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学佛最初之决定 *The Initial Determination to Study Buddhism*

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凡人到歧途莫决的时候，是最痛苦的时候，一切疑怖恐慌，随之而起。忽有人指示究竟，使勿入险道，则其人之感激诚不可名状。然又有人焉，已入险道而不自知，设有人指示究竟，彼终不信。	When ordinary people reach a crossroads and cannot decide which way to take, that is their most painful moment; every kind of doubt, fear, and panic arises with it. If someone suddenly shows them the way to safety and keeps them from entering a dangerous path, their gratitude is beyond description. Yet there are also those who have already entered a dangerous path without knowing it. Even if someone shows them the way to safety to them, they will not believe it.
必亲到遇险时，无处问津，发生恐怖时，方为之指示，彼始信入。然又有人焉，虽入险道，急求指示。虽有人指示其究竟，但多疑之劣性不除，转因指示太易而生疑虑，常恐受欺，转而不信，指示亦终无益。此三等人，比比皆是，甚矣度人之难也。是故世上迷人倍多，转辗自误，更以误人。此佛菩萨大悲心之所由启发欤?	Only when they personally encounter danger, have nowhere to turn for guidance, and are seized by fear—only then, when they are shown the way, will they begin to trust and enter it. Yet there are others who, though they have entered a dangerous path, urgently seek instruction. Even when someone shows them the way to safety, their habit of excessive doubt persists. Because guidance was so readily offered, they become suspicious, constantly fearing deception, and turn away from it; thus the instruction ultimately does them no good. These three kinds of people are everywhere. How difficult it is to liberate people! This is why there are so many deluded people in the world: they repeatedly mislead themselves and, further, mislead others. Is this not what gives rise to the great compassion of Buddhas and bodhisattvas?
佛说法四十九年，种种法门，一言以蔽之曰“为人决定”。惟菩萨每度人于未信入之始，或勉强而行之，佛则度人于合机之时，不必徒劳白费，亦无丝毫得失成败之见，随缘启之而已。	For forty-nine years the Buddha taught the Dharma through all manner of dharma gates. In a single phrase, it may be summed up as “helping people reach a decision.” Bodhisattvas, however, often liberate people at the beginning, before they have faith or entry, sometimes urging them forward by force of encouragement. The Buddha liberates people when the occasion accords with their capacity, without fruitless toil or waste. He has not the slightest view of gain or loss, success or failure; he merely awakens them in accordance with conditions.

学佛伊始，人不独应求善知识为之决定，亦当自己一决定也。先问自己究为何事学佛？曰为求究竟。问云何谓究竟？则曰世间一切一切，如苦乐事，如妻财子禄，终究不实，过眼成空，昙花一现，终归生灭，痛苦竟无了期。	At the very beginning of learning Buddhism, one should not only seek a good spiritual friend to help one reach a decision; one should also make a decision for oneself. First ask yourself: Why do I study Buddhism? The answer is: To seek the ultimate. What is meant by the ultimate? All things of the world—such as matters of suffering and happiness, wife, wealth, children, and livelihood—are ultimately unreal. They vanish before one's eyes, appearing only briefly like an epiphyllum flower, and in the end return to arising and ceasing. Suffering never seems to end.
如此有也苦，无也苦。若云一切不要，又是落于断灭，佛所不许。若云一切都要，又是落于贪著，佛又不许。因此世间愉乐，纵使十分满足，亦只暂时的空喜，不是究竟的安慰。在佛法又当如何决定之乎！	Thus, having things is suffering, and lacking them is also suffering. If one says that one wants nothing at all, one falls into annihilationism, which the Buddha does not allow. If one says that one wants everything, one falls into grasping attachment, which the Buddha likewise does not allow. Therefore, even if worldly pleasures are wholly satisfying, they are only temporary empty joys, not ultimate consolation. How, then, should one reach a decision in the Buddhadharma?
在解决此问题之先，应先决定所谓苦乐者是何物。当知苦乐绝不关乎事与物，实在关乎心。心动而立意，随意而立义，因义而成见，因见而执我，因我而自缚，因缚而失自在，因失自在而受诸苦。若有所得，则曰心满意足。	Before resolving this question, one must first determine what suffering and happiness are. Know that suffering and happiness have absolutely nothing to do with affairs or things; they truly concern the mind. When the mind stirs, intentions arise; intentions give rise to meanings; meanings form views; views lead to attachment to self; attachment to self binds one; bondage causes one to lose freedom; and, having lost freedom, one undergoes all kinds of suffering. When one obtains something, one calls it satisfaction and contentment.
无所得，则懊丧恼苦。所以制苦在先制贪，不贪则无所求，无所求则嗔心不起，若不贪嗔，自无痴疑慢邪等见。但一切总在制心，擒贼擒王，断苦求乐，总在心得其主。先认识自己主人公，为学佛最初之决定。	When one obtains nothing, one becomes dejected, distressed, and troubled. Therefore, to curb suffering, one must first curb greed. Without greed, there is nothing to seek; with nothing to seek, anger does not arise. Without greed and anger, views such as ignorance, doubt, pride, and wrong views naturally do not arise. Yet everything comes down to mastering the mind: to catch the thief, catch the king. To end suffering and seek happiness, the mind must gain its master. First

	recognize your own true master; this is the first decision in learning Buddhism.
此决定者，不独学佛，学儒亦如是，曰夫子之道忠恕而已矣。学道亦如是，曰谷神不死，否则流于精气神之浅说而失真道矣。耶回等教莫不如是，曰尊其圣灵。何况包罗万有、广大无边之佛法，以明心见性为正宗者乎。	This decision applies not only to learning Buddhism; learning Confucianism is the same. It is said, “The Way of the Master consists only in loyalty and reciprocity.” Learning the Dao is likewise so: it is said, “The valley spirit does not die.” Otherwise, one falls into shallow talk of essence, energy, and spirit and loses the true Dao. Teachings such as Christianity and Islam are no different: they speak of honoring the spiritual efficacy of their sages. How much more so is this true of the all-embracing, vast, and boundless Buddhadharma, whose central principle is realizing the mind and seeing one’s true nature.
且不独佛门一法如是，法法如是。不独一佛如是，累劫佛佛如是。总不外最先决定乎心，舍此更无二途，离此别无二法。如是其平易浅显焉，而实证之，又如是其精深严密矣。	Moreover, it is not only one Buddhist teaching that is so; every dharma is so. It is not only one Buddha who is so; throughout countless kalpas, every Buddha is so. In all cases, one must first decide upon the mind. Apart from this, there is no second path; apart from this, there is no other dharma. It is so plain and easy to understand, yet its actual realization is so profound and exacting.
否则一句话可以道破而无余，不知一句话或可以道得破，经千百世竟难以彻了。呜呼！佛法极平常，正因是最难，因地不先决，永不出轮回，必先明乎此义，则一切问题，迎刃而解。	Otherwise, it may be fully disclosed in a single sentence, yet one may not understand it. A single sentence may be capable of revealing it, but even through hundreds and thousands of generations one may find it difficult to penetrate completely. Alas! The Buddhadharma is utterly ordinary, and precisely for that reason it is most difficult. If one does not first settle the causal ground, one will never emerge from saṃsāra. One must first understand this principle; then every question will be readily resolved.
学佛不是求佛，是求己，求己只是制心，学此心如佛不二，制止其三毒，自然启发明慧。但三毒非慧不能制。二者固孰先，曰先制止其心乎，抑先发其慧乎？此一疑问也。不知能制三毒，即是发慧，二者相因，不必先后。	Learning Buddhism is not seeking the Buddha; it is seeking oneself. Seeking oneself is simply mastering the mind. If one learns that this mind is nondual with the Buddha, and restrains its three poisons, clear wisdom naturally unfolds. Yet the three poisons cannot be restrained without wisdom. Which of the two comes first: restraining the mind, or first bringing forth wisdom? This is a question. One does not realize that being able to

	restrain the three poisons is itself the bringing forth of wisdom. The two depend upon each other; there is no need to establish a sequence.
今当先得定，由定可以发慧，但定依乎法，法中即含有戒，一切念佛修密禅观都是法，亦都是戒，总归是制心。古人云：制心一处，无事不办，佛说一切法，为度一切心，我无一切心，何用一切法。	One must now first attain samādhi, for samādhi can give rise to wisdom. Yet samādhi depends on a method, and method already includes precepts. All practices of Buddha-recitation, Esoteric Buddhism, Chan, and contemplation are methods, and all are also precepts; in the end, they are all ways of mastering the mind. The ancients said: “When the mind is brought to one place, nothing cannot be accomplished.” The Buddha taught all dharmas to liberate all minds. If I have no mind at all, what use have I for all dharmas?
苦乐既然在心，则不在妻财子禄焉明矣。家家有妻财，人人有子禄，未必家家不烦恼，亦未必人人不痛苦。可见佛法并不废乎人事，只是人无智慧，有妻财子禄而不善调处。	Since suffering and happiness lie in the mind, it is clear that they do not lie in wife, wealth, children, and livelihood. Every household has wife and wealth; everyone has children and livelihood. Yet not every household is free from afflictions, nor is every person free from suffering. This shows that the Buddhadharma does not discard human affairs; it is simply that people lack wisdom and do not know how to manage wife, wealth, children, and livelihood properly.
未得时，苦于贪求；既得矣，又苦于不足；既足矣，又苦于丧失。把一切无常不实之幻境，当作永久不灭之至宝，岂不糊涂可怜，颠倒可笑。若真明觉之人，于妻财子禄，亦不厌弃，亦不贪求，随缘而取，随缘而用。	Before obtaining them, one suffers from craving them; after obtaining them, one suffers from not having enough; once there is enough, one suffers from their loss. To regard all these impermanent and unreal illusory circumstances as precious treasures that will last forever—is this not confused and pitiable, perverse and laughable? Those who are truly clear and awakened neither reject nor crave wife, wealth, children, and livelihood. They acquire them according to conditions and use them according to conditions.
正有时，不当作永久想。丧失时，明本来不实，绝不懊丧依恋。这苦自然而减，自然而灭。一次勉强，二次生，三次熟悉，四次习惯，再经过千百次往来，自然不知不觉，消灭于无形矣。千里之行，始于足下，咫尺之地，不行难到，人只要做，只要发心，无不成者。	When they are present, do not regard them as permanent. When they are lost, understand that they were never real, and do not become dejected or cling to them. Then suffering will naturally lessen and naturally cease. The first time requires effort; the second time gives rise to familiarity; by the third time one becomes accustomed; by the fourth time it becomes a habit. After hundreds and thousands

	of such repetitions, it naturally disappears without one even noticing. A journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one's feet; even a short distance is hard to reach without walking. So long as people act and arouse the resolve, none will fail to succeed.
众生之所以谓众生者，以有烦恼障覆也，烦恼本来不有，只是自生自障。此缘于迷而不觉，故要学佛。学佛者，求觉也，求明自心也。	Sentient beings are called sentient beings because they are covered over by afflictions. Afflictions do not inherently exist; people give rise to afflictions and thereby hinder themselves. This comes from being deluded and unaware; therefore one must learn Buddhism. To learn Buddhism is to seek awakening, to seek clarity regarding one's own mind.
把此心由暗黑转光明，由烦恼转清净，由生死转涅　，由糊涂转大觉，由执著转自在，观世间一切，平平淡淡，无所系著，即修证至菩萨位，亦无欢喜骄慢等习，不被境转，不受法缚，心常空空地，气常平平地，意常淡淡地，居常申申地，无喜无怒，亦不压制，随缘随喜，亦不枯寂，此即是佛境，亦即名佛。	Transform this mind from darkness into light, from affliction into purity, from birth and death into nirvāṇa, from confusion into great awakening, and from attachment into freedom. Regard all things in the world with calm equanimity, without anything to which one is bound. Even upon cultivating and realizing the bodhisattva stage, one has no habitual tendencies of delight, arrogance, and the like; one is not turned by circumstances or bound by dharmas. The mind is always empty, one's vital energy always even, and one's intentions always light. One remains naturally composed: without joy or anger, yet without repression; rejoicing according to conditions, yet not withered or quiescent. This is the realm of Buddhahood, and this is what is called Buddha.
学佛既以摄心为主，则舍自心之外，一切都属缘助。举凡研究经论，持名修法等，非属正文，只是副业。近世学佛者多，成就者少，其所以不能成就，原因则如下：	Since learning Buddhism takes gathering in the mind as its main point, everything apart from one's own mind is merely a supporting condition. Researching sūtras and treatises, reciting names, and practicing methods are not the main work; they are only subsidiary pursuits. In recent times, many study Buddhism but few attain realization. The reasons they fail to attain it are as follows:
一者、但知求佛求法求僧，性属依赖，忘却自求自修自证。	First, they know only to seek the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. By nature they are dependent, forgetting to seek, practice, and realize for themselves.

二者、以依赖于他，故必求最高无上之法与师，以冀速成，而不知实误。	Second, because they depend on others, they necessarily seek the highest and unsurpassed teachings and teachers, hoping for swift success, without realizing that they are in fact going astray.
三者、以求最高无上故，遂生种种分别，而门户之见起矣。即此一事，可以空耗时光，匆匆老去，一事无成。	Third, because they seek what is highest and unsurpassed, they give rise to all kinds of discrimination, and sectarian views arise. This matter alone can waste away one's time; one grows old in haste and accomplishes nothing.
四者、以空耗时光，久无消息，遂又疑人谤法，或竟退转不修。	Fourth, having wasted their time and received no news for a long while, they then doubt people and slander the Dharma, or even retreat and cease practicing.
五者、终日务外，不知痛切，或抽空在佛堂一修，一曝十寒，终不得益，有或当作消遣之事，无关痛痒，毕竟毫不相干。	Fifth, they spend all day pursuing things outside themselves and do not feel the urgency of the matter. Or they make time to practice once in a while in the Buddha hall, practicing intermittently, and ultimately gain no benefit. Some even treat it as a pastime, unrelated to anything that truly matters, and thus it remains completely irrelevant to them.
六者、于一切行住坐卧人事往来之地，种种习气发现时，一任其流浪，绝不回顾自心，故不得受用。	Sixth, amid all activities of walking, standing, sitting, lying down, and dealings with others, when habitual tendencies arise in various forms, they simply let themselves drift and never turn back to look at their own mind. Therefore, they gain no benefit.
七者、贪取于法，以多为胜，不能一门深入。	Seventh, they greedily collect teachings, believing that more is better, and cannot go deeply into a single gate.
八者、不明学佛无定法之义，法法各有立场，不可强同。乃不依规矩而自生法见。	Eighth, they do not understand that there is no fixed method in learning Buddhism. Every dharma has its own standpoint and cannot be forcibly made the same as another. Yet they do not follow the rules and instead give rise to views about dharmas.
九者、喜分别他人之意境而自成妄，如曰某也开悟，某也成魔。不知称人开悟者，即不啻自称开悟。以非开悟人不能断他人之悟与否也，论人魔者亦然。故曰妄。	Ninth, they delight in discriminating others' inner states and thereby create delusion for themselves, saying, for example, that this person has awakened and that person has become possessed by demons. They do not realize that to declare

	another person awakened is no different from declaring oneself awakened, for one who has not awakened cannot determine whether another has awakened. The same applies to speaking of others as demonic. Therefore, such talk is delusion.
十者、难遇善知识，或以耳为目，遇而不识。	Tenth, good spiritual friends are difficult to encounter; or, taking hearsay as direct perception, people encounter them but do not recognize them.
十一者、先入为主，于法不知圆通变化，故自甘劣小，不敢承当。	Eleventh, preconceived ideas become dominant. They do not understand the Dharma's flexible and comprehensive responsiveness, and so willingly confine themselves to what is inferior and limited, not daring to take responsibility.
十二者、误认无明为实，烦恼难除，菩提惟佛独有，我辈此生无分。	Twelfth, they mistakenly regard ignorance as real: afflictions are difficult to remove, bodhi belongs to the Buddha alone, and people like us have no share in it during this life.
十三者、以修行入善，为学佛事业终了，尚不知究竟了义，又以生西为学佛唯一之希望，尚不明如何往生之义，故修至中途，不能再进。	Thirteenth, they take cultivating goodness as the completion of the work of learning Buddhism, still not knowing the ultimate and definitive meaning. They also take rebirth in the Western Pure Land as the sole hope of learning Buddhism, yet still do not understand what rebirth means. Thus, when they reach the middle of the path of practice, they cannot advance further.
十四者、误以求佛可以销罪业得福报，而自己依旧烦恼。	Fourteenth, they mistakenly believe that seeking the Buddha can eliminate karmic offenses and gain blessings, while their own afflictions remain unchanged.
十五者、于自己生高慢，于他人生疑忌，且耻于下问，轻于初学，不觉自障其道。	Fifteenth, they give rise to arrogance concerning themselves and suspicion and jealousy toward others. Ashamed to ask those below them, they slight beginners, unaware that they are obstructing their own path.
十六者、于初下手时，不先明学佛究竟，不先决定，因地不正，故入盲从。	Sixteenth, when first beginning, they do not first understand the ultimate purpose of learning Buddhism and do not first reach a decision. Because their causal ground is not correct, they fall into blind conformity.
以上诸端，皆学者通病，不先予决定，其害不可胜道。我人学佛，不妨以病人求医药为喻。如人有病请医调	All the above are common faults among students. Unless they are first helped to reach a decision, the

治，药即是法。问何以久药不愈？则原因不外有二：一曰药不对症，二曰服不如法。	harm cannot be fully described. In learning Buddhism, we may compare ourselves to sick people seeking medicine. If someone is ill and asks a doctor for treatment, the medicine is the Dharma. Why does one remain unhealed after taking medicine for a long time? There are no more than two reasons: first, the medicine does not suit the illness; second, it is not taken in the proper way.
今久修而不得效果者，则亦无非法不当机，与修不如法而已。但此病其责在师，初不为之决定，不予以相当之法，复不告以修法所以。	Likewise, when one has practiced for a long time without effect, it is nothing other than a Dharma that does not suit one's capacity, or practice that is not carried out properly. Yet responsibility for this illness lies with the teacher, who at the outset does not help the person reach a decision, does not give an appropriate method, and again does not explain the reasons for the practice.
更加行者不自痛切，人情用事，故愈趋愈远，甚可痛也！又余常谓医生无不慈悲者，然庸医杀人，每自问以为无罪，此不能不负过，当名慈悲罪业，尤可哀也。至病人不自痛切，服药久不见功而不知所反，虽有善知识，亦无可如何矣。	Furthermore, practitioners themselves do not feel the urgency of the matter and act according to ordinary human feelings; thus they drift ever farther away. This is deeply painful. I have often said that no doctor is without compassion, yet incompetent doctors kill people while asking themselves and believing that they are blameless. They cannot avoid bearing responsibility for this; it may be called the karmic offense of compassion, and it is especially lamentable. As for patients who do not themselves feel the urgency of their illness, who take medicine for a long time without seeing results and do not know to reflect upon themselves—even if they have a good spiritual friend, nothing can be done for them.
佛之为人决定者，无非要人破无明了生死，而其方法，不外使其自己觉悟。经云“如实知自心”是也。此应最先决定者。	When the Buddha helps people reach a decision, it is simply to enable them to break through ignorance and transcend birth and death. His method is no more than enabling them to awaken for themselves. The sūtras say, “Know your own mind as it truly is.” This is what should be decided first.
人为什么要觉悟？觉悟个什么？拿什么来觉悟？又什么叫做觉悟？此四个问题，当首先决定。第一，问为什么要觉悟？只因众生迷惑，因迷惑而造业，因造业而得诸苦。所谓惑业苦是也，此为最要之件。	Why must people awaken? What is it that one awakens to? By what does one awaken? And what, moreover, is awakening? These four questions must first be settled. First, why must one awaken? Because sentient beings are deluded; because of

	delusion they create karma; and because of karma they undergo all manner of suffering. This is what is meant by delusion, karma, and suffering. It is the most essential matter.
第二，问觉悟个什么？就是觉悟个本来，因法性本来平等，本来清净，本来自在，本来不动，本来妙用恒沙，本来不惑，悟得本来后，自然怖苦发心，亟求脱离。第三，问拿什么来觉悟？就是把自己的糊涂心来觉悟。	Second, what is it that one awakens to? One awakens to the original nature. The dharma-nature is originally equal, originally pure, originally at ease, originally unmoving, originally endowed with countless wondrous functions, and originally free of delusion. Having awakened to the original nature, one naturally recognizes the peril of suffering, arouses the resolve, and urgently seeks liberation from it. Third, by what does one awaken? One brings one’s own confused mind to awakening.
所谓自悟自觉，不是佛可以赐我觉悟，不是善知识可以替我觉悟，而是以自己妄心降伏妄心。一经觉悟，无明打破，而习气必得逐渐铲除也。	This is what is meant by awakening and realizing for oneself. It is not that a Buddha can bestow awakening upon me, nor can a good spiritual guide awaken on my behalf. Rather, one uses one's own deluded mind to subdue one's own deluded mind. Once awakening occurs, ignorance is shattered; then habitual tendencies must gradually be eradicated.
第四，什么叫做觉悟？觉悟云者，觉现前种种的不是，悟本来自性清净平等，更觉悟未来之修法，所谓悟后正修，修至与佛不二是也。凡心有所凛觉，必依因缘而成就，由凛觉而推求其所以，反察其根源，方恍然于本来自性。	Fourth, what is called awakening? Awakening means recognizing that the various things presently before us are not as they seem, realizing that one's original intrinsic nature is pure and equal, and further awakening to the practices to be cultivated in the future. This is what is meant by right cultivation after awakening: cultivate until one is nondual with the Buddha. Whenever the mind is stirred to an apprehension of danger, it necessarily comes about through causes and conditions. From this apprehension, one investigates its reasons and reflects back upon its source; only then does one suddenly awaken to one's original intrinsic nature.
此四者，由理悟而渐入于事修。由凛觉而深入于恐怖，皇皇若恐其不及，更悟己力之不足，遂起求救于他人之想，此求佛求法求师之心所由起也。	Through these four matters, one proceeds from awakening at the level of principle gradually into practical cultivation. From apprehension one goes more deeply into fear, anxiously fearing that one may not act in time. One further realizes the insufficiency of one's own strength and thus conceives the wish to seek help from others. This is

	how the mind that seeks the Buddha, seeks the Dharma, and seeks a teacher arises.
若为之师者，不先予决定，则前书十六条之病象，一一随缘而显现，含糊过去，必有追悔不及之苦。	If one serves as a teacher but does not first give the student a decisive determination, then each of the sixteen symptoms of illness set forth earlier will manifest according to circumstances. If one muddles through, there will surely be suffering from regrets that come too late.
譬如造屋过半，因根基不实，屋有斜侧倾圮，拆而重建，意有不舍，再进则不可能，是又当为之决定，曰拆，不能因小而失大也。行者如肯深信不疑，方有大用开发之日，如甘于守小而不肯放下，则永成僵局，永远坐误。又复不肯虚心下气，所谓以性命作人情也。	It is like building a house that is more than half complete. Because its foundation is unsound, the house leans and threatens to collapse. To demolish it and rebuild it, one is reluctant; yet to continue is impossible. A decision must therefore be made: demolish it. One cannot lose the greater for the sake of the lesser. If practitioners can deeply believe without doubt, the day will come when great capacities unfold. But if they are content to preserve the lesser and refuse to let go, they will forever remain at an impasse and continually waste their opportunity. Moreover, they refuse to be humble and receptive; this is what is called sacrificing one's life for the sake of personal feelings.
今有人焉，具大丈夫之志愿与魄力，毅然而决，一反所为，扫荡前此种种，仍从根本上下手。	Now suppose there is someone endowed with the aspirations and courage of a great person, who resolutely makes a decision, completely reverses what he has been doing, clears away all that has gone before, and begins again at the root.
天必不负苦心者，佛菩萨必悯念其诚苦，自然善知识应运而至，为之启发，为之决定，为之付授，为之护念；彼亦老老实实，依法虔修，亦不致以耳为目，为一切外论邪见所阻，从此日有进益。	Heaven will surely not disappoint one who strives with such dedication, and the Buddhas and bodhisattvas will surely take pity on such sincere hardship. Naturally, a good spiritual guide will arrive when circumstances ripen, to enlighten him, give him decisive guidance, transmit the teaching to him, and protect and keep him in mind. If he too practices sincerely and faithfully according to the Dharma, he will not mistake what he merely hears for what he sees, nor will he be obstructed by all manner of external theories and wrong views. From then on, he will make progress day by day.
把前列四种问题，如何觉悟，一一自决自证，自明自悟，明悟而后，万无退转之理。如未到上海，虽经种种论说，终不知上海之究竟。既到之后，自然明了，亦永	Regarding the four questions listed above and how to awaken, one must settle each question through personal inquiry and direct realization. Once one

无退转忘记之理。根本既得，然后徐除习气，广结多缘，乃至成佛。	has clarified and awakened, there can be no possibility of regression. Before one has reached Shanghai, however much one may hear it discussed, one will never know Shanghai as it truly is. Once one has arrived, one naturally understands and will never forget what one has seen. Once the root has been attained, one may gradually eliminate habitual tendencies, broadly form many beneficial connections, and eventually attain Buddhahood.
觉者何？心也。悟者何？心也。觉悟此心不可得，并能觉悟之心亦不可得也。由一不可得，通达至一切法界，四大，五蕴，十八界，根身器界，都不可得。	What is awareness? It is mind. What is awakening? It is mind. Awaken to the fact that this mind is unobtainable, and that even the mind capable of awakening is unobtainable. From the unobtainability of this one thing, penetrate through to the entire dharma realm: the four great elements, the five aggregates, the eighteen realms, the sense faculties, the body, and the material world are all unobtainable.
不可得者，非虚无不有断灭之谓，乃即有以显空，原无自性，初无是非好坏分别等，都由幻心假定而成。心本不有，一切自空，心非断灭，一切不废，非有非空，即空即色，离色不能显空，离空不能破色，会入不二，方名大觉。	Unobtainable does not mean that there is nothing at all, as in annihilationism. Rather, it means that presence reveals emptiness: things originally have no inherent nature. From the outset there are no distinctions of right and wrong, good and bad; all are provisionally established by the illusory mind. Mind is originally nonexistent, and therefore all is naturally empty. Yet mind is not annihilated, and thus nothing is negated. It is neither existent nor empty; it is precisely emptiness and precisely form. Without form, emptiness cannot be revealed; without emptiness, form cannot be penetrated. To enter into nonduality is what is called great awakening.
譬如善恶二义，在凡夫不知善恶，在外道知善恶，而严立对峙；在二乘慕善过切，以远离诸恶为究竟；菩萨通达善恶之妙用，而起种种方便；佛则非善非恶，二性本空，随机而行菩萨行，起种种方便。	Consider, for example, the two concepts of good and evil. Ordinary beings do not understand good and evil. Non-Buddhists know good and evil but rigidly set them in opposition. The two vehicles long too eagerly for good and take avoidance of all evil as ultimate. Bodhisattvas penetrate the wondrous functioning of good and evil and therefore employ various skillful means. A Buddha is neither good nor evil: both natures are originally empty. In accordance with circumstances, a Buddha practices

	the bodhisattva path and employs various skillful means.
此五等分别，凡夫不知其心，外道知心而不见所以，二乘见心而明悟未彻，皆不名觉。菩萨明心而觉不圆。佛则觉海圆澄。其实皆同体一心，无二无别。	In these five levels of distinction, ordinary beings do not know their own minds; non-Buddhists know mind but do not see its underlying basis; and the two vehicles see mind but have not awakened to it thoroughly. None of these is called awakening. Bodhisattvas realize the mind, but their awakening is not complete. A Buddha's ocean of awakening is perfectly clear and complete. In truth, all share the one mind of a single essence, without duality or distinction.
譬如五人行道，凡夫深入险道而不觉，外道知险道不可入而横行，二乘知险道不可深入，乃止而弗进，菩萨已回头反走，出于险道，佛则明达非夷非险，虽入险道而自无碍。	It is like five people traveling along a road. Ordinary beings go deep into a perilous road without recognizing it. Non-Buddhists know that the perilous road cannot be entered, yet proceed crosswise along it. The two vehicles know that they cannot go deeply into the perilous road, so they stop and do not advance. Bodhisattvas have already turned back and retraced their steps, emerging from the perilous road. Buddhas understand clearly that it is neither level nor perilous; though they enter the perilous road, they are naturally unobstructed.
又如落入大坑，凡夫居坑中而不知险，以未知坑之外另有天地也；外道知坑外另有天地而不能出；二乘坐于坑边，上下齐观，寂守勿动，虽不入坑，与守坑不异；菩萨已出于坑，其力足以跳出，乃故入坑，为度众生故；佛则跳入跳出，两都无碍，来去自在，并忘其坑。	Again, it is like falling into a great pit. Ordinary beings dwell in the pit without recognizing its danger, for they do not know that beyond the pit there is another heaven and earth. Non-Buddhists know that there is another heaven and earth outside the pit but cannot get out. The two vehicles sit at the edge of the pit, viewing above and below alike, abiding quietly and refusing to move. Though they do not enter the pit, they are no different from those who guard it. Bodhisattvas have already emerged from the pit and have sufficient strength to leap out, yet deliberately enter it again in order to liberate sentient beings. Buddhas leap in and leap out, unobstructed in either direction, coming and going freely, and have even forgotten the pit.
以夷险无二别也，故跳入跳出，只在此心，欲跳出坑，只用脚力，欲了生死，只用心空，空力至如何，即心力至如何，至一切平等不可得时，便无坑内坑外矣。	Because level ground and perilous ground are not two different things, leaping in and leaping out depend only on this mind. To leap out of the pit, one need only use the strength of one's legs; to

	transcend birth and death, one need only empty the mind. To the extent that the power of emptiness is attained, so too is the power of mind attained. When all is equal and unobtainable, there is no longer an inside or outside of the pit.
不经开悟，不得名修，以修亦无用也。必觉悟后方入正修。佛为方便说，先息其狂心，止其粗恶，使之就范。就范后，则为之决定说，令悟自心，开发本来，无明破而入手有办法矣。譬如暗室中，整理物品，不可得也。	Without awakening, one cannot be said to practice, for such practice is also of no use. One must awaken before entering right cultivation. As a skillful means, the Buddha first teaches people to calm their unruly minds and restrain gross misconduct. Once they have learned this restraint, he gives them definitive instruction, enabling them to awaken to their own minds and unfold their original nature. When ignorance is shattered, there is then a way to begin. It is like trying to arrange things in a dark room: it cannot be done.
劳而无功，空耗气力，必焉先开电灯，乃有办法。先为之决定者，使之觅灯也；破无明者，开灯放光明也；整理物品者，除习气烦恼也。先后次第如是。彼执于先除习气后破无明者，若了达方便与决定二义，当知所变通矣。	One labors without accomplishment and wastes one's strength. One must first turn on the electric light; only then is there a way to proceed. To give decisive guidance first is to have one seek the lamp; to shatter ignorance is to turn on the lamp and let forth light; to arrange the things is to eliminate habitual tendencies and afflictions. Such is the sequence. Those who insist on first eliminating habitual tendencies and only afterward shattering ignorance should, if they understand the two meanings of expedient means and decisive instruction, know how to adapt their approach.
学佛最初之决定，既在如实知自心，则心性相貌，不可不知，第心有幻相，性无状貌，惟以遍满故，能生万法故，因名曰法性。法性本体清净平等，不动不变，妙用具足。	The first essential determination in learning Buddhism is to know one's own mind exactly as it is. Therefore, one cannot fail to know the characteristics of mind and intrinsic nature. Mind has illusory appearances, whereas intrinsic nature has no form or appearance. Yet because it pervades all things and can give rise to all phenomena, it is called dharma-nature. The essential nature of dharma-nature is pure and equal, unmoving and unchanging, and fully endowed with wondrous functioning.
如以水为喻，水本不动，风吹而激荡，遂名曰浪；性本不动，因境而起念，遂名曰心；风过浪止，境亡心灭，浪为水之幻化，心属性之流迁，然水虽起浪，水体非	Take water as an analogy. Water is originally still; when wind blows and stirs it, it is called a wave. Intrinsic nature is originally unmoving; when thoughts arise in response to circumstances, it is

灭，性起幻心，性体不迁，原本无生，安有生灭来去诸相耶？故性为心之体，心为性之用。	called mind. When the wind passes, the waves subside; when circumstances vanish, the mind ceases. Waves are transformations illusorily appearing from water, and mind is the shifting flow of intrinsic nature. Yet although water gives rise to waves, the substance of water is not destroyed; although intrinsic nature gives rise to the illusory mind, the essence of intrinsic nature does not shift. It is originally unborn, so how could there be appearances of arising, ceasing, coming, or going? Therefore, intrinsic nature is the essence of mind, and mind is the function of intrinsic nature.
如人手足动摇起用，其暂时动摇之幻相可见也，其内藏气力不变之体不可见也。不得因其不见而断为非有，亦不得因其可见而妄认为真实也。故幻心若有，毕竟有而不可得，真性若无，毕竟空而不断灭也。一切法用，由此而生，宇宙万有，依之建立。识得此无上法宝，即登自性光明宝殿矣。	When a person's hands and feet move and function, their temporary, moving illusory appearances can be seen, but the unchanging power stored within cannot be seen. One must not conclude that it does not exist because it cannot be seen, nor mistakenly take it to be real because it can be seen. Thus, if the illusory mind is said to exist, it ultimately exists yet is unobtainable; if true nature is said to be nonexistent, it is ultimately empty yet not annihilated. All dharmic functions arise from this, and all things in the universe are established in reliance upon it. To recognize this unsurpassed Dharma treasure is to ascend the jeweled hall of one's own intrinsic luminosity.
心与性，不可强分为二，亦不可死执为一。譬如镜是性，镜与外境相对而显形影，是为心。形影非无，不可执实，以外境亡，则形影灭也。非属自性，故幻。	Mind and intrinsic nature cannot forcibly be divided into two, nor can they rigidly be clung to as one. Consider a mirror as intrinsic nature: when the mirror encounters external objects, shapes and reflections appear; this is mind. Shapes and reflections are not nonexistent, but they cannot be taken as real, for when the external objects vanish, the shapes and reflections disappear. Since they do not belong to intrinsic nature, they are illusory.
此影幻心，有时而明，有时而暗，有时而迷，曰无明，有时而觉，曰明，其实皆幻也。故明暗迷觉都是幻，即灭幻者，灭亦即幻，都不可得，更不立幻与非幻，以都不可得故。	This reflected illusory mind is at times bright and at times dark; at times it is deluded, which is called ignorance, and at times awakened, which is called illumination. Yet in truth all of these are illusory. Thus brightness and darkness, delusion and awakening, are all illusory. Even the extinction of illusion is itself illusory and unobtainable. Still less should one posit illusion and non-illusion, since both are unobtainable.

因此镜中起诸幻影，不问其为美为丑，实无损于镜，以照体不动故。而性中起诸幻心，不问其为无明为悟觉，或善或恶，或圣或凡，实无碍于性。以性体无生，不动不变故，圣凡同体故，能起恒沙妙用故。	Therefore, the various illusory images arising in a mirror, whether beautiful or ugly, do not truly damage the mirror, because its reflecting substance is unmoving. Likewise, the various illusory minds arising within intrinsic nature, whether ignorance or awakening, good or evil, sage or ordinary, do not truly obstruct intrinsic nature. This is because the essence of intrinsic nature is unborn, unmoving, and unchanging; because sages and ordinary beings share one essence; and because it can give rise to countless wondrous functions.
心不可得者，以幻心造境，复因境而有幻心，以无自性，故不可得。譬如镜之照物而成影，此影者，谓从物有，谓自心生，两皆不可也。非自生，非他生，非共生，非无因生。其生也，不见其生处，其灭也，亦然，不见其有灭处，故曰有而不可得。	Mind is unobtainable because the illusory mind creates circumstances, and circumstances in turn give rise to the illusory mind. Since it has no inherent nature, it is unobtainable. It is like a mirror reflecting an object and producing an image: one cannot say that the image comes from the object, nor can one say that it arises on its own. Neither is possible. It is not self-produced, not produced by another, not jointly produced, and not produced without cause. When it arises, no place of arising can be found; when it ceases, likewise no place of cessation can be found. Therefore, it is said to exist yet be unobtainable.
心垢与身垢不同。去身垢，必经种种方法过程，且垢之类别亦不同，垢且有体相矣。去心垢则不然，心垢无体相，只把此心念一转，即立时放下。如正念贪嗔时，忽一念佛，贪嗔即为乌有，当体清净矣。其去固快，其来亦速，转瞬复又贪嗔，此则习气引之也。	Defilements of mind differ from bodily dirt. To remove bodily dirt, one must undergo various methods and procedures; moreover, kinds of dirt differ, and dirt has form and appearance. Removing mental defilements is not like this. Mental defilements have no form or appearance. One need only turn this thought of mind, and they are immediately let go. For example, when greed or anger is present, if one suddenly thinks of the Buddha, greed and anger immediately become nonexistent, and one's very being is pure. Although they depart quickly, they also return swiftly: in an instant greed and anger arise again. This is because habitual tendencies draw them back.
眼耳鼻舌身意，名曰六根，外曰六尘，即色声香味触法是也。	The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are called the six sense faculties. Externally there are the six sense objects: forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile objects, and dharmas.

根尘相对而起六识，由识而生见，由见而生分别，由分别而生顺逆，由顺逆而生憎爱，由憎爱而生取舍，由取舍而定执我，由执我而再转识见，分别顺逆憎爱取舍等等，辗转循环，执我不舍，是曰习气。	When the faculties and objects interact, the six consciousnesses arise. From consciousness arises perception; from perception arises discrimination; from discrimination arise favorable and adverse conditions; from favorable and adverse conditions arise aversion and attachment; from aversion and attachment arise acceptance and rejection; from acceptance and rejection is fixed attachment to self; and from attachment to self consciousness and perception turn again, producing discrimination, favorable and adverse conditions, aversion and attachment, acceptance and rejection, and so forth. This turns in a ceaseless cycle, without relinquishing attachment to self. This is called habitual tendencies.
此中毛病，都由不明而分别所起。一切是幻，彼当作实，一切是假，彼当作真。倘于对境时，认定真幻，不独境是幻，心亦是幻，觉亦是幻，自然不取。不取则不执，不执则不染。前所执者，今以智慧破之，是名解脱。	The problem in all this arises from discrimination due to lack of clarity. Everything is illusory, yet people take it as real; everything is provisional, yet people take it as true. If, when encountering circumstances, one recognizes clearly what is real and what is illusory—recognizing that not only circumstances are illusory, but mind is illusory and even awareness is illusory—then one will naturally not grasp. Without grasping, there is no clinging; without clinging, there is no defilement. What one previously clung to is now shattered by wisdom. This is called liberation.
惟力量不足，有时照顾不到。但只要根本认识明白，久久自然抵抗有力。所以摄心是学佛第一关键，当以明心开智慧为最初之决定。	Yet one's strength may be insufficient, and at times one may fail to attend to it. But so long as one's fundamental understanding is clear, in time one will naturally have the strength to resist. Therefore, gathering in the mind is the primary key to learning Buddhism, and realizing the mind and opening wisdom should be the first essential determination.
学人想除习气，自是正办，但不先明心地，从根上下手，如开锁而不用匙，救火而不去薪也。今所决定者，即是此点。昔有某居士夫妇谒诺那上师，自称淫业太重，求师加持，以解淫业。师笑曰，无上密乘中，无此法也。	Students who wish to eradicate habitual tendencies are certainly addressing the right task. But if they do not first realize the mind-ground and begin from the root, it is like trying to open a lock without a key or put out a fire without removing its fuel. This is the point that must now be decisively settled. In the past, a lay couple visited Master Nona, claiming that their karmic habit of sexual desire was too heavy and asking the master to bless them so as to

	resolve it. The master laughed and said, “There is no such method in the unsurpassed Vajrayāna.”
尔只先明心地，证得根本，开发般若后，此习气自然扫荡云云。旨哉此言！自藏密东来，能以密法会通般若者，惟师一人而已。故彼独推重心中心法，与印心学者，相契益厚也。今上师虽为国而殉身，原不足为贤者累，此一幻躯，上师岂有所爱惜而执持哉？亦了一前账而已。	“You need only first realize the mind-ground. After realizing the root basis and opening prajñā, this habitual tendency will naturally be swept away,” and so forth. How profound these words are! Since Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism came eastward, the master alone was able to integrate esoteric practice with prajñā. Therefore, he alone held the Heart-of-Heart Dharma in such high regard, and his affinity with Mind-Seal practitioners grew ever deeper. Although the master has now died a martyr for his country, this was originally no burden to one of worth. Why would the master cherish and cling to this illusory body? He had merely settled a previous account.
学人不明心地故，遂不脱依赖习气，以为一经佛力加持，即可将我淫业铲除，然则佛又何不一体慈悲，将众生度尽乎？佛之所以度众生者，只传示其方法，令彼自度，如付之以食，不能代伊吃也。而所谓法食者无他，曰惟摄心以启般若，用般若以扫荡习气，至自在成佛，此应最初决定者。	Because students have not realized the mind-ground, they remain unable to free themselves from the habitual tendency of dependence. They suppose that, once blessed by the Buddha’s power, their karmic habit of sexual desire can be eradicated. But if so, why would the Buddha not, in impartial compassion, liberate all sentient beings? The Buddha liberates sentient beings only by transmitting and showing them the method, enabling them to liberate themselves. It is like giving them food: one cannot eat on their behalf. As for this Dharma food, it is nothing other than gathering in the mind to open prajñā, then using prajñā to sweep away habitual tendencies, until one freely attains Buddhahood. This is what must be settled at the very outset.
心之为物，大奇大奇，如通法性平等之义，世间竟无一好人，无一坏人也，以好坏皆无定义，世上罪恶，无过杀人，但何以杀盗则又敬之叹之。又如一物被击而破碎，即永破碎，不复还原，人则昨非而今是，只一改过，盗即为圣，可见人能还原，正如橡胶皮之暂伸暂屈，毕竟还原无二，故曰妙心，人又何乐而不改过哉？	The mind is a most extraordinary thing. If one understands the meaning that dharmatā is equal, then in the world there is not a single good person and not a single bad person, for good and bad have no fixed definition. Among worldly evils, none surpasses killing. Yet why are killers and robbers sometimes respected and praised? Again, when an object is struck and shattered, it remains shattered forever and cannot be restored. But a person who was wrong yesterday may be right today: with but a single reform, a thief may become a sage. This shows that a person can be restored, just as rubber

	may temporarily stretch or contract yet ultimately returns unchanged to its original state. This is why it is called the wondrous mind. Why, then, would anyone take no pleasure in reforming?
人之罪恶业障习气，无一不系之于心，则学佛不从心上决定，更从何处下手乎？尤妙者，以幻心制幻心，罪恶等等，绝无体相，世人以举刀杀人见血为罪恶，不知未举刀前，杀意即起，罪即成立，至于杀人而逃，刹那间为悔罪心所冲动，心中只一怕罪，而杀意已销矣。	Every evil deed, karmic obstacle, and habitual tendency is tied to the mind. If those who study Buddhism do not settle the matter from the mind, where else can they begin? More wondrous still, one uses the illusory mind to govern the illusory mind. Evils and the like have absolutely no substantial form or characteristic. Worldly people take raising a knife to kill someone and seeing blood as evil. They do not realize that, before the knife is raised, the intention to kill has already arisen and the offense is already constituted. Yet if, after killing someone, the person flees and is stirred in an instant by repentance, then only the fear of wrongdoing remains in the mind, while the intention to kill has already vanished.
或如起意杀人，罪虽成立，只一转念勿杀，则杀罪顿灭，所谓放下屠刀，立地成佛者此也。只要一放下，一切都解决耳。	Or, if one forms the intention to kill, the offense is constituted; but if, with a single turn of thought, one decides not to kill, the karmic offense of killing immediately ceases. This is what is meant by, “Lay down the butcher's knife and become a Buddha on the spot.” So long as one lets go, everything is resolved.
人之罪业习气，譬如镜中幻景，销之极易。人之为恶，如手之污泥，随染随洗可也。不知恶心念，只是迷而不觉。其恐怖心永不解脱，即其罪恶亦永不解脱也。今之学佛者，正如狱中罪人，遇赦释放，乃自己不肯出狱。	A person’s karmic offenses and habitual tendencies are like illusory scenes in a mirror and are very easy to dispel. Doing evil is like getting mud on one’s hands: whenever they are soiled, they may be washed. What one does not know is that evil thoughts arise only through delusion and lack of awareness. If one’s fear can never be released, then one’s evil likewise can never be released. Those who study Buddhism today are like prisoners who have been pardoned and released but refuse to leave the prison themselves.
此无他，福薄而缘浅也。余故尝劝人宜兼修福。佛教人布施行方便者，皆是造福，而行最大之布施方便，莫如发广大心，明自性本体与佛不二，只缘不广大故。又莫如发平等心，明一切众生本体与佛不二，只缘不平等故。	There is no other reason: their merit is slight and their conditions shallow. For this reason, I have often urged people also to cultivate merit. The Buddha teaches people to give and employ skillful means; all these are ways of creating merit. Yet no giving or skillful means is greater than arousing a

	vast mind and realizing that the essence of one's own nature is nondual with the Buddha; one fails only because one's mind is not vast. Nor is there anything greater than arousing an impartial mind and realizing that the essential nature of all sentient beings is nondual with the Buddha; one fails only because one is not impartial.
又莫如发大悲心，明心佛众生同具大悲本德，而我人长此沉沦，只缘不大悲故。经云依于众生而起大悲，依大悲发菩提心，依菩提心成等正觉。	Nor is there anything greater than arousing great compassion and realizing that mind, Buddha, and sentient beings alike possess the fundamental virtue of great compassion, while we human beings remain sunk in saṃsāra only because we lack great compassion. A sūtra says: "Relying on sentient beings, one arouses great compassion; relying on great compassion, one gives rise to bodhicitta; relying on bodhicitta, one attains perfect, complete awakening."
学佛之正因地者，在先明心地。而如何明心地法，则在研求其根，察其心之所自起，然后研求其去处，毕竟是如何相貌，则有而不可得之幻相见矣。而此见者，亦幻相也。以摄之不易，故取诸法以为缘助如下：	For those who study Buddhism, the proper causal ground is first to realize the mind-ground. How does one realize the mind-ground? One investigates its root, examines where the mind first arises, and then investigates where it goes. When one sees what its ultimate appearance is, one sees its illusory appearance as something that exists yet cannot be grasped. And this seeing, too, is an illusory appearance. Because it is not easy to gather in the mind, one takes up various dharmas as supporting conditions, as follows:
一曰净土，其最后之功行，曰一心不乱，心不颠倒。	First is the Pure Land school. Its ultimate practice is one-pointedness of mind without distraction and a mind free from inversion.
二曰密宗，其功行悉地，曰证入三昧，通达实相，观其各部法事，开始总不离乎净三业观空持咒可知矣。	Second is Esoteric Buddhism. Its practice and accomplishment consist in entering samādhi, thoroughly realizing the true reality, and observing that the rites of all its divisions invariably begin with purifying the three karmas, contemplating emptiness, and upholding mantras.
三曰相宗，其用意在分释诸相，引证到诸法空相一句。	Third is the Dharma Characteristics School. Its purpose lies in analyzing and explaining all appearances, leading to the single statement that all dharmas have the characteristic of emptiness.

四曰禅宗，其下手处即直指根源，当下见性，为各宗之所究竟归止。	Fourth is the Chan school. Its point of entry is direct pointing to the source, seeing one’s true nature in the very moment; this is the ultimate destination of all schools.
可见各宗无一不同此义趣，无不以安心为究竟。方便多门，归元不二，摄心归空，同臻圆觉。而诸法门者，都属副业而非正行。譬如磨刀，意在割用，磨而不用，何如不磨，且不用则终不知刀之钝利。	Thus it is clear that no school differs in this intent: all take settling the mind as ultimate. Skillful means have many gates, but returning to the source is not two. Gather in the mind and return to emptiness; together, one reaches perfect enlightenment. Yet all dharma gates are auxiliary work, not the primary practice. It is like sharpening a knife: the purpose is to use it for cutting. If one sharpens it but never uses it, how is that better than not sharpening it? Moreover, without using it, one will never know whether the knife is dull or sharp.
故在佛堂修持，用诸法门，乃求其磨练以付我之用而已。至于二六时中，宜无一刻，无一事，无一念，不凛凛然觉照观心，此才是正业。	Therefore, when cultivating in the Buddha hall, one uses various dharma gates only to hone oneself for practical use. But throughout the day and night, at no moment, in no activity, and in no thought should one fail to remain alertly aware, illuminating and observing the mind. This alone is the primary work.
果能常常如是，久久成熟，习成自然，则观外境前来，无一丝一毫有价值处，不被境夺，心不流转，是名不惑。	If one can truly do this continually, then after a long time it matures and becomes second nature. When external circumstances appear, not the slightest thing in them is found to have value; one is not carried away by circumstances, and the mind does not wander. This is called freedom from delusion.
不惑则念念空净，自无贪嗔痴三毒之因，安有杀盗淫极恶之果乎？即习气未除，三业起时，庶亦有抵抗调解之法，决不至流浪无主矣。故摄心为正业，诸法为副，自求为正业，求佛为副，先明心地，后除习气，是为正行，此应最初决定者。	When one is free from delusion, each thought is empty and pure. Then there is naturally no cause of the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance; how could there be the results of such extreme evils as killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct? Even if habitual tendencies have not yet been eradicated and the three karmas arise, one will at least have a means of resisting and regulating them, and will certainly not drift about without self-mastery. Therefore, gathering in the mind is the primary work, while the various dharmas are auxiliary; seeking within oneself is primary, while seeking the Buddha is auxiliary. First realize the mind-ground, then eradicate habitual tendencies.

	This is right practice, and it must be settled at the very outset.
菩提与烦恼不二，人或疑之，有来问者，余令其人举手，复令其放下，更谓之曰，一举一放，原属二事，手则非二也。	Bodhi and afflictions are nondual, though some may doubt this. When someone asked me about it, I told the person to raise a hand, then told them to lower it. I then said, “Raising and lowering are indeed two actions, but the hand itself is not two.”
今姑以举手为烦恼，放手为菩提，究何碍于手乎？故学佛而不臻究竟，学佛亦是烦恼，此无他，根本未彻而心终有所不安也，故当言安心法。达摩祖师初来，传安心法于二祖，此佛法正宗，始来东土。	Let us provisionally call raising the hand affliction and lowering it bodhi. What obstruction does either create for the hand? Therefore, if one studies Buddhism without reaching the ultimate, even studying Buddhism becomes an affliction. There is no other reason: one has not thoroughly penetrated the root, and the mind therefore remains unsettled. Thus one must speak of the method for settling the mind. When Patriarch Bodhidharma first came, he transmitted the method of settling the mind to the Second Patriarch. This was the orthodox transmission of the Buddhadharma when it first came to the Eastern Land.
以佛法只是心法，如离心法，一切都非佛法。于最上根人，一语道破，立即承当，更不退转，此名顿悟。所谓觅心了不可得，则曰与汝安心竟，此直指心田，安心之最简捷法也。	For Buddhadharma is simply mind Dharma; apart from mind Dharma, nothing is Buddhadharma. For people of the highest capacity, a single phrase lays it bare: they immediately accept it and never retreat. This is called sudden awakening. When one seeks the mind and finds it utterly unobtainable, it is said, “I have already settled your mind for you.” This is direct pointing to the mind-ground, the most direct and expedient method for settling the mind.
次曰证悟，如上根人夙世根基，已臻上乘，惟所证未圆。此生得遇善知识，随机启发，平日所修，蒙师印可，再加事修，然后契合，一旦囫地开悟，如百丈之遇马祖，鼻子扭得痛而得契是也。	Next is realization through verification. Persons of the highest capacity may have, through foundations cultivated in former lives, already reached the highest vehicle, though their realization is not yet complete. In this life, they encounter a good spiritual friend, who awakens them in accordance with their capacity; their ordinary cultivation is confirmed by the master, and they further engage in actual practice until they accord with it. Then, one day, they suddenly awaken completely—as when Baizhang met Mazu and, upon having his nose twisted painfully, attained accord.

再次曰明悟，如大乘人已知心法，仅明于理，未证于事。必待开示悟入，因缘契合，大事方明。然又未敢决定，最后一关，必待印可。如智隍禅师二十年后遇玄策，再参六祖而证是也。	Next is awakening through understanding. A Mahāyāna practitioner may already know mind Dharma and understand it only at the level of principle, without realizing it in actual experience. They must await instruction that enables awakening and entry; only when causes and conditions accord is the great matter made clear. Yet they still do not dare to settle it decisively. At the final barrier, confirmation is required. This was so when Chan Master Zhihuang met Xuance after twenty years, then again consulted the Sixth Patriarch and realized it.
再次曰缘悟，如人累世苦行，惜未证悟，今世缘熟，得受当机之法，因而开悟者。又近世行者，多年苦行，讫未明究竟，开般若慧。忽遇大愚法师，开心中心无相密乘，由是证入三昧、达诸心要者，不可胜数，岂非累劫因缘？是自己之善根，遇无上法缘，共成此福德者是也。	Next is awakening through conditions. Some people have practiced austerities through many lives but regrettably have not realized awakening. In this life, when conditions ripen, they receive a practice suited to them and thereby awaken. Again, among recent practitioners, many have undergone arduous practice for years without yet understanding the ultimate or opening prajñā wisdom. Then they suddenly encounter Dharma Master Dayu, who opens the formless Esoteric Vehicle of the Heart-of-Heart Dharma; from this they enter samādhi and comprehend the essential points of mind. Such people are too numerous to count. Is this not the fruition of causes and conditions accumulated over many kalpas? It is their own wholesome roots encountering the supreme Dharma conditions, which together bring about this merit and virtue.
此数者，皆同以开般若，得安心为究竟者也。或由顿悟，或由事修，根无利钝，时有先后，因缘各异，遂分迟速。惟安心一法，若全赖学人自己力量，诚属不易。近由各方来谘于余，窃以心中心法，乃直证心田之法。	All these alike take opening prajñā and attaining a settled mind as ultimate. Some do so through sudden awakening, others through actual practice. Capacities are neither sharp nor dull in any fixed way; times differ as earlier or later, and causes and conditions vary, so attainment is divided into slow and swift. Yet if the method of settling the mind depends entirely on the student’s own strength, it is truly not easy. Recently, people from all quarters have come to consult me. In my private view, the Heart-of-Heart Dharma is a method for directly realizing the mind-ground.
佛菩萨悯末世众生，用自力直证禅定者，根器殊少，若使三密加持，佛力合以自力，必可由定生慧，而般若门	Buddhas and bodhisattvas, compassionate toward sentient beings in the degenerate age, know that

开，为最稳捷之法。	among those who use their own strength to directly realize dhyāna and samādhi, very few have the requisite capacity. If the empowerment of the three mysteries is employed, joining the Buddha's power with one's own strength, wisdom will surely arise from samādhi and the gate of prajñā will open. This is the most stable and swift method.
不予开释，则未修者，误于门户，疑人而不敢承受；已修者，中途躁急，自疑而徘徊莫决；久修者，未明启用，疑法而知见横生，坐误者多，可叹也。心中心法，立场与他法绝然不共，为人开释，本无定义，非对其机，莫由决定。	If this is not explained, those who have not yet practiced will be misled by sectarian divisions, doubt others, and not dare to accept it; those already practicing will become impatient midway, doubt themselves, hesitate, and remain undecided; those who have practiced for a long time will not understand how to bring it into use, doubt the Dharma, and multiply their own views. Many are thus led astray, which is lamentable. The Heart-of-Heart Dharma has a standpoint entirely distinct from other teachings. In explaining it to people, there can be no fixed formula; the explanation must be settled in light of the listener's capacity.
惟有关于或问数则，如心乱难制，如何得定诸问题，几无日不有讨论，姑择要录之如后：	Only with respect to several questions that are commonly asked—for example, how to attain samādhi when the mind is chaotic and difficult to control—are there scarcely any days without discussion. I will select and record the essentials below:
一问杀盗淫诸业如何制止？答：如救火然，以从根本救治为义。此先明因果，以杀盗淫为果，贪嗔痴为因，而贪嗔痴实又为果，不觉又为其因，于是不觉为果，不明心地为因，不明由于无慧，无慧由于无定，无定慧由于修法无效，无效由于法不当机，不当机由于下手不先予决定心地法门，此名学佛不明因果，未从根本救治故。	First question: How can the karmas of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct be stopped? Answer: It is like putting out a fire: one must remedy it from the root. First understand cause and effect. Killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct are the results, while greed, anger, and ignorance are their causes. Yet greed, anger, and ignorance are themselves results, and unawareness is their cause. Unawareness, in turn, is the result, while failure to realize the mind-ground is its cause. Failure to realize the mind-ground is due to lacking wisdom; lacking wisdom is due to lacking samādhi; lacking samādhi and wisdom is due to ineffective practice; ineffective practice is due to a Dharma that does not suit one's capacity; and a Dharma that does not suit one's capacity is due to not first being given a decisive Dharma gate for realizing the mind-ground. This is called studying Buddhism

	without understanding cause and effect, because one has not remedied matters from the root.
二问心中心法又如何而可制心？答：此法惟赖咒印二力，与自己修持之力，身口意三密成就。如咒印为飞机，自修如开机人，必相合而成，故速得成就。	Second question: How can the Heart-of-Heart Dharma control the mind? Answer: This Dharma relies solely on the two powers of mantra and mudrā together with the power of one's own cultivation, so that the three mysteries of body, speech, and mind are accomplished. Mantra and mudrā are like an airplane, while one's own practice is like its pilot. They must work together for accomplishment to be swiftly attained.
三问其他密法，何以不可制心？答：非不可也。法法皆是无上，皆是佛制，何得妄分高下？惟心中心法为现代当机之法，又如他法当机，行人亦必依法而修。心中心法，亦有修至三千座而不见功效者，非法之咎，修者未得法耳。	Third question: Why can other esoteric practices not control the mind? Answer: It is not that they cannot. Every dharma is supreme and was established by the Buddha; how could one arbitrarily divide them into high and low? The Heart-of-Heart Dharma is simply a practice suited to people today. Likewise, if another practice suits someone's capacity, that practitioner must cultivate in accordance with that Dharma. There are also those who practice the Heart-of-Heart Dharma for as many as three thousand sessions without seeing results. This is not the fault of the Dharma; it is because the practitioner has yet to grasp the method.
四问修心中心法必两小时，有时愈坐愈乱，反不得定何也？答：此法以拔根为主，故不许压制，倒要伊翻种子，如坐时忽觉心乱，甚至数十年前细事，亦到眼前，仿佛愈坐愈乱，正不必怕，此已是得定时，以不定则不知乱也。	Fourth question: The practice of the Heart-of-Heart Dharma requires two hours. Sometimes the longer one sits, the more chaotic the mind becomes, and one instead fails to attain samādhi. Why is this? Answer: This Dharma takes uprooting as its main aim and therefore does not permit suppression. On the contrary, it requires one to turn up the seeds. Thus, when sitting, one may suddenly feel the mind becoming chaotic; even trivial matters from decades ago may come before one's eyes. It may seem that the longer one sits, the more chaotic the mind becomes. There is no need to fear this. This is already a time of attaining samādhi, for if one were not settled, one would not know that the mind is chaotic.
五问如何是依法而修？答：只一老实把持，坐足两小时。种种乱、种种翻动到来，或中途人事有来引逗，我只不管，除埋头持咒勿放印外，一概不理。	Fifth question: How should one practice in accordance with the Dharma? Answer: Simply hold firmly and sincerely to the practice, sitting for a full

	two hours. When all kinds of confusion and agitation arise, or when worldly affairs intrude midway and draw one away, one simply pays them no heed. Apart from keeping one's head down, maintaining the mantra, and not releasing the mudrā, one attends to nothing else.
如思潮忽起，一觉即顾到持咒，任伊天翻地覆，我只不问不闻，如同虚行故事。满两小时下座，更勿思量，见光见佛，观字观月，一切不许。经云凡所有相，皆是虚妄。守定此义，一切不惑。如身有酸痛等反应，亦更不计较。如轮船行海，居大浪中，上下颠狂，一以南针为指，绝不问前途如何。是唯一妙诀，久久自见功效。	If a surge of thoughts suddenly arises, as soon as one notices it, return to the mantra. Let heaven and earth turn upside down if they will; simply do not ask or heed them, as though they were an empty drama being played out. After getting down from the seat at the end of two hours, do not reflect further. Seeing light, seeing Buddhas, visualizing letters, visualizing the moon—all of this is forbidden. The sūtra says, "All appearances are false and illusory." Hold firmly to this meaning, and one will not be deluded by anything. If bodily reactions such as soreness or pain occur, do not concern yourself with them either. It is like a ship crossing the sea amid great waves, pitching wildly up and down: it takes the compass needle as its guide and never asks what lies ahead. This is the sole wondrous essential; with long practice, its efficacy will become apparent.
六问功效如何？可得闻乎？答：若言功效，即又误人。彼时时贪求功效，反不得定，不知久久自定，自得功效也。	Sixth question: What is its efficacy? May one hear about it? Answer: To speak of efficacy is itself misleading. Those who constantly crave efficacy instead fail to attain samādhi. They do not know that, with time, samādhi naturally develops and efficacy naturally follows.
七问有时又忽昏睡，其义如何？答：如修至一时半后，或心中烦躁，此正进功之时，切勿疑怖。若以昏睡，而手印勿散，口持咒密密勿停，即非睡也。切不可疑而中止。	Seventh question: At times one suddenly grows drowsy. What does this mean? Answer: If, after practicing for an hour and a half, one becomes drowsy or inwardly agitated, this is precisely the time when one's practice is advancing; do not doubt or fear it. If one is drowsy but does not release the mudrā, and quietly continues the mantra without interruption, then it is not sleep. Never stop because of doubt.
八问如心乱至极而难过，万不能忍受时如何？答：当生欢喜心，自念此正进功之时，正可借以制心，只一转念，当下空寂。又念凡人死时，如生龟脱壳，不知如何痛苦，皆由我先不制心故。我今移未来之苦于今日，先	Eighth question: What should one do when the mind is in extreme disorder and suffering becomes utterly unbearable? Answer: Give rise to joy and tell yourself: "This is precisely the time when practice is

消除之，其便宜不可胜道，狂心刹那顿息。然总以观空为主，以空则定矣。	advancing, and I can use it to discipline the mind." With a single turn of thought, there is immediate empty quiescence. Reflect also: when ordinary people die, it is like a living turtle being stripped from its shell; one cannot know how painful it is. This is all because I did not discipline my mind beforehand. Now I bring the suffering of the future into the present and eliminate it in advance; the advantage of this cannot be fully described. The frantic mind then suddenly comes to rest in an instant. Yet contemplation of emptiness must always be primary; through emptiness, samādhi is attained.
九问何谓翻种子？答：凡人习气，潜伏根内，如平地不见有草，难以拔除，反要其生出，然后除根，切不可剃而不拔。佛制比丘剃发，欲其反悟一切烦恼，如发时生，暂除非计，必焉拔除其根，方名究竟，可由此悟入。	Ninth question: What does it mean to bring karmic seeds to the surface? Answer: Ordinary people's habitual tendencies lie latent at their roots. Like grass that cannot be seen on level ground, they are difficult to pull out. They must instead be allowed to grow forth before they can be uprooted; one must never merely shave them off without pulling out their roots. The Buddha instituted that bhikshus shave their heads so that they might thereby awaken to the fact that all afflictions are like hair: merely removing them temporarily is not enough; their roots must be pulled out before this can be called ultimate. One may awaken through this analogy.
今如不用此法，则种子不出，压而制之，非根本计划也。又譬如杯水污泥，彼以不动荡为主，则上清而下浊，仿佛见功，终必混乱。切不可取功于一时，宁可过沙去泥，虽一时紊乱，毕竟全功，永永动定不二，皆属清水矣。今劝人勿先求定，而只老实修法翻出种子者，即此意也。	If one does not use this method, the seeds will not emerge. To suppress and restrain them is not a fundamental plan. It is also like muddy water in a cup: if one chiefly avoids stirring it, the top becomes clear while the bottom remains turbid. This may seem like progress, but it will inevitably become muddled again. One must never seek a temporary result. It is better to let the sand pass through and remove the mud; though there may be disorder for a time, the work will ultimately be complete. Forever afterward, movement and stillness will be nondual, and all will be clear water. This is why people are now advised not first to seek samādhi, but simply to practice sincerely and bring the seeds to the surface.
十问种子习气于翻出时，又如何拔乎？答：正上座修时，切勿顾及拔除，只要口持咒勿停，手结印勿散，心	Tenth question: When karmic seeds and habitual tendencies are brought to the surface, how are

净空勿理，至拔根乃下座时事，二六时中，固无刻不要用功。况习气本来无根，一转即空，能观空即是拔也。	they uprooted? Answer: While practicing in meditation, never concern yourself with uprooting them. Simply keep the mantra going without pause, keep the mudrā formed without releasing it, and let the mind be pure and empty, without heeding them. Uprooting their roots is a matter for after one leaves the seat. Throughout the twenty-four hours, there is never a moment when one should not practice. Moreover, habitual tendencies originally have no root; with a single turn, they are empty. To be able to contemplate emptiness is itself to uproot them.
十一问人事纷扰之地可坐乎？答：有何不可。且正要在乱时坐，才是真见力量。若慕清净山林者，彼已立有动静二见，非心中心法。盖境无乱静，心自分别，我心若定，何关声色乎？	Eleventh question: Can one sit in a place full of worldly disturbances? Answer: Why not? Indeed, one should sit precisely amid disorder; only then can one truly see one's strength. Those who long for pure mountains and forests have already established the dual view of movement and stillness, which is not the Heart-of-Heart Dharma. Circumstances themselves are neither disturbed nor tranquil; it is the mind that makes distinctions. If my mind is settled, what do sounds and forms matter?
十二问下座后，平日如何用功？答：二六时中，无杂用心，方是真精进。无杂用心者，非不用心也，于无谓无益事，应时时凛觉。但人事往来，诸无谓酬应事，不能免也。惟接一切事时，常用智慧察照，了达一切性空，随缘应付，心无悬恋，即不污染。	Twelfth question: After leaving the meditation seat, how should one practice in daily life? Answer: Throughout the twenty-four hours, to have no miscellaneous mental activity is true diligence. Having no miscellaneous mental activity does not mean not using the mind. In matters that are pointless and unbeneficial, one should remain constantly alert. Yet interpersonal dealings and all kinds of unnecessary social obligations cannot be entirely avoided. When dealing with any matter, however, always use wisdom to observe and illuminate, clearly realizing that all things are empty in nature. Respond according to conditions, without mental attachment; then one is not defiled.
十三问如何不污染？答：不是避去一切，正接物时，勿把此心偏执于空，而故示消极，亦勿把此心偏执于有，而认妄作真，随来随应。只不放松本来，时时回顾，即名不污染。	Thirteenth question: How does one remain undefiled? Answer: It does not mean avoiding everything. When engaging with things, do not cling to emptiness and deliberately display passivity; nor should you cling to existence and take delusion for reality. Respond to whatever comes. Simply keep your original nature in view, and constantly turn

	back to look within; this is called remaining undefiled.
以众生之所以为众生者，心如油胶，遇物执著，佛度众生，亦只度此执著心。	What makes sentient beings sentient beings is that their minds are like oily glue: when they encounter objects, they become attached. In liberating sentient beings, the Buddha liberates only this attached mind.
惟众生难度，扶东倒西，遇物染物，遇事染事，乃至遇佛染佛，遇法染法，教下有教下之习气，宗下有宗下之法见，显教密教，各执其是，颠来倒去，总在生死海中。至所云污染者，固在生死，而执以为不污染者，亦在生死法见之中，以心未平等故，不离二见故。但真见性人，明达本来不污染，自无此等分别顾忌耳。	Yet sentient beings are difficult to liberate. Support them in the east and they fall in the west; encountering things, they are stained by things; encountering affairs, they are stained by affairs. They are even stained by the Buddha when they encounter the Buddha, and stained by the Dharma when they encounter the Dharma. Those of the teaching schools have the habitual tendencies of the teaching schools; those of the Chan school have views about its methods. Exoteric Buddhism and Esoteric Buddhism each cling to what they regard as right. Tossed this way and that, they remain altogether in the sea of birth and death. As for what is called defilement, it certainly belongs to birth and death; but clinging to the notion of being undefiled also belongs to the Dharma-view of birth and death, because the mind lacks equanimity and has not abandoned dualistic views. But those who have truly seen their nature clearly understand that they are originally undefiled, and so naturally have no such distinctions or anxieties.
十四问平居习气来时，如何制止？答：习气来时，只怕不觉，觉则未有不转而空者。第遇极难排遣之事，明知之而力有不足，则有二法，一曰移化，把此心速移于他事而化之。二曰量果，言思量凡事必有其果。如是流浪深入，步步演进，必不堪收拾，则自然凛觉而止矣。	Fourteenth question: When habitual tendencies arise in daily life, how should they be stopped? Answer: When habitual tendencies arise, the only danger is failing to notice them. Once one notices them, there is none that will not turn and become empty. But when one encounters something extremely difficult to dispel, knows it clearly, yet lacks the strength to do so, there are two methods. The first is shifting and transforming: swiftly shift the mind to something else and thereby transform it. The second is assessing the result: reflect that every action must have its result. If one drifts ever deeper in this way, advancing step by step, the consequences will surely become beyond repair. One will then naturally become alert and stop.

十五问云何无念？答：无念者非绝无思念也，心若虚空，念而不执也。如居高楼，下视通衢，往来人物，非不见闻，只是过而不留，毫不系著，非同栈房之纳而勿出也。	Fifteenth question: What does no-thought mean? Answer: No-thought does not mean the complete absence of thoughts. It means that the mind is like empty space: thoughts arise, but one does not cling to them. It is like living in a high building and looking down on a busy street. People and vehicles come and go; it is not that one does not see or hear them, but they pass without remaining, and one is not attached to them in the least. It is not like a storeroom that takes things in but does not let them out.
十六问最深之习气，如何除法？答：为方便说，自然要除，若究竟说，尔应先明心地，则不除自除，只是时间力量问题。凡硬除习气者，只止于一时。	Sixteenth question: What method removes the deepest habitual tendencies? Answer: Speaking provisionally, they must naturally be removed. Speaking ultimately, however, you should first clearly realize the mind-ground; then, without being removed, they remove themselves. It is merely a matter of time and strength. Those who forcibly remove habitual tendencies can stop them only temporarily.
譬如扬汤止沸，而究竟者，则不计速效，行釜底抽薪法，火根已断，而水尚沸热。故虽明心地，习气仍在，不得因其习在而断为未明心也。久久自然慧力强，习气弱，且真用功人，习气亦容易翻出，惟起速而去易，乃必经之过程，未证者，不足与语此。	It is like ladling out boiling soup to stop it from boiling. The ultimate approach, however, does not seek quick results; it removes the firewood from beneath the pot. Once the root of the fire has been cut off, the water may still boil and remain hot. Thus, although one has clearly realized the mind-ground, habitual tendencies may still remain. One must not conclude, merely because they remain, that one has not realized the mind-ground. Over time, the power of wisdom naturally becomes strong and habitual tendencies weak. Moreover, for one who truly practices, habitual tendencies readily come to the surface; they arise quickly and depart easily. This is a necessary process, and it is not worth speaking of this to those who have not yet realized it.
十七问既不硬压习气，则一任其流转乎？抑另有其他法门也？答：此未可概言也。明心地与除习气，非属二事，于正明觉时，习气自然消亡，惟去而又来，故云习气。	Seventeenth question: If one does not forcibly suppress habitual tendencies, should one simply let them continue to flow? Or is there another Dharma gate? Answer: This cannot be stated categorically. Clearly realizing the mind-ground and removing habitual tendencies are not two separate matters. When there is right clear awareness, habitual tendencies naturally disappear; yet they go and

	then return, which is why they are called habitual tendencies.
若真见性人，心已平等，无复二见，于自己之习尚，不独不除，且从而逆之。譬如肥甘之好，心一日不厌，习则一日不去，故意日日尝试，使之生厌。	If one has truly seen one's nature, the mind has become equal and no longer holds dualistic views. Regarding one's own remaining habits, one not only does not eliminate them, but may even deliberately go against them. For example, as long as one does not tire of rich and sweet foods, the habit will not leave; one deliberately tastes them every day until aversion arises.
惟尝试时，与他人不同，彼必不肯轻轻放过，必自考其力量，与夙昔如何，自问其贪爱执取，较前何似，则精进之力日强。至对根本未明之人，切记慎言，勿与妄谈般若，宗下习气，恒多此病，误以为此即平等，人人可以方便，而不知其大不方便也。	But when doing this, such a person differs from others. Such a person will certainly not let it pass lightly, but will test their own strength: comparing it with the past, they ask themselves how their greed, attachment, and grasping now compare with before. Thus the power of diligence grows stronger day by day. But for those whose fundamental nature has not yet been realized, remember never to speak carelessly. Do not idly discuss prajñā with them. This is a common failing among those with Chan-school habits: they mistakenly take this to be equanimity and suppose that everyone can use expedient means, without realizing how greatly inexpedient this is.
十八问修道人于男女之际应如何？答：男女即是夙习，为生死最坚固难拔之根，欲爱不断，决难入道，但修道人怕欲而不言断，只言制而不言化，此欲爱所以永不除也。	Eighteenth question: How should practitioners deal with relations between men and women? Answer: Sexual attraction is itself a habit from the past, the most firm and difficult-to-extract root of birth and death. Unless desire and attachment are cut off, it is absolutely difficult to enter the Way. Yet practitioners fear desire without speaking of cutting it off; they speak only of restraining it, not of transforming it. This is why desire and attachment are never eliminated.
修道人要练得此心，说止就止，说断就断，到力量充足时，仿佛毫无气力功用，不是废却功用也。古人谓制心如悬崖勒马，到万不可止时，能截然而止，是何等力量。故下手处在临事时常用一忍字。	Practitioners must train the mind so that when they say stop, it stops, and when they say cut off, it cuts off. When their strength is sufficient, it may seem as though there is no strength or effort at all; this does not mean that effort has been abandoned. The ancients said that disciplining the mind is like reining in a horse at a cliff's edge. When one reaches the point where stopping seems utterly impossible, yet can stop abruptly, what

	tremendous strength that is. Therefore, the initial practice is to apply the word “forbearance” constantly when matters arise.
但事过后将忍字舍去，不可再受法缚。平时常用一化字，此中妙谛，在人自觉，包括观空转念等法，非可予人以巧，此即般若之用，久久自然纯熟。	But after the matter has passed, put aside the word “forbearance”; do not remain bound by the Dharma. In ordinary life, constantly apply the word “transform.” Its wondrous principle lies in one’s own awakening and includes such methods as contemplating emptiness and turning the thought. It cannot be given to another as a clever technique. This is the functioning of prajñā; with time, it naturally becomes fully familiar.
于欲爱事，最不易截然止念，果能于此时见功，肯一化而空，则断分段生死不远。然尚得以般若扫荡余习，方有几分把握。又居士与比丘不同，切勿压制，亦勿流浪，此亦非恶事也，当体会之，勿拘执可矣。	In matters of desire and attachment, it is most difficult to cut off thoughts abruptly. If one can show one’s practice at such a time, willingly transform them so that they become empty, then liberation from segmented birth and death is not far off. Yet one must still use prajñā to sweep away residual habits before there can be some assurance. Lay practitioners differ from bhikshus: do not suppress them, but do not let them run unchecked either. This is not in itself an evil matter; one should understand it and not cling rigidly.
十九问比丘与居士修持如何？答：比丘与居士，环境不同，故比丘以淫戒为首，居士以杀戒为重也。以闭户清净自修论，比丘为宜，以试验磨练除习论，则居士为便。今如有人，其病畏风，因医而愈，若不见风，不能考验，但比丘则无再见风之机会矣，因此最后一关，极难透过。	Nineteenth question: How do bhikshus and lay practitioners differ in cultivation? Answer: Bhikshus and lay practitioners have different circumstances. Therefore, for bhikshus the precept against sexual misconduct comes first, while for lay practitioners the precept against killing is most important. In terms of shutting oneself away for pure self-cultivation, bhikshus are more suited; in terms of testing oneself, tempering oneself, and removing habitual tendencies, lay practitioners have the advantage. Suppose someone fears the wind and is cured by a physician. If that person never encounters the wind again, the cure cannot be tested. But bhikshus have no further opportunity to encounter the wind. Therefore, this final barrier is extremely difficult to pass through.
二十问如何可以不惑？答：上上根人，直证心源，本无阶级。惟不妨假立一次第，行者先练空境，外不惑于境也。次练空心，内不惑于见也。至此根本已得，而夙习尚在，则时时运用般若以扫荡之，斯名不惑。	Twentieth question: How can one avoid delusion? Answer: Those of the highest capacities directly realize the source of mind; originally there are no stages. Yet one may provisionally establish stages

	without harm. Practitioners first train in the emptiness of circumstances, so that outwardly they are not deluded by circumstances. Next, they train in the emptiness of mind, so that inwardly they are not deluded by views. At this point the root has been attained, but past habits still remain. One must therefore constantly employ prajñā to sweep them away. This is called being free from delusion.
二十一问如何可以证三昧？答：不惑者，一切不受之谓也。一切不受，斯名正受，又名正定。此在一门深入，由体起用，开般若后，即可证入，即见实相。	Twenty-first question: How can one realize samādhi? Answer: To remain undeluded is to take hold of nothing that arises. This is called right reception, or right samādhi. By going deeply into a single Dharma gate, giving rise to function from essence, and opening prajñā, one can enter realization and see true reality.
二十二问如何可以见实相？答：凡所有相皆是虚妄，若见诸相非相，即见实相。此在一门深入，能起般若妙用，了达一切万有，本体平等，尽从缘生，此即实相。经云，实相者，即是非相，以慧力谛观而空之，曰见实相。	Twenty-second question: How can one see true reality? Answer: All appearances are false and illusory. If one sees all appearances as non-appearances, one sees true reality. By going deeply into a single Dharma gate and bringing forth the wondrous functioning of prajñā, one clearly realizes that all existing things are equal in their fundamental essence and entirely arise from conditions. This is true reality. The sūtra says, “True reality is itself non-appearance.” To contemplate it closely with the power of wisdom and realize it as empty is called seeing true reality.
二十三问证三昧见实相后，是否即名成佛？答：是。成佛之义，乃在开觉。世人不识成佛为何义，以为成佛必如弥陀释迦。	Twenty-third question: After realizing samādhi and seeing reality directly, is this immediately called attaining Buddhahood? Answer: Yes. The meaning of attaining Buddhahood lies in awakening. Worldly people do not understand what attaining Buddhahood means; they think that one who attains Buddhahood must be like Amitābha Buddha or Śākyamuni Buddha.
不知树之开华结实，亦有次第，初为下种，次为萌芽，次为成树，次为华果，而果之由小而大，由生而熟，亦必待时。佛法无时间相，能下种即算成就，及已结果，虽小而生，不得名为非果也。	They do not know that a tree’s flowering and fruiting also proceed in stages: first the seed is planted, then it sprouts, then it becomes a tree, and then it produces flowers and fruit. The fruit, too, grows from small to large and from raw to ripe, and must await its time. Buddhadharma has no mark of time: to be able to plant the seed already counts as accomplishment. When fruit has

	appeared, though it may be small and unripe, it cannot be called non-fruit.
如其人证得三昧，已显法身，即是法身成佛。惟习气不除，为诸障所覆，神用未开，诸缘不具，必待时而熟，方可如过去佛之报化身圆满。密宗即生成佛者，在此生先显法身，根本无明初破，即名登佛位是也。	If a person realizes samādhi and has already manifested the dharmakāya, this is becoming a Buddha in the dharmakāya. Yet if habitual tendencies have not been removed, one remains covered by various hindrances; spiritual functions have not unfolded, and the requisite conditions are not yet complete. One must wait for the time to ripen before the sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya can become complete, as they did for the Buddhas of the past. For those in Esoteric Buddhism who attain Buddhahood in this very life, the dharmakāya is first manifested in this life. When fundamental ignorance is initially broken through, this is called ascending to the Buddha-stage.
二十四问学佛功用，究应如何下手？答：学佛原不可但凭理解，不重事修，虽不能离功用，却不可著功用。故下手时先宜因地决定，最初勿猛，中途勿怠，在后勿疑。	Question Twenty-Four: In studying Buddhism, how exactly should one begin the work? Answer: One must not study Buddhism by relying solely on intellectual understanding while neglecting actual practice. Although one cannot dispense with practical efficacy, one must not become attached to it. Therefore, when beginning, one should first establish one's resolve at the causal stage: do not be too fierce at the outset, do not become lax midway, and do not give rise to doubt at the end.
若有所得，切勿喜欢自是而生骄慢，独发愿宜宏，以无限量之勇猛心，承当自己法性与佛不二，此是第一关。老实修持，一门深入，不疾不徐，百折不回，自可精深严密，此是第二关。	If there is any attainment, never become pleased with yourself and give rise to arrogance. One's aspiration alone should be vast: with boundless courageous resolve, undertake the truth that one's own dharma-nature is nondual with the Buddha. This is the first gate. Practice honestly, penetrate deeply into one method, neither hurried nor slow, and never turn back despite a hundred setbacks. Then one will naturally become profound, refined, and meticulous. This is the second gate.
及至大事已明，会入不二，宜注重涵养，去其躁急，功夫纯熟，自然炉火纯青，幽光显发，处处圆润，此是第三关。故学佛易，承当难；承当易，老实难；老实易，养道难。惟不用其所长，即常觉其所短，日进于道，必无退转。	When the great matter has become clear and one has entered nonduality, one should emphasize cultivation and nurture, eliminating impatience and haste. When one's practice becomes fully mature, it will naturally reach complete maturity; its hidden light will manifest, and one will be rounded and harmonious in every circumstance. This is the third

	gate. Therefore, studying Buddhism is easy, but undertaking it is difficult; undertaking it is easy, but practicing honestly is difficult; practicing honestly is easy, but nurturing the Way is difficult. Only by not relying on one's strengths, and constantly recognizing one's shortcomings, can one advance daily in the Way and surely never regress.
然承当与自大不同，老实与死执不同，养道与守法不同。譬如宝器，第一取材，以品质精纯为主；第二雕琢，以手工细致为贵；第三打磨光润；第四入土，以去火气为宝。盖不经多年蕴藏，宝光不显发也。学佛亦然。	Yet undertaking this is not the same as self-importance; practicing honestly is not the same as rigid attachment; and nurturing the Way is not the same as merely observing rules. Consider a precious vessel: first comes the selection of materials, in which purity and excellence of quality are primary; second comes carving, in which fine workmanship is prized; third comes polishing until it is lustrous; fourth comes burying it in the earth, in order to remove its fiery energy. Unless it is stored away and nurtured for many years, its precious radiance will not manifest. Studying Buddhism is the same.
故心中若有一毫法见蕴积于内，即不肯不露，骄慢生于不觉，此何异仰天登山，不顾脚下，到处是生死坑，岂不危哉？此段切宜注意。	Therefore, if even the slightest trace of a view of dharmas accumulates within the mind, one cannot help displaying it, and arrogance arises without one's noticing it. How is this different from climbing a mountain while looking up at the sky and disregarding one's footing? Everywhere are pits of birth and death—how dangerous that is! One should pay the closest attention to this passage.
二十五问参语录或答公案，往往不契时如何？答：此亦被境夺，不知脱卸，彼先有一胜负心，必得心，工文字者，更有文字习，此尽属生死，故契不契，不在对方公案，而在内证，是即一切都是，不是即一切不是。	Question Twenty-Five: When studying recorded sayings or answering koans, one often fails to accord with the occasion. What should one do? Answer: This too is being carried away by circumstances and not knowing how to cast them off. One first harbors a competitive mind and a mind bent on gaining; those skilled in literary composition further possess literary habits. All this belongs to birth and death. Therefore, whether one accords or does not accord does not depend on the other party's koan, but on one's inner realization. If it is so, then everything is so; if it is not so, then nothing is so.
如能根本透澈，即不参语录，处处是语录，不答公案，在在是公案，何必借他以为己有，况他人是他人的，未	If one has thoroughly penetrated to the root, then even without studying recorded sayings,

必是我的，会即本来具足，不关自他契不契也。	everywhere is a recorded saying; even without answering koans, everywhere is a koan. Why borrow from others and make it one's own? What belongs to others belongs to others and may not be one's own. If one understands, one is originally complete; it has nothing to do with whether oneself or another accords or fails to accord.
故禅有禅病，密有密习，修净土切忌有死气，以不是死了往生，就算究竟也。修禅宗切忌有标气，以标则喜不自胜而近于狂，狂则轻他而入于慢，非真禅定也。	Therefore, Chan has Chan sicknesses, and Esoteric Buddhism has esoteric habits. In cultivating the Pure Land, one must absolutely avoid a deathly air, for dying and then attaining rebirth is not, in itself, ultimate attainment. In practicing the Chan school, one must absolutely avoid a showy air. Once one becomes showy, one is so delighted that one approaches madness; once mad, one belittles others and falls into arrogance. This is not true Chan meditation.
修密切忌有法气，以密法乃一时之借用，非如道士之捉妖，手不离符剑以为究竟也。若执于法，即看处处都非法，徒自生恼，则又三密清净之谓何，非究竟也。深望同学者，时时顾到自己习气，不要有此等气味，并不要有火气，令人不可近，亦不要有冰气，自缚枯寂如寒蝉，常体察我平日之习气，自然相契。	In esoteric practice, one must absolutely avoid a dharma air, for esoteric Dharma is a temporary expedient, not like a Daoist catching demons and never letting go of talisman and ritual sword, taking these to be ultimate. If one becomes attached to dharmas, one sees every place as devoid of Dharma and merely gives rise to affliction. What, then, could be meant by the purity of the three mysteries? This is not ultimate either. I deeply hope that fellow students will constantly attend to their own habitual tendencies. Do not have such airs; nor should you have a fiery temper that makes others unable to approach you. Nor should you have an icy air, binding yourselves in dry quiescence like cold cicadas. Constantly examine your ordinary habitual tendencies, and you will naturally come into accord.
二十六问宗下语录，可用功乎？答：学佛本旨，在去执见，众生习气，在见境即被夺，自无主张，流浪生死，此其根也。故必练习此心，不被流转，所以二六时中，不杂用心，处处回顾本来。	Question Twenty-Six: Can one use the recorded sayings of the Chan school as a method of practice? Answer: The fundamental purpose of studying Buddhism is to remove clinging views. Sentient beings' habitual tendency is to be carried away as soon as they encounter an object, having no mastery of themselves and drifting through birth and death. This is the root. Therefore, one must train this mind not to be swept along in the flow. Thus, throughout the twenty-four hours, do not

	allow the mind to become mixed and scattered; in every circumstance, turn back and look to the original nature.
宗下法门，先令其开悟，悟个本来，既悟已，然后加以考试，出其不意，忽来一问，伊如照顾得到，暗箭亦可接，若照顾不到，即当面错过。如问如何是佛，彼必著了佛，或思躲避，说如何不是佛，不知还是著了佛。	The Chan-school method first enables a person to awaken and realize the original nature. Once one has awakened, one is then tested. The teacher catches them off guard with a question. If one can maintain awareness, one can even catch a hidden arrow; if one cannot maintain awareness, one misses what is right in front of them. If asked, “What is the Buddha?” one will surely become attached to “Buddha,” or perhaps think of evading the question by saying what is not the Buddha, not realizing that one is still attached to “Buddha.”
如真见性人，著亦无碍，暗箭来时，接亦得，躲亦得，圆转自如，皆无定法。故参公案，应在明心之后，借以考练心地，非藉公案即可发明心地也。近有人关门死参公案，终不得要领者有之。	For one who has truly seen one’s nature, nothing can tie them down. When a hidden arrow comes, one may catch it or evade it; one turns freely and naturally, for there is no fixed dharma. Therefore, koans should be studied after realizing the mind, using them to test and train the mind-ground. It is not by means of koans alone that one can illuminate the mind-ground. In recent times, some have shut themselves away and mechanically studied koans, yet in the end have failed to grasp the essential point.
有心地已明，乐于禅昧，反被法缚者有之。有死执公案以为法，不知随处音声言事，乃至鄙俚俗话，一切动作，尽是实相，乃生种种分别者有之。故法无定法，当机为上，义无定义，善用则得。	Some have already clarified the mind-ground and delight in Chan absorption, only to become bound by the Dharma. Some rigidly cling to koans as Dharma, not knowing that sounds, speech, and affairs in every place, even crude popular sayings and every action, are all true reality, and thus give rise to all kinds of discrimination. Therefore, Dharma has no fixed Dharma; what accords with the recipient is supreme. Meaning has no fixed meaning; skillful use brings attainment.
以密宗融通禅要，直证心田，以般若扫除禅病，归于不二，说教说宗，两无染习，言显言密，尽得融通。如此广大微妙法门，开千古未有之奇局者，其惟吾师大愚师尊一人而已。其能认识此理，推崇至再者，亦只诺那上师一人。	Using Esoteric Buddhism to integrate and elucidate the essentials of Chan, directly realizing the mind-field; using prajñā to sweep away Chan sicknesses and return to nonduality; whether speaking of teachings or of Chan, one is unstained by either habit; whether speaking of the exoteric or the esoteric, one fully integrates them all. As for opening up such a vast and subtle Dharma gate,

	unprecedented throughout the ages, only my revered teacher, Patriarch Dayu, has done so. The only one able to recognize this principle and praise it repeatedly was Guru Nona.
近世人始稍稍领悟，知学佛最初之决定，惟在明心见性，欲开般若，先证心田，虽心中心法，未必个个当机，人人可学。但上根人，具有智慧而无法开启，或苦修各宗而仍无出路者，则莫如修心中心法，较为简捷。	Only in recent times have people gradually come to understand that the initial decisive point in studying Buddhism lies solely in realizing the mind and seeing one's true nature. To open prajñā, one must first realize the mind-field. Although the Heart-of-Heart Dharma may not suit every individual, everyone may study it. But for those of superior faculties, who possess wisdom but have no way to open it, or who have painfully cultivated the various schools yet still find no way out, nothing is more direct and expedient than practicing the Heart-of-Heart Dharma.
至证三昧，见实相后，般若门开，然后借公案以为印证。譬如下棋者，必先懂棋法，然后参谱，方知其妙，而灵用又在棋谱之外，非可以教法传也。	After realizing samādhi and seeing true reality, the gate of prajñā opens; one may then use koans as verification. It is like playing chess: one must first understand the rules of chess before studying game records and thereby knowing their marvels. Yet flexible functioning lies beyond the game records and cannot be transmitted through instructional rules.
二十七问有修心中心法至二三千座，仍不起用者何也？答此有五：一者习于门户之见，不知法法融通之义。二者已入三昧而不自知，有体而不达用。三者依赖于佛，不明自心。四者死执于定，不明慧用，下座即放弃勿参。五者离师太早，无人督饬故。	Question Twenty-Seven: Why are there people who have practiced the Heart-of-Heart Dharma for two or three thousand meditation sessions but still have no functioning? Answer: There are five reasons. First, they are habituated to sectarian views and do not understand that all dharmas interpenetrate. Second, they have entered samādhi without knowing it themselves; they have essence but do not understand its function. Third, they rely on the Buddha and do not understand their own mind. Fourth, they rigidly cling to meditative stability and do not understand the functioning of wisdom; once off the meditation cushion, they abandon inquiry altogether. Fifth, they leave their teacher too early and therefore have no one to supervise and exhort them.
二十八问有修心中心法，已开般若，而心忽放荡，反无把持，则又何也？答：此于初开般若时，必生种种知见，苦无善知识督饬于后。若能随起随扫，与之决定，	Question Twenty-Eight: Why is it that some who practice the Heart-of-Heart Dharma and have already opened prajñā suddenly become

转其知见，入于妙用，则不生障。非知见之生障也，乃著于知见而自障耳。此无他，限于所知，不再向上，自以为究竟而止也。当知明心后，正要用功，不可一刻放松也。	unrestrained in mind and lose their self-mastery? Answer: When prajñā first opens, all kinds of views inevitably arise, and they suffer from having no good spiritual friend to supervise them afterward. If they can sweep away each arising as it arises, settle the matter decisively, transform their views, and enter wondrous functioning, then no hindrances will arise. It is not the arising of views that creates hindrances; rather, one becomes attached to views and thereby obstructs oneself. There is no other reason: one is limited by what one knows, does not proceed further, and stops by taking oneself to have reached the ultimate. Know that after realizing the mind, one must apply oneself to practice all the more and must not relax for even a moment.
二十九问何以密宗可以即生成就？答：此是机缘会合。其人善根已熟，故敢承当，信受勿疑，加以咒印加持之力，故可速得成就，非人人均可即生成就也。	Question Twenty-Nine: Why can Esoteric Buddhism bring attainment in this very life? Answer: It is because capacities and conditions come together. Such a person’s wholesome roots have already matured, so they dare to undertake it and accept it in faith without doubt. In addition, through the power of mantra and mudrā empowerment, they may quickly attain accomplishment. It is not the case that everyone can attain accomplishment in this very life.
人生遇佛，必数百万年一次，而能入大乘者，千万人中，未必得一，如入大乘了义者，又千万人中未必得一，入大乘了义而能修证者，又千万人中未必得一。人生六十年，半世入梦，只三十年一世耳。	For a human being to encounter the Buddha occurs only once in several million years. Among ten million people, perhaps not even one can enter the Mahāyāna; among ten million who enter the Mahāyāna, perhaps not even one can enter its definitive meaning; and among ten million who enter the Mahāyāna’s definitive meaning, perhaps not even one can cultivate and realize it. Of sixty years of human life, half is spent in sleep, leaving only thirty years.
此三十年中，童孩老病又去其半，只十五年耳。此十五年中，再加人事之阻扰，游戏之荒芜，又只七八年耳。若不痛切，匆匆老去，可不惧哉！	Of those thirty years, childhood, old age, and illness take away another half, leaving only fifteen years. Of those fifteen years, the hindrances of worldly affairs and the waste of diversions leave only seven or eight years. If one is not earnestly resolved, one will grow old in haste. How can one not be afraid?

三十问修行要诀，请再详示，究有简要法门否？答：法本无法，有何言说？今不得已而略说之，约有七条	Question Thirty: Please explain the essential instructions for practice in greater detail. Is there any concise and essential Dharma gate? Answer: Dharma is originally without dharma; what is there to say? Yet, having no alternative, I will briefly set forth approximately seven points:
（一）定宗旨。宗旨在自求自修，自除苦恼，自开智慧，自成佛，求佛只如问路求医，走路吃药，还在自己。所以佛学考据，只如地图和药方，与本病不相干也。学佛者，是学与佛不二，同一无烦恼。清净自在，不是变个佛。	(I) Establish the purpose. The purpose is to seek and cultivate for oneself, remove one's own suffering and afflictions, open one's own wisdom, and become a Buddha oneself. Seeking the Buddha is only like asking directions or consulting a physician; walking the road and taking the medicine still depend on oneself. Therefore, textual research into Buddhist teachings is only like a map or a prescription; it is unrelated to one's actual illness. Those who study Buddhism learn to be nondual with the Buddha, equally free from afflictions, pure and at ease; they do not seek to turn themselves into some other Buddha.
又宗旨在断一切苦，所以要求究竟乐，而得究竟乐者，只在开智慧，求智慧在定，得定在坐，坐在法，而宗旨既定，中途方不疑退，此生必可成就。不问你修净土禅宗密法，都要同此宗旨，同此目的。	Furthermore, the purpose is to cut off all suffering and therefore seek ultimate happiness. Ultimate happiness is attained only by opening wisdom; wisdom is sought through meditative stability; meditative stability is attained through sitting; and sitting depends on a method. Once the purpose has been established, one will not doubt or retreat midway, and attainment in this life will certainly be possible. Whether you practice Pure Land, the Chan school, or Esoteric Buddhism, you must share this purpose and this aim.
（二）明修义。一明本来，本来不用修，因冤枉而入病，要恢复本来，才叫做修，否则叫做建造，不叫修理。二修心与修理物品不同，当云复，言复其本来也。	(II) Clarify the meaning of practice. First, clarify the original nature: the original nature needs no cultivation. Because one has mistakenly fallen into illness, restoring the original nature is called cultivation; otherwise, it would be called construction, not repair. Second, cultivating the mind differs from repairing an object; it should be called restoration, for it means restoring the original nature.
物品之修理赖他，心之修复还赖乎自心，以妄心复妄心，至光明自在为止。三修心虽赖乎法，但教法只用于一时，取舍予夺在我，以明心见性为体，起一切妙法为用。	The repair of an object depends on others, but restoring the mind still depends upon one's own mind. One uses the deluded mind to restore the deluded mind, until luminosity and freedom are

	attained. Third, although cultivating the mind depends on Dharma, the teaching Dharma is used only temporarily. Choosing, rejecting, giving, and taking are in one's own hands. Take realizing the mind and seeing one's true nature as the essence, and bring forth all wondrous dharmas as the function.
四修宜重行，于一切行住坐卧时，无一不用凛觉，在佛堂修持者曰修坐，修坐只一时，而修行在时时。	Fourth, cultivation should emphasize practice in action. In walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, one must never be without vigilant awareness. Cultivation in the Buddha hall is called seated practice; seated practice occupies only a time, whereas practice is to be carried on at all times.
五修者修至明心见性为第一关，见性后，开般若妙用，方可以除习气，此是第二关，是先破无明，后除习气，此禅密二宗，由果寻因，乃根本解决唯一办法，与他宗不同。六以般若凛觉自己，观世间一切皆平等，此即是大心。	Fifth, the first gate of cultivation is to practice until realizing the mind and seeing one's true nature. After seeing one's nature, one can bring the wondrous functioning of prajñā into play, and only then can habitual tendencies be removed. This is the second gate: first break through ignorance, then remove habitual tendencies. In the Chan and Esoteric schools, one seeks the cause through the fruition; this is the sole method for a fundamental resolution and differs from other schools. Sixth, use prajñā and vigilant awareness to observe oneself, and contemplate all things in the world as equal. This is great resolve.
观自己本体与佛不二，此即是正修。七无论何宗，皆以归净土为止，或念阿弥陀佛以净其土，或参禅修密以净其土，明心见性后，方入正修，否则劳而无功，毕竟退转。至不退转时，在净土宗曰阿裨拔致，在禅宗曰破参，在密宗曰证三昧悉地。	Contemplate that one's own fundamental essence is nondual with the Buddha. This is right cultivation. Seventh, regardless of the school, all culminate in returning to the Pure Land: one may recite Amitābha Buddha to purify one's land, or practice Chan or Esoteric Buddhism to purify one's land. Only after realizing the mind and seeing one's true nature does one enter right cultivation; otherwise, one labors without result and ultimately regresses. In the Pure Land school, the stage of nonretrogression is called avaivartika; in the Chan school, it is called breaking through the critical phrase; in Esoteric Buddhism, it is called realizing the siddhi of samādhi.
（三）求正法。一切佛法，本无邪正之别。但绝无一法可以普及、人人皆可当机之理。故不论禅净密，法以当	(III) Seek the true Dharma. All Buddhadharma is originally without a distinction between false and true. Yet there is absolutely no single Dharma that

机为正。如其人应修净土而令之参禅，此即毒药。如其人应修密宗而限以净土，此亦是毒药。	can be universally applied and suit everyone's capacities. Therefore, whether Chan, Pure Land, or Esoteric Buddhism, a Dharma that suits the recipient is true Dharma. If a person should practice the Pure Land but is made to study Chan, this is poison. If a person should practice Esoteric Buddhism but is restricted to the Pure Land, this too is poison.
故其责在师，师必负阿鼻之责。佛度众生，本在去执，若再教伊执着，不使之活泼自在，实难辞咎。譬如治病，死守一法，以为谨慎稳妥。而因循即可坐误，不可不知。又求师不可以人情用事。如药不对症，即当变计。	Therefore, the responsibility lies with the teacher, and the teacher must bear the karmic consequence of falling into Avīci hell. The Buddha liberates sentient beings precisely by removing attachment. If one instead teaches them to become attached, preventing them from being lively and free, one can hardly evade blame. It is like treating an illness: to rigidly adhere to a single method, considering it cautious and safe, can cause harm through delay. This must be understood. Moreover, in seeking a teacher, one must not act according to personal sentiment. If a medicine does not suit the illness, one should promptly change the treatment.
如修净土多年，不见功效，可以修密，至证三昧后，回头再修净土，则决有把握矣。鄙人近始自信可以修净土有几分把握，故敢忠告。	For example, if one has practiced Pure Land for many years without seeing results, one may practice Esoteric Buddhism. After realizing samādhi, one may return to Pure Land practice, and then success will certainly be assured. Only recently have I myself come to believe that I have some confidence in practicing Pure Land; therefore, I dare to offer this sincere advice.
（四）防诸病。一勿苦修，凡毁残身体，均非佛法，佛以得大自在为主，上升极乐，如愿苦行，何不入地狱修乎？当知苦行者，乃在坚定其志，百折不回，防其惰逸也。	(IV) Guard Against Various Ills. First, do not practice ascetically. Anything that damages or ruins the body is not Buddhadharma. The Buddha's primary aim is to attain great freedom; one ascends to the Land of Utmost Bliss. If you wish to undergo ascetic practices, why not enter hell to practice? You should understand that ascetic practice is meant to strengthen one's resolve, so that one does not turn back despite a hundred setbacks, and to guard against laziness and laxity.
世人每以恶衣恶食为苦，不知无智慧而心放荡失主宰者，为世间第一等苦人。学佛应从得定慧下手，无第二法也。	People of the world often regard poor clothing and poor food as suffering, not knowing that those without wisdom, whose minds run wild and have lost their mastery, are the most miserable people in

	the world. Those who study Buddhism should begin by attaining samādhi and wisdom; there is no second method.
二勿怨修，修之本意在解脱得自在，如因怨而修，则嗔根难拔，故当解释，使其自然，此惟得定开慧解空，则入欢喜地矣。三勿盲修，盲修之病，世人最多。凡未明心见性者，皆是盲修。故学佛第一要诀，在开智慧。	Only after understanding clearly does one begin right cultivation. Fourth, do not practice through suppression. Many who cultivate the mind seek a dead samādhi, forcibly suppressing deluded thoughts so that they will not arise. Such repression is dangerous and may later produce a reaction. These are all illnesses of suppressive practice. For example, not thinking a single thought and merely sitting to fix the mind is one such case. A certain association once transmitted this method; it is called indeterminate emptiness. This is the first. Spending all day in meditation, forcibly controlling one's thoughts, and believing oneself to have attained samādhi is the second.
明白后，方是正修。四勿压修，凡修心多求死定，压住妄念勿起之辈，日后反动危险，此皆压修之病也。如一念不思，正坐定心。某会曾传有此法，此名无记空，一也。终日禅定，硬制其念，自以为得定，二也。	Only after understanding is there right cultivation. Fourth, do not cultivate by suppression. Many who cultivate the mind seek a dead, fixed samādhi, forcibly suppressing deluded thoughts so that they will not arise. This may lead to a dangerous backlash later on; these are all the faults of suppressive cultivation. First, one does not think a single thought, but merely sits rigidly, fixing the mind. A certain association has transmitted such a method; this is called indeterminate emptiness. Second, one spends the whole day in dhyāna, forcefully restraining one's thoughts and believing that one has attained samādhi.
硬行忍辱，不能观空，久久成病，三也。食斋持戒，非从本愿，为人情所冲动，不能持久，对人嗔恨，心不能素，四也。外道死守精气神，临死不能散功，或至颠狂，五也。此皆见功于一时，流弊在日后。	Forcibly practicing forbearance without contemplating emptiness will, over time, produce illness; this is the third. A vegetarian diet and observance of the precepts will not last if they arise from social pressure rather than one's own vows. One then resents others, and the mind cannot remain pure; this is the fourth. Non-Buddhists rigidly cling to essence, vital energy, and spirit; when death approaches, they cannot disperse their accumulated practice and may even become deranged; this is the fifth. All these may show results for a time, but their harmful consequences emerge later.

近有腹胀欲死，乃至自杀，即此类也。种如是因，而欲得极乐之果，不亦大可悯哉。五勿小修，修行目的在成佛，如自甘劣小，即非大器，决不能成。故当发大愿，修大行，只求此生开智慧成佛，大愿也。	Recently, some have suffered abdominal swelling until they wished to die, even to the point of suicide; this is one such case. Having planted such causes, yet wishing to obtain the fruition of Ultimate Bliss—is this not deeply pitiful? Fifth, do not practice on a petty scale. The aim of cultivation is to attain Buddhahood. If one willingly settles for what is inferior and limited, one is not fit for great accomplishment and can never succeed. Therefore, one should make great vows and cultivate great practices. To seek only to develop wisdom and attain Buddhahood in this very life is a great vow.
我当以智慧救度一切众生，大行也。六勿贪修，言不可见法即求，见师即拜，得一正法，当一门深入，不可心活。七宜自制，此又有七：一勿骄慢，二勿自喜而自是，三勿恼恨，四勿性急，五勿怠惰，六勿衡量他人意境，七勿先求神通。此皆用功期内必有之毛病。功夫益深，习气翻出益多，不可不防。可阅余之《乙亥讲演录》而细参之。	I shall liberate all sentient beings through wisdom: this is a great practice. Sixth, do not practice greedily. Do not seek every Dharma you encounter, bow to every teacher you see, or, having obtained one authentic Dharma, fail to go deeply into that single gate. Do not let the mind be fickle. Seventh, exercise self-restraint. This too has seven points: first, do not be arrogant; second, do not become self-satisfied and self-righteous; third, do not become vexed or resentful; fourth, do not be impatient; fifth, do not be lazy; sixth, do not assess the inner states of others; seventh, do not first seek spiritual powers. These are all faults that may arise during the period of practice. The deeper one's practice becomes, the more habitual tendencies emerge; one must guard against them. You may read my Records of the Yihai Lectures (1935) and study it carefully.
（五）务八要。一要圆修。言心量宜大，则见义斯圆，自无门户胜劣之见。二要痛修。言自己警觉痛切，则进步自速，此生必得究竟。三要愿修。言必有愿力为主，愿力宜正大，宜切实。四要专修。	(V) Attend Diligently to Eight Essentials. First, practice comprehensively. This means that one's mind-capacity should be vast; then one's understanding of principle will naturally be comprehensive, and one will no longer hold views of the superiority or inferiority of sectarian gates. Second, practice earnestly. If one is keenly and urgently alert, progress will naturally be swift, and one will surely attain the ultimate in this very life. Third, practice through vows. This means that vow-power must be primary; one's vows should be upright, great, and practical. Fourth, practice exclusively.

言得有正法，当专一深入，自可由一门会入普门而圆矣。五要活修。言专一与固执呆板不同，心宜活泼，则得自在，且佛开种种法门，非可执一，随时当有变化，第宗旨则无变易也。六要双修。	This means that, having obtained an authentic Dharma, one should enter deeply and single-mindedly. From one gate, one may enter the universal gate and attain completeness. Fifth, practice flexibly. Single-mindedness differs from stubborn rigidity. The mind should be lively and flexible; then one attains freedom. Moreover, the Buddha opened many Dharma gates, so one must not cling to a single one. Methods should change according to circumstances, though the essential aim never changes. Sixth, practice in pairs.
言我与佛相对成双，求佛还当求己，一也。家庭修持，能得伴侣赞助，二也。修慧兼宜修福，发愿必须行愿，三也。持斋者，口素更宜心素，勿见他过，四也。此均双修，可得其全，功德亦易圆满。七要实修。	This means: first, we take ourselves and the Buddha as two distinct parties; in seeking the Buddha, one must also seek oneself. Second, in household practice, one may receive the support of one’s spouse or companion. Third, in cultivating wisdom, one should also cultivate merit and virtue; in making vows, one must also put those vows into practice. Fourth, for those who keep a vegetarian diet, keeping the mind pure matters even more than keeping a vegetarian diet: do not look at the faults of others. All these are paired practices; thereby one may attain completeness, and merit and virtue may more readily be perfected. Seventh, put the teachings into practice.
言功夫实在，冷暖自知，不可自欺，故以实行为主。实行者，心行耳，非表面唱拜也。八要养修。言已发明心地，修有所得，必以涵养为主，如玉之入土是也。	This means that one’s practice must be real. Only oneself knows whether one is cold or warm; one must not deceive oneself. Therefore, actual practice is primary. Actual practice means the conduct of the mind, not outward chanting and bowing. Eighth, cultivate and nurture. This means that, having awakened to the mind-ground and gained something through practice, one must make cultivation and nurturing primary, like jade buried in the earth.
（六）明过程。修行过程，本无定法，但亦有最要数点如下：甲、求得正法，言得正合我机之法也。或密或禅，或持名，或观相，所以皆净我自性之土而已。乙、如法修持，中途切不可杂以我见，自然得定。	(VI) Clarify the Process. There is fundamentally no fixed method in the process of cultivation, but several points are most important: A. Obtain an authentic Dharma—that is, a Dharma suited to one’s own capacity. Whether Esoteric Buddhism, Chan, reciting the Buddha’s name, or contemplation of forms, all are simply means of purifying the land of one’s own intrinsic nature. B. Practice in accordance with the Dharma. Along the

	way, never mix in one's own views; then one will naturally attain samādhi.
丙、开发般若，此言大智慧，由定而生，定慧相合即是戒，此名具足十戒。丁、明心见性，心地既明，则本性自见，色空不二，方不受惑。	C. Develop prajñā. This means great wisdom, which arises from samādhi. When samādhi and wisdom are united, this itself is discipline; this is called fully possessing the ten precepts. D. Realize the mind and see one's true nature. Once the mind-ground is clear, one's intrinsic nature naturally becomes evident. Form and emptiness are nondual, and one will then no longer be deluded.
戊、心不惑，然后可除习气，一空境，二空心（粗分），三空法（细分），四空空（微细分），以上为先开第六漏尽通，即名道通，是谓得体。己、发五神通，此谓起用，切不可先求，惟明心后自得开展，小有证效，喜则成魔，如无道通而先求此者，名曰妖通，则大误矣。	E. Once the mind is no longer deluded, one may then eliminate habitual tendencies: first, empty the realm; second, empty the mind, the coarse division; third, empty dharmas, the subtle division; fourth, empty emptiness, the extremely subtle division. Above all, one first develops the sixth supernormal power, the exhaustion of outflows, which is called the Way-power; this is attaining the essence. F. Develop the five spiritual powers. This means bringing forth function. One must never seek them first; only after realizing the mind will they naturally unfold. If one rejoices over slight signs of attainment, that joy becomes a demon. If one seeks these before attaining the Way-power, they are called demonic powers; this is a great error.
（七）示要诀。一、凡夫与佛，本体不二。只是不明因果，故觉在后，觉在果地，并有始终不觉者。	(VII) Instructions on Essential Formulas. First, ordinary beings and Buddhas are not two in their fundamental essence. It is only because ordinary beings do not understand cause and effect that awakening comes later, at the ground of fruition; some remain unaware from beginning to end.
只要一觉，即是彼岸，故宜用一字诀，曰“阿”，言心有所起时，此在因地动念，常常先自凛觉，想我今入如是因，将来必得如是果，则恐惧而勿入矣。久久纯熟，不至误入。	As soon as there is awakening, one has reached the other shore. Therefore, one should employ a one-character formula: “A.” When something arises in the mind, this is the stirring of thought at the causal stage. One should stay alert and recognize the thought at once: “If I now enter into such a cause, I shall certainly receive such a result in the future.” One will then be fearful and not enter into it. After a long time, this becomes thoroughly familiar, and one will not mistakenly enter into it.
此阿字即是凛觉，即是照见，即是转，即是空，即是无染，即是净土。二、把持此心，如在通衢大道，一切形	This character A is alert awakening; it is seeing clearly; it is transformation; it is emptiness; it is

形色色，了了见闻，过而不留，与我无染，此便是佛境。	freedom from defilement; it is Pure Land. Second, hold this mind as though you were on a great public thoroughfare: clearly see and hear all the myriad forms and colors, yet let them pass without leaving any trace. They do not defile you. This is the Buddha's realm.
三、若有所接，只随缘应付，善恶分明而不起我见，常与自己脾气奋斗，情为我爱，转而疏之，见为我执，解而空之，久久自然自在。四、辨轻重。	Third, when encountering anything, simply respond according to conditions. Distinguish clearly between good and evil, yet do not give rise to views of self. Constantly struggle against your own temperament: emotional attachment is self-love, so turn from it and loosen it; views are attachment to self, so understand them and empty them. Over time, you will naturally become free and at ease. Fourth, distinguish what is weighty from what is light.
言观世间无论千万最大事，都抵不过一个死，千万个死，还抵不过我一修，而千万个修，又抵不过我一觉，觉则心空，此是最上福德，轻重利害不可比拟，当知众苦只缘不觉，极乐无过明心。五、勿忘记，但有时忘记。	This means that, among all worldly matters, however great they may be, none outweighs a single death. Yet ten thousand deaths do not outweigh one act of practice, and ten thousand acts of practice do not outweigh one awakening. When awakened, the mind is empty. This is the highest merit and virtue; its relative weight, benefit, and harm cannot be compared. You should know that all suffering arises solely from lack of awakening, while no bliss surpasses realizing the mind. Fifth, do not forget—though at times you may forget.
或虽不忘记而力不能转，又奈何。曰有二诀：一把未来之恐怖事先一想；二持咒，顿时可以觉转。诸仁真肯用功者，每日勿忘修法，念念在觉，方是念念在佛，时时修时时照。一修一照，行之半年不间断，并回向一切众生，必定证三昧见实相，皆得成佛。珍重！	What if you do not forget, yet lack the strength to transform it? There are two formulas: first, think in advance of frightening events that may happen in the future; second, recite a mantra, whereby one may immediately awaken and transform. All worthy ones who truly wish to apply themselves should not forget to practice each day. With every thought abiding in awakening, every thought abides in the Buddha; practicing and illuminating at every moment. Practice once and illuminate once. If you continue this without interruption for half a year, and dedicate the merit to all sentient beings, you will certainly realize samādhi, see true reality, and all attain Buddhahood. Take care!