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佛说阿弥陀经经义略说

A Brief Explanation of the Meaning of the Amitābha Buddha Sūtra

阿弥陀佛本尊咒	Amitābha Buddha Yidam Mantras
即大往生咒，三咒应连持，年老人单持第三咒十字亦可。	These are the Great Rebirth Mantras. The three mantras should be recited consecutively; elderly people may recite only the ten-syllable third mantra.
一、嗡，卑马，达拉，塞，沙哈。	1. Oṃ, Bēimă, Dálā, Sài, Svāhā.
二、大也他，嗡，阿米迭阿米迭，乌巴委，阿弥达省巴哇，阿弥达，比真迭，阿弥达。嗄米尼，冈冈拉，格衣帝嘎里，萨哇，格削，牵洋嘎利，沙哈。	2. Tadyathā: Oṃ, Amite Amite, Upāya, Amitā Saṃbhava, Amitā Bhijñate, Amitā. Gāmini, Gaṅgala, Gīti Gāli, Sarva, Keśa, Kṣayaṅkāri, Svāhā.
三、嗡，阿弥达，札卑，阿弥达，哞。	3. Oṃ, Amitā, Jabi, Amitā, Hūṃ.
此咒应面授方可持诵。	This mantra should be received through personal oral transmission before it is recited.
经义略说	A Brief Explanation of the Sūtra’s Meaning
佛说法四十九年，种种方便，无非使众生摄心归一，做到一不可得，方是度尽苦厄。随机应化，非有定法，念佛法门，亦是方便法门之一种，不可专执持名为念佛，凡内观自性，外参经论，念念不离觉性，皆念佛也。	For forty-nine years the Buddha taught the Dharma, employing all kinds of skillful means for no other purpose than to gather sentient beings’ minds into oneness. Only when even this one cannot be obtained are all sufferings and afflictions truly crossed over. The Buddha responds to beings according to their capacities; there is no fixed Dharma. The method of Buddha-remembrance is also one kind of skillful means. One must not rigidly cling to holding the name as Buddha-remembrance. Whoever inwardly contemplates intrinsic nature, outwardly studies sūtras and treatises, and never departs from awakened nature in thought after thought is practicing Buddha-remembrance.
千百年来，念佛者多，成就者少，其原因为：一贪得便宜，不耐吃苦；二不明心要，力量不足；三分宗立派，秽净之见横生；四不得持名法门之诀窍。	For thousands of years, many have practiced Buddha-remembrance, but few have attained accomplishment. The reasons are these: first, they seek easy gain and cannot endure hardship; second, they do not understand the essential point of mind, so their strength is insufficient; third, they divide into schools and factions, giving rise to notions of purity and defilement; fourth, they do

	not obtain the key to the method of holding the name.
今先要明白此念佛之物，究为何物？终日受苦颠倒流浪生死之物，又为何物？然后再去念佛，心地明白，方可我不离佛，佛不离我，佛我同光，体用如如，在在净土，处处西方，行者须明生死事大，加意痛切，努力精进，则生西并非难事，阿　跋致，此生定可证到也。	First one must understand what it is that practices Buddha-remembrance. What, too, is this thing that suffers all day long, is upside down and confused, and wanders through birth and death? Only then should one practice Buddha-remembrance. When the mind-ground is clear, I do not depart from the Buddha, and the Buddha does not depart from me; Buddha and self share the same light, essence and function are thusness, everywhere is the Pure Land, and every place is the West. Practitioners must understand that birth and death are a grave matter. With earnest and heartfelt resolve, diligent effort, and vigorous practice, rebirth in the Western Pure Land is not difficult; one can certainly realize avaivartika in this very life.
净土二字，当分别解之。净，乃扫除一切习气，使无污染之义。土，乃指本心地而言，我之本觉妙体，原来亦是光明无量，照十方国无所障碍，寿命亦无量无边，与佛同体不二，我与弥陀，本无来去，本无隔绝，迷则西方变阿鼻，悟则阿鼻即西方，故经云：欲净其土，先净其心，随其心净即佛土净。	The two Chinese characters jing ( ), “pure,” and tu ( ), “land,” should be explained separately. “Pure” means sweeping away all habitual tendencies so that there is no contamination. “Land” refers to the original mind-ground. The wondrous substance of my original awakening is likewise of immeasurable light, illuminating the lands of the ten directions without obstruction. Its life is also boundless and immeasurable. It is one substance with the Buddha and not two. Amitābha and I have never come or gone, nor have we ever been separated. In delusion, the Western Land becomes Avīci; in awakening, Avīci itself is the West. Therefore the sūtra says: “If one wishes to purify one’s land, one must first purify one’s mind. As one’s mind is purified, so the Buddha-land is purified.”
净土者，一切佛子究竟修证之果地也。修行不证净土，不名成就，是以西方属成就门，而一切法不问其为禅定、为密乘、为法相、为戒律、为持名，皆修净业之前方便，所用以证净土者也。功行成就时，诸法皆无所用之矣。	The Pure Land is the fruition-ground ultimately realized and verified by all children of the Buddha. If one practices without realizing the Pure Land, it cannot be called accomplishment. Thus the West belongs to the gateway of accomplishment. All methods—whether Chan meditation, Vajrayāna, Dharma Characteristics, precepts, or holding the name—are preliminary expedients for cultivating pure karma, used to realize the Pure Land. Once practice and conduct are accomplished, none of these dharmas has any further use.

故净土二字，乃果地圆成之德号，非属于法，不可单树一门而与他宗分胜劣，亦非西方为净而他方为秽者也。因法法皆归净土，非净土另有一法，亦非必以此法可以入净而他法不能也。当初立宗者，原开一时之权宜方便，乃以启后来胜劣之见，甚至误以他宗为不净，互相水火者，此岂祖师之始愿，亦岂净土之本旨哉?	Therefore, the words Pure Land are the honorable name for the perfected virtues of the fruition-ground. They do not belong to a particular method. One must not establish it alone as a single school and rank it superior or inferior to other traditions; nor is it that the West alone is pure and other directions are defiled. For all dharmas return to the Pure Land; the Pure Land is not some separate dharma. Nor is it necessary to enter purity by this method alone, while other methods cannot do so. The founders of schools originally opened provisional expedients suited to their time. How could these have been intended to give rise in later generations to views of superiority and inferiority, even to the mistaken belief that other schools are impure, leading them to oppose one another like fire and water? Could this have been the patriarchs' original aspiration? Could it have been the fundamental intent of the Pure Land?
净者，究竟清净也，土者，本心地也，以西方国土众生生者，皆具心地清净之至德，我必同具此清净心，方可与诸上善人俱会一处。善根福德因缘三者，必一切具足，乃得相应，今偏执一门为胜，谓法有高下，非净土矣。	"Pure" means ultimately pure, and "land" means the original mind-ground. All beings born in the Western Land possess the supreme virtue of purity of mind-ground. I too must possess this pure mind before I can assemble in one place with all the beings of superior goodness. The three—roots of goodness, merit and virtue, and conditions—must all be completely present before there can be correspondence. To cling one-sidedly to a single gate as supreme and claim that dharmas are higher or lower is not the Pure Land.
疾视他宗为魔为怪，其心已先入魔怪，非净土矣。纵无此二病，而贪得净土法门之有佛接引，仍本贪便利与依赖之劣性，亦非净土矣。如此颠倒，则又善根福德之谓何，虽有因缘，已自生障，此知见不正之自误，非成就也。	To regard other schools with hostility as demonic or monstrous is for one's own mind already to have entered the demonic and monstrous; this is not the Pure Land. Even without these two faults, if one covets the Pure Land teaching because the Buddha receives and guides one, this still rests on the inferior disposition of seeking convenience and dependence; it too is not the Pure Land. With such inverted views, what then can be meant by roots of goodness and merit and virtue? Though one may have conditions, one has already produced obstacles for oneself. This self-deception through incorrect views is not accomplishment.

上中下三根人，本同具净土德性，惜不同其愿力，有体无用，是以有彼非众生，非不众生之叹，惟以因缘之不同，证入亦随之而有异。佛说此法门，使初学人，可于因地下种，与西方先结胜缘。	People of the higher, middling, and lower capacities all inherently possess the virtues of the Pure Land. It is regrettable only that their power of vow is unequal; they have essence but no function. Hence the lament: “They are not sentient beings, nor are they not sentient beings.” It is only because their conditions differ that their realization and entry also differ accordingly. The Buddha taught this Dharma gate so that beginners might sow its seeds at the causal stage and first form an excellent affinity with the West.
中根人则以先有夙因，可藉此证入，为往生之缘助。上根人则果地将次圆成，一经接引便得成就，故曰三根普被。	Those of middling capacity, having prior causes from the past, may rely on this to enter realization, using it as an aid and condition for rebirth. Those of higher capacity are about to bring the fruition-ground to perfection; once received and guided, they attain accomplishment. Therefore it is said that it universally embraces practitioners of all three capacities.
又九品者，非往生后始分九品也，乃未生前，已具有无数品耳，岂得谓人人皆可此生成就？今言往生若是之易者，初意原为方便接引，不知众生劣性，发心不痛切者，虽更有方便法，彼终不肯精进，反因说之过易而轻法，弊害滋多。	Moreover, the nine grades are not first divided into nine grades after rebirth. Before rebirth, there are already countless grades. How then can one say that everyone can attain accomplishment in this very life? Present claims that rebirth is so easy were originally intended as expedient means of guidance. Yet this overlooks sentient beings’ weak dispositions: those whose resolve is not earnest will refuse diligent practice even if still more expedient methods are offered. Instead, because it is said to be too easy, they take the Dharma lightly, and the resulting harm only grows.
如以为太易而不痛切，一也。以为佛可接引，而临终仍颠倒不自责，反咎于法，疑法谤佛，堕入地狱，二也。真用功人，因久修而仍无把握，转生疑退，三也。银台不去，必俟金台，因此贪求，魔即乘便，四也。	First, considering it too easy, they do not arouse earnest resolve. Second, believing that the Buddha can receive them, they remain inverted at death without reproaching themselves; instead they blame the Dharma, doubt the Dharma, slander the Buddha, and fall into hell. Third, those who truly apply themselves may, after long practice and still lacking certainty, give rise instead to doubt and retreat. Fourth, they refuse the silver dais and insist on waiting for the golden dais; because of such greed, Māra seizes the opportunity.

经云是为甚难，而反说甚易，苦行人必生疑怖，五也。有一于此，已足障其信心，况多乎哉。故立言不可不慎。若欲善巧引之，则先使其怖苦痛切发心可耳，又何必偏执此理，以为定论耶？	The sūtras say that this is extremely difficult, yet it is instead called extremely easy; ascetic practitioners will surely give rise to doubt and fear—this is the fifth. Any one of these is enough to obstruct faith, much less all of them. Therefore one must be cautious in establishing teachings. If one wishes skillfully to guide people, it is enough first to make them fear suffering and arouse earnest resolve. Why must one cling one-sidedly to this principle and take it as a fixed conclusion?
欲修净土，必先使其人正信。云何正信？不独信西方为净土，乃信十方皆有佛土，弥陀经已言之，一也。	To cultivate the Pure Land, one must first establish right faith. What is right faith? It is not merely faith that the West is a Pure Land; it is faith that Buddha-lands exist throughout the ten directions, as the Amitābha Sūtra already states. This is the first.
不独信净土为彼土，乃兼指我自性之净土，而西方净土者，亦诸上善人自性清净之所建立，同一平等本际，理事双融，同得成佛，二也。	It is not merely faith that the Pure Land is that land; it also refers to the Pure Land of one's own intrinsic nature. The Western Pure Land, moreover, is established by the purity of intrinsic nature of all beings of superior goodness. They share the same equal fundamental basis; principle and phenomena interpenetrate, and all attain Buddhahood. This is the second.
信佛土无定义，娑婆地狱，分别之则有秽净，佛视之则无一而非净土，众生自起幻心不净而作业，若以慧力转之，当下即是净土，三也。佛无来去，在在处处皆有弥陀，行者自障其心而不见，四也。	Believe that Buddha-lands have no fixed definition. In the Sahā world and in hell, distinctions produce purity and defilement; but in the Buddha's view, there is not a single place that is not a Pure Land. Sentient beings themselves give rise to illusory impure minds and create karma. If they transform this through the power of wisdom, that very moment is the Pure Land. This is the third. The Buddha neither comes nor goes; Amitābha is everywhere, in every place. Practitioners obstruct their own minds and therefore do not see him. This is the fourth.
明此义者，乃曰正信，此即难信之法，余前著弥陀心要，已论之矣。净土法门，目的在先净其意，故必至一心不乱。夫一心不乱者，觉后证得之果也，持名念佛者，证前修行之法也。	Those who understand this meaning possess what is called right faith. This is the Dharma difficult to believe. I have already discussed it in my earlier Essential Teachings of Amitābha. The purpose of the Pure Land Dharma gate is first to purify one's intention; therefore one must attain one-pointedness of mind without distraction. Such one-pointedness is the fruition realized after

	awakening, whereas holding the name in Buddha-remembrance is a method of practice before realization.
佛者觉也，念佛者念念在觉也，心若有所贪嗔时，一念觉则顿转为净矣。此是无上圆顿法门，故一句弥陀，顿超八十亿劫生死重罪，惟转觉固快，转迷亦易。	Buddha means awakening; Buddha-remembrance means abiding in awakening in thought after thought. Whenever the mind gives rise to greed or anger, a single awakening instantly turns it into purity. This is the unsurpassed, perfect, and sudden Dharma gate. Thus one utterance of Amitābha immediately transcends the grave sins of birth and death accumulated through eighty billion kalpas. Yet although turning toward awakening is swift, turning back toward delusion is also easy.
又言八十亿劫而不言九十亿者，何也？曰九者数之至也，以未离法，故言八十。倘并此一句而亦空之，乃直了成佛义，一切净尽，方可以言九十亿劫也。	Why does it speak of eighty billion kalpas rather than ninety billion? Nine is the ultimate number. Since one has not yet departed from dharmas, it speaks of eighty. If even this single phrase is emptied, one directly comprehends the meaning of Buddhahood: everything is wholly purified, and only then may one speak of ninety billion kalpas.
众生只是一念，不是念念，以一念佛，即又回念嗔也，必念念在佛，则打成一片，贪嗔无由而起矣，久久成熟，斯名成就。	Sentient beings have only one thought, not thought after thought. With one thought of the Buddha, they may immediately turn back to a thought of anger. One must abide in the Buddha in thought after thought; then one forms an unbroken whole, and greed and anger have no way to arise. When this matures over time, it is called accomplishment.
又众生只是念念而非一念，何也？因众生念念于人事情见，非贪即嗔，非嗔即痴，三业恶因之所招感，念念不断，则娑婆因缘，永无脱离之望矣。必如修证人之一念净信，永不退转，虽习气常来，而常觉照勿失，力气充足，不致动摇，故曰一心不乱，方可与佛相应也。	Again, sentient beings are only thought after thought, not one thought. Why? Because their thoughts are constantly caught up in people, affairs, emotions, and views: if not greed, then anger; if not anger, then ignorance. These are evoked by the evil causes of the three karmas. If thoughts continue without interruption, there can be no hope of ever escaping the conditions of the Sahā world. One must be like a practitioner who has realized one thought of pure faith and never retreats. Though habitual tendencies continually arise, one must constantly maintain awareness without losing it. When one's strength is sufficient and one cannot be shaken, this is called one-pointedness of mind without distraction; only then can one correspond with the Buddha.

一心不乱者，修至自性净土之极则也，但必如何而可如此乎？则法门无量，总不外乎正副二途。正者曰观心，即反问自己，于一切所行处痛切警觉，是曰修行，言修于行也。	One-pointedness of mind without distraction is the ultimate standard of cultivating to the Pure Land of one's intrinsic nature. But how can it be attained? There are immeasurable Dharma gates, yet in general they do not go beyond two paths: the primary and the auxiliary. The primary is called contemplating the mind: turning back to question oneself and remaining earnestly alert in all one's actions. This is called practice—cultivating in action.
副者曰取法，即藉法以为缘助，藉以净心，至心净则无所用之。	The auxiliary is called adopting methods: relying on methods as supportive conditions to purify the mind. Once the mind is pure, they have no further use.
然法门因缘，各各不同，必以当机为尚，有持佛号者，有入禅定者，有说理以破幻相者，有起三觉者，有以所逆之人事，用以反省者，此皆念佛法也，乃至读经礼佛焚香供养，修一切善法，亦皆念佛也，以念念合乎佛心净意，念念勿失觉照而已。	Yet the conditions of Dharma gates differ in every case, and what suits the recipient must be paramount. Some hold the Buddha's name; some enter samādhi; some explain principle to break through illusory appearances; some arouse the three awakenings; some use adverse people and circumstances for self-reflection. All these are methods of Buddha-remembrance. Even reading sūtras, bowing to the Buddha, burning incense, making offerings, and cultivating every wholesome dharma are all Buddha-remembrance, provided that thought after thought accords with the Buddha's pure intention and never loses awakened awareness.
弥陀经之执持名号者，乃念佛法门中之一法，非定法也，若有定法者，非佛法也，念佛不难，惟老实难，近世以老实作本分解，其义未尽，盖老者不动，实者不假，使此心常常如是之湛寂，一切外境意念诸相前来，不被流转而去，若一日若七日，无一日不如是，打成一片，则平日做到一心不乱，临终自然心不颠倒矣。	The holding of the name in the Amitābha Sūtra is one method among the Dharma gates of Buddha-remembrance, not a fixed method. If there were a fixed method, it would not be Buddhadharma. Buddha-remembrance is not difficult; what is difficult is being genuine. In recent times, "being genuine" has been understood merely as doing one's duty, but this does not exhaust its meaning. Lao ( ) means "unmoving," and shi ( ) means "not false." If the mind constantly remains in such tranquil quiescence, then when all appearances of external circumstances and thoughts arise, one is not carried away by them. If for one day or seven days there is not a day when one is not thus, one forms an unbroken whole. Then, if one ordinarily attains one-pointedness of mind without

	distraction, at death the mind will naturally not be inverted.
念佛不难！除习气难，若不除习气，又安能证入觉地，念念在觉乎？我为此论，明知闻者必以除习气为苦，反视念佛为畏途，或斥为魔说矣，而不知真修行者，必不河汉斯言，定转其昔日之依赖心，与贪省事之习气，一反其所行，于入世法，必趋于忠国家，孝父母，友昆弟，和夫妇，信朋友，克尽人道以为念佛。	Buddha-remembrance is not difficult; eliminating habitual tendencies is difficult. If habitual tendencies are not eliminated, how can one enter and realize the ground of awakening, abiding in awakening in thought after thought? In writing this discussion, I know well that those who hear it will surely find eliminating habitual tendencies arduous, will instead regard Buddha-remembrance as a fearful path, or may even denounce it as Māra's teaching. Yet true practitioners will not dismiss these words as absurd. They will certainly transform their former dependent mentality and their habitual tendency to seek the easy way. They will reverse their former conduct. In worldly affairs, they will strive to be loyal to their country, filial toward their parents, friendly toward their siblings, harmonious with their spouse, trustworthy toward friends, and fully carry out their human duties as Buddha-remembrance.
于出世法，必趋于兴大悲，度众生，明心地，达本性，空外境，扫积习，归证净土以为念佛。盖世有出世入世，心无彼此来去也，不念恶，即念佛，不念觉，即念迷，此指心行，非关口颂。今又误以持佛号即名念佛，遂失其宗旨而流为唱佛，更以大声贪多为胜，演成气膈胸痛诸病，人每生厌而疑退，久不相应，此即因地不正之误，可叹也。	In supramundane dharmas, they will strive to arouse great compassion, liberate sentient beings, clarify the mind-ground, reach intrinsic nature, empty external circumstances, sweep away accumulated habits, and return to realize the Pure Land as Buddha-remembrance. For the world includes both worldly and supramundane affairs, but mind has neither this nor that, neither coming nor going. Not thinking evil is Buddha-remembrance; not thinking awakening is thinking delusion. This refers to the mind's activity, not to oral chanting. Yet people now mistakenly take holding the Buddha's name alone to be Buddha-remembrance. Thus they lose its essential principle and reduce it to singing the Buddha's name, taking loudness and quantity as superior. This results in ailments such as constricted breath and chest pain; people often become weary, doubtful, and discouraged, and after a long time fail to correspond. This is the error of an incorrect causal ground—truly lamentable.
佛度众生，在使众生自度，自度其众生而已。此众生者，烦恼之通称也。烦恼为果，偏执为因，而偏执之	The Buddha liberates sentient beings by enabling them to liberate themselves—the sentient beings

果，不觉又其因也。然则宗旨所在，第一在明心，心明则破执。	within themselves, that is. These sentient beings are a general term for afflictions. Afflictions are the result, partial attachment is the cause, and partial attachment is itself a result whose cause is nonawakening. Therefore, the foremost point of the essential teaching is to realize the mind; when the mind is clear, attachments are broken.
佛不自认四十九年有所说法，并云若谓如来有所说法，即为谤佛，恐人死执于法而不知变化，反受其病也。故知佛说一切法，皆为一时因应之权宜，非永不变通之定法。夫有法终非究竟，无为岂即涅　？了此义者，方得与净土相应耳。	The Buddha did not himself claim to have taught any Dharma during forty-nine years, and said that whoever maintains that the Tathāgata taught any Dharma thereby slanders the Buddha. He feared that people would rigidly cling to the Dharma without understanding adaptation, and would instead suffer from this attachment. Thus we know that all Dharma taught by the Buddha was expediently adapted to particular circumstances and was not a fixed teaching that could never be modified. Any dharma is ultimately not final; does the unconditioned itself amount to nirvāṇa? Only those who understand this meaning can accord with the Pure Land.
弥陀经意之深邃，实不可思议。一说人胜，在此会中，皆是大阿罗汉，及一切菩萨，在极乐国，则皆阿　跋致，与一生补处之诸上善人。二说地胜，则七实庄严，异于世宝。三说境胜，则微风吹动，尽是法音宣流。	The profundity of the meaning of the Amitābha Sūtra is truly inconceivable. First, it speaks of the excellence of its people: in this assembly are all great arhats and all bodhisattvas, while in the Land of Ultimate Bliss all are avaivartika, together with the supreme virtuous beings who are one lifetime away from Buddhahood. Second, it speaks of the excellence of the land: it is adorned with seven precious substances, unlike worldly treasures. Third, it speaks of the excellence of its environment: when a gentle breeze stirs, all becomes the flowing proclamation of Dharma sounds.
四说体胜，则光明无量，照十方国无所障碍，寿命无量，异于世寿，并恶道之名，亦不可得。五说用胜，则以妙华供养十方诸佛，不只饭食经行。	Fourth, it speaks of the excellence of its essence: its light is immeasurable, illuminating the lands of the ten directions without obstruction; its lifespan is immeasurable, unlike worldly lifespans; even the name of the lower realms cannot be found there. Fifth, it speaks of the excellence of its function: one offers wondrous flowers to the Buddhas of the ten directions, rather than merely taking meals and practicing walking meditation.

总之无有众苦，但受诸乐，故名极乐，极乐无相，此正显金刚般若之体，而无我人之四相四见，无住生心，通达无我法等，正以显阿弥陀妙用，皆归证至净土为止。	In sum, there are no sufferings there; one receives only all manner of happiness, and it is therefore called Ultimate Bliss. Ultimate Bliss is without characteristics. This precisely reveals the essence of vajra prajñā: free from the four characteristics and four views of self and person, giving rise to mind without abiding, penetrating the non-self of persons and dharmas, and thereby revealing the wondrous functioning of Amitābha. All culminates in realization of the Pure Land.
弥陀经根本重在自修，以应当发愿为最初下手处，以执持名号为往生之缘助，以一心不乱为最后之心印。佛无来去，若不与相印，佛虽在目前，不相接也。印者何，见我之湛寂清净土耳。	The Amitābha Sūtra fundamentally places primary importance on self-cultivation. “One should make vows” is the initial point of entry; upholding the Name is the supporting condition for rebirth; and one-pointedness of mind without distraction is the final mind-seal. The Buddha neither comes nor goes. Unless one’s mind bears the same seal as the Buddha’s, even if the Buddha stands before one, there can be no communion. What is this seal? It is simply seeing my own clear, quiescent Pure Land.
执持者以弥陀圣号，念念持而勿失，如子忆母也，初学人不得不以应当二字勉之曰，应当发愿云云，但子之于母，无应当不应当之别，应曰当然，言当然如是，不止对弥陀如是，即对十方一切诸佛，亦皆当然如是，此所谓一念生净信者矣。	To uphold means to hold to Amitābha’s sacred name thought after thought without losing it, just as a child remembers its mother. Beginners cannot but be encouraged by the words “one should make vows,” and so on. Yet for a child in relation to its mother, there is no distinction between “should” and “should not”; “should” means that it naturally must be so. This is not only so in relation to Amitābha, but naturally so also in relation to all Buddhas of the ten directions. This is what is meant by giving rise, in a single thought, to pure faith.
弥陀经之味，如尝甘泉，能于白水知味，辨其为泉为水，此真知味者也，若但知西方世界之七宝庄严，而不识功德庄严，或但明功德，而未了成就之义，则有十万亿佛土之遥。	The flavor of the Amitābha Sūtra is like tasting a sweet spring. One who can recognize its flavor in plain water and distinguish spring water from ordinary water truly knows its taste. But if one knows only of the seven-treasure adornments of the Western Land and does not recognize the adornments of merit and virtue, or understands only merit and virtue but has not grasped the meaning of accomplishment, then one remains as far away as a hundred thousand koṭis of Buddha-lands.

六祖所云，为对治偏执人说，西方人有罪非经意也，但若决定西方人无罪，亦殊不必，以有带业往生者在耳，盖业即是罪，以未究竟故，惟西方无恶道之名，何况其实，然初往生者，业力未净，虽具有罪恶种子，只无因缘以成其罪恶，非绝对无罪也，是以往生西方后，仍得加行修持耳。	The Sixth Patriarch's words were intended to counter one-sided attachment; the statement that beings in the Western Pure Land have offenses is not the intent of this sūtra. Yet neither is it necessary to insist categorically that beings in the Western Pure Land are without offenses, for there are those who attain rebirth while carrying karma. Karma is itself sin; because they have not reached ultimate completion, this is so. Only the name of the lower realms does not exist in the West, much less their actuality. Nevertheless, when one first attains rebirth, karmic force has not yet been purified. Though one possesses seeds of wrongdoing, there are simply no causes and conditions for those wrongs to come to fruition; this does not mean that one is absolutely without sin. Therefore, after rebirth in the Western Pure Land, one must still undertake additional cultivation.
带业往生者，非言有罪恶者，可以往生也，言习气尚在，作恶之种子未净，而往生之因缘已熟，往生已，常与诸上善人相处，自然花开见佛。	Rebirth while carrying karma does not mean that those guilty of wrongdoing may attain rebirth. It means that habitual tendencies remain and the seeds of evil action have not yet been purified, while the causes and conditions for rebirth have already matured. Once reborn, one constantly dwells with the supreme virtuous beings and naturally, when the lotus opens, sees the Buddha.
此佛即指自性净土，花者自己智慧心花，极言其彻悟本性也，倘此佛仍指弥陀，则往生时接引之佛，已先见之，更何待花开时耶？弥陀经若已生若今生若当生等句，此言心向往之，不必定在死后往生也，乃生前思慕之诚，即是往生，以心不来去，非不来去，随愿而往，无生前与死后之别也。	This Buddha refers to the Pure Land of one's own nature, and the flower is the flower of one's own wisdom-mind; this strongly emphasizes thorough awakening to one's original nature. If this Buddha still referred to Amitābha, then the Buddha who comes to guide one at the time of rebirth would already have been seen; why wait until the flower opens? Phrases in the Amitābha Sūtra such as "have already been born," "are now being born," and "will be born" mean that the mind yearns toward it; rebirth need not necessarily occur after death. The sincerity of one's longing during life is itself rebirth. Since mind neither comes nor goes—not that it does not come and go—it goes according to its vows; there is no distinction between during life and after death.

五浊恶世，根本由见浊而起，惟见则不必定浊，曰佛知见，浊则决不离见，故曰见浊，见浊不净不名净土。	The Sahā world of the five turbidities fundamentally arises from the turbidity of views. Yet views need not necessarily be turbid; these are called Buddha-knowledge and Buddha-views. Turbidity, however, can never be apart from views, and is therefore called the turbidity of views. Where the turbidity of views is impure, it cannot be called a Pure Land.
密宗念佛法，略有四义：一者浅略，言弥陀者，法藏比丘，于世自在王佛前，发四十八愿，成就今之极乐世界是也。二者深秘，言弥陀者，义即无量寿无量光是也。三者秘中秘，言弥陀者，即是毗卢，故一门普门不异也。	The Esoteric Buddhist method of Buddha-recitation has, in brief, four meanings. First is the superficial meaning: Amitābha refers to the bhikshu Dharmākara, who made forty-eight vows before Lokeśvararāja Buddha and thereby accomplished the present Land of Ultimate Bliss. Second is the profound secret meaning: Amitābha means immeasurable life and immeasurable light. Third is the secret within the secret: Amitābha is Vairocana; thus the one gate and the universal gate are not different.
四者秘中深秘，言弥陀者，即一切众生同秘之本德，众生以未证得毗卢体性，故不能起阿弥陀妙观。盖阿为法身，表本不生灭，弥为报身，表我大自在，陀为化身，表如如不动，彼佛之所以号阿弥陀者，以有此至德而尊之也。	Fourth is the profound secret within the secret: Amitābha is the innate virtue shared in secret by all sentient beings. Because sentient beings have not realized the essential nature of Vairocana, they cannot give rise to Amitābha's wondrous contemplation. A represents the dharmakāya, signifying original non-arising and non-ceasing; mi represents the sambhogakāya, signifying my great freedom; tuo represents the nirmāṇakāya, signifying suchness, unmoving. That Buddha is called Amitābha because he possesses these supreme virtues and is honored for them.
一切众生，皆同具此净土，何可自暴自弃而甘居于劣小耶？以上略说净土之义，使行者先自明了，然则修证之法，又当如何耶？	All sentient beings alike possess this Pure Land. How can they abandon themselves in despair and willingly remain in an inferior and lesser state? The foregoing has briefly explained the meaning of the Pure Land, so that practitioners may first understand it clearly. But how, then, should one cultivate and realize it?
净土一门，近世学者最多，以便利而稳妥故，遂合娑婆众生贪便利省事之心，不觉从学者多矣，余常细察其故，一因信念未正，自视太劣；二因其省事，心不痛切；三因修法太乱，见效甚迟；四因见效迟，则或乏味，偏于人情用	Among all Dharma gates, the Pure Land gate has attracted the greatest number of students in recent times because it is convenient and reliable, thus suiting the Sahā world's sentient beings, who crave convenience and ease; consequently, many have taken it up without realizing it. I have often

	examined the reasons closely. First, their faith and understanding are not correct, and they regard themselves as too inferior. Second, because it is easy, their resolve lacks urgency. Third, their methods of cultivation are too confused, and results come very slowly. Fourth, because results are slow, they may lose interest and incline toward worldly considerations,
事，不是痛切真修；五因未明净土之正业与副业，颠倒用事，致妄心不能降伏，因此念佛与做人，截为两事，不能起用；六因修净土者，多中途入门，因地尚未彻了，人云亦云，先入为之主矣，如立门户，谤他宗，实非其本意也。	rather than undertaking earnest and sincere practice. Fifth, they do not understand the primary and subsidiary practices of the Pure Land, and apply them in reverse order; thus their deluded minds cannot be subdued. As a result, they split Buddha-recitation and ordinary conduct into two separate matters and cannot put the practice to use. Sixth, most Pure Land practitioners enter the gate midway: they have not thoroughly understood the causal ground, follow others blindly, and are governed by their first impressions. They establish sectarian boundaries and slander other schools, though this is not their original intention.
昔有疑谤密宗者，形于辞色，忽有扣以往生咒与大悲咒之因缘，其人愧悟，不敢再谤，即此之类，故修证净土，当以正因为第一。更有三种行持：一者因地法因，由理解入手，如前论各条，使其通体明解，方不至中途疑退。	In the past, there was someone who doubted and slandered Esoteric Buddhism, showing it in his words and expression. Suddenly, when someone questioned him about the origins of the Rebirth Mantra and the Great Compassion Mantra, he was ashamed and awakened, and dared not slander it again. This is an example of the kind. Therefore, in cultivating and realizing the Pure Land, one must take the proper cause as foremost. There are also three kinds of practice. First is the Dharma cause at the causal ground: begin with understanding, as in the preceding discussions, so that one comprehends it throughout and will not later doubt and retreat.
二者加行缘助，以事修为本，如注重持名方法，兼习禅定，下座后，于人事上练习妙用，又取其他法门以为帮助，则修证可以见速，平日不致放逸，无一曝十寒之叹，临终庶有把鼻，有即生成就之功。	Second are additional practices as supporting conditions. Take practical cultivation as fundamental: emphasize methods of upholding the Name, cultivate Chan meditation as well, practice wondrous functioning in one’s dealings with others after leaving the cushion, and use other Dharma gates as aids. Then realization may come more quickly; in ordinary times one will not become negligent or lament that one practices for one day

	and lets ten days grow cold. At the time of death, one may perhaps have something to rely on and achieve attainment in this very life.
三者果地圆成，以印证心田为主。证有互证与自证，互证者，互相考证其得失也；自证者，冷暖自知，外证于事，内契于理，中以印诸心也。	Third is the complete fulfillment of the fruition ground, with verification of the mind-ground as primary. Realization includes mutual verification and self-verification. Mutual verification means that practitioners examine one another's gains and losses. Self-verification means that one knows for oneself, as one alone knows whether water is cold or warm: outwardly it is verified in circumstances, inwardly it accords with principle, and between these it is sealed in the mind.
惟此三种行持，必由面授，以若干日为一期，合少数徒众，择地安居而修之，必有个实证处。	These three kinds of practice must be transmitted face to face. One should undertake them in periods of a certain number of days, with a small group of disciples, selecting a place to reside peacefully and cultivate; then there will surely be some point of actual realization.
而从前之念佛法，切宜稍事变更之如下：一不可高声念，如人多，可分班轮念，一班念，即一班听可也；二不必全持念珠，可结弥陀心印，则易入定；三毋庸绕佛而念，因绕佛一法，在禅宗久坐后，用以解昏沉者，此则增加散乱，甚无谓也，故合众而念，不如约少数人同念，人愈多，得益愈少耳。	The former method of Buddha-recitation should appropriately be modified somewhat as follows. First, do not recite loudly. If there are many people, they may be divided into groups that take turns reciting; while one group recites, another group may listen. Second, there is no need to use prayer beads throughout; one may form the Amitābha mind-seal, which makes it easier to enter samādhi. Third, there is no need to circumambulate the Buddha while reciting. In the Chan school, circumambulation after prolonged sitting is used to dispel drowsiness; here it only increases distraction and is quite unnecessary. Thus, collective recitation is not as good as reciting together with a small number of people: the more people there are, the less benefit is gained.
修净业以念念为本，而念佛法门应分如下：	In cultivating pure karma, each thought is fundamental. The Dharma gate of Buddha-remembrance should be divided as follows:
甲、持名，执持阿弥陀佛圣号而皈依之，曰南无阿弥陀佛，以南无为能皈依之我，以阿弥陀为所皈依之佛，即我与佛合而为一，是为持名，以心持于佛号，即不持于人事，一切颠倒烦恼自除，一切苦厄自度。	A. Upholding the Name: uphold and take refuge in the sacred name of Amitābha Buddha, saying "Namo Amitābha Buddha." Namo is the self that takes refuge, and Amitābha is the Buddha in whom one takes refuge; thus self and Buddha unite as

	one. This is upholding the Name. When the mind upholds the Buddha's name, it does not cling to worldly affairs; all inverted afflictions naturally fall away, and all suffering and adversity are crossed over by oneself.
乙、观想，观阿弥陀佛及诸菩萨之慈悲自在，观西方世界各种庄严，心观于彼，即不观于人事，一切颠倒烦恼，自然化除矣。	B. Visualization: contemplate the compassionate freedom of Amitābha Buddha and all the bodhisattvas; contemplate the various adornments of the Western Land. When the mind contemplates them, it does not contemplate worldly affairs, and all inverted afflictions naturally dissolve.
丙、慕乐，以思慕彼土之种种极乐而企慕之，心慕于彼，即不慕世间一切不究竟之乐矣，前曰持名，此曰心念，总持此法，不持他法，方名念佛。	C. Longing for bliss: yearn for the various joys of that land and aspire to them. When the mind longs for them, it no longer longs for all the imperfect pleasures of the world. Above this was called upholding the Name; here it is called mindfulness. Uphold this Dharma in its entirety and do not uphold other dharmas; only then is it called Buddha-remembrance.
丁、怖苦，苦乐本属相因，以慕彼乐，遂怖此苦，怖则急求脱离，往生之念始切，若念佛而求世间福报，是于厕所焚香，香虽普熏，不离于臭，安名曰净。经云求财得财，求子得子者，乃引初机人入佛道，非究竟出世法也，倘真念佛，则念念在觉，断无此劣见也。	D. Fearing suffering: suffering and happiness are mutually conditioned. Longing for that happiness therefore gives rise to fear of this suffering; fearing it, one urgently seeks escape, and the aspiration for rebirth first becomes earnest. If one recites the Buddha's name while seeking worldly blessings, it is like burning incense in a latrine: although the fragrance pervades everywhere, it does not depart from the stench. How can this be called purity? The sūtras say that those who seek wealth obtain wealth and those who seek children obtain children; this is to lead beginners into the Buddha Way, not the ultimate supramundane Dharma. If one truly recites the Buddha's name, every thought is in awakening; there can certainly be no such inferior view.
戊、修持，其法约为十则：	E. Cultivation: its method may be summarized in ten rules:
一者专心此六字真言。	First, focus the mind exclusively on this six-character formula of Buddha-name recitation.
二者不出声，口微动，取金刚持。	Second, do not recite aloud; move the lips slightly and use vajra recitation.

三者手结弥陀定印。	Third, form the Amitābha samādhi mudrā with the hands.
四者自视清净与佛不二。	Fourth, regard yourself as pure and nondual with the Buddha.
五者不用念珠而以时计，以一小时为一座。	Fifth, do not use prayer beads; use time for counting, with one hour constituting one session.
六者不理一切外务，设有念起，亦不摒除，只顾自念，如随放随收，经过数千百次，自然入范而定。	Sixth, disregard all external affairs. Should thoughts arise, do not try to cast them aside; simply attend to your own recitation. As one lets go and gathers in again, after hundreds or thousands of times, one will naturally enter the pattern and settle into samādhi.
七者取急进法，以四十八日为一期，每日至多以十座为度，由七座渐加至十座，有时或减为八九座，平均每日二万句，如是四百数十座，可得一百万句，一心于彼，自然证入三昧。	Seventh, adopt an intensive method: take forty-eight days as one period, with no more than ten sessions each day. Gradually increase from seven to ten sessions; at times one may reduce them to eight or nine. Averaging twenty thousand recitations per day, one will complete more than four hundred sessions and attain one million recitations. With the mind wholly focused on that, one will naturally realize and enter samādhi.
八者取缓进法，每日修一座，亦可息心养性，有人事者，不必过贪。	Eighth, adopt a gradual method: practice one session each day. This too can calm the mind and nurture one’s nature. Those with worldly responsibilities need not be excessively greedy for more.
九者发愿求觉，不求余事，以觉则自然不慕世乐而求脱离，则往生之念自切，纵与西土无缘，亦必往生他世界佛土也，否则终在五浊恶世沉沦而已。	Ninth, make vows seeking awakening, not other things. With awakening, one naturally ceases to long for worldly pleasures and seeks liberation; thus the aspiration for rebirth naturally becomes earnest. Even if one has no affinity with the Western Land, one will certainly attain rebirth in another Buddha-land. Otherwise, one will only continue to sink in the Sahā world of the five turbidities.
十者修持时细则，此分为初学佛人入门办法，先摄野心，勒此不羁之马，如小儿手执利刃，用糖果以易之，尚不名究竟也。又如小儿手被糖果所粘，更当拭而净之，至净空为止，故述如下：	Tenth, detailed rules for cultivation. This section provides an introductory method for beginning Buddhist practitioners: first gather in the wild mind and rein in this unbridled horse. It is like a child holding a sharp blade: one exchanges it for candy, yet this is still not ultimate. Again, when the child's

	hand is made sticky by the candy, it must further be wiped clean, until it is clean and empty. Therefore, the following is set forth:
一、择一静室约徒众五六人，克期为四十八日，室内温度不可太高，一切设备，可参考《乙亥讲演录》内心中心修法。	1. Choose a quiet room and gather about five or six fellow practitioners. Set a fixed period of forty-eight days. The room temperature must not be too high. For all arrangements, one may refer to the Heart-of-Heart Dharma practice in Records of the Yihai Lectures (1935).
二、每日只修一座，每座一小时，如打七期内，则每日先修六七座，逐加至十座为止，即十小时，逢天暖时，每早二点半即起身，三点上座，或连二座，每二座，即休息一刻，或三十分钟，时间可自定之。	2. Practice only one session each day, each session lasting one hour. During a seven-day retreat, however, first practice six or seven sessions daily, gradually increasing to ten sessions—that is, ten hours. In warm weather, rise at 2:30 each morning and begin sitting at 3:00. One may sit two sessions consecutively, then rest for fifteen or thirty minutes after every two sessions; the time may be determined as appropriate.
三、结弥陀手印，即两手心朝天，右四指平压左手上，两大拇指尖相对，此又名十方诸佛定印，于上座时，切勿散放手印，此是第一要诀。（身密）	3. Form the Amitābha mudrā: turn both palms upward, lay the four fingers of the right hand flat upon the left hand, and touch the tips of the two thumbs together. This is also called the samādhi mudrā of the Buddhas of the ten directions. While on the meditation cushion, never release the mudrā. This is the first essential instruction. (Body secret)
四、坐时单双趺皆可，如年老腿硬不能趺，则方便交叉两腿而坐，但座后必高于前面，两腿在下，眼宜闭，有时开视钟点亦无碍。	4. When sitting, either the full or half lotus posture is acceptable. If one is elderly and one's legs are too stiff for the lotus posture, one may conveniently sit with the legs crossed. The rear of the seat must be higher than the front, with the legs lower down. The eyes should be closed, though occasionally opening them to look at the time does no harm.
五、此一小时内，切勿散放手印，口勿停念，但勿出声，而唇必微动，此名金刚持，最易得定，并无气膈胸痛弊病，且上座时，切勿停咒，此是第二要诀。（口密）	5. During this hour, never release the mudrā. Do not stop reciting with the mouth, but do not recite aloud; the lips must move slightly. This is called vajra recitation. It is the easiest way to attain samādhi and does not cause such problems as constricted breath or chest pain. Moreover, while on the meditation cushion, never stop the mantra. This is the second essential instruction. (Speech secret)

六、一心贯注于修，意欲空虚，自己当作佛，此是第三要诀，若万念纷起时，觉即回头，顾到念佛，随放随收，随转随空，刹那间前后际断，便是净空之境，此即是佛境。（意密）	6. Concentrate wholeheartedly on cultivation. Let the mind become empty, and regard yourself as a Buddha. This is the third essential instruction. When a myriad thoughts arise in confusion, as soon as you notice them, turn back and attend to Buddha-recitation. Let go and gather in; turn and empty. When, in an instant, the succession of preceding and following thoughts is cut off, this is the state of pure emptiness; this is the Buddha realm. (Mind secret)
七、三密加持，久久由乱而定，由照而空，上座时，死心蹋地，一切不理，身起种种变化，亦勿欢喜，亦勿疑怖生嗔，亦不必作观想，因有手印也，观想为初步摄心者而设，取以万法归一，若用功过切，观想成就时，不知变通，	7. With the blessing of the three secrets, over time one passes from distraction to samādhi, and from contemplation to emptiness. While on the meditation cushion, be utterly resolute and pay no heed to anything. If various transformations arise in the body, do not rejoice; do not become doubtful, fearful, or angry; nor is it necessary to visualize anything, for there is already the mudrā. Visualization is established for beginners who need to gather in the mind, in order to bring the myriad dharmas back to the One. If one applies oneself too intensely, then, when visualization is accomplished, one may not know how to adapt,
反成死执，亦可偏执成颠，至身手麻木如无物，心意空寂如无知，乃口中密持勿停，手印结而不散，有时误念他咒者，大似睡着，实则非是，此系定相现前，不必惊怖生疑，又心如散乱时，亦勿恐怖，只是勿理，不久自然自在也。	and instead develop rigid attachment, or even become unbalanced through fixation. When the body and hands become numb, as though they were absent, and the mind is empty and quiescent, as though without knowing, continue the silent recitation in the mouth without stopping; keep the mudrā formed without releasing it. At times one may mistakenly recite another mantra, much as if asleep, though this is not actually so. These are signs of samādhi appearing; there is no need for alarm or doubt. If the mind is scattered and confused, do not be afraid either. Simply ignore it, and before long you will naturally be at ease.
兹言起用之法：	Here, then, is the method of putting it into practice:
子、明旨：明起用之旨，所言起用者，起在在处处念佛之妙，自得受用也，故知念佛不必定在佛堂矣。	A. Clarifying the principle: clarify the principle of putting it into practice. What is meant by putting it into practice is the wonder of Buddha-remembrance everywhere and at all times, through which one naturally receives its benefit. Thus one

	knows that Buddha-remembrance need not necessarily take place in a Buddha hall.
丑、明用：言用于何处也。人何故而念佛？则为断烦恼也，烦恼本不有，因不觉而枉自起惑，惑破则烦恼自断，故于寻常人事中，不可须臾离觉，即不须臾离佛也，此念佛者，乃念念清净，一切处皆无彼此，观一切自在者即是佛。	B. Clarifying its application: this means clarifying where it is applied. Why do people practice Buddha-remembrance? It is to cut off afflictions. Afflictions are originally nonexistent; because of nonawakening, one vainly gives rise to delusion. When delusion is broken, afflictions naturally cease. Therefore, amid ordinary human affairs, one must not leave awareness even for an instant; this is not leaving the Buddha even for an instant. Such Buddha-remembrance is thought after thought of purity: everywhere there is no distinction between self and other. One who contemplates all things freely and without hindrance is Buddha.
寅、不二：言不二者，明我与佛不二也，佛未修前，与我不二，佛亦因修而成，今成为佛，是名果德，我今修持于因，自得未来成佛之果，故名因心，论体则不二也，众生亦然。	C. Nonduality: nonduality means clarifying that the Buddha and I are nondual. Before the Buddha cultivated, the Buddha and I were nondual. The Buddha too became a Buddha through cultivation. Having now become a Buddha, this is called the virtue of fruition. I now cultivate at the causal stage and will naturally attain the fruition of Buddhahood in the future; therefore this is called the causal mind. In essence, they are nondual. Sentient beings are likewise so.
又言不二者，明菩提与烦恼不二也，世人不明成佛之体性，习于分别计议，遂分为二事，不知迷觉同是此物，即在迷时，佛性亦勿失也。又言不二者，观一切语言音声，无非实相，一切处，若为有佛，一切处皆念佛也，得时时念佛，打成一片，不持而自念，斯得起用之妙矣。	Nonduality also means clarifying that bodhi and afflictions are nondual. Worldly people do not understand the essential nature of Buddhahood and are accustomed to discriminating and calculating, so they divide them into two things. They do not know that delusion and awakening are the same thing: even when one is deluded, Buddha-nature is not lost. Nonduality also means seeing all words and sounds as none other than the true aspect. Wherever there is a Buddha, there is Buddha-remembrance everywhere. When Buddha-remembrance is present at all times, it becomes continuous and undivided, continuing spontaneously without deliberate effort to sustain it. This is to attain the wonder of putting it into practice.
卯、互敬：我敬佛，佛亦敬我，佛不分别视也，我敬人如佛，人亦敬我如佛，我与人本来佛性不异，相互尊	D. Mutual respect: I respect the Buddha, and the Buddha also respects me; the Buddha does not

重，自视若弟子，此真念佛，且不独对佛对人，即对一切众生，乃至对一切物时，莫不如是尊敬，而所言尊敬者，非定欲礼拜皈依也，尊敬其同是佛性，体自空寂，佛如是，我如是，一切众生皆如是，即无往而非念佛矣。	view beings with discrimination. I respect people as Buddhas, and people also respect me as a Buddha. The Buddha-nature of others and my own Buddha-nature are originally no different. We respect one another and regard ourselves as disciples. This is true Buddha-remembrance. Moreover, it is not only before Buddhas or other people: toward all sentient beings, and even toward all things, one should have this same respect. By respect is not meant that one must necessarily bow in homage or take refuge. It is respect for the fact that all share the same Buddha-nature, whose essence is itself empty and quiescent. The Buddha is thus, I am thus, and all sentient beings are thus. Thus, there is nowhere that is not Buddha-remembrance.
（由此入手更复有杀盗淫之念否？）	(Having begun in this way, can thoughts of killing, stealing, or sexual misconduct still arise?)
辰、同化：将一切人事，与佛同化，则于自己之习气，常得觉悟而痛改之矣，久久习惯，即念念不失觉照，此真无上念佛法门也。	E. Assimilation: assimilate all people and affairs with the Buddha. Then one will constantly awaken to one's own habitual tendencies and deeply reform them. As this gradually becomes habitual, one will not lose awareness and contemplation from thought to thought. This is truly the unsurpassed dharma gate of Buddha-remembrance.
巳、大身：证大身者，一切佛土尽入我性海中，无不包罗是也，西方极乐世界者，正我性海中之一佛土耳，如是则不能再分彼此来去矣，故往生云者，非身有来去也，乃证入清净与阿弥陀同具此本德耳。	F. The great body: to realize the great body is to have all Buddha lands enter the ocean of one's own nature, with nothing excluded. The Western Land of Ultimate Bliss is simply one Buddha land within the ocean of my own nature. Thus one can no longer divide self and other, coming and going. Therefore, what is called rebirth does not mean that the body comes and goes; it means realizing purity and sharing this inherent virtue with Amitābha Buddha.
午、往生：往生者，心之向往也，先以西方为目的地，次化西方为十方，再化西方于自性，再以理合事，以西方又实有佛土，并不因理而废事，汇入无实无虚之圆义，故不往而往，生即不生，以本自无生，亦不妨立往来以坚行愿耳。	G. Rebirth: rebirth is the mind's aspiration. First take the West as the destination; then transform the West into the ten directions; then transform the West into one's own nature. Further, unite principle with phenomena: the West truly has a Buddha land, and one does not abandon phenomena because of principle. This enters into the perfect meaning of neither real nor unreal. Therefore, one

	goes without going, and is reborn without being born. Since one is originally unborn, this does not prevent one from provisionally establishing coming and going in order to strengthen one's practice and vows.
未、修证：修证三昧者，非可于定中见，乃于动中观，云何三昧？言正受也，以一切不受为正受耳，如见境不惑，喜怒不受，即得正定，故三昧又名正定，言心无染著也，至其极，则一心不乱矣，我人于世务情见太熟，于佛道太疏，每日必练习纯熟，把此心常常顾到觉地，每日观照次数，至少十次，所谓观照者，由自问反观入手，例如：	H. Cultivation and realization: cultivation and realization of samādhi are to be assessed amid activity, rather than in meditative stillness. What is samādhi? It means right receptivity: taking non-receptivity toward everything as right receptivity. If, when encountering circumstances, one is not deluded, and does not receive joy or anger, one attains right samādhi. Thus samādhi is also called right concentration, meaning that the mind has no defiled attachment. At its ultimate, this is one-pointedness of mind without distraction. We are all too habituated to worldly affairs and emotional views, and too unfamiliar with the Buddha Way. We must practice daily until we become thoroughly proficient, constantly bringing this mind back to the ground of awareness. Each day, contemplate at least ten times. What is called contemplation begins with self-questioning and reflective observation, for example:
一、自问假如我最爱之人，设染病或死亡时，我能断爱否，心有所动时，我能镇摄否，能解化其悲思否，又思此事虽属理想，若真有其事，临到眼前时，我又如何，倘有所不能者，则非加行精进不可。	1. Ask yourself: If the person I love most were to become ill or die, could I cut off attachment? When my mind is stirred, could I steady and restrain it? Could I resolve and transform my sorrowful thoughts? Further reflect: although this may be only hypothetical, if it actually happened before my eyes, what would I do? If there is anything I cannot do, then I must diligently undertake additional practices.
二、自问我平日最不易改之习气是什么，设不能满我意时，我之嗔念，能勿随之引起否，倘有所不能者，则非加行精进不可。而所谓加行者，即与自己奋斗，务改除其习气，由生而熟，由勉强而自然，此是真净业。	2. Ask yourself: What habitual tendency is hardest for me to change in daily life? If things do not satisfy my wishes, can I prevent thoughts of anger from arising in response? If there is anything I cannot do, then I must diligently undertake additional practices. Such additional practices mean struggling with oneself and resolutely eliminating one's habitual tendencies, moving from unfamiliarity to familiarity and from effort to spontaneity. This is genuine pure karma.

三、自问我平时最恶之人，我今后对之，能减少其怨毒心否，思我与彼，未生恶感以前，亦曾情好过来，且想念其好处，更思恶感之起因，双方各有不是之处，逐渐做到冤亲平等。	3. Ask yourself: Toward the person I dislike most, can I henceforth lessen my resentment and malice? Reflect that before ill feeling arose between us, we too had been on good terms; think also of that person's good qualities. Further reflect on the causes of the ill feeling: both sides have their faults. Gradually achieve equality between enemies and friends.
四、自问我最喜爱之物，能永保其常存否乎，设以之布施，能无所动乎，能起慧观以转其痴爱否。	4. Ask yourself: Can the thing I love most remain forever? If I were to give it away, could my mind remain unmoved? Can I give rise to wise contemplation and transform my deluded attachment to it?
五、自问我所希望之事，若乖我意，或事之垂成而失败，或被强者所夺，我之定力又如何，若强制压下者，转成为病，必化除之，即以智慧解释之。	5. Ask yourself: If what I hope for goes against my wishes, if an undertaking fails just as it is about to succeed, or if it is taken from me by someone stronger, what becomes of my meditative stability? If I forcibly suppress it, it will instead become an illness; I must dissolve it through wise understanding.
六、自问世乱如麻，不如意事常八九，凡日夜所希望者，惟曰平安顺利等吉祥事，设有不利之事前来，我能受之否，能以观空解之否。	6. Ask yourself: The world is as chaotic as tangled hemp, and eight or nine things out of ten go against one's wishes. Day and night, all that people hope for are auspicious things such as peace and success. If unfavorable circumstances arise, can I accept them? Can I resolve them by contemplating emptiness?
七、自问遇有敌对事前来，能退让否，能反省自己之过恶否，纵无过恶，要其敌对心即是过恶，但关于大局群众利益事，当争不争者，转入消极，亦是过恶，能一体圆通观照而应之否。	7. Ask yourself: When hostile circumstances arise, can I yield? Can I examine my own faults and wrongs? Even if I have no faults or wrongs, my hostile mind itself is a fault and wrong. Yet in matters concerning the overall situation and the interests of the public, failing to contend when one should contend becomes passivity and is also a fault and wrong. Can I respond through an all-inclusive, unobstructed contemplation?
八、自问大悲利众之念，有所退失否，于恶念起时，能参其起因否，若于起因时，预作防止，即不失觉照，而防止之法，先以空境为入手，境空则心自空，对外自不起纷争，此即布施。	8. Ask yourself: Has my thought of great compassion and benefiting others diminished? When an unwholesome thought arises, can I investigate its cause? If, at the time its cause arises, I prevent it beforehand, I will not lose awareness and contemplation. The method of prevention

	begins by entering through the emptiness of circumstances. When circumstances are empty, the mind naturally becomes empty; outwardly, disputes do not arise. This is giving.
凡此种种都属起用之法，反问自己，即属观照妙用，以能观之心，破所观之境，久之成熟，气力充足，了不著意，无一毫之见，存于其中，是名能所双忘，不是双亡，亡则落于断灭，忘乃无著之意，自在之境，然亦微细之习也，更进而善习亦空，空不著空，是光常寂，得大自在，是净土印心法。	All such methods are methods of putting it into practice. Questioning oneself is the wondrous function of contemplation. Use the mind that contemplates to break through the circumstances contemplated. Over time, when this matures and one's strength is sufficient, one does not attend to it at all, and not the slightest view remains within. This is called the simultaneous forgetting of subject and object, not their simultaneous annihilation. Annihilation falls into annihilationism; forgetting means non-attachment. This is the state of ease. Yet it too is a subtle habitual tendency. Advance further until even wholesome habits are empty; be empty without attachment to emptiness. Then luminosity is ever quiescent, and one attains great ease. This is the Mind-Seal Dharma of the Pure Land.
以上是对治法，言由恶转善，以善习代恶习，用以疏娑婆之缘而已，尚不离乎法，故宜息心常寂寂然，此宜修禅定以为缘助，本来念佛至不持而念，一心不乱，即是禅定，心密密地，了无系染，即是净土。	The foregoing are methods of counteraction: turning from unwholesomeness to wholesomeness and replacing unwholesome habits with wholesome habits, merely in order to loosen one's conditions of attachment to the Sahā world. One has still not departed from dharmas. Therefore, one should rest the mind and remain constantly quiescent. For this, cultivate dhyāna and samādhi as supporting conditions. When Buddha-recitation becomes spontaneous, without deliberate effort to sustain it, and there is one-pointedness of mind without distraction, this is dhyāna and samādhi. When the mind is continuous and seamless, with no attachment or defilement whatsoever, this is the Pure Land.
今言习禅定者，亦不离乎法，惟禅定全仗自力，上根人当下直了。坛经云，但用此心，直了成佛，初言以心观心，即不离心地法，起诸妙用，直了者言并此能观之心亦了也，方是见性成佛。	Now, as for those who cultivate dhyāna and samādhi, they too do not depart from dharmas. Yet dhyāna and samādhi rely entirely on one's own strength. Those of superior capacity directly realize it at once. The Platform Sūtra says, “Simply use this mind and directly realize Buddhahood.” It first speaks of using the mind to contemplate the mind, which does not depart from the Mind-Ground

	Dharma Gate and gives rise to all wondrous functions. “Directly realize” means that even this mind that is capable of contemplating is also relinquished; only then is this seeing one's true nature and becoming a Buddha.
中根人可依天台三观法，由空假中会入，言以空破有，以假破妄，会入中道作为过度，及至中道，尚存法见，再进而中道不立，三观齐舍入于究竟。下根人则不能了无依据，离法更无所资，故必以他法为缘助。	Those of middling capacity may rely on the Tiantai method of the three contemplations and enter through emptiness, provisional existence, and the middle: use emptiness to break attachment to existence, use the provisional to break delusion, and enter the middle way as a transitional stage. Upon reaching the middle way, however, one still retains a view of dharmas. One must advance further until even the middle way is not established; abandoning all three contemplations together, one enters the ultimate. Those of lesser capacity cannot be entirely without support; apart from dharmas, they have nothing else on which to rely. Therefore, they must use other methods as supporting conditions.
一切法门，不外正副二途，以观心为正业，而以一切法为副，如心无把持，则宜仗佛力，以他法为助。如修密，印与咒，佛力也，持念则是自力，南无阿弥陀佛，本南无阿弥达布达耶之化音，如持之纯熟而快，即化为六字矣。	Among all dharma gates, there are no more than two paths: the primary and the auxiliary. Contemplation of the mind is the primary practice, while all other methods are auxiliary. If one cannot hold the mind steady, one should rely on the Buddha’s power and use other methods as aids. In Esoteric Buddhism, mudrās and mantras are the Buddha’s power, whereas recitation is one’s own power. “Namo Amitābha Buddha” is a transformed pronunciation of “Namo Amitābuddhāya.” When recited fluently and swiftly, it becomes the six characters.
以有手印，本属密法之一，念珠是后来人欲记数而用，反失去身密之用，并误意密，心不能专，身口意不密，安名瑜珈？因此称唱累年，毫无实益，非法之咎，乃行人所修不相应耳。	Because it includes mudrās, it is inherently one of the practices of Esoteric Buddhism. Prayer beads were later used by people for counting, but this instead forfeits the benefit of esoteric body practice and impairs esoteric mind practice; the mind cannot become focused. If body, speech, and mind are not integrated in esoteric practice, how can it be called yoga? Therefore, one may chant for years without gaining any real benefit. The fault does not lie in the Dharma, but in the practitioner’s cultivation being incompatible with it.

又种种法门，各有因缘，一时有一时之机，一时有一时之法，若此法当机，则彼法不相应矣，故万无执一法而可永久者，此修净土法门之不可不变通也。	Moreover, the various dharma gates each have their own causes and conditions. At different times, capacities and methods differ. If one method suits a particular capacity, another may not. Thus, one can never cling to a single method as suitable forever. This is why the Pure Land dharma gate must be adapted to circumstances.
行者果欲速得成就，则变通之法有二：一曰持名方法之应变更，二曰他法不可不借用，如修弥陀大法、六字大明法、长寿咒法，乃至心中心密法，皆可取作缘助，及至成就，则一切法皆不可取，并亦不可说，方便之力，有如此者。	If practitioners truly wish to attain accomplishment swiftly, there are two adaptive methods. First, the method of name-recitation should be adjusted as circumstances require. Second, other methods must be borrowed and employed. Practices such as the Great Dharma of Amitābha, the Six-Syllable Great Bright Mantra practice, the longevity-mantra practice, and even the Heart-of-Heart Dharma of Esoteric Buddhism may all be taken as auxiliary conditions. Once accomplishment is attained, however, none of these methods may be grasped, nor may they be spoken of. Such is the power of skillful means.
昔李笑渊居士曾告人云：中国佛法衰微，其病不在缺少法门，只缺少真修的人，现在中国的佛法，已修不胜修，一一皆可修证三昧，何必贪多，远涉异地，徒增名相耶？旨哉此言！净土既为果地圆成之德号，则修证方法，当随各人之机而施。	The lay practitioner Li Xiaoyuan once told others: “The decline of Buddhism in China is not due to a lack of dharma gates, but only to a lack of people who genuinely practice. Buddhism in China now has more practices than one could possibly exhaust. Each one can lead to the realization of samādhi through practice. Why crave more, travel far to other lands, and merely add to names and forms?” How profound these words are! Since the Pure Land is the name of the perfected virtues of the fruition-ground, its methods of cultivation and realization should be applied according to each person’s capacity.
应以禅定法入净土者，即以禅定法而为教授；应以持名法入净土者，即以持名法而为教授；应以五戒六度等法入净土者，即以五戒等法而为教授。	For those who should enter the Pure Land through meditative concentration, meditative concentration should be their instruction. For those who should enter the Pure Land through name-recitation, name-recitation should be their instruction. For those who should enter the Pure Land through such practices as the five precepts and six pāramitās, the five precepts and similar practices should be their instruction.

诸法虽有不同，其必精进则一也，其必归于禅定而开般若则一也，般若开，则心自明，而性自见，然后可以言除习气矣，习气之除灭，至如何程度，则净土证入至如何程度，习气何时扫尽，净土何时圆成，若有未净，而其愿力足资往生者，则可带业而生西，生西已，再事修证，入于圆净为止。	Although the various dharmas differ, diligence is essential to them all; likewise, they must all return to meditative concentration, through which prajñā unfolds. Once prajñā has unfolded, the mind naturally becomes clear and one's true nature is naturally seen. Only then can one speak of eliminating habitual tendencies. To whatever extent habitual tendencies are eliminated, to that extent one realizes entry into the Pure Land. When habitual tendencies are completely swept away, realization of the Pure Land is complete. If some remain unpurified, but one's power of vows is sufficient to support rebirth, one may be reborn in the Western Pure Land while carrying karma. Having been reborn there, one continues cultivation and realization until complete purity is attained.
是故娑婆有净行之菩萨，而西方有带业之凡夫，其同为凡圣亲居之地乎？所异者娑婆有恶道而西方无之，西方多圣人，而娑婆亦有之，惟娑婆以烦恼多，下者为恶染，上者为情牵，终至沉沦。	Thus, in the Sahā world there are bodhisattvas who practice purity, while in the West there are ordinary beings reborn while carrying karma. Are they not both lands where ordinary beings and sages dwell together? The difference is that the Sahā world has evil realms, whereas the West does not. The Western Pure Land has many sages, though the Sahā world also has them. Yet in the Sahā world afflictions are abundant: those of lower capacity are defiled by evil, while those of higher capacity are bound by emotional attachment, and in the end they sink into saṃsāra.
佛故指示西方，以一经往生，即无退转，此世人所以认西方为稳土，而必发往生之愿也，然徒有其愿而无其行，或其所修不合乎法，则因缘不具足，于五浊恶世中，欲证入阿耨菩提，是为甚难，故曰不可以少善根福德因缘得生彼国也。	Therefore, the Buddha pointed out the Western Pure Land: once reborn there, one will never retrogress. This is why people of this world regard the West as a secure land and must arouse the vow for rebirth there. Yet if one merely has the vow without practice, or if one's cultivation does not accord with the Dharma, then causes and conditions are incomplete. In the Sahā world of the five turbidities, it is exceedingly difficult to realize anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi. Hence it is said that one cannot be born in that land with few roots of goodness, blessings, causes, and conditions.
由此法门无量，各种缘助，实不可少。今仅赖一持名法，而又散乱不密，不能一门深入，以死守为专一，为	Because dharma gates are immeasurable, the various auxiliary conditions are truly indispensable. Now people rely solely on name-recitation, yet are

不退转，各树门庭，我胜彼劣，此见不净，于净土尚隔万万里。	distracted and lack continuity in practice. They cannot enter deeply into a single gate, but take stubborn adherence to be single-mindedness and non-retrogression. Each establishes a separate camp, claiming, “Mine is superior and yours inferior.” Such a view is impure; they remain millions of miles away from the Pure Land.
复不知痛切改悔，一旦腊月三十日到来，所有西方胜境，全为烦恼情欲所蔽，彼佛接引之力，不敌自己业力之牵，往生其难矣。	Nor do they know to repent and reform with deep earnestness. When the “last day of the year”—the end of life—suddenly arrives, all the sublime realms of the West will be obscured by afflictions and sensual desires. The power of that Buddha’s guidance cannot overcome the pull of one’s own karmic force, and rebirth will indeed be difficult.
然世人每执往生为易，十念亦可往生，而弥陀经，世尊尚重说若干难字，则又何也？不知难易者，都属分别，非法有难易也，乃众生因缘不同，易者十念尚属费事，一念足矣；难者累劫尚在沉沦，地狱至今不空，是未修者误于情欲，已修者又误于法见也，皆自误而又误人也。	Yet people commonly insist that rebirth is easy, saying that one may attain it even through ten recitations. Why, then, does the Amitābha Sūtra repeatedly emphasize the word “difficult”? They do not understand that ease and difficulty both belong to discrimination; it is not that the Dharma itself is easy or difficult. Rather, sentient beings have different causes and conditions. For those for whom it is easy, even ten recitations are an unnecessary burden; a single thought is enough. For those for whom it is difficult, they remain submerged through countless eons; the hells are still not empty. Those who have not practiced are misled by sensual desires, while those who have practiced are again misled by doctrinal views. They mislead themselves and in turn mislead others.
慈悲而缺方便，希果而不正因，成见既立，净土益远，臻其极，亦只人天有漏之果，谓种未来西方胜因则可，谓能即世决定往生则难也。发心生西者，其慎之哉。	If compassion lacks skillful means, if one seeks the result without establishing the proper cause, and if fixed views have already taken hold, the Pure Land grows ever more distant. At the utmost, one will attain only the defiled fruition of the human and deva realms. It may be said that one plants superior causes for the future Western Pure Land, but it is difficult to say that one can certainly be reborn there in this very life. Those who arouse the resolve to be reborn in the West should be cautious indeed.
或又问经云五逆十恶人，亦可临终念佛往生，而汝独云往生甚难，有违经旨矣。	Some may further ask: “The sūtras say that even those who have committed the five heinous

	offenses and ten evil acts may recite the Buddha's name at the time of death and be reborn. Yet you alone say that rebirth is exceedingly difficult. Does this not contradict the meaning of the sūtras?"
不知往生必待前缘成熟，缘熟则虽五逆十恶人，到此亦即一齐放下矣，正一齐放下时，不得更以五逆十恶名之，否则诸君大可临终再念，此时亦不必勤苦修持也，为此语者，乃方便鼓励苦行人，言虽从前五逆十恶人，只要此时一觉，顿悟性空，万劫解脱，非言人人有此福缘也。	They do not understand that rebirth requires the maturation of prior causes and conditions. When those conditions ripen, even a person who has committed the five heinous offenses and ten evil acts will at that point let go of everything. At the very moment of letting go completely, such a person can no longer be called one who has committed the five heinous offenses and ten evil acts. Otherwise, you might as well wait until death to recite the Buddha's name, and need not labor diligently in cultivation now. Such statements are skillful means for encouraging those who practice arduously. They mean that, although one may previously have committed the five heinous offenses and ten evil acts, if one awakens at this moment and suddenly realizes the emptiness of intrinsic nature, one is liberated from countless eons. They do not mean that everyone possesses such blessings and conditions.
若不正此义，一面念佛，一面作恶，庸有济乎？为此问者，胶执于见，但守经文，不了经义，如是广大圆满遍覆之净土法，误于小心劣见，不亦惜哉！	If this meaning is not properly understood, and one recites the Buddha's name on the one hand while doing evil on the other, how could it possibly help? Those who raise this question cling rigidly to their views. They merely adhere to the words of the sūtras and do not understand their meaning. How regrettable that such a vast, perfect, and all-encompassing Pure Land Dharma should be misunderstood through narrow and inferior views!