

PURELAND

DAILY

PRACTICE

Under the guidance of
the Buddhist Yogi C. M. Chen

Chinese original compiled and translated by
Dr. Yutang Lin



A gift from
Dharma Friends of Dr. Lin



THE THREE HOLINESSES OF THE WESTERN PURELAND

Bodhisattva Mahasthanaprapta Amitabha Buddha Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara

Table of Contents

Preface.....	1
Foreword to the Second Edition.....	3
Pureland Daily Practice	
Preliminaries.....	4
1. Prostration.....	5
2. Recitation of Sutras	
Buddha Expounding Amitabha Sutra	6
The Heart Sutra	10
The Section on Bodhisattva Mahasthanaprapta's	
Achieving Complete Unification	11
3. Chanting of Mantras.....	12
4. Chanting "Amitabha".....	14
5. Dedication of Merits.....	15
Epilogue.....	16
Appendix A	
The Heart of Sublimation through Limitless-Oneness Compassion Sastra	17
Appendix B	
Unification of Mind and Wind.....	18
Appendix C	
On Chanting "Amitabha".....	20
Epilogue.....	28

Preface

Under the guidance of my late guru, Yogi C. M. Chen, I compiled in Chinese **Daily Recitations for Pureland Practitioner** (Jing Ye Zhao Mu Ke Song Du Ben) in 1986. Up to now there are four printings of that booklet, totaling 10,000 copies. I am now translating it into English so that more Buddhists may use it.

The basic instruction of Yogi Chen for this booklet was that the center of attention should be all Three Holinesses of the Western Pureland, namely, *Amitabha Buddha*, *Avalokitesvara* and *Mahasthanaprapta*. Hence, the prostrations, sutras and mantras center on them. Yogi Chen emphasized practicing visualization of the whole Dharmadhatu and including the **Heart Sutra** (Xin Jing) as one of the basic sutras of the Pureland School. Thus, the practices here are to be visualized as done by all sentient beings together; and the **Heart Sutra** is included to familiarize the practitioners with the most basic philosophy of Buddhism. The inclusion of the magnificent images of the Three Holinesses at the beginning of the booklet was also Yogi Chen's instruction.

While translating the **Buddha Expounding Amitabha Sutra** (Fo Shuo A Mi Tuo Jing), I consulted the following works:

Amitabha Buddha Sutra, translated by F. Max Muller, and revised by Yogi C. M. Chen in Chenian Booklet Series No. 131.

Fo Shuo A Mi Tuo Jing Jiang Hua, Nan Ting Fa Shi.

In this translation, instead of the literal translation of Guang Chang She Xiang as *wide and long tongue*, I chose to bring out the meaning of *superior power of speech*. I hope that this will make more sense for readers in general, without the slightest implication of disbelief in Buddha's supernatural powers.

While translating the Heart Sutra, I consulted the following works:

The Heart Sutra, translated by Lu K'uanyu, and revised by Yogi C. M. Chen in Chenian Booklet Series No. 131.

Heart of Wisdom, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, Tharpa Publications, London, 1986.

The Heart of Buddhist Wisdom, Douglas A. Fox, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston/Queenston, 1985.

The Heart Sutra Explained, Donald S. Lopez, Jr., State University of New York Press, 1988.

In this translation, instead of the common interpretation of *Emptiness* (Kong) as *empty of inherent existence*, I chose to interpret it as *Blank Essence*, which in Chinese would be Kong Xing. I hope that this will offer beginners a different perspective to the central idea of Buddhism. Indeed this may help beginners to reach some insight even before they become accustomed to the philosophical analyses explaining the problem of *inherent existence*. In short, the idea is that everything is of one nature, called Blank Essence. It is blank in the sense that it has no specific quality, thereby it may exhibit all sorts of qualities, dependent upon the particular conditions. Moreover, this Blank Essence is inseparable from the particulars in our experiences, hence it is everywhere but nowhere to be found by itself. Critically such a notion may be judged to be insignificant in the sense that it, in fact, refers to nothing. Nevertheless, by adopting and confirming it through constant practice, one may realize the spiritual truth of the oneness of all things.

Paramita (Bo Luo Mi Duo), meaning to *reach the other shore*, is commonly translated as *perfection*. In this translation I chose to translate it as *sublimation*. Because perfection may mean just an accomplishment on a certain level, while *sublimation* brings out the transcendental aspect of the Buddhist practices that are rooted in the philosophy of *Sunyata*.

While translating the **Section on Mahasthanaprapta** of the **Surangama Sutra**, I consulted the following work:

Da Fo Ding Shou Leng Yan Jing Jiang Yi, Yuan Ying Fa Shi

The mantras are presented in accordance with the pronunciation of my guru, Yogi Chen. The tantric tradition teaches that the most effective use of mantras comes from following the guru's pronunciation wholeheartedly, without the distractions resulting from other considerations. In my Chinese original, the Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit mantra of Great Compassion was listed as an optional practice. In this English version, I have included a transliteration of the Tibetan mantra of Great Compassion into the regular curriculum. The appendices of the Chinese original have been omitted.

May whatever merits generated through this work be shared by all sentient beings and thereby shorten their path toward Full Enlightenment.

Yutang Lin
August 1989
El Cerrito, California

Foreword to the Second Edition

The **Heart Sutra** presented in this edition is a revised version of my original translation. Only minor changes are made to elucidate the meaning.

Three appendices have been added. My Sastra on Limitless-Oneness Compassion is included to compliment the wisdom teaching of the **Heart Sutra**. For a detailed exposition on the unification of wisdom and compassion, please read my book, **Wisdom and Compassion in Limitless-Oneness**.

The **Unification of Mind and Wind** introduces an effective method of chanting which unifies chanting, visualization and deep breathing into one practice. The chanting of **Amitabha** is the core of this daily practice, therefore this wonderful method is recommended to the practitioners.

On Chanting Amitabha provides a simple explanation in daily terms of the benefits of this practice to people who have no prior contact with Buddhist teachings.

The size of this manual and that of the printed words have been enlarged to facilitate daily practice.

Thanks to Ann Klein for improving the English of this edition and to Chen-jer Jan for formatting the entire book.

Yutang Lin
October 1993

Pureland Daily Practice

Under the Guidance of the Buddhist Yogi C. M. Chen
Compiled by Dr. Yutang Lin

Preliminaries

First, present the offerings of incense, candle, water, etc., then stand facing the images of the Three Holinesses of the Western Pureland, i.e., *Amitabha Buddha*, *Avalokitesvara* and *Mahasthanaprapta*. Visualize as follows: The Three Holinesses are surrounded by the holy beings of the Western Pureland, and this assembly is in turn surrounded by all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and holy beings of the Ten Directions and the Three Times of the past, present and future. They all look down with great Compassion upon the sentient beings in the six realms of transmigration.

On one's right and left side stand one's father and mother, respectively. One's relatives, friends, creditors or foes of this or previous lives gather in front of oneself, while sentient beings in the six realms gather behind in the following order: hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, asuras and heavenly beings. All of these beings stare up at the holy beings. The holy beings and the beings in transmigration are infinite in number and fill the whole Dharmadhatu.

Visualize that all sentient beings are simultaneously doing this practice with you, and that the holy beings, who are the objects of our veneration, are pleased to grant their blessings by reciting the sutras and the mantras with us.

1. Prostration

Repeat each one of the following salutations three times; each repetition is to be accompanied by one prostration.

Namo Amitabha Buddha!

Namo Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara!

Namo Bodhisattva Mahasthanaprapta!

Namo holy beings of the Western Pureland!

Namo Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and holy beings of the Ten Directions and Three Times!

2. Recitation of Sutras

Buddha Expounding Amitabha Sutra

From the Chinese translation by Kumarajiva
Translated into English by Yutang Lin

Thus have I heard. Once Buddha was in the garden of the almsgiving elder Anathapindaka that contains Jeta's grove, located in the country of Sravasti. With Him there were one thousand two hundred fifty great monks; all wellknown great Arhats. They were the great disciples such as the elder Sariputra, the great Maudgalyayana, the great Kasyapa, the great Katyayana, the great Kausthila, Revata, Suddhipanthaka, Nanda, Ananda, Rahula, Gavampati, Pindolabharadvaja, Kalodayin, the great Kapphina, Vakkula and Aniruddha. There were also the great Bodhisattvas such as the Dharma-prince Manjusri, the Bodhisattva Ajita, the Bodhisattva Gandhahastin and the Bodhisattva Constant-diligence. Also present were Sakra, the King of heavenly gods, and countless other beings of the various heavens.

Then Buddha told the Elder Sariputra:

To the West ten thousand billion Buddha-lands from here, there is a world named **Utmost Joy**. There is a Buddha, called **Amitabha**, in that land. He is preaching right now. Sariputra, why is that land named **Utmost Joy**? The sentient beings of that land are free from all kinds of suffering, yet enjoy variegated pleasures, thus it is named **Utmost Joy**. Furthermore, Sariputra, the Utmost Joy Land is enclosed by seven rows of railings, seven layers of nets and seven rows of trees, all made of four kinds of jewels, hence, that land is named **Utmost Joy**.

Furthermore, Sariputra, in the Utmost Joy Land there are ponds made of seven kinds of jewels and fully filled with water with eight kinds of merits, and their bottoms are covered with gold sand. The stairways on the four sides are made of gold, silver, beryl and crystal, and lead to towers adorned with gold, silver, beryl, crystal, diamonds, red pearls, and coral. The lotus flowers in these ponds are as large as the wheel of a chariot. They are blue and emitting blue light; yellow, emitting yellow light; red, emitting red light; or white, emitting white light. They are sublime, wonderful, fragrant and pure. Sariputra, the Utmost Joy Land is complete in such meritorious grandeur. Again, Sariputra, the land of that Buddha is constantly filled with heavenly music and the ground is made of gold. Three times daily and three times nightly there falls from the sky a rain of heavenly Mandarava flowers. Regularly, in the early morning, the sentient beings of that land carry all sorts of wondrous flowers in their skirts to make offerings to the ten thousand billion Buddhas of other places. By breakfast time they have returned to their own land to have a meal followed by a meditative walk. Sariputra, the Utmost Joy Land is complete in such meritorious grandeur. Furthermore, Sariputra, In that land there are all sorts of wonderful

birds of variegated colors: white cranes, peacocks, parrots, saris, Kalavinkas and shared-fate birds. All these birds sing harmonious and sublime melodies three times daily and three times nightly. These melodies propagate the teachings on the Five Roots, the Five Forces, the Seven Bodhi-branches and the Eightfold Right Path. Beings of that land, upon hearing such melodies, all turn their thoughts toward the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Sariputra, you should not say that these birds are born as a result of their sinful karma. Why is it so? There are no three bad realms in the land of that Buddha. Sariputra, in the land of that Buddha there is not even the name of a bad realm, not to mention the reality of such. All these birds are miraculously produced by Amitabha Buddha in order to propagate the Dharma sounds. Sariputra, in the land of that Buddha breezes wave the rows of jeweled trees and the jeweled nets, thereby, producing sublime and wondrous sounds. This is analogous to hundreds and thousands of harmonious kinds of music playing simultaneously. Whoever hears such sounds naturally develops a mind that fixes upon the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Sariputra, the land of that Buddha is complete in such meritorious grandeur.

Sariputra, what do you think, why is that Buddha called **Amitabha**? Sariputra, the brightness of that Buddha's light is immeasurable, it shines upon lands in the ten Directions without any hindrance, hence, He is called **Amitabha**—infinite light. Further, Sariputra, the lifespan of that Buddha or anyone of His subjects is countlessly and boundlessly innumerable kalpas, thus, He is named **Amitabha**—infinite life. Sariputra, ever since Amitabha Buddha awoke to Full Enlightenment it has been ten kalpas. Furthermore, Sariputra, that Buddha has innumerable boundless sravaka disciples, all of whom are Arhats, and their number is beyond the knowledge of arithmetic. The number of Bodhisattvas in that land is likewise innumerable. Sariputra, the land of that Buddha is complete in such meritorious grandeur. Further, Sariputra, sentient beings who are born in the Utmost Joy Land will not regress on the path toward Enlightenment. Many among them are candidates for Buddhahood and will be born as humans just once more in order to achieve Buddhahood. Their number is so great that it is beyond the knowledge of arithmetic and can only be described as countlessly and boundlessly innumerable.

Sariputra, sentient beings who hear the above should vow to be born in that land. Why is it so? Because then one may enjoy the company of these aforementioned most benevolent people. Sariputra, it is impossible to be born in that land with only a few good dispositions, meritorious and moral causes and conditions. Sariputra, if there is a good man or woman who hears about Amitabha Buddha and keeps chanting His holy name for one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, six days or seven days with one mind free from distractions, then such a person, at the end of his life, will see Amitabha Buddha and His holy assembly appear before him. At the time of death this person's mind will not be perturbed and will take rebirth in the Utmost Joy Land of Amitabha Buddha. Sariputra, I see such advantage, hence I say such words. Whosoever hears this should develop the vow to be born in that Land.

Sariputra, just as now I am praising the advantage of the inconceivable merits of Amitabha Buddha, in the Eastern Universe there are Buddhas such as Immovability Buddha, Meru Form Buddha, Great Meru Buddha, Meru Light Buddha, Wondrous Voice Buddha, equal in number to the sands of the river Ganges. Each Buddha in his own land displays his superior power of speech and spreads the following honest words throughout his domain of one billion world-systems: "You sentient beings should have faith in this sutra that praises the inconceivable merits and is favored by all Buddhas."

Sariputra, in the Southern Universe there are Buddhas such as Sun Moon Lamp Buddha, Famous Light Buddha, Great Flaming Shoulders Buddha, Meru Lamp Buddha, Immeasurable Diligence Buddha, equal in number to the sands of the river Ganges. Each Buddha in his own land displays his superior power of speech and spreads the following honest words throughout his domain of one billion world-systems: "You sentient beings should have faith in this sutra that praises the inconceivable merits and is favored by all Buddhas."

Sariputra, in the Western Universe there are Buddhas such as Immeasurable Lifespan Buddha, Immeasurable Form Buddha, Immeasurable Pennant Buddha, Great Light Buddha, Great Brightness Buddha, Precious Form Buddha, Pure Light Buddha, equal in number to the sands of the river Ganges. Each Buddha in his own land displays his superior power of speech and spreads the following honest words throughout his domain of one billion world-systems: "You sentient beings should have faith in this sutra that praises the inconceivable merits and is favored by all Buddhas."

Sariputra, in the Northern Universe there are Buddhas such as Flaming Shoulders Buddha, Most Superior Voice Buddha, Impeccable Buddha, Rising Sun Buddha, Net of Brightness Buddha, equal in number to the sands of the river Ganges. Each Buddha in his own land displays his superior power of speech and spreads the following honest words throughout his domain of one billion world-systems: "You sentient beings should have faith in this sutra that praises the inconceivable merits and is favored by all Buddhas."

Sariputra, in the Nadiral Universe there are Buddhas such as Lion Buddha, Famous Buddha, Fame Light Buddha, Dharma Buddha, Dharma Pennant Buddha, Dharma Holding Buddha, equal in number to the sands of the river Ganges. Each Buddha in his own land displays his superior power of speech and spreads the following honest words throughout his domain of one billion world-systems: "You sentient beings should have faith in this sutra that praises the inconceivable merits and is favored by all Buddhas."

Sariputra, in the Zenithal Universe there are Buddhas such as Pure Voice Buddha, King of Constellations Buddha, Supreme Incense Buddha, Fragrance Light Buddha, Great Flaming Shoulders Buddha, Adorned with Variegated Jewel Ornaments Buddha, King Teak Tree Buddha, Jewel Flower Merits Buddha, Seeing All Truths Buddha, Like Meru Mountain Buddha, equal in number to the sands of the river Ganges. Each Buddha in his own land

displays his superior power of speech and spreads the following honest words throughout his domain of one billion world-systems: "You sentient beings should have faith in this sutra that praises the inconceivable merits and is favored by all Buddhas."

Sariputra, what do you think? Why is this sutra named **The Favor of All Buddhas Sutra**? Sariputra, if there are good men or women who hear, accept and uphold this sutra and hear the names of these Buddhas, all these good men or women will be favored by all Buddhas and will never regress on the path toward the Unsurpassable Right and Full Enlightenment. Therefore, Sariputra, all of you should believe and accept these words of mine and those of the Buddhas.

Sariputra, those people who have vowed, vow now, or will vow to be born in the land of Amitabha Buddha will never regress on the path toward the Unsurpassable Right and Full Enlightenment. They have been born, are born or will be born in that land. Hence, Sariputra, all good men or women, if they have faith, should vow to be born in that land.

Sariputra, just as I am now praising the inconceivable merits of those Buddhas, likewise they are praising my inconceivable merits by uttering the following: "Sakyamuni Buddha is capable of rare and most difficult accomplishments. He is able to achieve the Unsurpassable Right and Full Enlightenment in the Land of Toleration during the Corrupt Age of Five Obscurities—those of the era, the views, the sorrows, the sentient beings and the lives, and to preach to the sentient beings such teachings that are difficult to believe by all worldlings." Sariputra, you should realize that it is extremely difficult for me to accomplish the heavy task of achieving the Unsurpassable Right and Full Enlightenment in the Corrupt Age of Five Obscurities and to preach to all worldlings such unbelievable teachings.

Thus Buddha concluded the preaching of this sutra. Sariputra, the monks and the worldlings—heavenly beings, humans, asuras, etc., all rejoiced in hearing the teaching of Buddha, and they accepted the teaching with great faith. They all prostrated to Buddha and then departed.

The Heart of Sublimation through Transcendent Wisdom Sutra (The Heart Sutra)

From the Chinese translation by the Reverend Xuan-Zang
Translated into English by Dr. Yutang Lin

Whenever Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara practices deeply sublimation through Transcendent Wisdom, He intuitively perceives that the five aggregates are of Blank Essence, thus transcending all suffering and difficulties. "Sariputra, phenomena are inseparable from Blank Essence, and Blank Essence is inseparable from phenomena; phenomena are identical to Blank Essence, and Blank Essence is identical to phenomena. Feeling, conceptualization, motivation and consciousness are also inseparable from and identical to Blank Essence."

"Sariputra, the characteristics of Blank Essence of all these things are: neither born nor deceased, neither dirty nor clean, neither increasing nor decreasing. Therefore in Blank Essence there are no phenomena, no feeling, conceptualization, motivation, consciousness; no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; no color, sound, odor, flavor, touch, impression; no eye-species up to and including no perceptual-consciousness-species; no Ignorance and no elimination of Ignorance, up to and including no senility and death and no elimination of senility and death; no suffering, its causes, its transcendence, the path toward its transcendence; no Wisdom and no attainment. Since there is no attainment, by sublimation through Transcendent Wisdom, a Bodhisattva's mind has no attachment. Since there is no attachment, there is no fear. There is freedom from perversive delusions, and Nirvana is realized."

"Buddhas of the past, present and future attain the Unsurpassable Right and Full Enlightenment by sublimation through Transcendent Wisdom. Therefore sublimation through Transcendent Wisdom is known to be the great wondrous mantra, the great open mantra, the unsurpassable mantra, the no-equal-rank mantra, capable of eliminating all suffering, truthful and without deceit. Hence, the mantra of sublimation through Transcendent Wisdom is to be proclaimed." So He utters the mantra:

Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha

The Section on Bodhisattva Mahasthanaprapta's Achieving Complete Unification through Chanting Buddha's Name of the Surangama Sutra

From the Chinese translation by Paramiti
Translated into English by Yutang Lin

The Dharma Prince Mahasthanaprapta and fifty-one Bodhisattvas of his kind rose from their seats and prostrated to Buddha by touching His feet with the top of their heads. Then Mahasthanaprapta told Buddha: As I recall, a long time ago, as many kalpas back as the number of sands of the river Ganges, there was a Buddha in the world, named *Immeasurable Light Buddha*. Beginning with this Buddha, during one kalpa, there were twelve Buddhas, one succeeding the other. The last Buddha of this sequence was named *Transcending Sun and Moon Light*. That Buddha taught me the Samadhi of Chanting Buddha's Name.

For example, if there are two persons, and one keeps remembering the other, while the other keeps forgetting the first, then such two persons either come across each other without a meeting together, or see each other without a mutual recognition. If two persons remember each other dearly and deeply, then even from life to life, they would stay together, like a body and its shadow, in unseparable harmony.

Buddhas of the Ten Directions compassionately remember sentient beings, just as a mother remembers a child. If the child runs away, what is the use of her remembrance? If the child remembers the mother just as the mother remembers the child, then the mother and the child will not be far apart even through many lives. If sentient beings wholeheartedly remember Buddha and chant the name of Buddha, then immediately or in the future they will surely see Buddha. Being not far from Buddha, hence, not dependent on disciplines, they will naturally open up their minds. Just as the body of a person imbued with perfume will smell fragrant, likewise this practice is named the *Adornment with Fragrance and Light*.

While I was in the causal stage I realized the Patience of Non-Born through the mind that chants Buddha's name. Now I stay in this world to attract people who chant Buddha's name in order to guide them to return to the Pureland. Buddha, you inquire about how I attained complete unification. I had no preference over using any one of the six sensory organs, but withdrew from all the distractions produced through them, and maintained the continuation of pure thoughts by chanting Buddha's name, thus I attained Samadhi. Hence, I recommend this practice to be the foremost one.

3. Chanting of Mantras (three times each)

Chinese Pin Yin is used to transliterate the mantras below.

The Mantra of Amitabha Buddha:

Weng A Mi Da Wa Xie

The Mantra of Avalokitesvara:

Weng Ma Ni Bei Mi Hong

The Mantra of Mahasthanaprapta (Vajrapani):

Weng Ban Zha Ba Ni Hong Pei

The Mantra of Great Compassion:

Na Mo Ye La Zha Ya Ya

Na Mo A Ya Ga La San Ga Ya

Pi Lu Zha Na

Bu Ha La Zha Ya

Da Ta Ga Da Ya

Na Mo Sa Wa Da Ta Ga Da Bei

A Ha Dei Bei

San Ya Ga San Bu Dei Bei

Na Mo A Ya A Wa Luo Ke Bei Xia Ya Ya

Pu Ti Sa Duo Ya

Ma Ha Sa Duo Ya

Ma Ha Ga Lu Ni Ga Ya

Da Ya Ta Weng

Da Ra Da Ra

Di Li Di Li

Du Lu Du Lu

Yi Zha Wei Zha

Zha Lei Zha Lei

Zha Zha Lei Zha Zha Lei

Gu Shu Mei Gu Shu Mei Wa Lei

Yi Li Mi Li

Zi Di Za Ra

Ma Ba La Ye Suo Ha

The Mantra of Rebirth-in-the-Pureland:

Na Mo O Mi Duo Po Ye

Duo Tuo Qie Duo Ye

Duo Di Ye Tuo

O Mi Li Duo Po Pi
O Mi Li Duo Xi Dan Po Pi
O Mi Li Duo Pi Jia Lan Di
O Mi Li Duo Pi Jia Lan Duo
Qia Mi Ni
Qia Qia Nuo
Zhi Dan Qie Li
Suo Po Huo

4. Chanting "Amitabha"

Set a number yourself for your repetitions. For example, start with one thousand repetitions daily and gradually increase your number of repetitions.

5. Dedication of Merits

May the merits of this practice be shared by all sentient beings!

May all beings in the Dharmadhatu soon adopt this Pureland practice!

May we accumulate immeasurable merits before the end of this life!

May we be welcomed by Amitabha Buddha when it is our time to depart from this world!

May we get rebirth in the Utmost Joy Pureland and realize our own Buddha nature!

Epilogue

I finished compiling the Pureland Daily Practice in the evening of August 21, 1989. The next morning, just before I woke up, I dreamed that in my house on top of a bookcase there were three boxes of birdies just hatched from their eggs, and in my dining room all over the floor were tiny white swans with golden beaks also just hatched from their eggs.

I believe that this is a very auspicious omen, signifying that many practitioners will be reborn through adopting this Pureland Daily Practice. The birdies on top of the bookcase signify that the practice is based on knowledge, yet goes beyond studies. The swans on the floor in the dining room signify that those practitioners who do the practice as regularly as people taking meals, will obtain solid grounding.

I recorded and explained this dream in order to encourage and add faith to the practitioners of this practice. May the blessings of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha be with you always!

Appendix A

The Heart of Sublimation through Limitless-Oneness Compassion Sastra (Heart Sastra)

Dr. Yutang Lin

Wherever Bodhisattva Manjusri practices sublimation through Limitless-Oneness Compassion effortlessly, He intuitively understands that the five aggregates are of one essence, thus enduring all suffering and difficulties. "Sudhana! Phenomena are inseparable from essence, and essence is inseparable from phenomena; phenomena are identical to essence, and essence is identical to phenomena. Feeling, conceptualization, motivation and consciousness are also inseparable from and identical to essence."

"Sudhana! The Limitless-Oneness of all these things transcends existence and non-existence, attraction and repulsion, plurality and singularity. Therefore the Limitless-Oneness contains phenomena, contains feeling, conceptualization, motivation, consciousness; contains eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; contains color, sound, odor, flavor, touch, impression; contains eye-species up to and including perceptual-consciousness-species; contains Ignorance and elimination of Ignorance, up to and including senility and death and elimination of senility and death; contains suffering, its causes, its transcendence, the path toward its transcendence; and transcends Loving-kindness and loss. Since there is transcendence of loss, by sublimation through Limitless-Oneness Compassion, a Bodhisattva's mind is free from attachment. Since there is no attachment, there is no criticism. There is freedom from prejudiced discriminations, and Nirvana is realized."

"Buddhas of the past, present and future attain the Unsurpassable Right and Full Enlightenment by sublimation through Limitless-Oneness Compassion. Therefore sublimation through Limitless-Oneness Compassion is known to be the great mind mantra, the great loving-kindness mantra, the indiscrimination mantra, the all-encompassing mantra, capable of enduring all suffering, absolute and joyous. Hence, the mantra of sublimation through Limitless-Oneness Compassion is to be proclaimed." So He utters the mantra:

Tolerance, tolerance, tolerance for all, tolerance with joy, bodhi svaha!

Appendix B

Unification of Mind and Wind

A wonderful method of chanting "Amitabha"

Written in Chinese by Dr. Yutang Lin

Translated by Chun-Jane Chen

Edited by Anne Klein

I. Introduction

The ancient sages of the Pureland School passed down a method of chanting "Amitabha," which combines the mind and the wind (breathing), that is, chanting while concentrating on breathing. This method enables one to achieve single-mindedness while chanting "Amitabha." The practice of Buddhist Tantra is based on the teaching of the undifferentiability of mind and wind; therefore, they aim at achieving the unification of mind and wind through mental and/or breathing training. However, the practice of Tantra requires devoted and intensive engagement, and hence, it is not within the reach of everyone.

In this article, I would like to introduce a method which is based on the original practice of the Pureland School, but enriched with a simplified tantric visualization for ordinary Buddhists to practice. Thereby, we may soon achieve the goal of purifying one's own mind. This method consists of deep breathing; therefore, it is also beneficial to one's health. It is indeed a wonderful practice, having many merits. I would hope that Buddhists who engage in this practice of chanting "Amitabha" will spread this method to others so they can share the benefits.

II. The Practice

Sit or stand in a place with fresh air; chant "Amitabha" silently, slowly and continuously. Visualize the air of the entire universe being transformed into the white light of wisdom and compassion by Amitabha Buddha. Close your mouth, and slowly inhale the air through the nostrils to the abdomen; visualize that after the light has entered, it fills your entire body. Hold the breath for a few moments. Slowly exhale through your nostrils, simultaneously visualizing that all your sickness, karmic hindrances and sorrows are transformed into black, foul-smelling air, leaving through the nostrils. This black air is then purified by Amitabha's light of limitless Buddha power.

Keep repeating the above breathing and visualization. Visualize your body continuously being filled with Amitabha's light, and your karmic hindrances and sorrows being reduced more and more. During the last round of practice, think of your entire body as cool, fresh and bright, with all your karmic hindrances and sorrows eradicated. Then, fold your palms

together, thank Amitabha Buddha for the blessing, and pray for all sentient beings to receive this grace.

Beginners should practice continuously for fifteen minutes or less; later on, the session may be gradually prolonged. The period of breath holding should be increased naturally and non-forcefully.

September 19, 1990
El Cerrito, California, U.S.A.

Appendix C

On Chanting "Amitabha"

Under the guidance of the Buddhist Yogi C. M. Chen

Written by Dr. Yutang Lin

The most popular practice adopted by Buddhists is the chanting of "**Amitabha**," the sacred name of the Buddha of the Western Pureland. Whenever I talk to people, I like to talk about the benefits of doing this practice. I talk from my own experiences and understanding of Buddha's teachings. Since many people know only a little about Buddhism, I present my ideas in simple words, with the sincere hope that the benefits will be shared by all who are prompted to do this practice.

Let me, first of all, talk from my own experiences:

In 1976, when I was a graduate student in the Group in Logic and the Methodology of Science at the University of California, Berkeley, I came across a Chinese Gong-fu novel **Tian Long Ba Bu** (i.e., the eight departments of gods, dragons, etc.) The author incorporates some Buddhist philosophy into his story. Driven by a Logician's fondness for accuracy, I wanted to verify his version of the Buddhist philosophy, hence I went to the East Asiatic Library on campus. Alas! There were thousands of books on Buddhism in the library, and I didn't know where to start. Back home in Taipei we had a copy of the **Diamond Sutra** on the altar, so I felt a kind of familiarity with it. Thus, I began my study on Buddhism by reading various annotations on this Sutra. The next three years I read quite a few books on Buddhism; gradually my interest shifted toward the study of classical Chan (Zen) stories (i.e., the Gong-An's of Chan masters.) Nevertheless, I gradually came to realize that reading by itself is not a reliable method. On the one hand, my interpretation of the same story would change from time to time, and I wouldn't know when I had the right one; on the other hand, even if my understanding of the philosophy were quite good, it was not readily applicable when I had to face the facts of life. The practice of chanting "**Amitabha**" is consistent with the profound philosophy of Buddhism. As long as I couldn't grasp the essence of Chan at once, I might just as well adopt this practice, the step-by-step path which is generally recommended for being safe and sound.

I worked rather hard on it; I tried to stick with it all the time. While chanting "**Amitabha**" I would even ignore visiting friends or relatives. Three months later I felt mentally and physically a bit more relaxed than before. During my first year of doing this practice, I chanted, on the average, ten thousand "**Namo Amitabha Buddha**" per day. Gradually I gained some supernatural experiences. At the time my accumulation had reached four million repetitions, I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to move on to the tantric path of Tibetan Buddhism. I voluntarily gave up my social activities so that I had more time for my practices. On the day after I received my Ph.D., I donated all my logic books

to either the Math Library or the Logic Group's small library. I have been a full-time Buddhist practitioner ever since.

Although I'm now doing the more advanced tantric practices, I still adhere to my daily chanting of 1,000 repetitions of "**Amitabha**." Since our lives are impermanent, if I fail to realize the tantric goal of attaining Full Enlightenment within this body, I'll definitely need to reach out for the salving hand of Amitabha Buddha. Until today (12/09/92) I have accumulated 8,426,000 repetitions of "**Amitabha**." After each and every Dharma activity I always turn the merits to all sentient beings for their rebirth in Amitabha's Pureland.

Let me tell you one of my supernatural experiences:

Some people think that chanting Buddha's name is superstitious or self-hypnotic. In fact, the numerous records of Buddha's miraculous responses to faithful Buddhists' appeals are still well preserved today in the Buddhist literature. They certify that, although supernatural experiences are not common to people in general, Buddha's answer to our calls can be realized. However, there are still people who do not accept these records as evidential, and even consider these as mere propagandas. Thus I, serving as an eyewitness, would like to reveal my own story.

If I cited my dreams as examples, the critics would say: "You are so crazy about Buddha while you are awake; no wonder you dream of Buddha when you sleep. How could this be accepted as an example of supernatural experiences? It is nothing but your own imagination!" Therefore, the example I give below is not a dream; it happened when I was fully conscious and among a group of over 1,000 people.

The 16th Karmapa, the spiritual head of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, came to San Francisco six years ago. My guru Yogi Chen led my wife, our son, and me to attend the Black Crown Ceremony bestowed by His Holiness. The origin of this ceremony is, briefly, as follows: the first Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa, attained Buddhahood and manifested as the Buddha Chakrasamvara; simultaneously 100,000 dakinis (i.e., female Buddhas) gathered around and cheered him in celebration. Each and every one of them offered him one thread of her hair, and the hairs are woven into the Black Crown for him to wear.

Since then there have been 15 reincarnations of Karmapa, and they all wear this holy crown. However, this spiritual crown is not visible to the ordinary human eye; only those with great faith or high spiritual attainment may witness its presence. The fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shegpa, was invited by the Chinese emperor Yong Le of the Ming dynasty to go to Nan-jing. So he went to China and gave the emperor many tantric teachings. Once during a ceremony the emperor witnessed the presence of the spiritual Black Crown on his teacher's head, hence he ordered a replica made and offered it to Karmapa. Karmapa accepted the gift and agreed to the emperor's request that whoever sees this crown will receive the same blessings as seeing the spiritual one.

Thus began the tradition of Karmapa's Black Crown Ceremony, and each generation of Karmapa had conducted it over and over again to bless the faithful. Before the ceremony my guru taught me the mantra of Karmapa, and instructed me to recite it during the ceremony so as to become more receptive to the blessings. Guru Chen also explained to me that concurrent with the present Karmapa's wearing the crown, the first Karmapa would be spiritually present and we should stand up to express our respect.

The ceremony began with lamas reciting the ritual text and playing the ritual music, then His Holiness put the Black Crown upon His head. We stood up and I continued to recite the mantra in my heart. Right at that instant, when the Crown rested on His head, a strong force filled me. My blood circulation sped up and the force was so powerful that I shouted out the mantra in spite of myself. In the presence of so many people during a meditative ceremony, I knew quite well what my manners should have been. Nevertheless, such a force had never been experienced by me before, nor did I expect it. It simply came and took me over. Karmapa supported the Crown with His right hand, while reciting the mantra of Avalokitesvara and counting a crystal rosary with His left hand.

At the end of one round of the 108 beads, His Holiness took the Crown off. The force was with me all that time and the outburst of chanting from my mouth—to be more precise, from my heart—just kept going. Then, with the coming down of the Crown, the force left me, and my chanting quieted down. I was baptized by the Grace of Karmapa, the Dharma King. My experience, in Buddhist term, is called the sign of receiving initiations. In other words, I had, in fact, received the blessings. I was the only one there who did the shouting.

Afterwards I asked only my wife and our son to see if they also shared the same experience; they did not feel the force. It is not because Karmapa's blessings are partial to anyone, rather it's because I had accumulated over four million repetitions of "**Amitabha**," and that made me spiritually more receptive to the Grace of Karmapa. I hope that the above eyewitness account would help people understand that Buddhism is not just a philosophy, but also contains spiritual contents that could be experienced.

Living in this world, each one of us has more or less some worries. The universal problems of overpopulation on Earth, safety of the uses of nuclear energy, environmental pollution by industrial wastes, etc., plus the personal problems of health, career, social relations, family, etc., all weave into a web of sorrows. We would seem to be no better than the insects hanging on a spider's web. Aging, sickness and death arrive in no time, and we have no escape from them. Our lifelong efforts in the pursuit of wealth, fame, fun and pleasures will neither prevent the misfortunes nor prolong our lives.

Upon death all worldly efforts become futile, and the habit of worldly worries would render a peaceful departure impossible. Worldly things and worldly concerns take up the best of our time and energies, bring us numerous sorrows, and disturb us unceasingly up to our final moments. Were death the end of our consciousness, then the suffering would last but one lifetime. There are numerous records of reincarnations in the histories of mankind;

how could we just ignore them as insufficient proof? Even today there are new evidential cases of reincarnation reported by researching scientists.

Buddhism teaches that our mentality at our final moments has the most influence on the outcome of our next rebirth. Shouldn't we reflect upon the goals and ways of our lives? Wouldn't it be better to go after a way of life guided by the wisdom of Buddha who is free from all sufferings? The teachings of Buddha are applicable, not only to our individual ways of life, but also to the direction and path for the human race. In a word, Buddha teaches us to "Forget yourself; Serve others!" A detailed and precise presentation of Buddha's teachings is beyond the scope of this talk, hence we go no further on this.

However, I would like to emphasize the fact that Buddhist practices can lead to the following:

1. The development of inner strength and tranquility that pacifies the storms of life.
2. The increase of favorable circumstances and the reduction of misfortunes.
3. The ability to give effective help to others through meditative prayers.

Above all, the most precious thing about Buddhism is its ultimate goal of achieving complete liberation from all suffering for all sentient beings.

There are Buddhist books collecting records of people who had obtained rebirth in the Pureland of Amitabha. Due to their diligent practice of chanting "**Amitabha**," many of them knew in advance the time of their departure from this life. Hence they could make their final arrangements in time, and bade friends and relatives adieu with grace, as if they were about to set out on a long journey. Moreover, their departures were often accompanied by miraculous phenomena, such as the coming of Amitabha Buddha with His holy attendants to welcome the dying person, supernatural lights, heavenly music coming from the sky, and/or extraneous fragrance, etc. In contrast, we ordinary people neither know when we'll have to leave, nor have any guaranty for a peaceful ending.

We may encounter an inopportune death, such as drowning, freezing, being shot, crushed or burned to death, or death due to diseases like cancer, heart attack or AIDS. After death we would go through endless transmigrations in the six realms—heaven, asura, human, animal, hungry ghost and hell—and endure countless repetitions of sufferings; while those who have gone to the Pureland of Amitabha Buddha are forever free from this vicious recycling of sorrows; we couldn't help but envy them. Fortunately Buddha's teachings are not patented by them; owing to the boundless compassion of Buddha, as long as we are willing to learn and practice the teachings diligently, we shall be at ease with life and death, and be liberated from all suffering.

Buddha gave various teachings to different people, always choosing the most appropriate one to suit the students' levels and needs. All the teachings from Buddha are sure paths leading to complete liberation, but which one is the best for ordinary people? The

traditional choice is the practice of chanting "**Amitabha**." Even today it remains the most popular practice adopted by Buddhists all over the world.

From the Talk above we know that Buddhist philosophy is based on empirical spirituality and that Buddhist practices are indeed beneficial. Now I am going to explain the practice of chanting "**Amitabha**," using learning to swim as my favorite analogy. No matter how many books on swimming you have studied in great details, if you haven't tried it out in water, you won't be able to swim! Children who live by the ocean and play daily in the water learn to swim in no time, without reading any book on the subject. Most of them can even dive, surf and somersault in water; they are at ease and have a lot of fun! Of course, if they were to become experts, reading the right books would be helpful. But if their goal is simply to be able to swim, then reading becomes unnecessary. Likewise, studying Buddhist books is very important, but understanding the teachings without carrying out the practices will not float you through the tidal waves of life. Chanting "**Amitabha**," at the beginning, is like children wading; although with just a few tries a day, gradually they learn to float.

Numerous are the books on Buddhism; abstract and complicated are the terms and theories contained therein. One could hardly expect a thorough grasp of its essence in a short time. Furthermore, real understanding of the teachings can be gained only through the extraordinary experiences that come with the actual practices. The habit and experiences of chanting "**Amitabha**" will enable one to gain insights into Buddha's teachings. Moreover, the essential benefits of Buddhism would be tasted by the practitioners, and this is what really matters.

As modern men we generally have good common sense about diet and hygiene. We are selective and particular as to what to eat, how much to take, and how to combine and prepare the food. In contrast, we are generally quite careless about our consumption of spiritual foods. Willy-nilly we take in the commercials and gossips from television programs, newspapers or magazines. Upon reflection we would seem to be a spiritual dump filled up with all kinds of junk. This junk will not get us out of our sorrows; yet they are sure to incite our worldly desires or reinforce our prejudices.

Thus we become even tenser and more sorrowful. What a waste of life! If we build up the habit of chanting "**Amitabha**," it would be like drinking milk or fresh water, or eating nutritious food. A sorrowful mind is like a glass of muddy water; as the pure drops of "**Amitabha**" drip in continuously, at first the muddy water runs over, finally it becomes a cup of clear water—pure, clean and ready to serve. People who chant "**Amitabha**" not only benefit themselves. They will try to persuade others to do the same so as to share the same benefits. They will also help dying people by chanting "**Amitabha**" near the deathbed, or pray for people who are in trouble. In fact, the basic principle behind all Buddhist practices is to help all beings to achieve Buddhahood. Hence chanting "**Amitabha**" would transform one into, so to speak, a glass of fresh water that would quench others' thirst.

The holy name "**Amitabha**" can purify our minds, because Buddha transmits His blessings through it. Beginners could hardly sense this; old-timers may become aware of it. It is analogous to tuning in for a radio or television station. "**Amitabha**" is the particular frequency or channel that we want; our practice of chanting it, is an attempt to tune in. Beginners, with all sorts of worldly concerns in their minds, cannot concentrate on the chanting. Even while they are chanting "**Amitabha**" loud and clear, deep down inside there are still many thoughts running through, therefore, they are not tuning in to Buddha. No wonder beginners cannot see Buddha's presence. Nevertheless, it is more a matter of sincerity and concentration than time, so it is also possible for a beginner to sense Buddha's grace, especially in the case of people who had done much practice in their previous lives. In general, however, we need to build up the habit of chanting "**Amitabha**," then gradually its strength will overcome our indulgence in worldly thoughts. Only then, with a pure mind, can we feel the transmission of power from Buddha. Like a 24-hour radio station, Buddha is transmitting His grace constantly; but we are unaware of it, simply because our minds are not tuning in.

Some advanced practitioners have witnessed the existence of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the dream state; the more advanced ones have seen the holy ones in meditation, which is a state of high concentration with ease. Some practitioners have even visited the Pureland of Amitabha Buddha either in dream or in meditation. These dreams differ from the ordinary ones in that the contents are orderly, symbolic and in agreement with the teachings; they can be recognized by experienced practitioners and be interpreted systematically.

Some of these dreams show concurrent distant events, foretell the future or impart teachings; they are indeed meditative states of a lesser degree. We should not discard them as mere dreams and confound them with the ordinary ones that reflect and extend our confusions, desires, and emotions.

When worry comes, it wouldn't be stopped—we would lose our appetite, forget our thirst, and sometimes even stay awake all night worrying. Suppose you say to yourself: "I won't think about this anymore!" Such a thought just shows that you are still tied up with it. So it seems that there would be no easy way to leave one's worries behind. Moreover, the things that vex us are various and abundant. On our backs we are carrying so many burdens picked up along the road of life—no wonder the years could have hunched our backs. Chanting "**Amitabha**" is a simple yet sure way out.

All worldly thoughts and emotions are intertwined. The whole complex could be activated by the slightest stirring of any limb, although we might not be sensitive enough to be aware of this. It is not unusual for trivial arguments to lead to big fights, or minor misbehavior to be taken as great offenses; all the tiny, insignificant annoyances in the past may be triggered by a careless remark into a volcanic eruption. The holy name "**Amitabha**" is transcendental and free from the whirlpool of sorrows. It is ideal to do this practice at the same time daily, for at least a certain number of repetitions. The fixed schedule would help us to form the habit of practicing daily. The preset minimum number

of repetitions would make sure that our practice won't deteriorate. Ideally, one should gradually raise his minimum to a higher number, just as swimmers would gradually increase their number of laps.

Besides the daily practice, it would be helpful to chant "**Amitabha**" whenever possible, e.g., while driving, waiting, bathing, doing chores, etc., and even in dreams. One may chant "**Namo Amitabha Buddha**" (meaning homage to the Amitabha Buddha, and the name "**Amitabha**" means boundless light and infinite life), "**Amitabha Buddha**," or simply, but with equal reverence, "**Amitabha**." As time goes by, our hands will slowly be untied from holding the big bags of sorrows on our backs. Then one day, all of a sudden, the bags will be off our backs, because we have joined our hands with Amitabha's.

Jogging has been a popular exercise in recent years because it is simple, effective and beneficial. Nevertheless, it wouldn't be very useful, unless you did it regularly and persistently. Chanting "**Amitabha**" resembles jogging in that profound changes would ensue only after long-term practices. Chanting "**Amitabha**" is the spiritual jogging for our minds; it will increase our wisdom and endurance, and produce a healthy and mature mentality. Why don't we get into the habit of spiritual jogging? We may even unify the physical jogging with the mental one. Just add the chanting to your jogging by running to the beat of "**Amitabha, Amitabha, Amitabha, ...**"

The resulting concentration will improve the effectiveness of your jogging. Moreover, the mental jogging becomes a daily rush toward the spiritual summit of Enlightenment. Daily the repetitions would bring us a certain height upward. The spiritual strength which ensues would shelter us against the storms of life; the spiritual power that may be acquired by devotees could even render help to sentient beings in distress.

We would like to take care of our family members, especially aging parents and growing kids. Nevertheless, unless we ourselves are dependable and well-off, we could even become a millstone to the family. Who in the world has the guaranty that no accident will befall him? The habit of chanting "**Amitabha**" would invoke Buddha's mercy to protect us—afflictions would be eased and things would change for the better. One who constantly chants "**Amitabha**" keeps a pure mind; he would naturally do no harm, but good. Consequently he will be well-received by society, and live a stable and happy life.

Taking good care of our folks involves not only the provision of physical comforts and mental amusements, but it is also important to comply with their wishes and likings. But, most of all, we should endeavor to help them feel peaceful and calm when they are sick or dying. This is of course no easy job, but it is not impossible. The best thing to do is to convert the whole family into Buddhists; preferably all would gather together to do this chanting day by day. This will bring about a harmonic and peaceful atmosphere in the family. When someone in the family is sick or dying, remind him to chant "**Amitabha**" and the rest of the family would take turn in chanting along beside him. Under Buddha's

blessings the one-mindedness of the whole family would relieve the suffering and conquer the distress. Best of all, the deceased would get rebirth in Amitabha's Pureland.

Even when the person needing help, be he a family member or not, has no experience of Buddhist practices, he may still receive Buddha's blessings through our chanting and praying for him. It is customary for Buddhists to pray for the joy and happiness of all sentient beings. I believe that our sincere concern for others' well-being should include easing their pains and sufferings, especially when they are sick or dying. Handing patients over to the hospital, leaving the funeral to the undertaker, and paying the bills are not good enough; we should strive for spiritual help that are direct and most significant to the sick or dying. These considerations are among the reasons that led me to give up worldly activities for Buddhist practices.

The practice of chanting "**Amitabha**" won't cost you a dime. Maintaining the holy name in your heart will keep your mind clear and pure. Isn't it better than indulging in self-centered wishful thoughts compounded with emotional entanglements? At least it would be more relaxing and effortless. I have savored the flavor of chanting "**Amitabha**," and I do pray that you will also have the same good fortune. Please realize your chance by trying it out. Good luck and best wishes!

July 27, 1986
Written during a retreat

Epilogue

This article focused on the chanting of the holy name of **Amitabha Buddha**, but the ideas therein are not limited to this specific holy name only. For those who want to practice chanting, they may select other Buddhist holy names or mantras according to personal inclinations, for example, **Namo Healing Buddha**, **Namo Avalokitesvara** (Guan Yin) **Bodhisattva**, **Namo Ksitigarbha** (Di Zang) **Bodhisattva**, **Om Mani Peme Hung**, etc. The key point is to engage oneself deeply into one practice, i.e., to base one's chanting practice mainly on one specific holy name or mantra and practice it frequently. For other holy names and mantras besides the main one, one may chant a few repetitions during regular morning or evening sessions or at some other time. The wisdom and compassion of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are based on Non-Self, and they are indivisible in Limitless-Oneness. Therefore, one may choose any one of their names or mantras for practice.

This supplementary explanation is added in response to Ms. Yun-hua Huang's request.

April 9, 1998

A Study for the Cultivation of Harmony, California

My Bodhicitta Vows

(Used for Dedication of Merits)

Dr. Yutang Lin

- 1. May virtuous gurus remain with us and those departed return soon!*
- 2. May perverse views and violence soon become extinct and Dharma spread without hindrance!*
- 3. May all beings proceed diligently on the path and achieve Buddhahood before death!*
- 4. May all beings develop Great Compassion and never regress until they reach perfect Buddhahood!*
- 5. May all beings develop Great Wisdom and never regress until they reach perfect Buddhahood!*

Acknowledgement

Thanks to disciple Ji Hu for formatting the current digital version of this booklet.

Thanks to Buddhist friends who helped produce the earlier versions.

NOT FOR SALE

Under the guidance of the Buddhist Yogi C. M. Chen
Written and Published by Dr. Yutang Lin

© 2013 Yutang Lin

For your free copy
Please write to:
Thao Nguyen
tnguyen0409@yahoo.com

