

# 佛说阿弥陀经要解

## Commentary on the Amitabha Sutra

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Originally Translated by Dr. J. C. Cleary ---- Mind-Seal of Buddhas  
Humbly Revised by Hsingmean (Edwin) Sha 沙行勉 based on my  
understanding of the scriptures.

**Version: Dec. 4, 2007.** This one has the Main part. The Essence and  
Introduction are in another file.

### [Main portion of AMITABHA sutra]

(甲) 二正宗分三：初广陈彼土依正妙果以启信、二特劝众生应求往生以发愿、三正示行者执持名号以立行。

The main body of the sutra is divided into three parts. The first part presents a full-scale description of the wonders of the Pure Land and of Amitabha in order to arouse our **faith**. The second part makes a special point of urging sentient beings to seek **rebirth** in the Pure Land, in order to get them to **vow** to do so. The third part teaches Pure Land practitioners to **recite the Buddha-name** in order to establish their **practice**.

**信愿持名，一经要旨。信愿为慧行，持名为行行。得生与否，全由信愿之有无。品位高下，全由持名之深浅。故慧行为前导，行行为正修，如目足并运也。**

The essential message of the sutra as a whole is to **develop faith and vows and recite the Buddha-name**. Vows and faith are acts of wisdom, and reciting the Buddha-name is an act of practice. **Whether we achieve rebirth in the Pure Land depends entirely on whether or not we have faith and vows. How high we rank in the Pure Land depends entirely on how deeply we recite the Buddha-name. Thus, the act of wisdom is the guide, and the act of practice is true cultivation: they go together like eyes and feet.**

### [Description of the Pure Land]

(乙) 初文为二：初依报妙、二正报妙。(丙) 初又二：初征释、二广释。  
(丁) 初又二：初征、二释。(戊) 今初。

The first part of the main body of the sutra has two sections: the first describes the wonders of the Pure Land, and the second describes the wonders of Amitabha and the people born there.

Now let us look at the first part. [Buddha says to Sariputra:]

舍利弗，彼土何故名为极乐？

**Buddha says to Sariputra: "Why is this land called Ultimate Bliss"?**

(戊) 二释又二：初约能受用释、二约所受用释。(己) 今初。

Next comes the explanation, in two parts: an explanation of the beneficiaries of the Pure Land, and an explanation of what they receive.

其国众生，无有众苦，但受诸乐，故名极乐。

**It is called "Ultimate Bliss" because the sentient beings in this land are free from the myriad sufferings, and only receive every kind of joy.**

众生是能受用人，等觉以还皆可名。今且约人民言，以下下例上上也。

Sentient beings are the ones who receive [the benefits of the Pure Land]. All sentient beings below Buddha, from highest rank of Bodhisattva, can be called such. Here we can regard them as ordinary people in the Land, using the lowest case to include all cases.

娑婆苦乐杂。其实苦是苦苦，逼身心故。乐是坏苦，不久住故。非苦非乐是行苦，性迁流故。彼土永离三苦，不同此土对苦之乐，乃名极乐。

In this mundane world of ours, the world called "Endurance", suffering and happiness intermingle. The happiness in the Endurance world is not ultimate happiness, where the suffering is painful suffering because it harries the body and the mind, and the happiness is deteriorating happy since happiness does not remain for long. When we are neither

suffering nor happy, we still suffer the pain of transience, since all things are transitory by nature.

The Pure Land is forever removed from these three kinds of suffering. The happiness in the Pure Land is not the same as the happiness in our world, which is only relative to suffering, so it is called **ultimate bliss**.

一往分别。**同居五浊轻**，无分段八苦，但受不病不老，自在游行，天食天衣，诸善聚会等乐。

Roughly describe the joys in each land in the world of Ultimate Bliss. In the Land of Saints and Ordinary Beings Dwell Together, people have little five turbidities; there are no birth-death and eight kinds of sufferings: birth 生, aging 老, sickness 病 and death 死, separation from that which we love 爱别离苦, association with that which we hate 怨憎会苦, Inability to fulfill our desires 求不得苦 and the suffering from the instability of the five **skandhas** (aggregates) 五阴盛苦. They will receive joys of no sickness, no aging, traveling freely, heavenly food and clothing, and assembly with Saints.

**方便体观巧**，无沈空滞寂之苦，但受游戏神通等乐。**实报心观圆**，**无隔别不融之苦**，但受无碍不思议乐。寂光究竟等，无法身渗漏，真常流注之苦，但受称性圆满究竟乐。

People reaching this Expedient Land personally experience void through subtlety, with no attachment of still void but with the joy of freedom. People reaching the Reward Land have realized their nature completely, with no attachment of differentiation of dharma, but with the joy of inconceivable no-obstruction. People in the Quiescent Light Land have reached the equal understanding of Buddha, with no shortcoming of any leakage of Absolute Reality, but with the ultimate joy and complete enlightenment.

然同居众生，**以持名善根福德同佛故**，**圆净四土**，**圆受诸乐也**。复次极乐最胜，不在上三土，而在同居。良以上之，则十方同居，逊其殊特，下又可与此土较量。所以凡夫优入而从容，横超而度越。佛说苦乐，意在于此。

For the people in Land where Saints and Ordinary Beings Dwell together, because the Buddha-name they recite enable them to receive the same **good roots, meritorious virtues** as Buddha, they reach the same purity and receive the same joys as people in other three lands. Thus, the most wonderful feature of the World of Ultimate Bliss lies in the Dwelling-Together Land, not the upper three lands because this land has the similar benefits as the upper three lands and the only difference among them are just particulars. Moreover, the comparison between the Dwelling-Together Land and our inferior mundane world is obvious. Therefore, people are delighted to reach there from our mundane world and enjoy the total environment of World of Ultimate Bliss. This is why the Buddha is talking about “**Bliss**” here.

## (己) 二约所受用释

Next, Buddha explains what sentient beings experience in Amitabha's Land of Ultimate Bliss:

又舍利弗，极乐国土，七重栏楯，七重罗网，七重行树，皆是四宝，周匝围绕，是故彼国名为极乐。

**Furthermore, this land is called "Ultimate Bliss" because it is surrounded by seven rings of railings, and seven layers of nets, and seven rows of trees, all made of the four precious jewels.**

七重，表七科道品。四宝，表常、乐、我、净四德。

周匝围绕者，佛菩萨等无量住处也。皆四宝则自功德深，周匝绕则他贤圣遍，此极乐真因缘也。

The seven rings, seven layers, and seven rows represent the seven categories of the aids to enlightenment [the four bases of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of miraculous power, the five roots, the five powers, the seven factors of Enlightenment, and the eightfold right path]. The four precious jewels represent the four qualities of enlightenment: permanence, bliss, real self and purity.

The word "surrounded" stands for the innumerable abodes of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The fact that the surroundings are all made of the four precious jewels indicates that the sentient beings in the Pure Land have their own deep meritorious virtues, and the fact that these precious things surround them stands for the holy ones who are everywhere in this Land of Ultimate Bliss.

[Additional Comment: [一、四念处]，念即想念，处即身受心法也。一、身念处，谓观此色身，皆是不净也。二、受念处，谓观领受好恶等事，悉皆是苦也。三、心念处，谓观此识心生灭无常也。四、法念处，谓观诸法从因缘生，皆无有我也。

[二、四正勤]，正谓不邪，勤谓不怠。一、已生恶，令永断。谓一切恶法，若已生者，当精勤一心决别，令其永断除也。二、未生恶，令不生。谓一切恶法，若未生时，当精勤一心遮止，令其不复萌生也。三、未生善，令生。谓诸善法，若未生时，当精勤一心勇猛，令其发生也。四、已生善，令增长。谓诸善法，若已生者，当精勤一心修习，令其增长也。

[三、四如意足]，谓所修之法，如愿满足也。一、欲如意足，谓希慕所修之法，如愿满足也。二、精进如意足，谓于所修之法，专注一心，无有间杂，如愿满足也。三、念如意足，谓于所修之法，记忆不忘，如愿满足也。四、思惟如意足，谓心思所修之法，不令忘失，如愿满足也。

[四、五根]，根即能生之义，谓此五根，能生一切善法也。一、信根，谓信于正道也。二、精进根，谓修正法无间无杂也。三、念根，谓于正法记忆不忘也。四、定根，谓摄心不散也。五、慧根，谓于诸法观照明了也。

[五、五力]，力即力用，谓能破恶成善也。一、信力，谓信根增长，能破诸疑惑也。二、精进力，谓精进根增长，能破身心懈怠，成办出世之事也。三、念力，谓念根增长，能破诸邪念，成就出世正念功德也。四、定力，谓定根增长，能破诸乱想，发诸禅定也。五、慧力，谓慧根增长，能遮止三界见、思之惑，发真无漏也。（三界者，欲界、色界、无色界也。见、思惑者，分别曰见惑，贪爱曰思惑也。真无漏者，谓阿罗汉断见、思惑尽，不漏落三界生死，异于初果等，故名真也。）

[六、七觉分]，觉即觉了，分即支分。谓此七法，各有支派分齐也。一、择觉分，谓拣择诸法之真伪也。二、精进觉分，谓修诸道法，无有间杂也。三、喜觉分，谓契悟真法，得欢喜也。四、除觉分，谓断除诸见烦恼也。五、舍觉分，谓舍离所见念着之境也。六、定觉分，谓觉了所发之禅定也。七、念觉分，谓思惟所修之道法也。

[七、八正道]，不邪曰正，能通曰道。一、正见，谓能见真理也。二、正思惟，谓心无邪念也。三、正语，谓言无虚妄也。四、正业，谓白净善业也。五、正命，谓依法乞食活命也。六、正精进，谓修诸道行无间杂也。七、正念，谓专心忆念善法也。八、正定，谓一心住于真空之理也。]

[*ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY (after Master Hsuan Hua):* The railings represent the precepts (prohibiting evil and preventing error) the netting represents concentration (because one does not enter or emerge from true concentration) and the trees represent wisdom (if you have wisdom, you are said to be tall).]

此等庄严，同居净土是增上善业所感，亦圆五品观所感，以缘生胜妙五尘为体；

Here is to explain the causes and the bodies of these sublimities in each land. In Dwelling-Together Land, it is caused by the karma of exceedingly good deeds, and is also caused by the results of five deeds expounded by the Round Section. The sublimity is embodied by the karma-generated marvelously-splendid environment perceived by their five sensory organs.

[Comment: 指圆教五品外凡位，即

一、随喜品，闻实相之法，而信解随喜的人；

二、读诵品，读诵法华，及诸大乘经，而助观解的人；

三、讲说品，将所见解的佛法说出，以利益他人的人；

四、兼行六度品，是兼修六度，以助观心的人；

五、正行六度品，是正行六度，以自度度他，事理具足，观行转胜的人。十住以上，称为圣者，十住以下皆是凡夫，为别于十信内凡，故称外凡。]

[天台智者大师，立六即佛义，以示由凡夫修行，乃至佛果的位次，即

一、理即佛，一切众生，虽轮回六道，日处尘劳烦恼中，与觉体相背，然而佛性功德，仍然具足，故名“理即佛”。

二、名字即佛，或从知识处，或由经典中，得闻即心本具不生不灭的佛性，于名字中，通达了解，知一切法，皆为佛法，一切众生，皆可成佛，点头会意，豁然有悟，故名“名字即佛”。

三、观行即佛，这是圆教五品外凡位，不但解知名字，更进一步依教修观，知一切法皆是佛法，心观明了，理慧相应，故名“观行即佛”。

四、相似即佛，这是圆教十信内凡位，初信断见惑，七信断思惑，八九十信断尘沙惑，在此位上的行者，于观行中，愈观愈明，愈止愈寂，虽未真悟实证，而于理仿佛，有如真证，故名“相似即佛”。

五、分证即佛，这是于十信后心，破一分无明，证一分三德，即入初住，而证法身，从此成法身大士，其间从初住起，各各破无明，证三德，至等觉共历四十一位，破四十一分，故名“分证即佛”。

六、究竟即佛，这是从等觉，再破最后一分无明，则惑尽真纯，彻证即身本具的真如佛性，入妙觉位而成佛，故名“究竟即佛”。]

**方便净土是即空观智所感，亦相似三观所感，以妙真谛无漏五尘为体；**

In Expedient Land, the sublimity is caused by the wisdom that sees everything's essence void, and is also caused by the efforts made by three true views. The sublimity is embodied by the marvelously-true reality of all phenomena and the no-delusion environment perceived by Beings there.

**实报净土是妙假观智所感，亦分证三观所感，以妙俗谛无尽五尘为体；**

In the Real Reward Land, the sublimity is caused by the wisdom understanding that the essence of all phenomena and internal principles are merely name references, and is also caused by the partial realizations of Buddhahood from three delicate views. The sublimity is embodied by the marvelously-expedient reality of everything, and the environment that is endless.

**常寂光土是即中观智所感，亦究竟三观所感，以妙中谛称性五尘为体。**

In the Eternally Quiescent Land, the sublimity is caused by the wisdom of merging-center that contemplates void and name-reference identical, and is also caused by the ultimate three views. The sublimity is embodied by the marvelously-central reality and true-nature environment.

[Comment: (出金光明经玄义)]

谓天台智者大师所立也。观即照了之义。观达一念之心，即具三谛之法也。若观心空，则一切法皆空，即是真谛；若观心假，则一切法皆假，即是俗谛；若观心中，则一切法皆中，即是中谛。此之三观，全由性发，实匪修成。故于一心，宛有三用，所谓一心三观也。

[一、空观]，空者，离性离相之谓也。谓观一念之心，不在内，不在外，不在中间，名之为空。由观一念空故，一空一切空，无假、无中而不空，以三观皆能荡相故也。盖空荡见、思之相，假荡尘沙之相，中荡无明之相，三相皆荡，即毕竟空，是名空观。(见、思、尘沙、无明，即三惑也。)

[二、假观]，假者，无法不备之谓也。谓观一念之心具足一切诸法，名之为假。由观一念假故，一假一切假，无空无中而不假，以三观皆能立法故也。盖空立真谛之法，假立俗谛之法，中立中谛之法；三法皆立，即为妙假，是名假观。

[三、中观]，中即中正，绝二边对待之谓也。谓观一念之心，非空非假，即空即假，名之为中。由观一念中故，一中一切中，无空无假而不中；以三观当处皆能绝待故也。盖言空则空外无法，言假则假外无法，言中则中外无法，三皆绝待，即为圆中，是名中观。]

[诸家说三观，以天台之三观为最普通：一、空观，观诸法之空谛也。二、假观，观诸法之假谛也。三、中观，此有二。观诸法亦非空，亦非假，即是中，谓为双非之中观，观诸法亦空亦假，即是中，谓为双照之观。又就性德之理而谓为三谛，就修德之智而谓为三观，以吾人凡常之一心为所观之境而观之，则谓为一心三观。而三谛三观有别圆二教相违。

	(修三观)	(破三惑)	(证三智)	(成三德)	
生	┌修空观——	破见思惑——	证一切智——	成般若德┐	菩
死	└修假观——	破尘沙惑——	证道种智——	成解脱德┘	提
烦	┌修中观——	破无明惑——	证一切种智——	成法身德┐	涅
恼					槃

又曰圆融三观，不可思议三观，或不次第三观。为天台圆教之观法，利根菩萨之所修习。原出于大智度论二十七所谓三智一心中得之文。又得中论观四谛品，众因缘生法，我说即是无，亦为是假名，亦是中道义之意，天台智者大师之义因之而立。天台观经疏曰：“一心三观者，此出释论。论云：三智实在一心中，得祇一观而三观，观于一谛而三谛，故名一心三观。类如一心而有生住灭，如此三相，在一心中。此观成时，证一心三智。”又摩诃止观五上曰：“一空一切空，无假中而不空，总空观也。一假一切假，无空中而不假，总假观也。一中一切中，无空假而不中，总中观也。即中论所说不可思议一心三观。”盖天台之意，在对于别教隔历之次第三观，而明圆教之不次第三观也。别教之说，先修空观，破见思之惑，得一切智，而证真谛之理，次修假观，破尘沙之惑，得道种智，而知假谛恒沙之法门，后修中观，破无明之惑，得一切种智，而证中道法身，故三观次第而用之。圆教之说则不然，三观融即于一心，不纵不横，恰如伊字之三点，又如一刹那之法，有生住灭之三相，三即非三一即非一。是故举一观，即圆具三观。谓举一空观，则假中亦空。以三观悉能荡相著故也。举一假观，则空中亦假。以三观皆有立法之义故也。举一中观，则空假亦中。以三观之当处皆为绝对故也。是即三观只在一心，故得一一之观，任运具三。如是一圆融，修性泯绝，非次第而入，非并别而观，故得三惑破于一时，三智发于一心。所以称为不可思议之三观也。维摩经玄疏三，明一心三观，有三意：一、所观之境，即一念无明之心，因缘所生之十法界也。二、能观，观此一念无明之心，圆照三谛之理。三、证成，证一心三观，即是一心三智五眼也。古来惟天台一家，立一心三观之论目。其余诸教，绝不谈一心三观之旨。又见维摩经略疏七及止观辅行五之三。]

欲令易解，作此分别，实四土庄严，无非因缘所生法，无不即空假中。所以极乐同居净境，真俗圆融，不可限量。下皆仿此。

The comparisons made here are just for the ease of explanation. Actually the sublimity of four lands is just caused by karma. They all are identical in terms of void, name-reference and canter. Thus the pure environment of the Dwelling-together land encompasses all true, expedient realities as the other three lands. All lands are in one, endless to decipher.

[comment: 因缘所生法，我说即是空，亦为是假名，亦是中道义]

问：寂光惟理性，何得有此庄严？答：一一庄严全体理性，一一理性具足庄严，方是诸佛究竟依果。若寂光不具胜妙五尘，何异偏真法性。

Question: As the essence of Eternally Quiescent Land is of noumenon, why does the land have this sublimity of phenomena? Answer: Each sublimity of phenomena fully

embodies inner noumenon, and each inner noumenon completely encompasses sublimity. Thus, the ultimate environmental results must have both phenomena and inner noumenon. If people think that the Quiescent Land does not have the marvelously-splendid environment, this concept is not different from the bias that everything is nothing but void, and only void.

（丁）二广释二：初别释所受、二合释能受所受。（戊）初又二：初释生处、二结示佛力。（己）今初。

Next the sutra gives two broad explanations: first, an explanation of what sentient beings receive in the Pure Land, and second a combined explanation of the recipients and what they receive.

The first explanation is also in two sections: a description of where sentient beings are born in the Pure Land, and a summary of the powers of Amitabha Buddha.

又舍利弗，极乐国土有七宝池，八功德水，充满其中。池底纯以金沙布地，四边阶道，金、银、琉璃、玻璃合成。上有楼阁，亦以金、银、琉璃、玻璃、砗磲、赤珠、玛瑙而严饰之。池中莲华，大如车轮，青色青光，黄色黄光，赤色赤光，白色白光，微妙香洁。

**Moreover, the Land of Ultimate Bliss has seven-treasure ponds filled with the waters of eight virtues. The bottom of each of the ponds is floored by sands of pure gold, and the stepped walkways along four sides of ponds are made of gold, silver, lapis lazuli and crystal. Above ponds there are towers which are adorned with gold and silver and lapis lazuli and crystal and shells of giant clams (Tridacna clams) and red pearl and agate. In the ponds there are lotus flowers as big as cart wheels: blue ones shining with blue light, yellow ones shining with yellow light, red ones shining with red light, and white ones shining with white light, each emitting a subtle pure fragrance.**

上明住处，今明生处。宝池金银等所成，不同此方土石也。八功德者：一、澄清，异此方浑浊；二、清冷，异寒热；三、甘美，异咸淡劣味；四、轻软，异沉重；五、润泽，异缩腐褪色；六、安和，异急暴；七、除饥渴，异生冷；八、长养诸根，异损坏诸根，及渗戾增病没溺等也。

Earlier on the sutra described where sentient beings live in the Pure Land; now it describes where they are born.

The jewel ponds and the things made of gold and silver and so on in the Pure Land are not the same as the earth and stones in our mundane world.

The eight virtues of the water that fills the jewel ponds in the Pure Land are the following: **1.** it is pure and limpid, unlike the turbid water of our world; **2.** it is clear and cool, unlike the water of our world, which is either too cold or too hot; **3.** it has a sweet pleasing taste, unlike the water of our world, which has an inferior taste, being either salty or **alkaline**; **4.** it is **light and soft**, unlike the water of our world, heavy and hard; **5.** **it is moist and nutritious**, unlike the **murky water of our world**, which shrinks and rots things and is erosive; **6.** it is peaceful, unlike the turbulent water of our world; **7.** it eliminates hunger and thirst, unlike the water of our world which makes us shiver; **8.** it always nurtures the capacities of sentient beings, unlike the water of our world which easily damages their capacities, and can be **stagnant and insalubrious**, and drown people and so on.

充满其中，异枯竭泛滥。底纯金沙，异**污泥**。阶道四宝，异砖石。陞级名阶，坦途名道，重屋名楼，岑楼名阁。七宝楼阁，异此方土木丹青也。

The water in the Pure Land always keeps the jewel ponds perfectly full, unlike the water in our world, which can dry up or overflow. The bottom of the jewel ponds is pure gold sand, unlike the **mud and muck** on the bottom of ponds in our world. The walkways that lead up from all four sides of each of the ponds are made of precious things, unlike the brick and stone walkways in our world. The pavilions above the ponds are adorned with seven treasures, unlike the pavilions in our world.

楼阁是住处，及法会处。但得宝池莲胞开敷，便可登**四岸**，入法会，见佛闻法也。**华轮者，轮王金轮大四十里，且举最小者言。若据《观经》及《无量寿会》，大小实不可量，由同居净土身相不等故也。青色名优钵罗，黄色名拘勿头，赤色名钵头摩，白色名芬陀利。**

These pavilions are dwelling places, and they are also places where teaching assemblies are held. As soon as a person is reborn in the Pure Land, and comes forth from one of the lotus-wombs in one of the jewel ponds, that person can reach one of the four lands, enter a teaching assembly, see Amitabha Buddha, and hear the Dharma.

**The lotus flowers are as big as cart wheels.** The size of a cart wheel can be as large as 40 miles, actually picking it as the smallest one for reference. If we follow the other Pure Land Sutras, the sizes of these lotus flowers are hard to measure because the sentient beings born in the Dwelling Together Lands have various kinds of different features. Here uses the colors in our Mundane World to represent those subtle colors that are emitted from lotus in the Pure Land.

由生身有光，故莲胞亦有光。**然极乐莲华，光色无量，此亦略言耳。微妙香洁，略叹莲华四德。质而非形曰微。无碍曰妙。非形则非尘，故洁也。莲胞如此，生身可知。**

The bodies that are born from these lotuses are shining with light, and thus the lotus-wombs themselves are also shining with light.

The colored lights of lotus flowers in the Land of Ultimate Bliss are infinitely varied, and here the sutra just mentions them in brief.

The "**subtle pure fragrance**" of the lotus flowers is emblematic of their special virtues: they are ethereal with no forms, unobstructed, formless with no dust. Since the lotus-wombs are like this, we can understand what the bodies born from them must be like.

### (己) 二结示佛力

In the next sentence, the sutra sums up the powers of Amitabha Buddha.

舍利弗，极乐国土，成就如是功德庄严。

**The Land of Ultimate Bliss is complete with all these merits and adornments.**

明上住处生处种种庄严，皆是阿弥陀佛大愿大行称性功德之所成就。故能遍严四种净土，普摄十方三世一切凡圣令往生也。复次佛以大愿作众生多善根之因，以大行作众生多福德之缘。令信愿持名者，念念成就如是功德，而皆是已成，非今非当。

All the adornments of the dwellings in the Pure Land and the settings in which sentient beings are reborn in the Pure Land are created by the inherently real merits of the great vows and great deeds of Amitabha Buddha. That's why he can adorn all the Four Pure Lands, and embrace all the ordinary people and saints of all the worlds of the past, present, and future, and enable them to be reborn in the Pure Land.

With his great vows, Amitabha creates the causal basis for the multiplication of good roots of sentient beings, and with his great deeds he creates the conditions for the increase of merits of sentient beings. Thus those who develop faith and vows and recite the Buddha-name, from moment to moment, achieve these merits. All this is already accomplished: it is not just happening now, nor is it yet to happen.

此则以阿弥种种庄严作增上本质，带起众生自心种种庄严。全佛即生，全他即自。故曰成就如是功德庄严。

All the adornments of Amitabha act as an augmenting substance that stimulates the development of all the adornments within the minds of sentient beings. Amitabha in total merges with sentient beings: all his powers merge with ours. Thus the sutra says that the Pure Land "**is complete with all these merits and adornments.**"

(戊) 二合释能受所受又二：初约五根五尘明受用、次约耳根声尘明受用。  
(己) 初又二：初正明、二结示。(庚) 今初。

Next the sutra explains the sentient beings in the Pure Land, and what they receive. This section has two parts. First it explains what sentient beings in the Pure Land experience in terms of the **five sense-faculties and five sense-objects**. Next it explains this in terms of hearing and sounds.

Again, the first part can be divided in two: the explanation itself, and the summary. Here is the first passage:

又舍利弗，彼佛国土，常作天乐，黄金为地。昼夜六时，雨天曼陀罗华。其土众生，常以清旦，各以衣祴，盛众妙华，供养他方十万亿佛。即以食时，还到本国，饭食经行。

**And there is more -- celestial music is constantly playing in this Buddha-land, and the ground is made of gold. Flowers like Mandarava flowers rain down at all hours of the day and night. Every morning the sentient beings of this land use flower baskets to contain multitudes of wondrous flowers and make offerings to hundreds of billions of Buddhas in other worlds. When it is meal time, they return to their own lands, to eat and circumambulate [the teaching assembly].**

乐是声尘，地是色尘，华是色香二尘，食是味尘，盛华、散华、经行是触尘，众生五根对五尘可知。常作者，即六时也。黄金为地者，七宝所严地界，体是黄金也。日分初、中、后，名昼三时。夜分初、中、后，名夜三时。故云昼夜六时。然彼土依正各有光明，不假日月，安分昼夜，且顺此方假说分际耳。

Music represents the **sense-object sound**, the ground represents the sense-object form, the flowers represent the two sense-objects form and scent, food represents the sense-object flavor, and decorating garments, making offerings and circumambulating represent the sense-object touch. It is obvious that the sense-faculties of sentient beings [here in the Pure Land] are paired with sense-objects.

The music is "constantly playing", twenty-four hours a day. The ground is made of gold, because Amitabha's Pure Land is a world adorned with precious things, whose basic substance is gold.

The sutra says that flowers rain down at all hours of the day and night. But since both the Pure Land and its inhabitants shine with light, and do not depend on sun and moon for illumination, how can there be a division of day and night? This is just said **provisionally** to **accord with** the distinctions we make in our mundane world.

曼陀罗，此云**适意**，又云白华。衣裓，是盛华器。**众妙华，明非曼陀罗一种，应如妙经四华，表四因位。**

The Sanskrit name for the **Mandarava** flowers means both "as we wish" and "white flowers". **The flower baskets** are used to contain flowers. **Multitude of wondrous flowers** shows many varieties of flowers other than Mandarava flower. This should be as four flowers that were said in Lotus Sutra, which represent four causal stages.

[谓佛将说法华，故天雨**四华**，以表十住、十行、十回向、十地诸菩萨，当获成佛之因，故名雨华瑞。经云：天雨曼陀罗等**四华**。是也。（**十住者**，发心住、治地住、修行住、生贵住、方便具足住、正心住、不退住、童真住、法王子住、灌顶住也。**十行者**，欢喜行、饶益行、无嗔恨行、无尽行、离痴乱行、善现行、无著行、尊重行、善法行、真实行也。**十回向者**，救一切众生离众生相回向、不坏回向、等一切佛回向、至一切处回向、无尽功德藏回向、随顺平等善根回向、随顺等观一切众生回向、真如相回向、无缚解脱回向、法界无量回向也。**十地者**，欢喜地、离垢地、发光地、焰慧地、难胜地、现前地、远行地、不动地、善慧地、法云地也。梵语曼陀罗，华言适意，又云白华。**四华者**，曼陀罗华、摩诃曼陀罗华、曼殊沙华、摩诃曼殊沙华也。）]

供养他方佛，表真因会趋极果，果德无不遍也。**且据娑婆言十万亿佛，意显生极乐已，还供释迦、弥勒，皆不难耳。若阿弥神力所加，何远不到哉。**

Making offerings to Buddhas in other worlds symbolizes that through having a true causal basis, we can attain the ultimate fruit, and that the virtues of this ultimate attainment extend everywhere. **From our mundane world, passing through hundreds of billions of Buddha lands, after we are reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, it will not be hard for us still to make offerings to Sakyamuni Buddha and Maitreya Buddha.** If we are strengthened by the supernatural power of Amitabha, there is no place too far for us to reach.

食时，即清旦，故云**即以**。明其**神足**不可思议，不离彼土，常遍十方，**不假逾时回还也。**

The time for eating is the morning, so the sutra says the inhabitants of the Pure Land return to their own land **when it is time to eat** to show their supernatural power of **unimpeded bodily function**. They go to all the worlds in the ten directions and return to their own land without taking any time.

此文显极乐一声、一尘、一刹那，乃至跨步弹指，悉与十方三宝**贯彻无碍**。又显在娑婆则**浊重恶障**，与极乐不隔而隔。生极乐则功德甚深，与娑婆隔而不隔也。

This passage shows that in the Pure Land every sound, every sense-object, every moment, and even every step and every snap of the fingers, **interpenetrate without obstruction**, and

are in accord with the three Jewels [Buddha, Dharma and Sangha] of all the worlds of the ten directions.

It also shows that in our mundane world, the **defilements and obstructions** are so serious that our world is separated off from the Land of Ultimate Bliss, even though from the view of the Land of Ultimate Bliss, the mundane is not really separated from it. When we are reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, our merit and virtues will be so great that we will not be separated from this mundane world since we reach the mundane world in an instant.

饭食经行者，念食食至，不假安排。食毕钵去，不劳举拭。但经行金地，华乐娱乐，任运进修而已。

For the sentient beings, born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, food will come as they feel like eating, with no pre-arrangement, and the bowls will be gone when meals are over, with no need to wash the bowls. After eating, they walk quietly and slowly in the gold Buddha Land. With the flowers and joys around, they are just studying dharma and improving themselves naturally.

(庚) 二结示

Again, the sutra sums things up:

舍利弗，极乐国土，成就如是功德庄严。

**The Land of Ultimate Bliss is complete with all these merits and adornments.**

(己) 二约耳根声尘明受用。

以此方耳根最利，故别就法音广明。其实极乐**摄法界机**，五尘一一圆妙，出生一切法门也。

又二：初别明、二总结。(庚)初中二：初化有情声、二化无情声。(辛)初又二：初鸟音法利、二征释略显。(壬)今初。

Next the sutra explains what is experienced in the Pure Land in terms of hearing sound. Because the people in our mundane world are the most sharp in hearing ability, the sutra expounds the voices teaching Dharma in particular. In fact, the Land of Ultimate Bliss encompasses the potential of the Dharmadhatu – Dharma Realms (cosmos). All the sense-objects are perfect and wondrous there, and produce all the teachings.

This passage in the sutra is also divided into two parts: a particular explanation, and a general summation. The particular explanation discusses the sounds that come from sentient beings, and the sounds that come from inanimate things. It tells of the sounds of the birds bringing the benefits of the Dharma, and then briefly answers a question.

Here is the first part:

复次舍利弗，彼国常有种种奇妙杂色之鸟，白鹤、孔雀、鹦鹉、舍利、迦陵频伽、共命之鸟。是诸众鸟，昼夜六时，出和雅音。其音演畅五根、五力、七菩提分、八圣道分，如是等法。其土众生，闻是音已，皆悉念佛念法念僧。

**And there is more still - in this land there are birds of all sorts of wondrous variegated colors: white cranes, peacocks, parrots, orioles, kalavinka birds which can produce wondrous sounds, jivajiva birds with two heads in one body. All these birds bring forth harmonious songs day and night. Their songs communicate such Buddhist teachings as the five roots, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, the eightfold path, as well as other teachings.**

**When the sentient beings in this land hear the voices of the birds, they are mindful of the Buddhas, mindful of the Dharma [Buddha's teachings], and mindful of the Sangha [Community of Seekers of Enlightenment].**

种种奇妙杂色，言多且美也，下略出六种。舍利，旧云鹭鹭，琦禅师云是春莺，或然。迦陵频伽，此云妙音，未出壳时，音超众鸟。共命，一身两头，识别报同。此二种西域雪山等处有之，皆寄此间爱赏者言其似而已。六时出音，则知净土不以鸟栖为夜，良以莲华托生之身，本无昏睡，不假夜卧也。

“All sorts of variegated colors” means plentiful and beautiful. Six types are briefed in the text. It is possible that “Sheli” bird refer to orioles as Chan Master Chi said. Kalavinka birds, referring to “wondrous sound”, can produce sounds prettier than other birds. Jivajiva birds, referring to “sharing lives”, have two heads in one body, different senses but with the same karma. These two types of birds can be found in snowy mountains in the west of our world. The birds listed in the text, though they are appeared in our world, are used to show the similar wonders of the birds that are appreciated by people. From “Singing day and night”, we know that in the pure land birds as well as all sentient beings do not rest in the “nights.” Because all bodies in the pure land were born by lotus flowers, there is no need of sleeps.

五根等者，三十七道品也。所谓**四念处**，一身念处，二受念处，三心念处，四法念处。**四正勤**，一已生恶法令断，二未生恶法不令生，三未生善法令生，四已生善法令增长。**四如意足**，一欲如意足，二精进如意足，三心如意足，四思惟如意足。

The five roots, et al. are parts of thirty-seven aids to enlightenment. They are: The Four Bases of Mindfulness, the Four Right Efforts, the Four Bases of Supernatural Powers, the Five Roots, the Five Powers, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and the Eightfold Holy Path.

**The Four Bases of Mindfulness:** Mindfulness of body, mindfulness of sensation, mindfulness of thought, and mindfulness of phenomena.

[**四念处**又名四念住，即：身念处、受念处、心念处、法念处。**身念处**是观身不净；**受念处**是观受是苦；**心念处**是观心无常；**法念处**是观法无我。此四念处的四种观法都是以智慧为体，以慧观的力量，把心安住在道法上，使之正而不邪。]

**The Four Right Efforts:** Getting rid of existing evil, working not to produce evil, to work at producing goodness, and to work at nurturing goodness.

**The Four Bases of Supernatural Powers:** (1) desire power, the desire to gain excellent meditation; (2) effort power, the effort to gain excellent meditation; (3) mindfulness power, the gaining of control over thoughts and (4) wisdom power, the good function of analytical meditation.

[又名四神足，原系四种禅定，谓修此四者，则能如意开发神通。一、欲如意足，谓修道趣果的欲望增进；二、进如意足，谓精进直前，功无间断；三、念如意足，谓念念一心，住于正理，；四、慧如意足，谓真照离妄，心不散乱。]

**五根者**，信正道及助道法名**信根**；行正道及诸助道善法，勤求不息，名**精进根**；念正道及诸助道善法，更无他念，名**念根**；摄心在正道及诸助道善法中，相应不散，名**定根**；为正道及诸助道善法，观于苦等四谛，名**慧根**。

The Five Roots of Goodness are described as follows. The faith in right ways and various aids to goodness refers to the root of faith. The continuing effort in practicing right ways and aids to goodness refers to the root of effort. The single mindfulness of right ways and various aids to goodness refers to the root of mindfulness. The concentration of thoughts in right ways and various aids to goodness refers to the root of concentration. The wisdom of observing four noble truths refers to the root of wisdom.

[The four noble truths: the truth of suffering, the truth of the arising of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering and the truth of the path to the cessation of suffering.]

**五力者**，信根增长，能破疑惑，破诸邪信，及破烦恼，名信力；精进根增长，破种种身心懈怠，成办出世大事，名精进力；念根增长，破诸邪念，成就一切出世正念功德，名念力；定根增长，能破乱想，发诸事理禅定，名定力；慧根增长，能遮通别诸惑，发真无漏，名慧力。

The Five Powers obtained by the practice of five roots are described as follows. The power of faith: increase of the root of faith that can break doubts, wrong concepts and delusions. The power of effort: increase of the root of effort that can break various laziness of our body and mind to accomplish the success of breaking life-and-death cycle. The power of mindfulness: increase of the root of mindfulness that can break various evil minds to accomplish all kinds of out-of-life-cycle virtues and merits. The power of concentration: increase of the root of concentration can break chaotic thoughts to develop meditation that correctly contemplates phenomena and noumenon. The power of wisdom: increase of the root of wisdom that can remove the doubts of intermediate teachings (common doubts to all and particular doubts to Mahayana Buddhists) to reveal the true Buddha wisdom.

七菩提分，亦名七觉分。智慧观诸法时，善能简别真伪，不谬取诸虚伪法，名**择法**觉分。精进修诸道法时，善能觉了，不谬行于无益苦行，常勤心在真法中行，名**精进**觉分。若心得法喜，善能觉了此喜，不依颠倒之法而喜，住真法喜，名**喜**觉分。若断除诸见烦恼之时，善能觉了，除诸虚伪，不损真正善根，名**除**觉分。若舍所见念著境时，善能觉了所舍之境虚伪不实，永不追忆，名**舍**觉分。若发诸禅定之时，善能觉了诸禅虚假，不生爱见妄想，名**定**觉分。若修出世道时，善能觉了，常使定慧均平；或心沉没，当念用择法、精进、喜三觉分以察起之；或心浮动，当念用除、舍、定三觉分以摄持之；调和适中，名**念**觉分。

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment, also called Seven Bodhi Shares, are described as follows. **1.** Correctly evaluating the teaching: when using wisdom observes various phenomena, we can differentiate the true and the false, and will not accept various deceptive teachings. **2.** Making effort at practice: when vigorously practicing various aiding methods to enlightenment, we realize that we should not practice useless **austerities** and always reside our mind in the practice of true dharma. **3.** Rejoicing in the truth: we feel joyful when we realize the true dharma, not deceptive dharma. **4.** Freeing from illusions: when removing various illusions, we can be free from deception without hurting our virtuous root. **5.** Detachment of all thoughts from external things: when detaching thoughts that come from our observation and thinking, we can realize the falsity of these thoughts and never try to keep. **6.** Concentration: when mind is in various meditation states, we can realize the falsity of these states, and do not feel like to attach with them. **7.** Keeping proper awareness: when practicing dharma, we balance the wisdom and concentration; if our mind is sinking, we know how to use the first three factors of enlightenment: selection of teaching, making effort at practice and rejoicing in the truth, to investigate and recover our mind; if our mind is floating and vibrating, we

know how to use the later three factors of enlightenment, freeing from illusions, detachment of thoughts and concentration, to sustain and stabilize it. Thus, we know how to keep our mind in harmony and balance.

八圣道分，亦名八正道分。修无漏行观，见四谛分明，名正见。以无漏心相应思惟动发觉知筹量，为令增长入大涅槃，名正思惟。以无漏慧除四邪命，摄诸口业，住一切正语中，名正语。以无漏慧除身一切邪业，住清净正身业中，名正业。以无漏慧通除三业中五种邪命，住清净正命中，名正命。以无漏慧相应勤精进修涅槃道，名正精进。以无漏慧相应念正道及助道法，名正念。以无漏慧相应入定，名正定。

The noble eightfold path, also known as the correct eightfold path is described as follows. 1. Right view: conduct uncontaminated observation and understand clearly four noble truths. 2. Right thought: use uncontaminated mind matches with our thought to generate realization of awareness, so the progress is raised to reach enlightenment. 3. Right speech: use uncontaminated wisdom to remove four wrong types of livelihood and to absorb four types of wrong actions related to speeches, so the speeches can be always right. 4. Right action: use uncontaminated wisdom to remove all wrong actions, so we can always conduct clean and correct actions. 5 Right livelihood: use uncontaminated wisdom to remove the five types of wrong livelihood (make a living by showing unusual phenomena, saying his own virtues and merits, fortune telling, intimidating others with power and words, and alluring people with the benefits of giving.) from action, speech and thought, so the correct livelihood can be maintained. 6. Right effort: use uncontaminated wisdom to match with diligence and continuing effort, and to practice the methods for reaching enlightenment. 7. Right mindfulness: use uncontaminated wisdom to match with the mindfulness of direct methods and aiding methods to enlightenment. 8. Right concentration: use uncontaminated wisdom to match with concentration.

[四邪命: 四种的邪命食。比丘不乞食，亦不弘法，但作不如法之事，以维持其生命，叫做“邪命”。

- 一、种植田园，和合汤药，名下食。
- 二、仰观星宿，推测盈虚，名仰口食。
- 三、谄媚豪贵，游说四方，名方口食。
- 四、以咒术呼召鬼神，以及卜卦、算命、看相为业者，名维口食。]

[口业: 谓两舌，恶口，妄言，绮语也。]

[五种邪命: 谓出家之人，不依正命而食，则有五种：一为利养故，现奇特相；二为利养故，自说功德；三卜相吉凶，为人说法；四高声现威，令人畏敬；五说所得供养，以动人心，是名邪命食]

此等道品，依生灭四谛而修，即藏教道品。依无生四谛而修，即通教道品。依无量四谛而修，即别教道品。依无作四谛而修，即圆教道品。

These aids to enlightenments belong to **Elementary (Hinayana) teaching** (Lesser Vehicle) when they are based on the practice of birth-and-death four noble truths. They belong to **Common teaching** when they are based on the practice of no-birth four noble truths. They belong to **Particular teaching** when they are based on the practice of unlimited four noble truths. They belong to **Round teaching** when are based on the practice of un-constructed four noble truths.

[台宗之判教学说。以佛陀教化内容有藏教、通教、别教、圆教等四种，与化仪四教并称为天台八教。即：1.藏教：全称三藏(经、律、论)教之小乘教。为三乘人各别演说生灭四谛，以析空观同断见思惑，令入有余涅槃。

- 2.通教：指诸部义通大小，包括深奥与浅显道理。乃为三乘人说体空无生四谛，令同入有余涅槃。
- 3.别教：指不共二乘人，专为大菩萨说无量四谛，以次第三观破三惑，令证“但中”理。
- 4.圆教：指法华教义。亦即为菩萨说无作四谛，以圆融三观同断三惑，令证“不但中”理为旨趣。]

**[生灭四谛]**：台宗所立四种四谛之一。此系三藏教之说，主张因缘生灭实有；认为苦、集、道三谛依因缘实有而生灭，灭谛亦可视为实有灭法。亦即指立于实生实灭上四谛。即 1.苦谛：苦，逼迫义；有三苦、八苦等。即观色、心等诸法无常逼迫而知生死实苦。2.集谛：即观烦恼惑业，实能招集生死之苦。3.灭谛：即观涅槃理，而将生死诸苦归于寂灭。4.道谛：即观戒、定、慧之道，而断尽惑业，生起正智以证入涅槃为旨趣。

**[无生四谛]**：无生四谛系通教之说，认为因缘诸法，悉皆幻化，当体即空而无有生灭，以此观苦、集、灭、道四谛，故称**无生四谛**，以异于藏教之生灭谛。

- 1.苦谛：谓观一切生死皆空，而无逼迫相。
- 2.集谛：谓观一切惑业皆空，没有和合，不生苦果。
- 3.灭谛：谓观因缘诸法皆空，昔本无生，今亦无灭！
- 4.道谛：道，即戒定慧道。谓观一切道行皆空，能治之道，泯亡不存。

**[无量四谛]**：四种四谛之一。此系别教之说，认为三界内与三界外有恒沙无量之差别相，具无量法门，乃菩萨用以度化无量众生，而声闻、缘觉等二乘则慧眼亦不能知见，唯有菩萨能通达此法。

- 1.苦谛：即菩萨能知见众生苦，有无量相。
- 2.集谛：菩萨知见众生之惑业能招集苦果，亦有无量相。
- 3.灭谛：菩萨依方便正修而证入涅槃寂灭理，有无量相。
- 4.道谛：菩萨证得诸波罗密，有无量相，此无量道法能自利、利他，救度无量众生。

**[无作四谛]**：此系圆教之说，主张迷悟当体即皆实相；认为大乘菩萨圆观诸法，事事即理而无有造作。

- 1.苦谛：观五阴、十二入等法皆即真如，实无苦相可舍。
- 2.集谛：观一切烦恼惑业，性体本清净，实无招集生死相可断。
- 3.灭谛：观生死、涅槃，体本不二，实无生死苦可断，亦无涅槃寂灭可证。
- 4.道谛：观诸法皆即中道，离二边邪见，无烦恼惑可断，亦无菩提道可修。]

**藏道品名半字法门，净土浊轻，似不必用，为小种先熟者或暂用之。通道品名大乘初门，三乘共禀，同居净土多说之。别道品名独菩萨法，同居方便净土多说之。圆道品名无上佛法，有利根者，于四净土皆得闻也。**

The Elementary (Hinayana) teaching named “half-way dharma gate,” seems not necessary to be used in Pure Land for the land has light defilement. Or it might be used temporarily for those who prefer Elementary teaching. The Common teaching, named “beginning gate of Mahayana teaching,” is followed by people in all three vehicles (Shravaka, Pratyekabuddha and Bodhisattva) (声闻、缘觉、菩萨) . It is taught usually in Dwell-Together land. The Particular teaching, named “gate particular for Bodhisattva,” is taught usually in Expedient Land. The Round teaching, named “ultimate supreme Buddhist dharma,” is heard by people with sharp faculties in all four Lands.

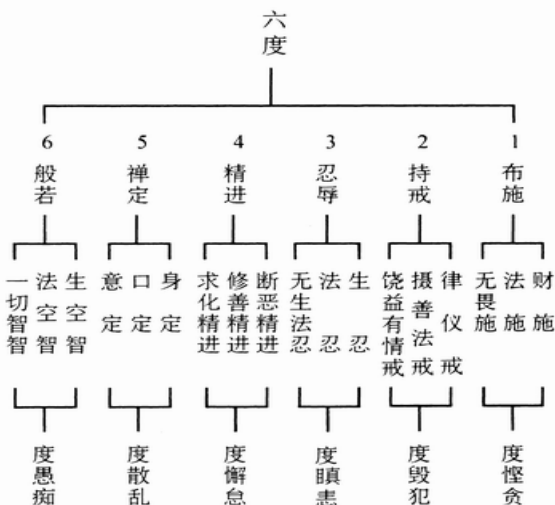
如是等法者，等前念处、正勤、如意足，等余四摄、六度、十力无畏无量法门也。

The Buddhist teachings communicated by birds as put in the Sutra text include all those thirty-seven aids to enlightenment as previously described as well we endless Dharma gates such as Four methods of attracting people learning Buddhism, Six perfections (Paramitas) (charity, morality, patience, effort, meditation, wisdom), Ten kinds of powers possessed by the Buddha, etc.

**[四摄:** 布施摄、爱语摄、利行摄、同事摄。布施摄是对钱财心重的人，用财施，对于求知心重的人，用法施，使双方情谊逐渐深厚，而达到我度化对方的目的；爱语摄是随著 众生的根性，以温和慈爱的言语相对，令他生欢喜心，感到我和蔼可亲而与我接近，以达到我度化对方的目的；利行摄是修菩萨道者，要身口意诸行皆有利于人，以 损己利人的行为，感化众生共修佛道，以达到我度人的目的；同事摄是修菩萨道者，要深入社会各阶层中，与各行各业的人相接触，做其朋友，与其同事，在契机契缘的情况下，而度化之。菩萨济度众生，必须先行此四摄法，使众生爱我敬我信我，然后方能听我劝导，修行佛道。]

**[六度:** 六种行之可以从生死苦恼此岸得度到涅槃安乐彼岸的法门，即布施、持戒、忍辱、精进、禅定、般若。布施能度悭贪，持戒能度毁犯，忍辱能度嗔恚，精进能度懈怠，禅定能度散乱，般若能度愚痴。兹列表说明如下：

]



[十力: 指如来所具有的十种力用。

- 一、知觉处非处智力，即能知一切事物的道理和非道理的智慧；
- 二、知三世业报智力，即能知一切众生三世因果业报的智慧；
- 三、知诸禅解脱三昧智力，即能知各种禅定及解脱三昧等的智慧；
- 四、知诸根胜劣智力，即能知众生根性的胜劣与得果大小的智慧；
- 五、知种种解智力，即能普知众生种种境界不同的智慧；
- 六、知种种界智力，即能普知众生种种境界不同的智慧；
- 七、知一切至所道智力，即能知一切众生行道因果的智慧；
- 八、知天眼无碍智力，即能以天眼见众生生死及善恶业缘而无障碍的智慧；
- 九、知宿命无漏智力，即知众生宿命及知无漏涅槃的智慧；
- 十、知永断习气智力，即于一切妄惑余气，永断不生，能如实知了的智慧。]

三十七品，收法虽尽，而机缘不等，作种种开合名义不同，随所欲闻，无不演畅。故令闻者念三宝，发菩提心，伏灭烦恼也。

Although all Buddhist methods are subsumed under the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, the potentials and circumstances of sentient beings all differ. Different forms of the Buddhist teaching have been devised for each individual. The Teaching is expressed effectively to all sentient beings according to what they are ready to hear. This enables those who hear the Teaching to become mindful of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. It enables them to develop the Bodhi Mind [aspiration for enlightenment for the benefit of self and others], and to put an end to [afflictions and delusions](#).

灼见慈威不可思议，故念佛。法喜入心，法味充足，故念法。同闻共禀，一心修证，故念僧。

They vividly see the inconceivable mercy and the awe-inspiring character of the Buddha, and so they become mindful of the enlightened ones. The joy of the Dharma enters their hearts, and they are filled with the flavor of the Dharma, and so they become mindful of the teaching of enlightenment. They listen to the teaching together, and accept it as a community, and wholeheartedly cultivate realization, and so they become mindful of Sangha, the community of seekers.

能念即三观。所念三宝，有别相、一体及四教意义。三谛权实之不同，如上料简道品，应知。

What enables us to be mindful of comes from three forms of contemplation (on [emptiness](#), on [dependent arising](#), and on [the middle](#)) and what are we mindful of are three objects of contemplation (the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha). They all have different aspects

with the four levels of the teaching (Elementary, Common, Particular, and Round teachings) but the same essence.

We should understand the different way to see into the three levels of truth (emptiness, dependent arising, and the middle) either expediently or truly from the four types of Teachings as described briefly.

[**三谛**: 空谛、假谛、中谛。空是说空无自体；假是说但有缘生假相；中是说诸法非空非假亦空亦假的中道实理。此三谛是天台宗所立。]

### (壬) 二征释略显

In the next passage the sutra briefly answers a question:

舍利弗，汝勿谓此鸟，实是罪报所生。所以者何，彼佛国土，无**三恶道**。舍利弗，其佛国土，尚无恶道之名，何况有实。是诸众鸟，皆是阿弥陀佛欲令法音宣流，变化所作。

**Do not think that these birds were born as birds due to karmic retribution for past misdeeds. Why not? In this Buddha-land, the three evil realms (as **animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings**) do not exist. In this Buddha-land even the names of the evil realms do not exist, much less the realities. All these birds are the creations of Amitabha Buddha, fashioned in order to broadcast the sounds of the Dharma.**

**征释可知。**问：白鹤等非恶道名耶？答：既非罪报，则一一名字，皆诠如来究竟功德。所谓究竟白鹤等，无非性德美称，岂恶名哉。

From the question and answer of the scripture, we can understand the meaning of these birds

*Question:* Are the names of birds [as animals] not names of creatures belonging to one of the evil realms?

The answer is: These birds in the Pure Land are not birds as a result of karmic retribution for having committed evil. All the birds in Pure Land are communicating the ultimate merits of the Tathagatas (Buddha). They can be called "birds of the ultimate", and this is a beautiful appellation conveying their innate virtues, not some **pejorative** name [connoting creatures born in a low realm].

问：化作众鸟何义？答：有四悉檀因缘。凡情喜此诸鸟，顺情而化，令欢喜故；鸟尚说法，令闻生善故；不于鸟起下劣想，对治分别心故；鸟即弥陀，令悟法身平等，无不具无不造故。

此中显微风、树、网等音，及一切依正假实，当体即是阿弥陀佛三身四德，毫无差别也。

*Question:* What does it mean that Amitabha fashions these birds?

The answer is: The reason is to provide the **four modes whereby the Buddha preached the Dharma to all sentient beings**.

[First], ordinary people take delight in these birds and can listen to them, since this suits their feelings, and makes them happy. [Second], when people think that even the birds can express the Dharma, and thus the listeners are easy to produce virtuous thoughts. [Third], by making people realize that we should not think of these birds in a pejorative way, it counteracts our tendency to make arbitrary distinctions. [Fourth], the birds represent Amitabha, which lets us realize the everywhere-equal nature of the Dharmakaya, which possesses everything, and creates everything.

This passage shows us that all the sounds [in the Pure Land], such as the sound of the breeze and the rustling of the trees and the jewel nets, as well as everything about the Pure Land environment and the Buddha who presides there, whether a provisional expedient or an absolute reality -- all these things are in their very essence identical to Amitabha Buddha with his **Dharma Body, Reward Body, and Emanation Body** -- all these things are no different from the four virtues of Amitabha Buddha, which are **permanence, bliss, self and purity**.

**[四悉檀:** 智度论说，四悉檀总摄一切十二部经、八万四千法藏。四是四个方法，悉是普遍之义，檀是梵语檀那之简称，亦即布施之义。佛以四法普施众生，以令一切众生完成佛道，叫做“四悉檀”。

一、世界悉檀，佛开始时，先顺世界之凡情，宣说浅近之事理，以令闻者欢喜和信受；

二、各各为人悉檀，佛审察众生的根机，及程度之浅深，而说各人所须要之法，令众生发起正信，增长善根；

三、对治悉檀，对嗔多者教以慈悲观，痴多者教以因缘观，障多者教以念佛观，如是普施种种之法药，以去除众生的恶病；

四、第一义悉檀，佛见众生的机缘既熟，便为之说诸法实相，以令众生一起悟入圣者之道。]

**[四德:** 指大乘大般涅槃所具有的四德，即：常、乐、我、净。常者，涅槃之体，恒常不变，没有生灭；乐者，涅槃之体，永远寂灭、安闲、受用、无丝毫的烦恼；我者，涅槃之体，得大自在，没有丝毫的束缚；净者，涅槃之体，解脱一切的垢染，非常清净。]

（辛）二化无情声

舍利弗，彼佛国土，微风吹动诸宝行树，及宝罗网，出微妙音，譬如百千种乐同时俱作。闻是音者，自然皆生念佛念法念僧之心。

**In this Buddha-land, there is a slight breeze that stirs the rows of jewel trees and jewel nets, so that they emit subtle wondrous sounds, like hundreds and thousands of melodies playing all at once. All those who hear these sounds spontaneously develop the intention to be mindful of the Buddha, mindful of the Dharma, and mindful of the Sangha.**

情与无情，同宣妙法。四教道品，无量法门，同时演说，随类各解，能令闻者念三宝也。

[In the Pure Land], both the sentient beings and the **inanimate things** communicate the wondrous Dharma together, and simultaneously expound the innumerable methods of the four types of Buddha's teachings. They offer explanations to all beings according to their kind, enabling their audiences to become mindful of the Three Jewels -- Buddha [the Enlightened One], Dharma [the Teaching of Enlightenment], and Sangha [the Community of Seekers].

念三宝是从悉檀获益。凡夫创闻，大踊遍身，是**欢喜益**；与三宝气分交接，必能发菩提心，是**生善益**；由此伏灭烦恼，是**破恶益**；**证悟一体三宝**，是**入理益**也。初别明竟。

To become mindful of Three Jewels, sentient beings benefit from the ways whereby the Buddha teaches Dharma to sentient beings. When ordinary people first hear the teaching, their bodies leap with delight: this is the **benefit of joy**. When their vital energy makes contact with the Three Jewels, they are sure to be able to develop the Bodhi Mind: this is the **benefit of becoming virtuous**. Using this to conquer afflictions is the **benefit of destroying evil**. Realizing the Three Jewels [Buddha, Dharma and Sangha] as one single essence is the **benefit of understanding the supreme truth**.

(庚) 二总结

At this point the sutra sums up the foregoing presentation with the line:

**舍利弗，其佛国土，成就如是功德庄严。**

**This Buddha-land is complete with all these merits and adornments.**

重重结示，令深信一切庄严，皆导师**愿行**所成，种智所现；皆吾人净业所感，唯识所变。佛心生心，互为影质，如众灯明，各遍似一。**全理成事，全事即**

理，全性起修，全修在性。亦可深长思矣！奈何离此净土，别谈唯心净土，甘堕鼠即鸟空之诮也哉！初依报妙竟。

The sutra sums things up again and again so that we can believe with profound faith that all the adornments of the Pure Land are brought into being by the **vows and actions** of our guiding teacher Amitabha, and manifested by his wisdom, and that they are also brought about by our own pure karma, as manifestations of consciousness. The Buddha-mind and the minds of sentient beings are reflections of each other, just as the lights of many lamps both individually reach everywhere and seem to merge into one. **Inner truth forms all kinds of phenomena, and all phenomena as a whole are identified with inner truth. Our entire true nature gives rise to genuine religious practice, and genuine religious practice in its entirety lies within our true nature.** This is something we should constantly ponder deeply.

How can anyone talk as if there is another "Pure Land that is Mind Alone" apart from this Pure Land? If you do this you are indulging in empty babbling.

This is the end of the section in the sutra describing the wonders of the Pure Land environment.

（丙）二正报妙二：初征释名号、二别释主伴。（丁）初中二：初征、二释。  
（戊）今初。

### **[Description of the wonders of Amitabha]**

Next the sutra takes up the wonders of Amitabha Buddha himself. First Buddha poses a question, and then proceeds to explain Amitabha's name:

舍利弗，于汝意云何，彼佛何故号阿弥陀？

### **What do you think: why is this Buddha called Amitabha?**

此经的示持名妙行，故特征释名号，欲人深信万德洪名不可思议，一心执持，无复疑贰也。

This sutra teaches the wondrous practice of reciting the name of Amitabha, so it makes a special point of explaining the name. The intent of the sutra is that people should develop deep faith in the inconceivable powers of this great name and its myriad virtues, and singlemindedly recite the Buddha-name without any further doubts or diversions.

(戊) 二释二：初约光明释、二约寿命释。

阿弥陀，正翻无量，本不可说。本师以光、寿二义，收尽一切无量。

光则横遍十方，寿则竖穷三际。横竖交彻，即法界体。举此体作弥陀身土，亦即举此体作弥陀名号。

The next passage gives two explanations of the name "Amitabha" -- as "infinite light" and as "infinite life". The literal translation of "Amitabha" is "infinite", and infinity is actually unexplainable. Here in the sutra our teacher Sakyamuni Buddha uses the meanings "infinite light" and "infinite life" to encompass all sorts of infinity.

Infinite light extends through space in all directions; infinite life extends through time and reaches through past, present, and future. The dimensions of space and time interpenetrating are the body of the universe. This body as a whole is the body and land of Amitabha, and this body as a whole is used as the name of Amitabha.

是故弥陀名号，即众生本觉理性。持名，即始觉合本。始本不二，生佛不二。故一念相应一念佛，念念相应念念佛也。

Thus, the name of Amitabha is the inherently enlightened true nature of sentient beings (Innate Enlightenment), and reciting the name of Amitabha merge the Actualized Enlightenment into the Innate Enlightenment. The internal force that begins the efforts to be enlightened is actually the inherent enlightenment itself, just as sentient beings and Buddhas are not two different things. Thus if we are in accord [with our inherently enlightened true nature] for a moment, we are Buddhas for a moment, and if we are in accord [with our inherently enlightened true nature] moment after moment, we are Buddhas moment after moment.

[ ( 出起信论 )

[一、本觉]，谓一切众生自性清净心源，离于妄念，即寂而照，等虚空界，无所不遍，法界一相，即是如来平等法身，故名本觉。

[二、相似觉]，谓圆教十信位中，由始觉之功，见、思粗惑既已断竟，尚余无明细惑未破，所觉之理，非真本觉，唯得名为相似，故名相似觉。(十信者，信心、念心、精进心、慧心、定心、不退心、护法心、回向心、戒心、愿心也。)

[三、随分觉]，谓圆教十住、十行、十回向、十地、等觉位中，分破无明之惑，故得分分是真本觉，故名随分觉。(十住者，发心住、治地住、修行住、生贵住、方便具足住、正心住、不退住、童真住、法王子住、灌顶住也。十行者，欢喜行、饶益行、无嗔恨行、无尽行、离痴乱行、善现行、无著行、尊重行、善法行、真实行也。十回向者，救一切众生离众生相回向、不坏回向、等一切佛回向、至一切处回向、无尽功德藏回向、随顺平等善根回向、随顺等观一切众生回向、真如相回向、无缚解脱回向、法界无量回向也。十地者，欢喜地、离垢地、发光地、焰慧地、难胜地、现前地、远行地、不动地、善慧地、法云地也。)

[四、究竟觉]，谓圆教极果，妙觉位中，无明之惑既尽，本觉之体全彰，得心见性，心即常住，是名究竟觉。]

(己) 今初。

First, the sutra gives the definition of the name of Amitabha as "Infinite Light":

舍利弗，彼佛光明无量，照十方国，无所障碍，是故号为阿弥陀。

**The light of this Buddha is infinite, and shines on all lands throughout the universe without obstruction. Thus this Buddha is called Amitabha.**

心性寂而常照，故为光明。今初证心性无量之体，故光明无量也。诸佛皆彻性体，皆照十方，皆可名无量光。

而因中愿力不同，随因缘立别名。弥陀为法藏比丘，发四十八愿，有光明恒照十方之愿，今果成如愿也。

The true nature of mind is **still but always shining with awareness**; hence it is a light. The idea here is that Amitabha Buddha penetrates to the infinite essence of the true nature of mind, so his light is infinite. All the Buddhas penetrate to the true nature of mind, and they all shine through all the worlds in the ten directions, so they all could be called "Infinite Light".

But the Buddhas in the causal stages [i.e., as Bodhisattvas] differ in the power of their vows, and they are named differently according to their circumstances. When Amitabha [in his previous incarnation in the distant past] was the **monk Dharmakara**, he made forty-eight vows, among them the vow that his light would forever shine through all the worlds in the ten directions. Now that he has achieved Buddhahood, what he vowed has been accomplished.

[阿弥陀佛在因地做法藏比丘时，于世自在王佛所建立的誓愿。因译者不同，故在排列上先后略有不同。

1、根据曹魏时康僧铠所译的无量寿经的排列是：

- 一、无三恶趣愿，
- 二、不更恶趣愿，
- 三、悉皆金色愿，
- 四、无有好丑愿，
- 五、宿命智通愿，
- 六、天眼智通愿，
- 七、天耳智通愿，
- 八、他心智通愿，
- 九、神足无碍愿。
- 十、不贪计身，速得漏尽愿，
- 十一、住正定聚愿，
- 十二、光明无量愿，
- 十三、寿命无量愿，
- 十四、声闻无数愿，
- 十五、眷属长寿随愿修短愿，
- 十六、无诸不善愿，
- 十七、诸佛称扬愿，
- 十八、至心信乐念佛往生愿，
- 十九、至心发愿，来迎引接愿，
- 二十、至心迴向系念定生愿，
- 二十一、三十二相愿，
- 二十二、一生补处愿，
- 二十三、供养诸佛愿，
- 二十四、供具如愿愿，
- 二十五、说一切智愿，
- 二十六、那罗延身愿，
- 二十七、所须严净愿，
- 二十八、见道场树愿，
- 二十九、诵经得辩才智愿，
- 三十、智辩无穷愿，
- 三十一、国土清净照见十方愿，
- 三十二、国土严饰愿，

三十三、触光柔软愿，三十四、**闻名得忍愿**，三十五、**脱离女身愿**，三十六、**常修梵行愿**，三十七、人天致敬愿，三十八、衣服随愿愿，三十九、乐如漏尽愿，四十、树现佛刹愿，四十一、**他方闻名，诸根具足愿**，四十二、**他方闻名，清净解脱三昧**，住定供佛愿，四十三、**他方闻名，生尊贵家愿**，四十四、**他方闻名，具足德本愿**，四十五、**他方闻名，普等三昧**，住定**见佛愿**，四十六、**随意闻法愿**，四十七、**他方闻名，得不退转愿**，四十八、**他方闻名，得三法忍愿**。

2、根据近代夏莲居的**会集本**的排列是：[参考罢了，非真经文，因有流通，故此画蛇添足]

一、国无恶道愿；二、不堕恶趣愿；三、身悉金色愿；四、三十二相愿，五、身无差别愿；六、宿命通愿，七、天眼通愿；八、天耳通愿，九、他心通愿；十、神足通愿，十一、遍供诸佛愿，十二、定成正觉愿，十三、光明无量愿，十四、触光安乐愿，十五、寿命无量愿，十六、声闻无数愿，十七、诸佛称叹愿，十八、十念必生愿，十九、闻名发心愿，廿、临终接引愿，廿一、悔过得生愿，廿二、国无女人愿，廿三、厌女转男愿，廿四、莲花化生愿，廿五、天人礼敬愿，廿六、闻名得福愿，廿七、修殊胜行愿，廿八、国无不善愿，廿九、住正定聚愿，卅、乐如漏尽愿，卅一、不贪计身愿，卅二、那罗延身愿，卅三、光明慧辩愿，卅四、善谈法要愿，卅五、一生补处愿，卅六、教化随意愿，卅七、衣食自至愿，卅八、应念受供愿，卅九、庄严无尽愿，四十、无量色树愿，四十一、树现佛刹愿，四十二、彻照十方愿，四十三、宝香普熏愿，四十四、普等三昧愿，四十五、定中供佛愿，四十六、获陀罗尼愿，四十七、闻名得忍愿，四十八、现证不退愿。]

**法身**光明无分际，**报身**光明称真性，此则佛佛道同。**应身**光明有照一由旬者，十百千由旬者，一世界十百千世界者。唯阿弥普照，故别名无量光。然三身不一不异，为令众生得四益故，作此分别耳。

**当知无障碍，约人民言。由众生与佛缘深，故佛光到处，一切世间无不圆见也。**

The light of the **Dharmakaya (Dharma Body)** is boundless, and the light of the **Sambhogakaya (Reward Body)** is in accord with true nature--in this all the Buddhas are the same. The light of the **Nirmanakayas [Response Body]** such as Sakyamuni] differs in scope: in some Buddhas it shines for a hundred miles, in other Buddhas it shines a million times further; in some Buddhas it illuminates one world, in other Buddhas it illuminates a million worlds. Only Amitabha's light shines universally. Thus Amitabha in particular is named "Infinite Light". Still, the three Buddha-bodies are neither one nor different. *These distinctions are made only to benefit sentient beings.*

Here explains "No obstructions." This refers to people. From the point of view of ordinary people, if their affinity with Amitabha Buddha is deep, then the light will reach them everywhere, and always appear to them in its complete fullness in all worlds.

[台家所立之三身也。法报应之名，法华论取之，是开真合应之三身也。开真者，法与自受用及报之二。合应者，应中合他受用与报之胜应也。一、法身，中道之理体也，本有之三千也。二、**报身**，报因行功德而显佛之实智也。二分之，自受内证法乐之身，名为自受用**报身**。对于初地已上菩萨应现之**报身**。名为他受用**报身**。此与应中之胜应身，同体异名。三、**应身**，又曰应化身。自理智不二之妙体，为化度众生应现种种之身也。亦二分之。对于初地菩萨应现者。名为胜应身。即上之他受用**报身**也。应现于地前凡夫及二乘者。名为劣应身。释迦如来之丈六身是也。此三身中法身如来名为毗卢舍那。译言遍一切处。**报身**如来名为卢舍那。译言净满。又译曰光明遍照。应身如来名为释迦文。译言度沃焦。此三名但就佛身分别者，故应化身单为释迦文度沃焦。然泛别应化身。则固于此中摄尽诸趣随类之身也。若以此三身配于彼宗所立之四土。则法身处于寂光土。**报身**

处于实报土，胜应身处于方便土。劣应身处于同居土。法华论曰：“一者示现应佛菩提故，随所应见而为示现。二者示现报佛菩提，十地行满足得常涅槃证故。三者示现法佛菩提，谓如来藏性常涅槃常恒清凉不变等义。”天台光明玄曰：“法报应是为三，三种法聚故名身。所谓理法聚名法身，智法聚名报身，功德法聚名应身。”止观六曰：“就境为法身，就智为报身，起用为应身。”文句九曰：“法身如来名毗卢舍那，此翻遍一切处。报身如来名卢舍那，此翻净满。应身如来名释迦文，此翻度沃焦。”辅行一之一曰：“从体，三身相即无暂离时，既许法身遍一切处，报应未尝离于法身，况法身处二身常在，故知三身遍于诸法，何独法身乎？”]

### (己) 二约寿命释

Next the sutra gives the definition of the name Amitabha as "Infinite Life":

又舍利弗，彼佛寿命，及其人民，无量无边阿僧祇劫，故名阿弥陀。

**Also, the life span of this Buddha and his people is an infinite number of immeasurable eons, and so he is called Amitabha.**

心性照而常寂，故为寿命。今彻证心性无量之体，故寿命无量也。法身寿命无始无终，报身寿命有始无终。此亦佛佛道同，皆可名无量寿。应身随愿随机，延促不等。

The true nature of Mind is shining with awareness yet ever still: hence it is life. The idea here is that Amitabha Buddha penetrates to the infinite essence of the true nature of Mind, so his life span is infinite. The life of Dharma body is endless with no beginning, and the life of Reward body is endless with beginning. These are the same for all Buddhas. So all Buddhas can be called “infinite life,” while the Response bodies might have different life spans dependent on the purpose of the responses each time.

法藏愿王，有佛及人寿命皆无量之愿，今果成如愿，别名无量寿也。阿僧祇，无边、无量，皆算数名，实有量之无量。然三身不一不异，应身亦可即是无量之无量矣。及者，并也。人民，指等觉以还。谓佛寿命并其人民寿命，皆无量等也。

When Amitabha was Dharmakara, the king of vows, he made a vow that the life spans of both Buddhas and sentient beings [in his realm] would be infinite. Now what he vowed has been accomplished [in the Pure Land], and he is given the special name "Infinite Life". In the sutra scripture, the life span is numbered by an extremely large number. This large number for us to perceive can be regarded as “infinitely countable.” However, we must know that the life span of Response body can be also regarded as “infinitely uncountable” because all three Buddha bodies are intrinsically the same. The “people” in the sutra scripture refer to those reaching the status below “Equal Enlightenment”. It says that the life spans of Buddha and the people are all infinite.

当知光寿名号，皆本众生建立。以生佛平等，能令持名者，光明寿命同佛无异也。

复次由无量光义，故众生极乐即生十方，见阿弥陀佛即见十方诸佛，能自度即普利一切。

We must understand that the names "Infinite Light" and "Infinite Life" are both based on the attributes of sentient beings. Because sentient beings and Buddhas are inherently equal, those who invoke the name of Amitabha will be no different from him either in their light or in their life span.

Moreover, given the truth of infinite light, when sentient beings are born in Amitabha's Land of Ultimate Bliss, they are also born in all the lands of the ten directions, and when they see Amitabha Buddha, they are also seeing all the Buddhas of the ten directions. Thus when they are saved themselves, they can bring benefits to all.

由无量寿义，故极乐人民，即是一生补处，皆定此生成佛，不至异生。

当知离却现前一念无量光寿之心，何处有阿弥陀佛名号。而离却阿弥陀佛名号，何由彻证现前一念无量光寿之心。愿深思之，愿深思之。

Given the truth of infinite life, the people in the Land of Ultimate Bliss are in the position that they are certain of attaining complete enlightenment in a single lifetime, and will not be reborn in different forms.

We must realize that there is no such a name of Amitabha apart from our mind of infinite light and infinite life that is before us now at this moment, and there is no way for us to penetrate the mind of infinite light and infinite life that is before us now at this moment apart from the name of Amitabha. I hope you will ponder this deeply!

（丁）二别释主伴二：初别释、二结示。（戊）初又二：初主、二伴。（己）今初，此亦释别序中今现在说法句。

Now comes the section of the sutra that describes Amitabha and his retinue:

舍利弗，阿弥陀佛成佛以来，于今十劫。

**Amitabha Buddha attained enlightenment ten eons ago.**

此明极乐世界教主成就也。然法身无成无不成，不应论劫。报身因圆果满名成，应身为物示生名成，皆可论劫。

又法身因修德显，亦可论成论劫。报身别无新得，应身如月印川，亦无成不成，不应论劫。

但诸佛成道，各有**本迹**，本地并不可测。且约极乐示成之迹而言，即是三身一成一切成，亦是成非不成而论成也。

**This explains the accomplishment of the dharma master of the land of Ultimate Bliss. But the Dharma body cannot be said to be accomplished at any time. The Reward body can be said to be accomplished when the cause and result is complete. The Response body can be said to attain enlightenment for the purpose of showing the result to people. Thus, “attained enlightenment ten eons ago” refers to these two bodies.**

**However, the Dharma body also can be said to be attained after a period of time because it is discovered after our cultivation. In another sense, the Reward body and the Response body cannot be said to be attained because the Reward body is nothing new to be attained and the Response body is like a moon reflection on water.**

**The origins and traces of each Buddhas might have their own, and the origins are inconceivable. Here it just shows the trace of the Land of Ultimate Bliss. It means that when all three Bodies are attained, everything is attained. It also means that the attainment is not attained and is not un-attained.**

又佛寿无量，今仅十劫。则现在说法，时正未央。普劝三世众生速求往生，同佛寿命，一生成办也。

又下文无数声闻菩萨及与补处，皆十劫所成就。正显十方三世往生不退者，多且易也。

The life span of Amitabha Buddha is infinite, and here the sutra just speaks of ten eons. Thus, the current teaching is right to the present time, far away from the end. Here I urge all the sentient beings of the past, present, and future to quickly seek birth in the Pure Land, share in the infinite life of the Buddha, and accomplish this all in one lifetime.

The sutra goes on to speak of Amitabha's innumerable disciples who are Arhats, Bodhisattvas, and **final-stage** Bodhisattvas. All of them achieved their status during the past ten eons. Here the sutra is really illustrating that throughout all the worlds of the ten directions in the past, present and future, many sentient beings achieve birth in the Pure Land with no falling back, and do so easily.

(己) 二伴

又舍利弗，彼佛有无量无边声闻弟子，皆阿罗汉，非是算数之所能知。诸菩萨众，亦复如是。

**Moreover, this Buddha has innumerable Shravaka disciples, all of whom are Arhats, and whose numbers are incalculable. Amitabha also has a following of innumerable Bodhisattvas.**

他方定性二乘，不得生彼。若先习小行，临终回向菩提，发大誓愿者，生彼国已，

Sentient beings in other worlds who are set in their ways as followers of the Lesser Vehicles do not get to be born in Amitabha's Pure Land. But if those who have studied the practices of the Lesser Vehicles in their early lives turn toward enlightenment when they are facing death, and make great vows, they will be reborn in the Pure Land.

佛顺机说法，令断见思，故名罗汉。如别教七住断见思之类，非实声闻也。盖藏通二教，不闻他方佛名，今闻弥陀名号，信愿往生，总属别圆二教所摄机矣。

Buddhas teach according to the people's levels and preference. Those who have removed the affliction developed from views and thoughts are called Arhats. They accomplish the similar level as people in Particular section who have reached the Seventh stage (The abiding of no-backsliding) of Ten Abidings, so they are not just the followers of Lesser Vehicles. The followers in Lesser Vehicles never heard of any Buddhas other than Sakyamuni. After they heard the name of Amitabha Buddha and developed faith and vows to be born there, they can be regarded to be covered by the Particular Section and Round Section of Buddha's teaching.

(戊) 二结示

Again, the sutra sums things up:

舍利弗，彼佛国土，成就如是功德庄严。

**The Land of Ultimate Bliss is complete with all these merits and adornments.**

佛及声闻菩萨，并是弥陀因中愿行所成，亦是果上一成一切成。是则佛、菩萨、声闻，各各非自非他，自他不二，故云成就如是功德庄严。能令信愿持名者，念念亦如是成就也。

Amitabha Buddha himself, his disciples, and the Bodhisattvas who follow him, are all within the causal ground of Amitabha, created by his vows and his actions. At the level of results, when one is formed, all are formed. Thus Amitabha Buddha himself, his disciples, and the Bodhisattvas, are neither identical to nor different from each other: self and others are not two. Thus [after describing Amitabha Buddha himself, his disciples, and the Bodhisattvas who follow him] the sutra says, "The Land of Ultimate Bliss is complete with all these merits and adornments." Amitabha can enable those who have faith and vows and recite his name to become complete with all these merits after each of their mindfulness of the Buddha.

初广陈彼土依正妙果以启信竟。

This is the end of the first part of the sutra, which gives a broad account of the wondrous fruits of the Pure Land environment and Amitabha and his retinue, in order to arouse our faith.

(乙) 二特劝众生应求往生以发愿二：初揭示无上因缘、二特劝。

### [Seeking rebirth in Pure Land]

In the next section of the sutra Buddha urges all sentient beings to seek rebirth in the Pure Land and to make vows. The first part reveals the supreme causal basis **for people in the Pure Land to reach enlightenment**, and the second part urges people to be reborn there.

净土殊胜，谓带业往生，横出三界；同居横具四土，开显四教法轮；众生圆净四土，圆见三身，圆证三不退；人民皆一生成佛。如是等胜异超绝，全在此二科点示，须谛研之。

What a special excellence of the Pure Land is that Sentient beings can be reborn there carrying their karmic load with them, and thereby transcend the three realms "horizontally." In the pure land, the land where saints and ordinary beings dwell together includes all Four Lands [the Land where Saints and Ordinary Beings Dwell Together, the Land of Expedient Liberation, the Land of Real Reward, and the Land of Eternally Quiescent Light], and reveals the four teachings [elementary, common, particular, and round].

Sentient beings who are born in Amitabha's Pure Land completely reach the Four Lands, see the three Buddha-bodies, and fully arrive at the point where they cannot fall back from their position, from their practice, or their mindfulness. All the people in Amitabha's Pure Land will attain enlightenment in one lifetime.

All these special features of the Pure Land are pointed out in the next two sections of the sutra. You should study them carefully.

### (丙) 今初

Now the first passage:

[ (出华严孔目) 界，限也、别也。谓三界分限各别不同，故名界也。

[一、欲界]，欲有四种：一者情欲，二者色欲，三者食欲，四者淫欲。下极阿鼻地狱，上至第六他化天，男女相参，多诸染欲，故名欲界。(梵语阿鼻，华言无间。第六他化天者，假他所化而自娱乐也。

[二、色界]，色即色质，谓虽离欲界秽恶之色，而有清静之色，始从初禅梵天，终至阿迦腻吒天，凡有一十八天，并无女形，亦无欲染，皆是化生，尚有色质，故名色界。(梵语阿迦腻吒，华言质碍究竟。一十八天者，梵众天、梵辅天、大梵天、少光天、无量光天、光音天、少净天、无量净天、遍净天、无云天、福生天、广果天、无想天、无烦天、无热天、善见天、善现天、色究竟天也。)

[三、无色界]，谓但有心识而无色质也。始从空处，终至非非想处，凡有四天。但有受想行识四心，而无形质，故名无色界。(四天者，空无边处天、识无边处天、无所有处天、非非想处天也。)]

[此乃明菩萨修行的阶位，诸经论所说不一，自古广为大乘诸家所采用的，其名数为：一、十信心，即信心、念心、精进心、慧心、定心、不退心、回向心、护法心、戒心、愿心。二、十心住，即发心住、治地心住、修行心住、生贵心住、方便心住、正心住、不退心住、童真心住、法王子心住、灌顶心住。三、十行心，即欢喜心行、饶益心行、无嗔恨心行、无尽心行、离痴乱心行、善现心行、无著心行、尊重心行、善法心行、真实心行。四、十回向心，即救护一切众生离相回向心、不坏回向心、等一切佛回向心、至一切处回向心、无尽功德藏回向心、随顺平等善根回向心、随顺等观一切众生回向心、如相回向心、无缚解脱回向心、法界无量回向心。五、十地心，即四无量心、十善心、明光心、焰慧心、大胜心、现前心、无生心、不思議心、慧光心、受位心。第四十一地之心称为入法界心，即为等觉。第四十二地之心称为寂灭心，即为妙觉。此中，十住、十行、十回向、十地、等觉与妙觉，依次配习种性、性种性、道种性、圣种性、等觉性、妙觉性等。见梁译《摄大乘论释》卷七，《瑜伽师地论略纂》卷十二，《华严经探玄记》卷五。]

[修行佛道过程中，以既得悟之功德，而入于不退失之地位称为不退。三不退即：1.位不退：既修得之位不退失。2.行不退：所修之行法不退失。3.念不退：正念不退转。此三不退配以菩萨之行位，诸宗说法不一。台宗则以别教之初住至第七住为位不退，在此间断灭见思惑而永超三界生死；以第八住至十回向之终为行不退，在此间破除尘沙惑而不退失利他之心；又以初地以上为念不退，此时既断多品无明惑，永不退失中道之正念！如配以圆教，则初信至第七信为位不退；第八信至第十信之终为行不退；初住以上为念不退。]

又舍利弗，极乐国土，众生生者，皆是阿鞞跋致。其中多有一生补处，其数甚多，非是算数所能知之，但可以无量无边阿僧祇说。

None of the sentient beings who are born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss ever fall back into a lower realm [i.e., they are **avaivartika**]. Many among them have only one more lifetime [to go before enlightenment]. These beings are very numerous, and their number is incalculable: they can be spoken of as innumerable.

阿鞞跋致，此云不退。一位不退，入圣流，不堕凡地。二行不退，恒度生，不堕二乘地。三念不退，心心流入萨婆若海。

The sutra uses a Sanskrit word, "avaivartika", which means "not falling back". [There are three senses of this "not falling back" that apply to sentient beings in the Pure Land.] First,

they do **not fall back from their status**: having entered the sagehood, they do not fall back to the level of ordinary beings. Second, they do **not fall back from their practice**: as followers of the Bodhisattva path they continue to work for the salvation of all beings, and do not fall back to the level of the Lesser Vehicles [with their concern limited to individual salvation]. Third, they do **not fall back from their mindfulness**: from mind-moment to mind-moment, they flow into the ocean of all-inclusive wisdom, i.e. Buddha's wisdom.

[（术语）智度论所说：一、一切智，声闻缘觉之智也。知一切法之总相者。总相即空相也。二、道种智，菩萨之智也。知一切种种差别之道法者。三、**一切种智**，佛智也。佛智圆明，通达总相别相化道断惑一切种之法者。天台以之配于空假中三谛之观智。然三智就人分别，虽如上各别，而就法之胜劣分别之，则以上兼下，于一切种智中容余二智，犹如五眼中之佛眼容余四眼也。智度论二十七曰：“一切智是声闻辟支佛事，道智是菩萨事，一切种智是佛事。”止观三曰：“佛智照空如二乘所见，名一切智。佛智照假如菩萨所见，名**道种智**。佛智照空假中皆见实相，名一切种智。故言三智一心中得。”四教仪集注下曰：“三智圆明，五眼洞照。”又，一、世间智。是凡夫外道之智也。于一切法分别种种，执著有无，不能出离世间，故名。二、出世间智，是声闻缘觉二乘之智也。发无漏智，照偏真之四谛，能出离世间，故名。三、出世界上上智，是佛菩萨之智也。观察一切诸法之实相，能得妙觉，超出二乘之智，故名。说见楞伽经三。]

**若约此土藏初果，通见地，别初住，圆初信，名位不退。通菩萨，别十行，圆十信，名行不退。别初地，圆初住，名念不退。**

If we speak of our own world, “not falling back from their status” is reached by the people in our world who enter the first-fruit status in Elementary teaching, the **fourth stage** of Bodhisattva in Common teaching, the first abiding stage in Particular teaching, or the first faith stage in Round teaching. “Not falling back from their practice” is reached by people in our world who enter the **ninth** stage of Bodhisattva in Common Teaching, a stage of ten practices in Particular teaching, a stage of ten faiths in Round teaching. “Not falling back from their mindfulness” is reached by the people in our world who enter the first level of the ten-stage of Bodhisattva's path in Particular teaching or the first abiding stage in Round teaching.

[沙行勉：“别十行”。此乃据印光大师校订的“十要本”。上海版为“别十向”。窃以为十行较妥，因为已证十行，入回向，自然应已行不退。若依“别十向”，已证十向，即入地位，则已至念不退矣。另依据天台四教仪，八住以上至十回向为行不退。故此列十行较妥。精确的说是**别八住，圆八信，名行不退。**]

[声闻、缘觉、菩萨三乘所共有的十地，叫做“共十地”。]

一、干慧地，三乘之人，初居外凡之位时，未得真空之理水，乃观慧干涸之位；性地，三乘之人，进入内凡之位，于真空法性之理，颇有解悟之位；

三、八人地，人者忍也，三乘之人，欲断三界之见惑，于预流向起八忍智之位；

四、**见地**，三乘之人，见到四谛真空之理，已断三界见惑之位（声闻乘谓之预流果）；

五、薄地，三乘之人，断欲界上六品之思惑，欲与惑逐渐微薄之位（即声闻乘之一来果）；

六、离欲地，三乘之人，断欲界下三品之思惑，已完全脱离欲惑之位（即声闻乘之不还果）；

七、已办地，三乘之人，断尽上二界之思惑，更无所断，所作已办成立位（即声闻乘之阿罗汉果）；

八、辟支佛地，是缘觉乘之极果，观智锐利，不但断烦恼之体，更进而渐断习气之位；

九、**菩萨地**，三祇之间，福慧双修，将得一切种智，并断烦恼之习气，如仅余少灰之位；

十、佛地，由大功德之力，得一念相应慧，彻底见到真谛，同时也彻底断除烦恼习气，如劫火烧木，无复余灰之位。上述共十地，是大品般若经之所说，天台宗认为这是通教的位次。]

[菩萨五十二位修行中，第三个十位名**十行**，因菩萨经十信十住，已成佛子，满足自利，复须长养利他功行，故名**十行**，亦名十长养。

- 一、随顺众生，随喜功德，名“欢喜行”。
- 二、饶利众生，使得法利，名“饶益行”。
- 三、等视众生，不见其过，名“无嗔恨行”。
- 四、三际十方，化身无尽，名“无尽行”。
- 五、了达法门，悉无错误，名“离痴乱行”。
- 六、既离痴乱，则能现诸相，同异圆融，名“善现行”。
- 七、十方虚空，满足微尘，于一尘中，现十方界，尘界交现，不相留碍，名“无著行”。
- 八、缘般若故，成无著行，故六度中，特尊般若，名“尊重行”。
- 九、妙观慧中，显圆融德，能入诸佛法轨中，名“善法行”。
- 十、圆融德相，清净无漏，真无为性，妙契真实，名“真实行”。]

**今净土五逆十恶十念成就带业往生居下下品者，皆得三不退。**

**然据教道，若是凡夫，则非初果等；若是二乘，则非菩萨等；若是**异生**，则非同**生性**等。又念不退，非复异生；行不退，非仅**见道**；位不退，非是人民。躐等则成大妄，进步则舍故称。**

In Amitabha's Pure Land, even those who dwell in its lowest level, and have been born in there bringing along their karmic burdens, do not fall back from their status, from their practice, or from their mindfulness.

According to the doctrines of the non-Pure Land Buddhist scriptures, normal beings are not saints who reached the first-fruit status. People who are following Lesser Vehicle are not Bodhisattvas who follow Greater Vehicles. Those whose mindfulness does not match with Buddha's nature cannot be said that they have obtained the same nature as Buddha's. Similarly, those who have reached "not falling back from their mindfulness" cannot be said that their mindfulness is different from Buddha's. Those who have reached "not falling back from their practice" are beyond the levels of saints in Lesser Vehicles. Those who have reached "not falling back from their status" are no longer normal beings. It is a major error and a deviation from the established terminology to speak of skipping stages.

[大毗婆沙论四十五卷三页云：如世尊说：随信随法行、超异生地，未得预流果，定不命终。问：何故名**异生**地？答：一切圣者、皆名**同生**。此异于彼，故名异生。容受异生，名异生地。问：若尔；圣者异异生故；应名异生？答：一切圣者、同会真理，同见，同欲；名**同生**。异生不尔。可厌贱故；立异生名。不应为难。尊者世友、作如是说：容起异见、异类烦恼，容造异业，容堕异界，往异趣等而受生故；名异生地。复次容信异师，广说乃至求异果故；名异生地。大德说曰：异于正法及毗奈耶而受生故；名为异生。是诸异生长依处，名异生地。]

[小乘以八忍八智之十六心为**见道**，因十六心是初生无漏智照见真谛理之位。]

唯极乐同居，一切俱非，一切俱是。十方佛土无此名相，无此阶位，无此法门。非心性之极致，持名之奇勋，弥陀之大愿，何以有此！

It is only in Amitabha's Pure Land that people are not in any of these stages, and yet in all of them. Such transcendence of names and forms does not exist in any other Buddha-land: this definition of stages and levels, this teaching, does not exist in any other Buddha-land. But how could any of this exist if not from the ultimate reality of the true nature of mind, if not from the special effect of reciting the Buddha-name, if not from the great vows of Amitabha?

一生补处者，只一生补佛位，如弥勒、观音等。极乐人民普皆一生成佛，人人必实证补处。故其中多有此等上善，不可数知也。

[In the non-Pure Land Buddhist scriptures] the stage of having only one lifetime to go before enlightenment is attributed only to final-stage Bodhisattvas such as Bodhisattva Maitreya and Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanyin). But everyone in the Land of Ultimate Bliss will achieve enlightenment in one lifetime. Everyone in the Pure Land is sure to experience the stage of having only one lifetime to go before enlightenment, and among them are countless numbers of such superlative [Bodhisattvas].

复次释迦一代时教，惟《华严》明一生圆满。而一生圆满之因，则末后《普贤行愿品》中，十大愿王导归安养，且以此劝进华藏海众。

嗟乎！凡夫例登补处，奇倡极谈，不可测度。《华严》所禀，却在此经。而天下古今，信鲜疑多，辞繁义蚀，余唯有剖心沥血而已。

### （丙）二特劝

Among the teachings given by Sakyamuni Buddha in this era, only the *Flower Ornament [Avatamsaka] Sutra* explains perfect realization in a single lifetime. The basis for perfect realization is explained in the Chapter on the "Vows of Samantabhadra", in the Ten Great Vows showing the way back to the land called "Peaceful Nurturing" [another name for Amitabha's Pure Land]. The Flower Ornament [Avatamsaka] Sutra is thus urging the whole assembly in the Flower Treasury World (cosmos) on toward the Pure Land.

How amazing! Ordinary people [in the Pure Land] reach the stage of having only one lifetime to go before enlightenment, just like the great Bodhisattvas. What a sublime teaching -- it is truly unfathomable! What was presented to us in the Flower Ornament [Avatamsaka] Sutra is here in the *Amitabha Sutra*. Yet from ancient times until now, few have believed in it, and many have doubted it. Complex writings have been produced, but the meaning is hard to express. All I can do to set things right is work my heart out.

At this point in the sutra, Buddha gives a specific advice:

舍利弗，众生闻者，应当发愿，愿生彼国。所以者何？得与如是诸上善人，俱会一处。

**When sentient beings hear [of the Land of Ultimate Bliss], they must take a vow to be born in this land. Why so? So they can be together with all these beings of superior goodness.**

前罗汉菩萨，但可云善人。唯补处居因位之极，故云上。其数甚多，故云诸。俱会一处，犹言凡圣同居。

The Arhats and the Bodhisattvas the sutra talks about at the beginning [as part of the assembly listening to Buddha who expounds the sutra] can be called "good people". But only those with only one lifetime to go before enlightenment, those who are at the top level of the causal ground for enlightenment, are called "beings of superior goodness" (beings of the highest virtue). The sutra says "all these beings of superior goodness" because their number is large. "Being together" expresses the idea that in the Pure Land the ordinary and the saints live together.

寻常由实圣过去有漏业，权圣大慈悲愿，故凡夫得与圣人同居。至实圣灰身，权圣机尽，便升沈硕异，苦乐悬殊。乃暂同，非究竟同也。又天壤之间，见闻者少。幸获见闻，亲近步趋者少。

In the ordinary lands, holy sages live together with the ordinary people when sages pursuing to be Arhats still carry some past impure karma, and sages pursuing to be Bodhisattvas deliver their vows of great compassion. When the impure karma is over or the deliver has no chance, the holy sages and ordinary people differ widely in levels of attainment, and of bliss. Then, those who can see and hear [such holy sages] are few, and among those who do have the good fortune to see or hear them, few can approach them closely.

又佛世圣人纵多，如珍如瑞，不能遍满国土，如众星微尘。又居虽同，而所作所办，则迥不同。

When a Buddha is in the world, there may be relatively many holy ones [helping to spread the teaching], but after all they are still rare jewels, and they cannot cover the whole world like the stars of the firmament. **But even though sometimes in other lands saints and ordinary beings can dwell together, what they do and what they act and accomplish there are far from the same.**

今同以无漏不思議业，感生俱会一处为师友，如埧如簏，同尽无明，同登妙觉。

是则下凡众生于念不退中，超尽四十一因位。若谓是凡夫，却不历异生，必补佛职，与观音、势至无别。若谓是一生补处，却可名凡夫，不可名**等觉菩萨**。此皆教网所不能收，刹网所不能例。

Those who have been born in the Pure Land are together due to their stainless karma and inconceivable deeds. These beings act as one another's teachers, and work in harmony, so that they may end ignorance together, and together achieve wondrous enlightenment.

The ordinary lowly ones born in the Pure Land, by virtue of not falling back from mindfulness, have transcended [many levels of Bodhisattvahood]. If we say they are ordinary people, [this is wrong, because they are beyond the cycle of rebirth]; they are on the verge of becoming enlightened, and are no different from the great Bodhisattvas **Avalokiteshvara** and **Mahasthamaprapta**. Although they are going to attain enlightenment in one lifetime, still, they must be called ordinary people, and they cannot be called final-stage Bodhisattvas. This state of affairs cannot be encompassed by the systems of the non-Pure Land sutras, and has no precedent in Buddha-lands other than Amitabha's Pure Land.

当知吾人大事因缘，同居一关，最难透脱。唯极乐同居，超出十方同居之外。

了此，方能深信弥陀愿力。信佛力，方能深信名号功德。信持名，方能深信吾人心性本不可思议也。具此深信，方能发于大愿。

We must realize that in our great mission to reach enlightened, this barrier to the Land Where Saints and Ordinary Beings Dwell Together is the hardest to cross over. The Land of Ultimate Bliss, Amitabha's Pure Land Where Saints and Ordinary Beings Dwell Together, is unique -- it goes beyond all the other lands where saints and ordinary beings live together.

Only when we comprehend this can we have deep faith in the power of the vows of Amitabha. Only when we believe in the power of Amitabha Buddha can we have deep faith in the merits of his name. Only when we believe in the effect of the name of Amitabha can we have deep faith that the True Nature of our own minds is actually inconceivable. Only when we have this deep faith can we make great vows.

文中应当二字，即指深信。深信发愿，即**无上菩提**。合此信愿，的为净土指南。由此而执持名号，乃为正行。

The text of the sutra says sentient beings must take a vow to be born in the Pure Land. This word "must" points to deep faith. **Making vows with deep faith** is precisely the Awakening Mind. The combination of faith and vows is truly the guiding compass to the Pure Land. By such faith and vows to consistently invoke the Buddha-name is correct practice.

若信愿坚固，临终十念一念，亦决得生。若无信愿，纵将名号持至风吹不入，雨打不湿，如银墙铁壁相似，亦无得生之理。修净业者，不可不知也。大本《阿弥陀经》，亦以发菩提愿为要，正与此同。

If your faith and vows are solid and strong, then even you recite the Buddha-name only ten times, or only once, as you are on the brink of death, you are sure to attain birth in the Pure Land. Without faith and vows, even if you recite the Buddha-name until [you achieve a level of concentration the Zen literature describes as] "wind cannot enter you and rain cannot wet you" and "you stand like a silver wall or an iron wall", you will still not have a way to be born in the Pure Land.

Those who cultivate Pure Land practices must realize this truth. The Longer Amitabha Sutra also takes vows as essential and is identical in meaning to this section.

(乙) 三正示行者执持名号以立行二：初正示无上因果、二重劝。(丙) 今初

#### [Practice]

Now the sutra directly teaches practitioners that reciting the Buddha-name is the way to practice. First it shows the working of supreme cause and effect, and then it reiterates its admonition to recite the Buddha-name.

舍利弗，不可以少善根福德因缘，得生彼国。舍利弗，若有善男子、善女人，闻说阿弥陀佛，执持名号，若一日、若二日、若三日、若四日、若五日、若六日、若七日，一心不乱。其人临命终时，阿弥陀佛与诸圣众，现在其前。是人终时，心不颠倒，即得往生阿弥陀佛极乐国土。

**One cannot be born in this land through minor good roots, meritorious virtues and causal connections.**

**If there are good men or good women who hear of Amitabha Buddha, and recite his name *singlemindedly and without confusion*, for one day or two days or three days or four days or five days or six days or seven days, then when these people are about to die, Amitabha Buddha and all the sages who are with him will appear before them. When these people die, their minds will not fall into delusion, and they will attain rebirth in Amitabha Buddha's Land of Ultimate Bliss.**

菩提正道名善根，即亲因。种种助道施戒禅等名福德，即助缘。

声闻缘觉菩提善根少，人天有漏福业福德少，皆不可生净土。唯以信愿执持名号，则一声悉具多善根福德。散心称名，福善亦不可量，况一心不乱哉！

Bodhi minds with right (Bodhisattva) path are good roots, the direct causal basis. Other meritorious actions that promote the path, such as charity, discipline, and meditation, bringing merits and virtues, are the supportive conditions.

Literalist disciples of the Lesser Vehicle (Shravakas) and Pratyeka, have few good roots. The meritorious deeds and virtues of human beings and gods, defiled as they are, are also few. These will not be born in the Pure Land because of the lack of causal basis and conditions. Only if you have faith and vows and recite the Buddha-name will each and every repetition of the Buddha-name be amply supplied with good roots and meritorious virtues. Even if you invoke the Buddha-name in a scattered state of mind, the merits and good roots are still incalculable -- how much the more so when you invoke the Buddha name singlemindedly without confusion.

故使感应道交，文成印坏。弥陀圣众，不来而来，亲垂接引。行人心识，不往而往，托质宝莲也。

[By invoking the Buddha-name], you will bring on a response -- the shape is made and the function of mold is then accomplished -- Amitabha and his holy retinue come to you without coming, and extend a hand to lead you off. As the Amitabha Buddha is in your mind, you go to the Pure Land without going, placing yourself in a jewel lotus there.

善男女者，不论出家在家，贵贱老少，六趣四生。但闻佛名，即多劫善根成熟，五逆十恶皆名善也。

阿弥陀佛是万德洪名，以名召德，罄无不尽。故即以执持名号为正行，不必更涉观想参究等行。至简易，至直捷也。

When the sutra speaks of "good men and good women", it does not matter whether they are monks and nuns or householders, or whether they are high-ranking or low-ranking or old or young. No matter what your station and forms in life, all you have to do is hear the Buddha-name, and the good roots you have accumulated over many eons immediately ripen, and all forms of evil and perversity are transformed into virtues.

"Amitabha Buddha" is the all-inclusive term for the myriad virtues. When you use the name of Amitabha to summon virtues, all the virtues is included. Thus, reciting the name of Amitabha is the correct practice, and you do not need to get involved with other practices such as visualization or meditation. Reciting the name of Amitabha is the simplest and most direct method.

闻而信，信而愿，乃肯执持。不信不愿，与不闻等，虽为远因，不名闻慧。

If you hear [the Buddha-name] and believe in it, if you believe in it and make vows, then you are fit to recite the Buddha-name. If you do not have faith and do not make vows, it is as if you never heard [the Buddha-name] at all. Merely hearing the name of Amitabha [without faith and vows] may become a long-term causal basis [for your enlightenment], but it cannot be called the "wisdom that comes from hearing".

执持则念念忆佛名号，故是思慧，然有事持理持。事持者，信有西方阿弥陀佛，而未达是心作佛，是心是佛。但以决志愿求生故，如子忆母，无时暂忘。

理持者，信西方阿弥陀佛，是我心具，是我心造。即以自心所具所造洪名，为系心之境，令不暂忘也。

The practice of reciting the Buddha-name enables us to be mindful of the Buddha-name from moment to moment, and thus bring forth the "wisdom".

There are two levels of practice in reciting the Buddha-name: reciting the Buddha-name at the **phenomenal level** and reciting the Buddha-name at the **level of inner truth** (noumenon).

1. Reciting the Buddha-name at the phenomenal level means believing that Amitabha exists in his Pure Land in the West, but not yet comprehending that **he is a Buddha in our Mind, and that this Mind is Buddha**. It means you resolve to make vows and to seek birth in the Pure Land, like a child longing for its mother, and never forgetting her for a moment.

2. Reciting the Buddha-name at the level of inner truth (noumenon) means believing that Amitabha and his Pure Land in the West are **inherent features of our own [pure] Minds, the reflection of our own [pure] Minds**. It means using the great name of Amitabha, which is inherent in our Minds and the creation of our Minds, as a focal point to concentrate our minds on, so that we never forget our own pure mind for a moment.

一日至七日者，克期办事也。利根一日即不乱，钝根七日方不乱，中根二三四五六日不定。

又利根能七日不乱，钝根仅一日不乱，中根六五四三二日不定。

The sutra speaks of reciting the Buddha-name for one to seven days, defining a period of time in which we should accomplish the work. This passage can be interpreted in two ways.

[One interpretation is that] those with **sharp faculties** will be able to reach **complete undisturbed Buddha-remembrance** after one day of invoking the Buddha-name. Those with **dull faculties** will only be able to reach complete undisturbed Buddha-remembrance after seven days of invoking the Buddha-name. Those of **middling faculties** may take from two to six days to reach complete undisturbed Buddha-remembrance.

Another [interpretation of this passage is that] those with sharp faculties will be able to achieve complete undisturbed Buddha-remembrance for seven days, those with dull faculties will only be able to achieve it for a single day, and those of middling faculties may achieve it for from two to six days.

一心亦二种。

不论事持、理持，持至伏除烦恼，乃至见思先尽，皆事一心。

不论事持、理持，持至心开见本性佛，皆理一心。

There are also two categories for the **One Mind** [i.e. singleminded practice].

i) Regardless of whether you recite the Buddha-name at the **phenomenal level** or the **inner truth level**, if you invoke the name of Amitabha until you **subdue** all afflictions (anger, greed, ignorance...) and put an end to **delusions of views and thoughts**, this is the One Mind at the phenomenal level.

ii) Regardless of whether you recite the Buddha-name at the phenomenal level or the inner truth level, if you invoke the name of Amitabha until your mind opens and you see **inherent Buddhahood**, this is the One Mind at the level of inner truth.

事一心不为见思所乱，理一心不为二边所乱，即修慧也。

不为见思乱，故感**变化身佛**及诸圣众现前，心不复起娑婆界中**三有颠倒**，往生**同居、方便**二种极乐世界。

不为二边乱，故感**受用身佛**及诸圣众现前，心不复起**生死涅槃**二见颠倒，往生**实报、寂光**二种极乐世界。

The One Mind at the phenomenal level is not tainted by delusions of views and thoughts, and the One Mind at the inner truth level is not deluded by the supposed **dualisms** [of essence and form, nirvana and samsara, Buddhas and sentient beings]. This is "the wisdom that comes from cultivating practice".

When you are not deluded by delusions of views and thoughts [at the moment of your death], the response you get is that Amitabha Buddha will appear before you in his **Emanation (Response) Body**, along with his whole retinue of holy ones. Your mind will no longer create the **delusions appeared in three realms** of this mundane world "Endurance", and you will go to be reborn in either the Pure Land Where Saints and Ordinary Beings Dwell Together, or the Pure Land of Expedient Liberation.

When you are not deluded by dualisms [at the moment of your death], the response you get is that Amitabha Buddha will appear before you in his **Reward Body**, along with his whole retinue of holy ones. Your mind will no longer create the delusions of **Samsara and Nirvana**, and you will go to be reborn in either the Pure Land of Real Reward, or the Pure Land of Eternally Quiescent Light.

[1、三界的生死有因有果，所以叫做“三有”。

一、欲有，即欲界的生死；

二、色有，即色界的生死；

三、无色有，即无色界的生死。

2、本有、当有、中有。本有指现生的身心；当有指未来的身心；中有指本有与当有之间所受的身心。]

**当知执持名号，既简易直捷，仍至顿至圆。以念念即佛故，不劳观想，不必参究，当下圆明，无余无欠。上上根不能踰其阃，下下根亦能臻其域。其所感佛，所生土，往往胜进，亦不一概。**

可谓横该八教，竖彻五时。所以彻底悲心，无问自说，且深叹其难信也。

We must realize that reciting the name of Amitabha is not only a method **that is simple and direct, it is also a method that is sudden and complete for Enlightenment**. Since the Buddha-name reciting merges with Buddha from moment to moment, without bothering with visualization or meditation, you immediately witness perfect illumination, with no excess and no lack. Those of the highest faculties cannot go beyond this level while those of the lowest capabilities are also able to reach it. Of course the way Amitabha appears to people and the level of the Pure Land they are born in is not the same.

We can say that the method of reciting the name Amitabha fully encompasses all the varieties of Buddhism, the "eight teachings and five periods" [i.e., all the teachings of the Buddha's during his lifetime, according to the T'ien--t'ai schema]. In so doing, it is the most complete expression of the Buddha's compassionate heart, teaching spontaneously without being asked. What incredible power!

问：《观经》专明作观，何谓不劳观想？

答：此义即出《观经》，彼经因**胜观**非凡夫心力所及，故于第十三别开**劣像**之观。而障重者犹不能念彼佛，故于第十六大开称名之门。今经因末世障重者多，故专主第十六观。

当知人根虽钝，而丈六八尺之像身，无量寿佛之名字，未尝不心作心是。故观劣者不劳胜观，而称名者并不劳观想也。

*Question:* The *Meditation Sutra* is devoted to explaining visualization. Why do you say not to bother with visualization?

*Answer:* This idea comes from the *Meditation Sutra* itself. Because the superior forms of visualization [focusing on the **Reward Body** of Amitabha] are beyond the mental power of ordinary people, that sutra in the **thirteenth contemplation** also introduces a lower grade of visualizing the form of Amitabha [focusing on the **Response Body**, that is, the physical form, of Amitabha]. However those whose karmic barriers are heavy cannot even focus on Amitabha in that way, so in the **sixteenth contemplation**, the sutra teaches the method of invoking the name of Amitabha. The Amitabha Sutra concentrates on the Buddha-name-recitation method of the sixteenth contemplation because it is the Dharma Ending Age, and there are many people with heavy karmic obstructions.

We should know that though people have dull faculties, the images and the name of Amitabha Buddha are all created by our mind and inherent to our mind (The same One Mind). Thus the method to visualize the lower form of Buddha image is effective enough without the need to visualize the superior form of Buddha. Similarly, the method to recite the name of Amitabha Buddha is also effective enough without the need to conduct any visualization.

问：天奇毒峰诸祖，皆主参念佛者是谁，何谓不必参究？

答：此义即出天奇诸祖，前祖因念佛人不契释迦彻底悲心，故傍不甘，直下诘问，一猛提醒，何止长夜复旦。

我辈至今日，犹不肯死心念佛，苦欲执敲门瓦子，向屋里打亲生爷娘，则于诸祖成恶逆，非善顺也。

*Question:* Masters like Tien-Chi and Du-feng have proposed meditating on the Zen question, "Who is the one reciting the Buddha-name?" Why do you say that it is not necessary to practice such a Zen meditation?

Answer: This idea comes from Master Tien-Chi himself as well as other masters. Master Tien-Chi did not want to stand idly by while people reciting the Buddha-name failed to comprehend the compassion of Sakyamuni Buddha [in teaching Buddha-name-recitation], so he posed this question to help them wake up [to the real sense of reciting the Buddha-name]. When he taught this it was like the dawn returning after a long night.

If we are unwilling to still our minds in order to recite the Buddha-name with complete concentration, we are taking hold of "a fragment of tile with which to knock on a door to hit out at our own parents [our Mind]": we are rebelling against our own patriarchal teachers and doing evil, rather than obeying them and being good. [This fragment of tile represents Mater Tian-Chi's question: "Who is the one reciting the Buddha-name?"]

进问：此在肯心者则可，未肯者何得相应？

曰：噫，正唯未肯，所以要肯心相应。汝等正信未开，如生牛皮，不可屈折。当知有目者，固无日下燃灯之理。而无目者，亦何必于日中苦觅灯炬。

大势至法王子云：不假方便，自得心开。此一行三昧中大火聚语也，敢有触者，宁不被烧。

*Question:* What you said make sense for those who are willing to still their minds by reciting the Buddha name will be alright. But how are about those who are unwilling to recite Buddha name?

Answer: Alas! Master Tien-Chi is asking you to recite the Buddha name for reaching accord with the Buddha's Mind precisely because you are not yet willing to do so. Since you have not yet developed true faith, it is as though you are wearing thick leather blinders, and cannot cut through them. You must realize that those with eyes have no

reason to light a lamp when the sun is shining -- why should those without eyes struggle to find a lamp in broad daylight?

The **Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta** [one of the three Pure Land sages] said that **without using any other expedients than Buddha recitation, you manage to open your own mind. This is like a great mass of fire coming from the "Buddha recitation Samadhi": Whoever touches this fire of Samadhi will be subsumed by it.**

问：临终佛现，宁保非魔？

答：修心人不作佛观，而佛忽现，非本所期，故名魔事。念佛见佛，已是相应。况临终非致魔时，何须疑虑。

*Question:* When Amitabha Buddha appears to Pure Land practitioners when they are on the brink of death, how can they be sure it is not a demon?

Answer: If a Buddhist is not meditating on the Buddha, and yet Buddha suddenly appears unexpectedly, this is called a demon (delusion). A Pure Land practitioner sees the Buddha while focusing on the Buddha. In his case [cause and effect coincide] and his mind is in unison with the appearance of the Buddha. The appearance of the Buddha is therefore not a demon. **Moreover, the brink of death is not the time to cause the appearance of demon.** There is no need to worry about this.

问：七日不乱，平时耶，临终耶？答：平时也。

问：七日不乱之后，复起惑造业，亦得生耶？答：果得一心不乱之人，无更起惑造业之事。

*Question:* When the sutra speaks of reciting the Buddha-name singlemindedly for seven days, does this refer to ordinary times, or to the time when we are about to die?

Answer: This refers to ordinary times.

*Question:* If we recite the Buddha-name for seven days, singlemindedly and without confusion, but later we again become confused and create bad karma, will we still achieve birth in the Pure Land?

Answer: **A person who has actually managed to recite the Buddha-name singlemindedly will not give rise to confusion or create bad karma again.**

问：大本十念，宝王一念，平时耶，临终耶？

答：十念通二时。晨朝十念属平时。十念得生，与《观经》十念称名同，属临终时。一念则但约临终时。

*Question:* The *Longer Amitabha Sutra* speaks of attaining birth in the Pure Land through ten repetitions of the Buddha-name. The *Treatise of the Precious King of Samadhi* speaks of attaining birth in the Pure Land through a single repetition of the Buddha-name. Are they referring to ordinary times, or to the time when we are about to die?

Answer: Attaining birth in the Pure Land through ten repetitions of the Buddha-name applies to both times. If we recite the Buddha-name ten times each morning, this is an ordinary occasion. On the other hand, the *Longer Amitabha Sutra* speaks of attaining birth in the Pure Land through ten repetitions (and this is the same as what the *Meditation Sutra* says) -- this refers to when we are on the brink of death. As to passage in the "Treatise of the Precious King of Samadhi" about attaining birth in the Pure Land through a single repetition of the Buddha-name, this refers to the time when we are about to die.

[印光大师法语：**十念法门**：增广文钞卷一与陈锡周居士书

若或事务多端，略无闲暇。当于晨朝盥漱毕，有佛则礼佛三拜，正身合掌念南无阿弥陀佛。尽一口气为一念，念至十口气，即念小净土文。或但念愿生西方净土中四句偈。念毕礼佛三拜而退。若无佛即向西问讯，照上念法而念。此名十念法门。乃宋慈云忏主为王臣政务繁剧，无暇修持者所立也。何以令尽一口气念。以众生心散，又无暇专念。如此念时，借气摄心，心自不散。然须随气长短，不可强使多念，强则伤气。又止可十念，不可二十三十，多亦伤气。以散心念佛，难得往生。此法能令心归一处，一心念佛，决定往生。念数虽少，功德颇深。（增广文钞卷一）]

[唐飞锡，不详其所出。初学律仪。后与楚金法师，研习天台教观。天宝初，游京师，止终南紫阁草堂，撰**念佛三昧宝王论**三卷。]

问：十念一念并得生，何须七日？答：**若无平时七日功夫，安有临终十念一念？**纵下下品逆恶之人，并是夙因成熟，故感临终遇善友，闻便信愿。**此事万中无一，岂可侥幸。**《净土或问》斥此最详，今人不可不读。

*Question:* If we can attain birth in the Pure Land through ten repetitions of the Buddha name, or even a single repetition, why do we need seven days of reciting the Buddha-name, as the *Amitabha Sutra* says?

Answer: If we have not done the work of reciting the Buddha-name singlemindedly for seven days during ordinary times, how can we reach the Pure Land through ten repetitions or a single repetition when we are on the brink of death?

It would not be more than one chance in a million if someone who had committed many evils were to have a causal basis from past lives ripen as he was on the brink of death, enabling him to meet a spiritual friend, hear his teaching, and develop faith and vows. How could people rely on this slim chance of luck? [Master Tien Ru book] *Doubts and Questions about the Pure Land* has refuted this idea of waiting till death to practice Buddha recitation in great detail. People these days should read that book.

[元维则《净土圣贤录》维则，字天如，姓谭，永新人。出家后，嗣法中峰本禅师。至正初，住苏州师子林。屡召问，称疾不赴。则既密契单传，复推天台永明之旨，兼宏净土之教，著**净土或问**，破诸疑惑，策进修行。今录其尤警切者。或问，一生造恶，临终念佛，带业得生，又无退转。然则我且做世事，待临终念佛，可乎。答曰，苦哉，苦哉。赚自己，又赚天下僧俗男女，皆此言也。逆恶凡夫，临终念佛，是夙有善根，故遇善知识，而得念佛。此等侥幸，万中无一。（苏州府志，**净土或问**。）]

问：西方去此十万亿土，何得即生？

答：**十万亿土，不出我现前一念心性之外**，以心性本无外故。又仗自心之佛力接引，何难即生。如镜中照数十层山水楼阁，层数宛然，实无远近，一照俱了，见无先后。从是西方过十万亿佛土，有世界名曰极乐亦如是。其土有佛号阿弥陀，今现在说法亦如是。

*Question:* If Amitabha's Pure Land is a hundred billion worlds away from here, how can we be reborn there instantly?

*Answer:* The land that is a hundred billion worlds away is not beyond one moment of thought, since fundamentally there is nothing outside the True Mind. When we rely on the power of Buddha that is inherent in our own mind, what is so hard about being born in the Pure Land instantly?

It is like a many layered scene of mountains and rivers and towers reflected in a mirror: all the layers appear there in the mirror, and in reality there is no near and far. All are reflected at once, appearing without before or after. When the sutra says "West of here, past a hundred billion Buddha-lands, there exists a world called 'Ultimate Bliss'", it is also like this. When the sutra says "In this land there exists a Buddha called Amitabha, who is expounding the Dharma right now", it is also like this.

其人临命终时，阿弥陀佛与诸圣众现在其前，是人终时心不颠倒，即得往生阿弥陀佛极乐国土亦如是。当知字字皆**海印三昧，大圆镜智**之灵文也。

It is also like this when a person [who has developed faith and vows and recited the Buddha-name] is about to die, and Amitabha and all his retinue of saints appear before that person. It is also like this when the person dies without his or her mind falling into delusion, and the person is immediately born in Amitabha's Land of Ultimate Bliss.

We must recognize that every word in the sutra is said in the Ocean-Seal Samadhi and the Wisdom of Great-Perfect-Mirror.

问：**持名判行行**，则是助行，何名正行？

答：依**一心说信愿行**，非先后，非定三。盖无愿行不名真信，无行信不名真愿，无信愿不名真行。

今全由信愿持名，故信愿行三，声声圆具，所以名多善根福德因缘。《观经》称佛名故，念念中除八十亿劫生死之罪，此之谓也。若福善不多，安能除罪如此之大。

*Question:* Reciting the Buddha-name is a part of practice, an auxiliary practice. Why do you call it a principal practice?

*Answer:* Basing ourselves on the **One Mind**, we speak of faith, vows, and practice. There is however no order of precedence here, nor is naming three aspects a set definition. Without vows and practice, we cannot speak of true faith. Without practice and faith, we cannot speak of true vows. Without faith and vows, we cannot speak of true practice.

Relying fully on our faith and our vows, we recite the Buddha-name. Thus faith, vows, and practice seem to be three things, but all three are fully present in every repetition of the Buddha-name. **This is why the sutra says the phrase of many good roots, meritorious virtues and causal connection.** The *Meditation Sutra* means this when it says that by invoking the Buddha-name, from moment to moment we are clearing away the bad karma of eighty million eons of birth and death. Without great merits, virtues and good roots, how could we clear away bad karma on such a grand scale?

问：临终猛切，能除多罪，平日至心称名，亦除罪否？

答：如日出，群暗消。称洪名，万罪灭。

*Question:* With the intensity that comes [to reciting the Buddha-name] on the brink of death, we can clear away a lot of bad karma. Can we achieve the same result in ordinary times if we invoke the Buddha-name singlemindedly?

*Answer:* When the sun comes out, all darkness disappears. When we invoke the great name of Amitabha, myriad evil deeds are wiped away.

问：散心称名，亦除罪否？答：名号功德不可思议，宁不除罪，但不定往生。以悠悠散善，难敌无始积罪故。

当知积罪假使有体相者，尽虚空界不能容受，虽百年昼夜弥陀十万，一一声灭八十亿劫生死，然所灭罪如爪上土，未灭罪如大地土。

*Question:* Can we also clear away bad karma if we invoke the Buddha-name with a scattered mind?

*Answer:* The merit and virtue of the Buddha-name are inconceivable, so how could they not clear away bad karma? But reciting the Buddha-name with a scattered mind does not guarantee being reborn in the Pure Land, since the good roots created by a diffuse,

scattered recitation is no match for the bad karma that have accumulated from time “without beginning.”

We must understand that all of space could not contain our accumulated bad karma, if they took on physical form. Every repetition of the Buddha-name might wipe away the bad karma of eighty millions eons of birth and death, but even if we recited the Buddha-name days and nights for a hundred years, the amount of bad karma which would be wiped out is like the amount of dirt under a fingernail, while the amount of bad karma remaining is like all the dirt on earth.

唯念至一心不乱，则如健人突围而出，非复三军能制耳。然称名便为成佛种子，如金刚终不可坏。

佛世一老人求出家，五百圣众皆谓无善根。佛言：此人无量劫前为虎逼，失声称南无佛。今此善根成熟，值我得道，非二乘道眼所知也。由此观之，《法华》明过去佛所，散乱称名，皆已成佛，岂不信哉。

The only way [to eliminate all bad karma] is to recite the Buddha-name to the point of singleminded concentration. Then it is like a powerful warrior breaking out of encirclement, so even three armies cannot hem him in any more. In all instances however, invoking the Buddha-name is a seed for becoming enlightened. It is like an indestructible diamond that will last.

When Sakyamuni Buddha was in the world, there was an old man who asked to become a monk. The congregation of five hundred arhats all said the old man was lacking in good karmic roots. Buddha however said: "Countless ages ago this man was being pursued by a tiger, and cried out "Nam Mo Buddha!" Now the good roots from that occasion have become ripe: he has met me and found the path. This is not something that followers of the Lesser Vehicle can perceive." This story and the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* show that even those who invoked the Buddha-name in a scattered and confused state of mind have planted the seed of Buddhahood. How can we not believe them?

伏愿缙素智愚，于此简易直捷无上圆顿法门，勿视为难而辄生退诿，勿视为易而漫不策勤。勿视为浅而妄致藐轻，勿视为深而弗敢承任。

盖所持之名号，真实不可思议。能持之心性，亦真实不可思议。持一声，则一声不可思议。持十百千万无量无数声，声声皆不可思议也。

It is my humble hope that no matter whether you are a layperson or a monk or nun, no matter whether you are smart or stupid, [you will adopt a positive attitude] toward this simple, direct, supreme round and sudden Pure Land teaching. Do not look upon it as difficult, and shrink away from it. Do not look upon it as easy, and become complacent and not try hard enough. Do not look upon it as shallow, and wrongly despise it. Do not look upon it as profound, and not dare to accept it as your task.

The name of Amitabha which we recite is truly inconceivable [because it is our True Mind]. The True Mind of those who recite it is also truly inconceivable. If you recite the

Buddha-name once, [it is inconceivable](#). If you recite it ten or a hundred or a thousand or a million times, or countless times, [every one is inconceivable](#).

### (丙) 二重劝

In the next passage in the sutra, Buddha reiterates his admonition:

舍利弗，我见是利，故说此言。若有众生，闻是说者，应当发愿，生彼国土。

**I have seen this benefit, and so I speak these words. If sentient beings hear what I say, they must make a vow to be born in that land.**

我见者，佛眼所见究尽明了也。是利者，横出[五浊](#)，圆净四土，[直至不退位尽](#)，是为不可思议功德之利也。

复次是利，约命终时心不颠倒而言。盖秽土自力修行，生死关头，最难得力。

Buddha says, "I have seen this benefit." The vision of the Buddha is the ultimate in clarity. The benefit he has seen is that through reciting the Buddha-name sentient beings can transcend the world of [Five Defilements](#), completely purify the Four Lands, and reach the end of levels where they do not fall back from their position. [This is the benefit brought about by the inconceivable merit of the Amitabha's Pure Land.](#)

With reference to what happens when we die, this benefit is that our minds do not fall into delusion and error. It is known that if we cultivate practice in this polluted world through our own effort, it is extremely hard to gain power over the crucial juncture of birth and death.

无论顽修狂慧，么罗无功。即悟门深远，操履潜确之人，倘分毫[习气](#)未除，未免[随强偏坠](#)。永明祖师所谓[十人九蹉路](#)，[阴境若现前](#)，[瞥尔随他去](#)。此诚可寒心者也。初果昧于出胎，菩萨[昏于隔阴](#)。者 [这] 里岂容强作主宰，侥幸颠预。

If there is the least bit of [bad tendency](#) that you have not cleared away [by the time you are about to die], you will [plunge into an untoward rebirth following the strongest force](#) -- this applies no matter whether you have ignorantly cultivated a misguided practice and trusted in your deluded intellect, or whether you have had some profound awakenings and your conduct has been consistent and correct. As Pure-land Patriarch Yung-ming said, "Nine out of ten people who practice Zen meditation miss the road: scenes of delusion appear before them [at death], and in an instant they follow them off." This is truly a chilling prospect! Even Arhats become deluded again as they emerge from the womb

and even Bodhisattvas can become **benighted** between death and a subsequent rebirth. Here [at the point of death], how can you forcibly act the master? If you expect to be so lucky, you are a fool.

[永明延寿禅净四料简曰：

有禅无净土，十人九蹉路，阴境若现前，瞥尔随他去。无禅有净土，万修万人去，但得见弥陀，何愁不开悟。有禅有净土，犹如戴角虎，现世为人师，来生作佛祖。无禅无净土，铁床并铜柱，万劫与千生，没个人依怙。]

唯有信愿持名，**仗他力故**，佛慈悲愿，定不唐捐。弥陀圣众，**现前慰导**，故得无倒，自在往生。

佛见众生临终倒乱之苦，特为保任此事，所以殷勤再劝发愿，以愿能导行故也。

The only way out is to have faith and vows and recite the Buddha-name because of the help from Other-power. Amitabha's vows of compassion are certainly not empty promises. If we have faith and vows and recite the Buddha-name, when we die Amitabha and the assembly of saints will appear before us **to comfort us and lead us away**. That way we will not fail, and we will be free to be reborn in the Pure Land.

Buddha saw that sentient beings' greatest suffering is to fall into confusion at the moment of death, and so he **vouchsafed** this Pure Land teaching to us. This is why he urged us again and again to take vows: because vows can guide us.

问：佛既心作心是，何不竟言自佛，而必以他佛为胜，何也？

答：此之法门，全在了他即自。若讳言他佛，则是**他见未忘**。若偏重自佛，却成我见颠倒。

*Question:* If Buddha is a creation of the Mind, if Buddha is the Mind, why do you not speak of our own inherent Buddha as supreme? Why do you insist that another Buddha, Amitabha Buddha, is better?

Answer: This Pure Land teaching is all a matter of comprehending that Amitabha Buddha is precisely our own Buddha Nature, our Mind. If we mistakenly refer to the Buddha as "other", we would fall into **one form of delusive view**. If we were to overemphasize our own inherent Buddha, this would be another form of delusive view. Both are wrong.

**又悉檀四益，后三益事不孤起。倘不从世界深发庆信，则欣厌二益尚不能生，何况悟入理佛。**

Consider the four modes whereby the Buddha preached his dharma. The later three modes cannot be established without the first mode (worldly mode), preaching according to the conventional understanding of the world, which allows us to deeply develop our faith. Without this worldly mode, we cannot build up our willingness and determination of detachment, not to mention to understand the inner truth of Buddhahood.

- [一、世界悉檀，佛开始时，先顺世界之凡情，宣说浅近之事理，以令闻者欢喜和信受；  
二、各各为人悉檀，佛审察众生的根机，及程度之浅深，而说各人所需要之法，令众生发起正信，增长善根；  
三、对治悉檀，对嗔多者教以慈悲观，痴多者教以因缘观，障多者教以念佛观，如是普施种种之法药，以去除众生的恶病；  
四、第一义悉檀，佛见众生的机缘既熟，便为之说诸法实相，以令众生一起悟入圣者之道。]

**唯即事持达理持**，所以弥陀圣众现前，即是**本性明显**。往生彼土，见佛闻法，即是**成就慧身**。不由他悟，

Through our invoking the Buddha-name at the phenomenal level, we can reach the level of inner truth (noumenon). Then, Amitabha and his retinue of saints appear before us: this is **our inherent True Nature becoming manifest**. Also, we are born in the Pure Land and see Amitabha and hear his teaching: this is **perfecting the body of wisdom of our True Nature**. This is not awakening through something other than us.

法门深妙，破尽一切**戏论**，斩尽一切意见。唯**马鸣、龙树、智者、永明之流**，彻底担荷得去。其余世智辩聪，通儒禅客，尽思度量，愈推愈远。又不若愚夫妇老实念佛者，为能潜通佛智，暗合道妙也。

The Pure Land teaching is profound and wondrous. It destroys all **sophistry** and cuts off all delusive views. Only those with the wisdom of **Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Chih-i and Yung-ming** can take it up completely. Those of worldly intelligence, the common followers of Confucianism and the fans of Zen, may try to figure it out to the limit of their powers, but the more they think about it, the farther off they get. In terms of being able to reach the wisdom of the Buddhas and mesh with the wonders of the Path, such intellectuals are not as good as simple men and women who recite the Buddha-name in all sincerity.

**我见是利，故说此言**，分明以佛眼佛音，印定此事。岂敢违抗，不善顺入也哉！二正宗分竟。

**"I have seen this benefit and so I speak these words"**. Buddha's eye and Buddha's voice clearly affirm this truth, so how can we dare to go against it? Shouldn't we accept it?

This concludes the commentary on the main body of the sutra.