Name, prostrate themselves on the ground to revere and worship me, rejoice in faith, and perform the bodhisattva practices, should not be respected by all devas and people of the world, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 247).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is not the case that everyone without exception in heaven and on earth will totally revere all the humans and gods in the measureless and inconceivable world systems of all the buddhas in the ten regions of the universe, who, upon hearing my name, pay homage with a full prostration, feel great joy, believe and rejoice, and practice the bodhisattva practice (p. 170).

38. 設我得佛。國中人天。欲得衣服隨念即至。如佛所誥應法妙服自然在身。若有裁縫染治浣濯者。不取正覺 (p. 269a)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not obtain clothing, as soon as such a desire arises in their minds, and if the fine robes as prescribed and praised by the Buddhas should not be spontaneously provided for them to wear, and if these clothes should need sewing, bleaching, dyeing or washing, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 247).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the humans and gods in my land should have any need to sew, bleach, dye, or wash the precious garments that they will obtain in that land, which they will obtain exactly as they want them and when they think of them, which will clothe their bodies miraculously, and which will be praised by the Buddha as conforming to the norms of his teachings (p. 170).

39. 設我得佛。國中人天。所受快樂。不如漏盡比丘者。不取正覺 (p. 269a)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not enjoy happiness and pleasure comparable to those of a monk who has exhausted all the passions, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 247).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, all humans and gods in my land do not experience a bliss comparable to the state of bliss of a
monk who has extinguished all the sources for the flow of karma (p. 170).

40. 設我得佛，國中菩薩。隨意欲見十方無量嚴淨佛土。應時如願。於寶樹中皆悉照見。猶如明鏡睹其面像。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 269a)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land, who wish to see the immeasurable glorious Buddha-lands of the ten directions, should not be able to view all of them reflected in the jewelled trees, just as one seeds one’s face reflected in a clear mirror, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (pp. 247-248).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is not the case that the bodhisattvas in my land shall be able to see, as they so desire and when they so wish, the innumerable adorned and pure buddha-fields in the ten regions of the universe reflected in the jewel trees of my land, as one might see one’s own image in a clear mirror (p. 171).

41. 設我得佛。他方國土諸菩薩眾。聞我名字至于得佛。諸根缺陋不具足者。不取正覺 (p. 269a)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the land of the other directions who hear my Name should, at any time before becoming Buddhas, have impaired, inferior or incomplete sense organs, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 248).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, any among the host of bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in other regions of the universe beyond the western region of my pure buddha-land, from the moment when they hear my name and up until they attain buddhahood, suffer any lack or imperfection in their faculties (p. 171).

42. 設我得佛。他方國土諸菩薩眾。聞我名字。皆悉逮得清淨解脫三昧。住是三昧一發意願。供養無量不可思議諸佛世尊。而不失定意。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 269a)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions who hear my Name should not all attain the samādhi called ‘pure emancipation’ and, while dwelling therein, without losing concentration, should not be able to make offerings in one instant to immeasurable and inconceivable Buddha, World-Honoured Ones, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 248).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is not the case that everyone in the host of bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in other regions of the universe beyond the western region of my pure buddha-land, will attain in all its multiple aspects the state of mental concentration called Pure Liberation and, abiding in this state of concentrated mind, will be able to make offerings in a single moment of thought to innumerable, inconceivable buddhas, world honored ones, and this without losing their concentration of mind (p. 171).

43. 設我得佛。他方國土諸菩薩眾。聞我名字。壽終之後生尊貴家。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 269a)。
- If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions who hear my Name should not after death be reborn into noble families, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 248).
- May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is not the case that everyone in the host bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in other regions of the
universe beyond the western region of my pure buddha-land, upon hearing my name and
after their life spans come to an end, will be reborn in noble families (p. 171).

44. 悉我得佛。他方國土諸菩薩眾。聞我名字。歡喜踊躍。修菩薩行具足德
本。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 269a).

If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions who hear my
Name should not rejoice so greatly as to dance and perform the bodhisattva practices and
should not acquire stores of merit, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 248).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is
not the case that everyone in the host bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in other regions of the
universe beyond the western region of my pure buddha-land, upon hearing my name, is filled
with joy and enthusiasm, practices the conduct of a bodhisattva, and gains all the roots of
virtue (p. 171).

45. 悉我得佛。他方國土諸菩薩眾。聞我名字。皆悉速得普等三昧。住是三
昧乃至成佛。常見無量不可思議一切如來。若不爾者。不取正覺 (p. 269a).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions who hear my
Name should not all attain the samadhi called ‘universal equality’ and, while dwelling therein,
should not always be able to see all the immeasurable and inconceivable Tathāgatas until
those bodhisattvas, too, become Buddhas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 248).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is
not the case that everyone in the host bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in other regions of the
universe beyond the western region of my pure buddha-land, upon hearing my name will all
attain the state of mental concentration know as Universal Sameness and abiding, in this state
of concentration until they realize buddhahood, will constantly see all the innumerable,
inconceivable tathāgatas (p. 171).

46. 悉我得佛。國中菩薩。隨其志願所欲聞法自然得聞。若不爾者。不取正
覺 (pp. 269a-269b).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in my land should not be able to hear
spontaneously whatever teachings they may wish, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 249).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, it is
not the case that the bodhisattvas in my land, when they wish to hear the Dharma, will be
able to hear it spontaneously, exactly as they wish to hear it (pp. 171-172).

47. 悉我得佛。他方國土諸菩薩眾。聞我名字。不即得至不退轉者。不取正
覺 (p. 269b).

-If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions who hear my
Name should not instantly reach the Stage of Non-retrogression, may I not attain perfect
Enlightenment (p. 249).

-May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, everyone among the host bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in other regions of the universe
beyond the western region of my pure buddha-land, the moment they hear my name, will not
attain at once the state from which there is no falling back (p. 172).
If, when I attain Buddahood, bodhisattvas in the lands of the other directions who hear my Name should not instantly gain the first, second and third insights into the nature of dharmas and firmly abide in the truths realized by all the Buddhas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (p. 249).

May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, everyone among the host of bodhisattvas in the buddha-fields in other regions of the universe beyond the western region of my pure buddha-land, the moment they hear my name, will not attain the first, second, and third state of the serene acceptance of the Dharma, and if they will not attain at once the condition of not falling back in their pursuit of the qualities of a buddha (p. 172).
When upholding the four characters of *Amituqfo*, [one should] recite by chasing [the name] and following [it] closely [with another recitation of the name]; one should not [recite] aloud and so harm [one’s] vital energy; should not [recite] too rapidly to stir up [one’s] internal heat; should not exert [one’s strength] yet [recite] in silence to harm [one’s] blood [essence]; should not [recite] relaxingly to nurture [delusive] thoughts; and should not [recite] in a low voice and so become drowsy. [One should] sit for [the length of a period of the burning of] half a small stick of incense, stand for [the length of a period that burns] half a small stick of incense, walk for [the length of a period that burns] half a small stick of incense, and then sit for [the length of a period that burns] half a small stick of incense again, and [the cycle can] go round and round, even, and uninterrupted. Regardless of eating, drinking, going to the toilet, changing, or doing other things, all should be [done along with the recitation of] Buddha’s [name] and one must not speak. [Only] pickled vegetables and common dishes [are served] at all times, regardless of times for morning congee, snacks, vegetarian lunch, or evening congee; do not multiply expenses and give birth to [delusive] thoughts. [The mind] only [bears] the four-character name of Buddha [Amitābha].
APPENDIX SIX

The Six Periods of the Day and Night Recitation of Buddha’s [Name] Method

All those who practice [this should] first place an image of a Buddha in a clean room, offer incense and [oil to light] lamps they can be afforded, bathe to wash off dirt, and wear clean clothing. [Then,] at the times of morning, noon, sunset, nightfall, midnight, and sunrise, [stand] upright in front of the Three Precious Ones [of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha], putting the palms together, to sincerely worship the west, look at the compassionate appearance, recite “namo Amituofo [turn to and rely on Amitābha]” one thousand times, worship the image of Buddha by forty-eight prostrations, and read aloud the Essay on the West to resolve and dedicate merits [to the Western Pure Land and to the salvation of others]. [If one can] practice the Way at these six periods every day absorbedly and tirelessly, [one can] perfectly complete pure karma and will certainly be reborn in the upper grades.

637 Most likely, the Xifang wen 西方文 (Essay on the West) mentioned here is the short title of the Xifang fayuan wen 西方發願文 (Essay on Making vows to the West) by Shixian 實賢 (1686-1734, zi Siqi 思齊, hao Shengan 省庵), who was the eleventh Patriarch of the Pure Land School. However, since the purpose of reciting fayuan wen is to express and remind the reciter his/her goal of practice, the use of this kind of essays becomes quite flexible; as long as the content is clearly enough to express such goal, the reciter can choose to adopt previous noted works like this one or simply to compose one by himself/herself.
APPENDIX SEVEN

The Method of Worship

Burn incense in front of [an image of] the Buddha, wholeheartedly put the palms together, and prostrate once after each recitation (one should prostrate reverently). Recite:

Turn to and rely on Sahā-lokadhātu’s [the world’s] present, great compassionate Tathāgata and Original Teacher Śākyamuni Buddha (nine prostrations).

Turn to and rely on the Western World of Utmost Joy’s Guiding Teacher Amitābha Buddha of great compassion, vow, and power (forty-eight prostrations).
Turn to and rely on the Western World of Utmost Joy’s Great Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara of millions upon millions of pure gold bodies (three prostrations).

Turn to and rely on the Western World of Utmost Joy’s Great Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta of infinite wisdom light bodies (three prostrations).

Turn to and rely on all Western World of Utmost Joy’s Bodhisattvas of Great Ocean of Purity, who are of two perfect magnificent bodies [Dharmakāya and Sambhogakāya] (three prostrations).

After finishing the prostration, kneel and wholeheartedly put the palms together. Recite:

All evil karmas I did in the past were owing to beginningless greed, anger, and stupidity and given birth by the body, voice, and mind.

Now I face the [image of the] Buddha and seek repentance, wishing that I remove all obstacles when I am on my deathbed and be reborn immediately into the Peaceful and Happy Land upon seeing Amitābha.

The Void has an end, yet my vows are inexhaustible. [Wish that] all beings, sentient and insentient perfectly, [complete] the knowledge of the causes [of all phenomena].

Upon finishing the recitation, stand up, prostate thrice, and retire.
APPENDIX EIGHT

The Beginning and Ending Rite for the Recitation of Buddha's [Name]

念佛起止儀 諧佛偈
阿彌陀佛身金色 相好光明無等倫
白毫宛轉五髪彌 純目澄清四大海
光中化佛無數億 化菩薩眾亦無邊
四十八願度眾生 九品咸令登彼岸
南無西方極樂世界 大慈大悲 阿彌陀佛。
南無阿彌陀佛。或五百聲 或一千聲 愈多愈妙 必須
至誠懇切 字字句句 要從心裡念出
南無觀世音菩薩 十聲
南無大勢至菩薩 十聲
南無清淨大海衆菩薩 十聲 再接誦發願文
我今稱念阿彌陀 真實功德佛名號
惟願慈悲哀攬受 證知懺悔及所願
我昔所造諸惡業 皆由無始貪瞋癡
從身語意之所生 一切我今皆懺悔
願我臨欲命終時 盡除一切諸障礙
面見彼佛阿彌陀 即得往生安樂剎
彼佛眾會咸清淨 我時於勝蓮花生
親睹如來無量光 現前授我菩提記
蒙彼如來授記已 化身無數百俱胝
The Beginning and Ending Rite for the Recitation of Buddha's [Name]

Praise Buddha Gāthā:

The body of Amitābha is in gold color; his physical marks are pleasant\(^{638}\) and shining beyond comparison.

The ūrnā or curl of white hairs is [as big as] five Mount Sumeru\(^{639}\) and the dark purple eyes are as clear as the four great oceans.

Amid the light [of the Buddha] there are innumerable hundred of millions of transformed Buddhas as well as infinite crowds of transformed Bodhisattvas.

The forty-eight vows can save sentient beings and the nine grades enable all to reach the other shore [nirvāṇa].

Turn to and rely on great compassionate Amitābha in the Western World of Utmost Joy.

Turn to and rely on Amitābha (for five hundreds times or one thousand times, the more the better, and must [recite] wholeheartedly and earnestly so that each word and sentence is recited from within the heart).

\(^{638}\) The term xiānghào 相好 can also be interpreted as laksāna-vyāhjana, “the thirty-two 相 or marks and the eighty 好 or signs on the physical body of Buddha.” It is said that the “marks on a Buddha’s sambhoga-kāya number 84,000. 相 is intp. as larger signs, 好 as smaller.” See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 309-310.

\(^{639}\) It is said to be the central mountain of every world, which is surrounded by the four great oceans.
Turn to and rely on Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (ten times).

Turn to and rely on Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva (ten times).

Turn to and rely on all Bodhisattvas of Great Ocean of Purity (ten times).

Then, recite aloud the Essay on Making the Vow:\footnote{The full title for this essay is the Nianfo chanluii favuan wen 念佛懺悔發願文 (Essay on the Repentance and Vows Making by the Recitation of Buddha's [Name]) by Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032), a Song Tiantai monk. See Zongxiao, Lebang wenlei (Various Writings on the Land of Bliss), TT 47, no. 1969A: 178c.}

Now I recite Amitābha, the Buddha's name of true meritorious virtue.

Only wishing that the compassionate one [you] pityingly guide and receive [me], and verify [my] repentance and wishes.

All evil karmas I did in the past, of which I now repent, were owing to beginningless greed, anger, and stupidity and given birth by the body, voice, and mind.

I wish that I will remove all obstacles when I am on my deathbed and be reborn immediately into the Peaceful and Happy Land upon seeing Amitābha.

All that Buddha's assemblies are pure; at that [kind of] time may I be reborn in the superior lotus flower to see personally the Tathāgata Infinite Light,\footnote{The name Wuliangguang is one of Amitābha's names referring to one of his significances of infinity. For which the term wuliangguang can also be interpreted as the infinite light of Amitābha.} who foretells [my] enlightenment\footnote{Puti 菩提 (bodhi) means "knowledge; understanding; perfect wisdom; the illuminated or enlightened mind; anciently intp. by 達, later by 開, to be aware, perceive." William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, ed., Dictionary, p. 388.} at this very moment.

After being foretold by that Tathāgata, may [I] transform [myself] into one billion\footnote{Juzhi 儘趾 (koti) means a crore or ten millions; thus, the term bai juzhi 百俱趾 is referred to one hundred koti or ten millions.}
bodies and the power of [my] wisdom is so extensive and mighty that it covers all the ten directions and universally benefits sentient beings of all realms.

I turn to and rely on the Buddha and ought to wish that sentient beings comprehend the Great Way [so that they] give rise to the unsurpassed mind (one prostration).

I turn to and rely on the Dharma and wish that sentient beings penetrate sūtras in the Tripitaka [so that they gain] oceanic wisdom (one prostration).

I turn to and rely on the Sangha and wish that all be well organized and without any obstacles (one prostration).

Maintain such practice every day for two periods [of two hours], four periods [of two hours] or six periods [of two hours]. Be earnestly sure that [one] practice [this] with all one’s heart, utmost respect, and according to one’s duty and capability. [In so doing,] this person is sure to attain rebirth [in the Pure Land].
APPENDIX NINE
An Example of a Rite for the General Practice of Recitation
Suggested by Master Yinguang

1) In the morning, after finishing the prostration before an [image of] Buddha,

2) [one should] first recite the Amitābha Sūtra once and the Rebirth Mantra thrice;

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644 Yinguang, Yinguangfashi jiayan lu (Record of Dharma Master Yinguang’s Praiseworthy Talks), p. 67-68. Although the original text is written in an essay form, the English translation here intends to rearrange it in an outline form so that the order of the rite can be clearly shown.

645 The full title for this Wangsheng zhou (the Rebirth Mantra) is Ba yiqie yezhanggenben desheng jingtu shenzhou (Sacred Mantra on Uprooting the Root of All Karmic Obstacles to Acquire the Rebirth into the Pure Land). Re-translated by Gunabhadra (Qiunabatuoluo; 394-468) in the later years of Yuanjia era (424-454) of the Liu Song Dynasty (420-479) during the Northern and
3) Upon finishing [them], recite at once the eight-sentence Praise Buddha Gāthā [begun with]

“The body of Amañātha is in gold color.”

4) After finishing the recitation of the gāthā, recite “Turn to and rely on the Western World of Utmost Joy’s great compassionate Amañātha,”

5) and immediately recite only the six-character “Turn to and rely on Amañātha” either one thousand or five hundreds times, which shall be recited accompanied by circumambulation. If it is not convenient to circumambulate, kneeling, sitting, and standing are all permissible.

6) When the recitation is about to finish, return to the [original] position, kneel, and recite thrice Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and all Bodhisattvas of Great Ocean of Purity.

7) Then, recite the Pure Land Essay to dedicate merits to and resolve to be reborn into [the Pure Land]. ...

8) Upon finishing [the recitation of] the Pure Land Essay, recite the Taking Refuge in the Three

Southern Dynasties (420-589), this mantra was originally included in Gunabhāḍra’s translation of Amañātha Sūtra, which is no longer exist. TT 12, no. 368: 352a-b.

646 This was composed by Zunshi, who was also known as Ciyunchanzhu (literally means Repentance Master Compassionate Cloud). Thus, this essay bears the title Ciyunchanzhu jingtu wen (Pure Land Essay by Repentance Master Compassionate Cloud) as well. Besides, since the purpose of this essay is to make vows and delicate merits, which is similar to those writings called the fayuan wen (Essay on Making Vows), xifang wen (Essay on the West), xifang fayuan wen (Essay on Making vows to the West), huixiang fayuan wen (Essay on Dedicating Merits and Making Vows), and fayuan huixiang wen (Essay on Making Vows and Dedicating Merits), this essay is also called the Ciyunchanzhu fayuan wen (Essay on Making Vows by Repentance Master Compassionate Cloud). In addition, according to Yinguang, “those who recite the Pure Land Essay should give rise to [the kind of] mind that is in accordance with the essay’s textual meaning; if the mind is not given rise according to the essay, then it only becomes a false text composed in vain that no true benefit can be acquired [from it] (念淨土文者，令依文義而發心也。若心不依文而發，則成徒設虛文，不得實益矣。)” See Yinguang, Yinguangfashi jiayan lu (Record of Dharma Master Yinguang’s Praiseworthy Talks), p. 67.
[Precious Ones], prostrate, and retire.

This is a morning meritorious assignment; follow this as well in the evening. Those who want to prostrate themselves more can either prostrate [before an image of] Buddha a certain number of times when returning to the [original] position after the recitation of [Amitābha’s] name ([for example, if] recite nine times a Bodhisattva’s [name], then, prostrate nine times; upon finishing the prostration, make vows and delicate merits) or prostrate after the meritorious assignment of recitation at one’s own convenience; all are permissible. However, [one] must be earnest and with all one’s heart, and cannot be hasty and cursory.
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Figure 2. The Buddhist Materials Distribution Center of the Donglin Monastery (April, 2002)
Figure 3. Master Yinguang 印光 (1860-1940)
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Figure 5. Mr. Xia Lianju 夏蓮居 (1882-1965)
Figure 6. Mr. Huang Nianzu 黃念祖 (1913-1992)
Figure 7. Master Jingkong 淨空 (1927-)
Figure 8. The banquet on January the 1st, 2001, in which all representatives of nine main religions joined together to pray for the peace of the world (from Buddhist Educational Journal, no. 8 (January, 2001) 8)

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Figure 14a. One of the two couplets on two of the four pillars of the pavilion where the statue of Avalokitesvara is placed; the couplet indicates the principles advocated by Master Jingkong and the Pure Land Learning Center (April, 2002)

1. The first line of the couplet reads as follows:

The true sincerity, purity, equality, proper understanding, and compassion – all Buddhas teach us to cultivate [our] minds as such
Figure 14b. One of the two couplets on two of the four pillars of the pavilion where the statue of Avalokiteśvara is placed; the couplet indicates the principles advocated by Master Jingkong and the Pure Land Learning Center (April, 2002)

2. The second line of the couplet reads as follows:

See through, let go, be carefree, accord with conditions, and be mindful of [Amitābha] Buddha – Bodhisattvas manifest to demonstrate them
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Figure 21. A joint prayer meeting held by nine main religions in Singapore
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