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# PATH TO PURE LAND

THE FINAL TEACHING OF UPASAKA XIA LIAN JU

淨修捷要英文版

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## UPASAKA XIA LIAN JU'S FOREWORD

The Dharma-door of Amitabha Pureland is the rarest and most profound Dharma ; even though it is simple to cultivate, few ever have the extraordinary privilege to faithfully do so. Unless a person is willing to be devotedly courageous and venture forth into the deep blue Sea of Dharma, he will never realize the profound insight of the Buddha.

In the Avatamsaka Sutra, the Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra takes refuge in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva Vasubandhu cultivates the path towards Pure Land through the five virtuous intentions of reverence and refuge, praise and admiration, great vows, discernment and merit dedication.

Today in the Dharma-ending Age, many practice Buddhism only superficially. Such cultivators cannot easily understand the Dharma-door of Amitabha, which is the Buddha's highest and deepest teaching. Only by diligently reading and becoming familiar with the great Mahayana Sutras can one experience the profound wisdom of Amitabha.

Furthermore, a majority of those who cultivate the Dharma-door of Pureland today uphold only the Shorter Sutra of Amitabha, and only the version translated by Kumarajiva. It is rare indeed to find someone who also practices Xuanzang's translations and upholds the Longer Sutra of Infinite Life.

Thus, even though many study this Dharma-door, only a few truly, sincerely and faithfully cultivate it. A man with insufficient faith and wavering resolve cannot hope to truly benefit from this Dharma-door.

In 1880, when I was gravely ill, I vowed to consolidate and streamline the Buddha's sutras so as to facilitate easy acceptance and understanding--to realize the Patriarch's vision of creating a simplified practice (Path to Pure Land) for the masses and beginners. Enabling them to receive the Buddha's responses within the three karmas of body (prostration), speech (recitation) and mind (mindfulness).

This practice is also in full accord with the five virtuous intentions. Those who cultivate this practice will be able to expel all of their wandering thoughts.

Moreover, as each prostration is immediately followed by recitation of the Buddha's name and passages from the sutras, right mindfulness can manifest while false thoughts are given no opportunity to creep in. Not only can one accomplish the thirty two recitations and prostrations of this practice within in a short amount of time, the merit and virtue accumulated will be vast and incomparable. As of now, the Path to Pure Land is on its fourth printing and many have benefitted greatly from it.

Compared to other ways of cultivation, this practice saves both time and energy, thus proving itself to be a great convenience in today's busy environment. Anyone who regularly cultivates this practice will see their heart fuse with the Sagely sapience found herein. Eventually, they will be at one with their Buddha-nature and profound wisdom will arise naturally without the need for deep study, discourse or analysis. Cultivation of this practice is the same as cultivating Non-abidance and achieving the purity of the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Afterwards, when they read the great sutras, they will encounter no obstacles ; achieving rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss becomes as easy as sailing downstream amid favorable winds.

Every word herein is sourced from the sutras and must therefore be treated with respect and recited with sincerity. Cultivate it in the manner of Bodhisattva Vasubandhu's five virtuous intentions and four principles of deference, single-mindedness, uninterrupted recitation and lifelong devotion. Do so and the rare, esoteric and subtle wisdom of the Buddha will reveal itself to you.

Upasaka Xia Lian Ju

## THE THIRTY TWO RECITATIONS AND PROSTRATIONS

### *Incense Praise*

*Let this true incense of Sila and Samadhi constitute a pious offering, and may its virtuous smoke saturate and increase the good roots of all who are touched by it.*

*May delightful fragrances and bright inner light pervade across the ten quarters, sincerely drawing in the Buddha's compassionate blessings and protection.*

*Namo Incense Cloud Canopy Bodhisattva Mahasattva (recite thrice)*

1) With one heart, contemplate and revere the Patriarch of the Saha World, the Teacher of the Nine Realms, the Tathagata and World-Honored One. He patiently displayed the Eight Stages of Attaining Bodhi whilst dwelling among the five turbidities, and it was he who showed joyous Great Compassion towards sentient beings by speaking the Dharma, opening their Dharma-eye, blocking the path to the evil realms, opening the way to virtue and propagating the simple but profound Dharma-door that liberates all beings. A great benefactor and esteemed eminence, the Original Patriarch of Dharma, Shakyamuni Buddha.

*Namo Original Patriarch Shakyamuni Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

2) With one heart, contemplate and revere the Patriarch of the Land of Ultimate Bliss. When he was still sowing the seeds of Bodhi he heard the profound Dharma. Henceforth, he vowed to attain Unsurpassed Upright Realization, to abide in true wisdom and to deracinate the causes of the never-ending pain of birth and death. Thus, he abdicated his crown and joined the Sangha, becoming a monk called Dharmakara. He cultivated the Bodhisattva Way and amassed merit and virtue for limitless kalpas. His great and exalted vows were soon perfected and his name now encompasses tens of thousands of virtues. Moreover, his name is praised across the ten quarters for he is the guide to salvation—Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha ( prostrate once and recite thrice).*

3) With one heart, contemplate and revere the western direction, where hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddha-lands away, there is a Buddha-land called Ultimate Bliss. When Dharmakara attained Unsurpassed Bodhi, he became known as Amita and assumed the title Tathagata of Infinite Life and Light, Worthy of Offerings, Impartial and Enlightened. This title perfectly represents the ten honors of Buddhahood. He dwells amidst complete augustness and boundless merit, in the Pure Land—Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

4) With one heart, contemplate and revere the pure Dharmakaya. It exists everywhere, neither arises nor ceases to be, neither comes nor goes, and cannot be truly understood or expressed through language and duality. Fulfilling the vows promising salvation to all sentient beings, the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss and the Land of Sole and Lasting Light welcomes sentient beings from the entire Dharma-realm, allowing them to leave the sufferings of the Saha World behind and attain everlasting bliss. Greatly Benevolent Greatly Compassionate, Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

5) With one heart, contemplate and revere the perfect Sambhogakaya. Wherever it abides, there is never even a hint of suffering, calamities, evil realms and demon skandhas. Moreover, there will also exist not the harsh and volatile phenomena of summer, winter, rain, storm clouds and darkness. Always boundless, spacious, smooth, upright, full of wondrous beauty and surpassing all the worlds of the ten quarters—the adorned and exalted Pure Land—Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

6) With one heart, contemplate and revere the infinite lifespans, infinite bright light, the Bodhisattva disciples, the Shravakas and devas, all endowed with everlasting life. The land and the name surpasses anything found in the ten quarters and are free from both decline and impermanence ; rare, exalted and built to last for all eternity—Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

7) With one heart, contemplate and revere the Buddha of Infinite Life, also known as the Infinite Light Buddha and the Buddha of Boundless, Unhindered and Unsurpassed Light. Moreover, he is also praised as the light of wisdom, everlasting light, pure light, joyous light, light of liberation, light of peace and refuge, light surpassing that of the sun and moon and unimaginable light. Peerless and unrivaled, the King of Buddhas, Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

8) With one heart, contemplate and revere infinite light and life. The brightness of the Tathagata and World-Honored One shines across the entirety of the ten quarters. Sentient beings whose cultivation allows them to meet such light will see their virtues bloom and their defilements wither to dust. Their minds and bodies become easeful and flexible ; all afflictions cease and every anxiety dissolves. Of all such mighty and divine bright light, his is the foremost and even the light of all the Buddhas of the ten quarters cannot match it—Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

9) With one heart, contemplate and revere the Land of Ultimate Bliss and its Patriarch, who is seated upon his throne and exuding majestic merit. His august appearance and shining brightness illuminates all the worlds of the entire universe without exception. Like a radiant golden colossus rising from the sea, drowning out the light of everything and everyone else. The Buddha's light is pure, clear, bright and resplendent. Reverently surrounded by innumerable Shravakas and Bodhisattvas, Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

10) With one heart, contemplate and revere the Patriarch and Guru of the Land of Ultimate Bliss, who presently appears there to speak the profound Dharma to multitudes of sentient beings. He allows them to reap immense benefit and enjoy the utmost peace and bliss. The Bodhisattvas of the ten quarters all prostrate before him, hear his Dharma, receive his blessings, and praise and make offerings to him, Amita Buddha.

*Namo Amita Buddha (prostrate once and recite thrice)*

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