


AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHINGS PRACTICED AT THE PURE LAND LEARNING CENTER



"Pure Land Learning Centers" were proposed for the first time after World War II, when the respected Mr. Shia Lian Jui began promoting the exclusive study and cultivation of the Pure Land School. Teacher Chin Kung, with over thirty years of experience from propagating the Teachings, deeply understands the Pure Land School as the foremost method for helping living beings. In recent years, he has been tirelessly spreading the Teachings in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, and the United States. The Teacher also lead in the world-wide distribution of over three million texts regarding the practice of Pure Land, in the sincere hope of bringing this benefit to the world.

The famous Buddhist scholar Mr. Kuang Shi Mei once said, "If we can receive and uphold the Pure Land Teachings, not only would we eradicate future sufferings, but we can attain peace of mind now. People who do not sincerely cultivate pure conduct would never be able to understand or experience the happiness hidden behind the practice of this wondrous method. Likewise, those who do not enter the sea of Teachings would never realize the depth behind Pure Land. If we wish to spread the Buddha's Teachings at this time and age, it is definitely necessary to bring forth the Pure Land Teachings."

I respectfully hope advisors from Pure Land Learning Centers all over the world would widely promote the proper education, explain the reasons behind cause and effect, praise the unsurpassed Pure Land Teachings, and persuade all

people to recite Amitabha's name and set their hearts on reaching the Pure Land.

The fellow members of these Centers should cultivate according to the Five Texts of Pure Land. Included are The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding, A Principle Explanation of the Amitabha Sutra, The Chapter of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Conduct and Vows, The Sutra on Contemplating Amitabha and His Pure Land, and the Chapter on the Foremost Attainment of Great Strength Bodhisattva Through Buddha Recitation. These are all essential materials for our cultivation. Only if we have additional time and energy left from studying these texts may we seek further references of relation. We stress the importance of practicing what we preach, and through sincere practice, we will carry out our vows. There are Five Courses which we

must diligently practice everyday. First are the Three Lessons. These include being filial to one's parents, being respectful and considerate towards elders and teachers, being compassionate and refraining from killing, and cultivating the Ten Kind Deeds. We should develop true understanding, establish proper views, and purify our minds. We should also observe self-discipline by refraining from wrongdoings and practicing all kindnesses. We should give rise to a mind in constant and complete understanding, and sincerely believe in the truth that if we can recite the Buddha's name as our cause, then attaining Buddhahood will be our result. Finally, we should study the Teachings and do our best in encouraging others to walk the same path.

The Six Harmonies make up the Second Course. We must learn to see things

from a common viewpoint, only through this way can we share the same understanding. To preserve a harmonious assembly, we must abide by the same rules while living together. We should never argue amongst ourselves and always share the same benefits.

The Third Course relates to the Three Learnings of self-discipline, concentration, and wisdom. The Fourth Course is the Six Principles. We should abide by these when dealing with others. It includes giving, observance of rules, endurance, diligence, concentration, and wisdom.

The Final Course is Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Ten Great Vows. First is to respect all people and treat everything with care. Second is to praise all the virtues and kind practices of others. Third is to practice giving respectfully. Fourth is to repent and reform all the faults which ob-

struct us from seeing our true nature. Fifth is to rejoice in the virtuous deeds of others and not harbor jealousy. Sixth is to request for those with true practice to widely deliver the Teachings. Seventh is to ask for the Teachers to remain by our side in guidance. Eighth is to forever hold the Buddha's teachings in our hearts. Ninth is to put down our egos and accord with the wishes of the people around us. Tenth is to dedicate the peace and happiness gained from practicing the above deeds to all living beings, hoping that they will attain the unsurpassed Understanding.

We must cherish every minute of the day and not let the Buddha's name escape our lips. We should recite with full awareness, without the slightest doubt or interruption. We must never attempt to practice other teachings aside from the one we have chosen, for if we diverge our time

and energy to another subject, we would never amount to anything. This is just like trying to reach the second floor of a building by climbing the stairs and taking the elevator at the same time; definitely an useless attempt.

It is our sincere hope the world will recognize that the cause of their problems originates from their polluted minds, and they must cleanse it from delusion and change their immoral ways. If we really want their future deeds to be filled with kindness and love, and their lives apart from suffering, we must stress the importance of accepting the lessons given in The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding. It states so clearly in the Sutra text, *"Wherever the Buddha's teachings have been received, either in cities or countrysides, people would gain inconceivable benefits. The land and people*

would be enveloped in peace. The sun and moon will shine clear and bright. Wind and rain would appear accordingly, and there will be no disasters. Nations would be prosperous and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons. People would abide by morality and accord with laws. They would be courteous and humble, and everyone would be content without injustices. There would be no thefts or violence. The strong would not dominate the weak and everyone would be settled at their proper place in society." If everyone would read and follow the teachings of this Sutra, then it is certain they will give rise to wisdom, clear away faults of the past, live a long, healthy life, and enjoy constant happiness. Furthermore, if this Sutra could be widely distributed and accepted, then Society would turn towards benevolence. This Sutra is the key to solving all our

problems and establishing peace in the world.

The advices of Elder Teachers Mr. Shia Lian Jui and Mr. Huang Nien Tsu have deeply touched us and we are de-termined to comply with their teachings. We encourage all those who share a common viewpoint with us to spread the Teachings in their individual areas. We've also requested for the everlasting guidance of Teacher Chin Kung to lead us in the cultivation of pure conduct and the study of The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding. With these, we would be able to repay the various forms of kindness shown to us by our country and the people around us. We would also have the ability to help all distressed beings out of their sufferings. This is truly a rare and precious opportunity, a most difficult chance to come by in hundreds of years.

How could we let it slip by without so much of a glance? Fellow cultivators, we must encourage each other, and together take hold of this once-in-a-lifetime chance to prepare ourselves for the return to the Pure Land within our hearts.

Respectfully,

Han Ying

Hwa Dzan Buddhist Library

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