Chapter Three

Practices of the Pure Land Buddhism and their Relevance in the Contemporary World

III.1. The Three Essential Conditions For Rebirth

There are three essential conditions for rebirth. Also called the three factors or elements, these are the corner-stones of the Pure Land Buddhism. They are also regarded as the assets and credits necessary for the rebirth in Pure Land.

So, the three essential conditions for rebirth, they are very important and principles for the practitioners; which that they are the three prerequisites of the Pure Land Dharma-door. For this reason, the practitioners, one who wishes to go to the Land of Ultimate Bliss needs the three essential conditions of Faith, Vows and the method of practice holding the Buddha’s name recitation. They are so important like that, which is why in the book of ‘The Buddha Speaks of Amitābha Sūtra’ by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua stated that “One who goes on a journey takes along some food and a little money”¹. Thus, the method of recitation the name of the Buddha requires strong determination for instance, faith, vow, and practice’. In this connection, the practitioners must understand that without a vow equals no faith. Vow without action equals no vow. Action without resolve equals no action: it also indicates that the vow is not sincere. An insincere vow means lack of true faith. A sincere vow reveals true faith and vice versa. Whenever the vow is sincere, the action that follows will be vigorous and diligent.

a. The meaning of Faith

Pure Land Buddhism is a religion of faith. We can say therefore that faith is the first essential gate to reach on to the Pure Land Path. Faith is said to precede all things

like a good seed and treasure, because one can call on it whenever a need arises. The one who wishes to be reborn in the Pure Land is assured success when one is supported by deep faith and sincere practice in the Buddha’s name recitation. For instance, without faith, one will not make the vow to be born in the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss, and will not thus realize the objective of this Sūtra.

Based on the above assumption, it can be inferred that faith means faith in Amida Buddha’s Vows to rescue all who recite His name. So, one who wishes to practice in the Pure Land Path should establish one’s faith in the Buddha. It is because the historical Buddha who attained the enlightened was the one who introduced Amida Buddha to us.

The historical Śākyamuni Buddha never tells a lie to us. The Amida Buddha, he has the great compassion to save all living beings. That is why he took the forty eight Great Vows in the past in order to take all living beings to his Pure Land. Especially, in the eighteenth vow, he has a good cause with this Saha world. It suggests that, if a person who only recites the Buddha-name ten times, he will be born in the Western Paradise. If he will not be born there, Amida Buddha will not attain the state of Buddha-hood.

Thus, it has been stated that; “If, after my obtaining Buddha-hood, all beings in the ten quarters should desire in sincerity and trustfulness to be born in my country, and if they should not be born by only thinking of me ten times…, may I not attain the highest Enlightenment”. Therefore, the practitioners have a definite reason to believe in his vows. This belief germinates from faith in one’s own self-nature, which is intrinsically identical as the practice of reciting the Buddha’s name amounts to reciting the mind.

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The practitioners must also have faith in themselves, while simultaneously believing in the law of cause and effect, etc., because the concept of Pure Land Path is entirely based on the doctrine of cause and effect. Thus, if one takes vows in the Buddha’s name, without planting good seeds, one cannot encounter the Dharma-door. Besides, if we believe that in the past we have planted good roots we will encounter this Dharma-door. Relating to this is the question: What does it mean to believe in oneself?

According to V. Master Hsuan Hua, it is to believe that you certainly have the qualifications necessary to be born in the Land of Bliss. You should not take yourself lightly and say, “I have committed so many offenses, I can’t be born there”. If you have Karma, you now have a good opportunity to take it with you to the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Regardless of the offenses you have committed in the past, if you change your mind and reform your conduct, you may be born there.

Taking your karma to the Pure Land refers to the past karma rather than the future karma. Once you have understood the Dharma, offenses should cease. If you continue to offend, you will only be making investments in future Buddha-hood. You will not, in this life, be born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss because you clearly understood and yet deliberately violated the rules of the Dharma.3

Secondly, one must have faith in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. This is due to the fact that the distinctive feature of Pure Land Buddhism is the concept of faith, which is to be understood not as the result of one’s own power (Self-power) but as a gift from the Other-Power, i.e. gift of the Amitābha Buddha to all sentient beings achieved through his works of supererogation of merits.

Finally, the practitioners must be able to pay attention to the phenomenon and noumena of the Amida Buddha. Amida Buddha is contained within the hearts of all living beings.

Similarly, all living beings are contained within the heart of *Amida Buddha*. So, we should cultivate our thoughts and perceptions according to the phenomenal and the noumenal principles. Relating to the specific phenomenon is this assumption: *Amitābha Buddha* has a great affinity with us and will certainly guide us to *Buddha*-hood. The noumenal principle is this: We know the great affinity exists because without it we would not have met the Pure Land *Dharmma*-door. Moreover, we know that, *Amida Buddha* presides over the Pure Land, *Sukhāvatī*, the Land of Ultimate Bliss in the west, in which there is none of suffering and defilement and delusion that normally blocks people’s efforts toward Enlightenment here in our world with *Saha* (Endurance). In the connection, the *Smaller Sukhāvatī Sūtra*, the Buddha reminds us about Faith in several times, as in the following state; “*Sariputra*, all of you should believe and accept my words and those of all *Buddhas*… *Sariputra*, just as I now praise the inconceivable merits and virtues of all *Buddhas*, all those *Buddhas* equally praise my inconceivable merits and virtues with the words *Śākyamuni Buddha* can accomplish extremely rare and difficult deeds! In the *Saha* World, in the evil time of the five turbidities… he can attain *Buddha*-hood for the sake of all living beings and preach this Pure Land method, which people the world over are inclined to doubt.”

Or

“舍利弗。如我今者稱讚諸佛不可思議功德。彼諸佛等。亦稱說我不可思議功德。而作是言。釋迦牟尼佛能為甚難希有之事。能於娑婆國土五濁惡世。劫濁。見濁。煩惱濁。眾生濁。命濁中。得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。為諸眾生。說是一切世間難信之法。舍利弗當知。我於五濁惡世。行此難事。得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。為一切世間。說此難信之法。是為甚難。4

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4 T.12, No. 366, p. 0348a.
According to the *Smaller Sūtra* translated such as: “Śāriputra, just as I now praise the inconceivable virtue of other Buddhas, they also praise my inconceivable virtue, saying, Śākyamuni Buddha, you have accomplished an extremely difficult and unprecedented task. In this Sahā world, during the evil period of the five defilements— those of time, views, passions, sentient beings, and lifespan--you have attained highest, perfect enlightenment and, for the sake of sentient beings, have delivered this teaching which is the most difficult in the world to accept in faith…Śāriputra, you must realize that I have accomplished this difficult task during the period of the five defilements. That is to say, having attained highest, perfect enlightenment, I have for the sake of the world delivered this teaching, which is so hard for [people] to accept in faith. This is indeed an extremely difficult task.”

Therefore, Faith is of great importance to the cultivator. Faith is one of the three pillars of Pure Land, or to use a Chinese metaphor, one of the three legs of an incense burner. However, each of the three (Faith, Vows, Practice) encompasses the other two, when carried to the utmost level. Hence, based on this observation appertained to the Phenomenal and nounomenal principles in the teaching of *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Master HsuanHua speaks of Four Dharma Realms:

1. The *Dharma* Realm of Unobstructed Phenomena,
2. The *Dharma* Realm of Unobstructed Noumena,
3. The *Dharma* Realm of Noumena and Phenomena Unobstructed,
4. The *Dharma* Realm of All Phenomena Unobstructed.

Considering the *Four Dharma Realms*, and speaking from the standpoint of our self-nature, we and *Amitābha Buddha* are united in one, and therefore we have the
qualifications to realize *Buddha*-hood. Therefore, it is conditioned that the phenomenon has a mark and a manifestation. And the noumenon is the doctrine underlying any phenomenal event.

Moreover, the principle and essential of Pure Land relating to “Faith” can be traced to all ancient patriarchs and *Sūtras*. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, for example, teaches, “Faith is the basis of the Path, the mother of virtues/Nourishing and growing all good ways… Faith can assure arrival at Enlightenment”.\(^8\) Therefore, Faith is extremely significant to the *Buddhist* practitioners, or cultivators which are especially relating to the doctrine of Other-Power.

There are two kinds of essential Faith. The first of these is to be convinced of our own sinfulness; from the bondage of evil deeds, we possess no means of emancipating ourselves. The second of essential Faith is to throw our helpless souls wholly upon the Divine Power of *Amitābha* in the firm belief that His forty eight Vows were for the express purpose of saving all sentient beings that should put their trust on Him without the least doubt or fear, etc… Such souls will be born surely into His Pure Land. However, Faith also has two kinds that which are the true or correct Faith, and another is the false Faith…….

In broad terms, we can focus our discussion on the discourse of the famous patriarch *Aśvaghoṣa* who was one of the principal leaders when *Buddhism* passed through its great renaissance resulting in the birth of *Mahāyāna*. In his famous book ‘*The Awakening of Faith: The Essentials of Mahāyāna Buddhism*’, which is held in high esteem by Pure Land *Buddhist* practitioners, he states:

“Next, suppose there is a man who learns this teaching for the first time and wishes to seek the correct Faith but lacks courage and strength. Because he lives in the world of suffering, he fears that he will not always be able to meet the *Buddhas* and

honor them personally, and that, Faith being difficult to perfect, he will be inclined to fall back. He should know that the Tathāgatas have an excellent expedient means by which they can protect his Faith: that is, through the strength of wholehearted meditation on the Buddhas, he will, in fulfillment of his wishes, be able to be born in the Buddha-land beyond, to see the Buddha always, and to be forever separated from the evil states of existence. It is as the sutra says: “If a man meditates wholly on Amitābha Buddha in the world of the Western Paradise and wishes to be born in that world, directing all the goodness he has cultivated [toward that goal], the he will be born there.” Because he will see the Buddha at all times, he will never fall back. If he meditates on the Dharmākaya, the “Suchness” of the Buddha, and with diligence keeps practicing [the meditation], he will be able to be born there in the end because he abides in the correct Samādhi.

Thereafter, the following interesting passage occurs: “First consider those who begin to study the five methods of this chapter and desire to get right faith, but are timid and weak. As they live in this world of extreme suffering, they are afraid that they cannot approach Buddha continually and contribute personally to his service. Thus, they fear they cannot attain to this perfect faith and they have a mind to renounce the search after it.

These should known that Tathāgata has most excellence means for strengthening their faith. By having the mind set only on the things of Buddha and being constantly with him far from all evil, one attains this end. As the Sūtra says, “if a man sets his mind to think only of Amitābha Buddha who is in the happiest realm of the West, and if his good deeds are in the right direction, and if he desires to be born in the happy Paradise, he will then be born there, and as he always in the presence of Buddha, he will never fall back!”

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If we reflect on the eternal nature of *Amitābha Buddha* and constantly practice this method, we shall in the end reach the place of future wisdom. Therefore, Faith in this regard is not superstition, but is grounded in wisdom, relying entirely on the words of the *Buddhas, Bodhisattvas* and Patriarchs, as also taught in the *Sūtras*.

According to the book “*The Wisdom of Buddhism*” by Christmas Humphreys, “The Unsurpassed Perfect Wisdom of Buddha is attained through Faith. Although there are a great many ways by which to attain it, they are all contained in the Faith in *Amida*.

By ‘Faith’ is meant the whole-hearted acceptance of the message which our ears have heard and the eyes of our soul have seen.

He who hears the vow of *Amida* to save all beings by virtue of His sole Power and doubts it not, is said to possess true Faith in Him.

It is doubt and unbelief which cause one to return over and over again to the House of Birth and Death; but through Faith we enter into the peace of Eternal City called *Nirvāṇa*.

To us, *Gautama Buddha* and *Amida* appear like a father and mother, full of Compassion. That we may embrace the priceless Faith, they have taken many and various means to attract and persuade us.

To believe in *Amida’s* Divine Will and practice the *Nembutsu* is hard for unbelievers, proud souls, and evil-doers. It is the hardest of all hard things to do; and nothing is more difficult indeed”.

Moreover, if the Faith is one of the causes of rebirth in the Western Pure Land, it is also the way to attain the salvation through Other-Power by depending upon the compassion and the power of *Amitābha Buddha’s Vows*. Therefore, the practitioners

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10 Aśvaghoṣa, *the Awakening of Faith*, p. 89.
have Faith in Amitābha Buddha and Amitābha Buddha that has absolute Truth to save all sentient beings. According to the teaching of Pure Land Buddhism, the practice recitation of Amitābha Buddha’s name intently and single-mindedly and with oneness of heart from that very moment brings in great compassion of Amitābha Buddha who unfailingly sends forth his light to embrace us.

Based on this, however, Faith is the essential key of life and the essential factor for getting birth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Thus, the question is what we should believe in. The answer to this question is as follows.

- Believe the Western Paradise is the Ultimate Bliss.
- Believe human life is impermanent or transitory.
- Believe transmigration in this Samsāra world (the Wheel of Samsāra) is dangerous.
- Believe Amitābha Buddha has the Forty Eight Vows to save all sentient beings.
- Believe we can recite Buddha’s Name endlessly and with single-minded devotion.
- Believe our mind is full of Buddha-nature.
- Believe the law of cause and effect in practice leads to recitation of Buddha’s Name.
- Believe our own rebirth in Pure Land will never fall back (not to yield an inch ground).

That is why; actually, the practitioners should believe in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, the place of the Western Amitābha Buddha.

b. The meaning of Vows

All the practitioners of Pure Land Buddhism should establish Vows. Making vows to attain rebirth in the Pure Land signifies a fundamental reorientation of the practitioner's
motivation and will. Vows are the determination to be reborn in the Pure Land in the practitioner’s pure Mind. Therefore, Vows are the source of power using for maintaining the Faith more firmly. Powered with sheer Faith divested of Vows, the followers of Buddhist Pure Land in particular and the Buddhists in general also cannot attain complete Enlightenment practically.

So, Vows are the hallmark of Pure Land Buddhism and are among the three essential conditions. Hence, in the book titled “The Land of Bliss”, it is stated: “The Vows were taken as guarantees that the simple calling on Amitābha would produce rebirth in the Pure Land. This shift is in a continuum with earlier practices, found elsewhere in Indian religion, such as belief in the power of names (especially those of divinities), shortcuts to the process of karma (especially devotional alternatives), and the power of sincere devotion.

Many of these found expression in Mahayana Sutras that, like the Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtras, embodied the belief in Buddha-fields and cosmic Buddhas. Within the Amitābha tradition, the shift towards a doctrine of pure faith seems to have occurred only when the tradition reached China and developed, in the sixth and seventh centuries CE, the exegetical and theological perspectives summarized above.

Among these changes a need arose to somehow close the interpretive book on the vows. Considering the number of Chinese, the possibility of a single and authoritative understanding must have seemed as a guarantee not only of clarity, but of a sure path to salvation. Accordingly, the East Asian tradition places great importance on the interpretation of the vows, which is usually based on the selection of a number of proof texts from within the vows themselves. These are the core or essential vows, or, in more
theological terms, the vows (or the single vow) that are (is) the source for all other vows”.

However, it can be stated that for someone who does not want to go to Sukhāvatī, it is impossible to reach there. The reason is that, to make Vows are just important enough to be like the three legs of an incense burner; if one is lacking or broken, the incense burner cannot stand. Besides, It is also stated in the Avatamsaka Sūtra that "For the one who is in his/her final moment, all of the organs disperse; family and relatives are far away; wealth and possessions are no longer of any use to him/her; only the great Vow never departs, directing the drying person toward the moment of rebirth in western Pure Land."

Hence, to get the hang of it, J.C. Cleary in the book “Pure Land-Pure Mind” translated says: “By vowing to be reborn in the Pure Land, believers shift their focus. The joys and sorrows of this world become incidental, inconsequential. The present life takes on value chiefly as an opportunity to concentrate one’s awareness on Amitābha and purify one’s mind accordingly”. On the other hand, in order to deeply understand the meaning of Vows relating to the ‘Other-Power’ teachings, we can divide them into two main groups. These are as follows.

- The Vows made by the Amitābha Buddha when he was the Bodhisattva Dharmakāra.
- The Vows made by the practitioners to achieve rebirth in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss.

The Vows of Amitābha Buddha to save all sentient beings which we can investigate in the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtras are the forty-eight great Vows. The Amitābha Buddha completes his Bodhisattva practices for the adornment of the Western Pure Land, and

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13 J. C. Cleary (tr.), Pure Land-Pure Mind, the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan, 2002, p. 3.
finally attains *Buddha*-hood. He further transforms his body countless times to guide sentient beings towards rebirth in His Pure Land so that they might see the *Buddha*. These are all accomplished by *Amitābha’s* great vows.

*Amitābha Buddha* and his Vows are therefore equated with a boat capable of carrying all sentient beings to the other shore without sinking into the world of defilements and the sea of sufferings. Under the impact of the former Vows of the *Amitābha Buddha*, the practitioners can hear His name and desire to be reborn in His Pure Land. They never fall back with those who have practiced all the virtues of the Pure Land Path. They only desire to be born in the Pure Land and will therefore also be born there. However, Vows are very important in Pure Land. That’s why we can say in this connection that “the Vows of Endless Praise of the Name of the *Buddha*”.

Moreover, according to the version of *Sanghavarman* while also the Vow guarantees praise of *Amitābha Buddha’s* Name and this will be taken to contain the key to the meaning and practice of Faith. It states: “These are (*Sanghavarman’s* numbering): the seventeenth, promising that all *Buddhas* in the universe will praise the name of *Amitābha*; the eighteenth, promising rebirth in the Pure Land even to those who aspire for rebirth ten times or less (and also adding the exclusionary clause); the nineteenth, promising that *Amitābha* will appear to the believer on his deathbed; and the twentieth, promising rebirth to those who hear the name of *Amitābha*. The eighteenth is regarded as the most important and is often seen as the core meaning as the whole *Longer Sūtra*\(^\text{14}\). The five vows linked with the eighteenth Vow and identified by *Shinran* are:

- The Vow of birth through the *nembutsu*.
- The selected Primal Vow.
- The Vow of the threefold mind of the Primal Vow.
- The Vow of Sincere mind and entrusting.

• The Vow of Shinjin, which is Amida’s directing of virtue for our going Forth.”¹⁵

Based on the above description, it can be inferred the Vow which reflects a genuine desire to take birth in the Pure Land through the Buddha-Name Recitation is the true and final, and it can thus be regarded as the essential condition in Pure Land teachings.

We can also say that the essence of the fourth Vows is linked with the text of the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra itself. It can be condensed into the Eighteenth Vow, “May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained Buddha-hood, any among the throng of living beings in the ten regions of the universe should single-mindedly desire to be reborn in my land with joy, with confidence, and gladness, and if they should bring to mind this aspiration for even ten moments of thought and yet not gain rebirth there. This excludes only those who have committed the five heinous sins and those who have reviled the True Dharma’ and that what we may do is to be in accord with what is vowed therein”. Thus, although the Vows are forty-eight, so far as birth of the beings is concerned, they are fourth, which again can be condensed into one, i.e. the Eighteenth Vow is needed when the salvation of Amitābha Buddha is referred to in terms of ‘Vow’. The Vow represents the heart and will of Amitābha Buddha.

Thus, vow is very important which is why its significance has to be accepted as the object of ‘Faith’. Therefore, that’s why the practitioner’s sense of what is Faith in true belief. For instance, Faith means trust in the heart of Amitābha Buddha and one should make the vow seeking the rebirth in western Pure Land, leaving this shore of suffering for the other shore of happiness. So, the inconceivable Vows as that maintain their Faith in the Way.

The second is the Vow which is made by the practitioners to achieve rebirth in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. They really want to realize the Buddha-hood, adhering to the way of reciting the Name of the Buddha. Thus, they make way for taking the Vows

¹⁵ Prf. Yukio Yamada, Shinran’s View of The Primal Vow: JodoShinshu’s Approach to Pure Land Faith, Ryukoku University, Japan, 2005, pp. 6-7.
to attain rebirth into the Pure Land of *Amitābha Buddha*. Therefore, the practitioners, who want to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land, must make Vows to cultivate all virtues and merits, in order to have the desire to seek rebirth in the Western Pure Land through Buddha recitation.

In this connection, the book of "*Mind Seal of The Buddhas*" stated; “If we seek the simplest and most reliable among all the methods of the *Buddha*-remembrance, the best is to develop Faith and Vows and to concentrate on reciting the *Buddha*-name".16

Furthermore, In the "*Treatise on the Awakening of the Faith*", the Patriarch *Āśvaghoṣa*, while summarizing the essential points of Mahayana doctrine and explaining the Path of cultivation, state, “Next, suppose there is a man who learns this teaching for the first time and wishes to seek the correct Faith but lacks courage and strength. Because he lives in this world of suffering, he fears that he will not always be able to meet the *Buddhas* and honor them personally, and that, faith being difficult to perfect, he will be inclined to fall back [retrogress].

“He should know that the *Tathāgathas* have an excellent expedient means by which they can protect his Faith: that is, through the strength of wholehearted meditation-recitation on the *Buddha*, he will in fulfillment of his wishes be able to be born in the *Buddha*-land beyond, to see the Buddha always, and to be forever separated from the evil states of existence.

“It is as the *Sūtra* says: ‘If a man meditates wholly on *Amitābha Buddha* in the world of Western Paradise and wishes to be born in that world directing all the goodness he has cultivated toward that goal, and then he will be born there.’ Because he will never fall

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16 J. C. Cleary (tr.), "*Mind Seal of The Buddhas: Patriarch Ou-i’S Commentary on the Amitabha Sūtra*", Sūtra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada, New York - San Francisco - Niagara Falls - Toronto, 1996, p. 44.
back..., [If a cultivator follows this path], he will be able to be born there in the end because he abides in the correct *Samādhi.*”¹⁷

According to the *Buddha*, as sentient beings, we all have strong attachments – particularly to our bodies and possessions. At the time of death, as we are about to lose both body and possessions, our consciousness, impelled by these deep seated attachments, rushes to reincarnate itself in another body. It is at this juncture that Vows, particularly the Vow for rebirth in the Pure Land, are crucial: instead of just following our *karma*, good and evil, we may, through the power of these Vows, achieve rebirth in the Pure Land”.¹⁸

However, in principle, everyone can become a *Buddha*, but what do you wish? What is your Vow? I.e. unless you cultivate according to the *Dharma* and rid yourself of greed, hatred, stupidity, pride, and doubt, etc, then you will become a *Buddha* very fast. For instance, it is liked that, if someone who have not the slightest doubt that one ‘reaps as one sows’. Those who wish to accomplish something should make a vow first in order to subsequently act upon it. By this way, they will easily attain the final of goal. Hence, the importance of the Vows is a well illustrated by the following story:

“Once, Śākyamuni *Buddha* and his disciple *Mahamaudgalyayana* went with a large gathering of followers to another country to convert living beings. When the citizens saw the *Buddha* they shut their doors and ignored him. When they saw *Maudgalyayana*, however, they ran to greet him, and everyone, from the King and ministers to the citizens, all bowed and competed to make offerings to him. The *Buddha’s* disciples thought this most unfair. “*World Honored One,*” they said, “your virtuous conduct is so lofty; why is it they do not make offerings to you, but instead compete to make offerings to *Maudgalyayana*?”

¹⁸ Dharma Master Lok To, The Seeker’s Glossary of Buddhism, the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 2003 (Reprints), p. 692.
“This is because of past affinities,” said the Buddha. “I will tell you…

“…Limitless aeons ago, Maudgalyayana and I were fellow country-men. He gathered firewood in the mountains and I lived in a hut below. A swarm of bees was bothering me and I decided to smoke them out. But Maudgalyayana refused to help even though they stung him until his hands were swollen and painful. Instead, he made a vow, ‘I must be miserable to be a bee,’ he thought ‘I vow that when I attain the Way I will take these asura – like bees across first thing!”

“Many lifetimes later the bees were reborn as the citizens of this country. The queen bee became the King, the drones became the ministers, and the workers became the citizens. Because I didn’t like the bees, I now have no affinity with these people and therefore no one makes offerings to me. But, because of his vow, all the citizens revere Maudgalyayana.”

Furthermore, The guiding force of the Vow for rebirth we can following the excerpt the "Vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra" in Avatamsaka Sutra that; “Further, when a [king] is on the verge of death, at the last instant of life, when all his faculties scatter and he departs from his relatives, when all power and status are lost and nothing survives, when his Prime Minister, great officials, his inner court and outer cities, his elephants, horses, carts, and treasures of precious jewels can no longer accompany him, these [Great] Vows alone will stay with him. At all times they will guide him forward, and in a single instant he will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.”

And most important we can understand that Buddha Śākyamuni repeatedly reminded us, in the most earnest terms, about the principle of making Vows. Even toward the very end of the Amitābha Sūtra, he repeatedly enjoined us to make a Vow for rebirth in the Pure Land. Linked in this connection, in the Amitābha Sūtra repeatedly reiterates the

importance of making Vows, state that; “Moreover Shariputra: all those born in the Land of Utmost Happiness never fall back. Among them are many whose next birth will be in Nirvana. The number of them is extremely large; there is no reckoning that can tell it. Only in measureless, unlimited, innumerable kalpas could it be told.

“Shariputra, the beings who hear this ought to make a vow -- a vow to be born in that land. Why should they? Having succeeded thus, all are then persons of the highest virtue; all are assembled in the same circumstances.

“Shariputra, I see this gain and therefore speak these words; if any beings hear them, they ought to make a vow to be born in that land.

“Shariputra, if there are persons who have already made a vow, are presently making a vow, or shall in the future make a vow, desiring birth in Amida Buddha's land, all these persons obtain non-retrogression in Highest Perfect Knowledge in that land, whether already born, now being born, or yet to be born. Therefore, Shariputra, all good men and good women, if they have faith, ought to make a vow to be born in that land.”

As stated above, however, the countless sentient beings will be reborn in the Pure Land with their numbers exceeding even the innumerable raindrops. That is why in the Longer Amitābha Sūtra, the Buddha Śākyamuni succinctly lists the number of Bodhisattvas in various realms or lands, even including our Saha World who would be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha. The following excerpt clearly depicts this: “Then Bodhisattva Maitreya asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, how many non-regressing Bodhisattvas in this Buddha-land will be born in the Land of Utmost Bliss?""

The Buddha told Maitreya, "In this Buddha-land, seven billion two hundred million Bodhisattvas, who have planted good roots in incalculable hundreds of thousands of [millions of] billions of myriads of Buddha-lands and have become none regressing, will

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be born in [the Pure Land]. The *Bodhisattvas* who will be born in that *Buddha*-land [the Pure Land] because of fewer roots of virtue are countless...

"Ajita [Maitreya], if I enumerate the names of the *Bodhisattvas* in other lands who have been, are being, and will be born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss to make offerings to, pay homage to, and worship [Amitābha] *Buddha*, I will not be able to finish doing so even if I spend an entire *kalpa*."

Throughout the story narrated above, the material values relating to the meaning of the Vows are very important for those who seek the rebirth in the Pure Land and wish to attain *Buddhahood*. Thus, In order to achieve the rebirth in the Pure Land, the ‘three provisions’ are very important element of the Pure Land method. For instance, “just as travelers embarking on a distant journey must make provisions for medicine, food, clothing and cash to cover their needs en route, i.e., Pure Land practitioners require Faith to make firm Vows. However, Faith and Vows are hollow if without Practice and contrariwise… “Without Faith and Vows, you cannot be reborn, even if you recite the *Buddha’s* Name to the point where neither the blowing wind nor the falling rain can penetrate and your recitation is as solid as a bronze wall or an iron gate.”

However, according to the nature of the Vows, Vow or Aspiration they can become the three categories of aspiration such as; (1) Aspiration through the perfection of faith; (2) Aspiration through knowledge and practice; (3) Aspiration through intellectual intuition. On the above those three kinds of aspiration to expressed the practicing of the ‘right path’. However, the Vows are the part of Pure Land cultivation in which the practitioners use their Mind to steer the boat of *Buddha* Recitation toward the Western Pure Land.

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23 Dharma Master T. Thien Tam, *Buddhism of Wisdom and Faith: Pure Land Principles and Practice*, the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan, 2003 (Reprints), and also see Published for Free Distribution, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, p. 97.
In accordance with the Pure Land teachings, and in Buddhist community, the following fourfold vow is practiced by the Chan and Zen tradition. The four important elements are repeated as the Four “Great Vows” which in Chinese are known as (四弘誓願). These are as follows:

I vow to liberate all beings, without number. 眾生無邊誓願度
I vow to uproot endless blind passions. 煩惱無盡誓願斷
I vow to penetrate dharma gates beyond measure. 法門無量誓願學
I vow to attain the way of the Buddha.”

The practitioners should make their earnest Vows with a firm Faith in their Practice and progress towards achieving the goal of helping both themselves and others.

Besides, a number of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (普賢十大行願) advises and urges the youth Sudhana and Ocean-wide-Great Assembly to seek rebirth through the “Ten Kings of Vows”. The Ten Great Vows such as;

“First, worship and respect all Buddhas, or Honor all Buddha. 一者禮敬諸佛
Second, praise the Tathāgatas. 二者稱讚如來
Third, make abundant offerings, or Make offerings to all Buddhas. 三者廣修供養
Fourth, repent misdeeds and hindrances, or confess all past transgressions of the Law. 四者懺悔業障
Fifth, rejoice in the virtues and happiness of others (mudita). 五者隨喜功德
Sixth, request the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. 六者請轉法輪

Seventh, request the *Buddha* to remain in the world, or dwell in the world.

七者請佛住世

Eighth, follow the teachings of the *Buddha* at all times.

八者常隨佛學

Ninth, accommodate and benefit all sentient beings.

九者恒順眾生

Tenth, transfer merits and virtues universally, or to others.”

十者普皆迴向

Finally, the practitioners would want to develop an inclination towards making the Vows as a token of trust in order to link with the *Buddha* Mind:

- Vow, to be disgusted this *Saha* world: The wheel of life is suffering.
- Vow, to be birth in the Pure Land by Sincere Mind and never slacking off: *Amitābha Buddha*’s Pure Land there is no sickness, old age, or death. The sufferings and difficulties of this world do not exist.
- Vow, *Amitābha Buddha* will appear welcome us to lead us to the Pure Land: to enjoy in the *Amitābha Buddha*’s world of all happiness.
- Vow, destroy all of bad *karma* and grow all of merit and wisdom: to destroy ten parts of bad *karma* and yield ten parts of merit and wisdom.
- Vow, *Amitābha Buddha, Bodhisattvas*, and assembly coming from the West to welcome us: *Amitābha Buddha*’s hand feels on our head and *Amitābha Buddha*’s colored lights to save.
- Vow, before when we die: to know beforehand of date and time, to keep mindfulness with the *Buddha*’s Name recitation.
- Vow, become an *Amitābha Buddha*’s accompanies and sitting on the golden lotus.
- Vow, never falling back to, and never retreat in their pursuit of unsurpassable, perfect and full awakening - (皆得不退轉於阿耨多羅三藐三菩提)\(^2\). The vow is generated by faith and faith is realized by the Vow. When both the faith and the vow are genuine, the right action inevitably follows.

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\(^2\) T.12, No. 36, p. 0348a.
c. The Meaning of Practice

With the aspiration to practice diligence and effort, the practitioners will achieve a higher level in the early moment. Of course, if you have only made the Vows and without practice, i.e. all that’s just like an idle talk; empty words!

In the book ‘The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land’, it is stated that; “The Pure Land sutras exhort both monks and laity who aspire for rebirth in Amitābha’s Sukhāvatī to engage in a broad range of practices that include meditation, observances of precepts, virtuous acts,”29 Therefore, the Dharma of Buddha Recitation is for the purpose of achieving rebirth in the Pure Land, thus ending the “cycle of Birth and Death”. This is a most crucial matter for the subject of those who want to seek birth in the Amitābha’s Sukhāvatī-vyūha. Hence, that’s why the practitioners are urged to practice the Buddha’s Name Recitation. However, to ensure the rebirth into the Land of Utmost Bliss, practice is absolutely necessary. There are many aspects of the theoretical teachings and philosophical aspects in the Pure Land Buddhism. Here, according to the Pure Land teachings, there are two aspects very important for those who seek birth in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha. That is the doctrine of “Self-Power and Other-Power”. Therefore, the doctrine of “Self-Power” that can understanding as the effort to attain birth, whether by invoking good acts other than reciting the Amitābha Buddha’s Name, in accordance with your particular circumstances and opportunities, in anywhere and any-times or by endeavoring to make yourself worthy through amending the confusion in your acts, words, and thoughts, confident of your own powers and guided by your own calculation. And the doctrine of “Other-Power” that is the entrusting of you to the Great Vows of Amitābha Buddha, or the “Primal Vow” of birth through remembering of the Amitābha Buddha. The remembering or thinking on the Buddha’s Name referred to general sense as (Buddhanusmriti in Sanskrit). Therefore, the practitioners should practice the Recitation of Amitābha Buddha’s Name which was considered a natural corollary of the

practitioner’s Remembrance of the Buddha. As the sacred Name of Amitābha Buddha was thought to contain the perfection and virtue Enlightenment itself, its mere recitation was seen to have the power to bring to Nirvana all those who had complete Faith in it. So, the practitioners must recite the phrase as “Namo Amitābha Buddha” without interruption. Because why? Because reciting the Name of Amitābha is like throwing a pearl into muddy water so that the muddy water becomes clear. This clear-water pearl can purify even the filthiest water. Recitation of the Buddha’s Name is like this pearl. It is expressed in the following verse:

“When the water-clearing pearl
Is tossed in muddy water,
The muddy water becomes clear,
When the Buddha’s Name
Enters a confused mind,
The confused mind attains to the Buddha.”

Based on the above, we can infer that no one can count the negative thoughts which fill our minds and succeed one another endlessly like waves on the sea. Therefore, when the Amitābha Buddha’s Name after recitations enters our confused mind, it will be filled with the Buddha’s Name. There is a Buddha thought in your mind. When you are mindful of the Buddha’s Name, the Buddha will mindful of your mind, i.e., the more you have recited the Buddha’s Name is the more Buddhas are there in your mind. That’s why we must hold focus on practice Buddha’s Name Recitation.

Therefore, according to the sixth Patriarch of the Pure Land [Dhyana Master Yung Ming Shou], there are four methods of reciting the Amitābha Buddha’s Name:

- Contemplating and thinking Buddha-Recitation
- Contemplating an image Buddha-Recitation

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• Real Mark Buddha-Recitation
• Holding the name Buddha-Recitation.”

The First, the contemplating and thinking Buddha-Recitation, entails meditation on the features of Amitābha Buddha and His Pure Land of the West. According to the Visualization Sutra or Amitayurdhīyāna-Sūtra, these consist of the total of sixteen contemplations, including the three levels of the nine lotuses grades. However, the Pure Land Buddhism would be practice for visualization and recitation practices as “Samādhi-Sūtra”. Hence, in the book that ‘The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine’ appeared the passage that; “The Sūtra refers to visualization practice as the “Samādhi” (concentration) of contemplation on the Buddha (nien-fō san-mei). Thus, Pure Land visualization may be regarded as one among many of the rarely Mahāyāna samādhi such as Suramgama-samādhi (concentration of the heroic Buddha in which the defilements are destroyed) and Pratyutpanna-samādhi (concentration in which the Buddhas stand before one).”32 Therefore, linked in this method, the practitioners can always visualize the Pure Land appearing before him whenever his eyes open or closed his mind and thoughts in coursing through the Pure Land. On the other hand, Pure Land Master teaches on the contemplation of Amitābha Buddha in the following way:

“Amitābha Buddha’s body is a golden hue,
His fine marks radiant beyond compare.
His white light is as high as,
Five Mount Sumerus,
His purple eyes as clear and vast as,
Four great seas.
Countless transformation Buddhas
Appear within the light,

31 Ibid, p. 43.
With transformation *Bodhisattvas*,
Also limitless.
His forty-eight Vows take
Living beings across;
In nine grades of lotuses they ascend
To the other shore.\(^{33}\)

Based on this, the practitioners should know that the appearance of *Amitābha Buddha* has the result of perfection of His merits and virtues. Moreover, all of the thirty marks and eighty minor characteristics of a *Buddha* and His bright light are incomparable. Therefore, the method of contemplating and thinking *Buddha*-Recitation that which are immense obtained of the virtues and beyond to imagination. In this connection, it’s relating to the category of visualization method is too subtle, and lofty. This object can be called the profound depths of the ocean wisdom for the few practitioners can achieve it. And so on, this method presents will appear the five difficulties that are; (1) With dull capacities, one cannot easily succeed. (2) With a rude Mind, one cannot easily succeed. (3) Without knowing how to use expedients skillfully and flexibly during actual practice, one cannot easily succeed. (4) Without the ability to remember images clearly, one cannot easily succeed. (5)With low energy, one cannot easily succeed.\(^{34}\)

Let us now take up the second method of recitation of the *Amitābha Buddha’s* name: contemplating an image *Buddha*-Recitation. This method consists of making offerings to an image of *Amitābha Buddha* and reciting His name while contemplating. And the practitioners also face a statue of *Amitābha Buddha* and impresses all the features of that statue in their memory, contemplating to the point where, even if there is

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without a statue of the Buddha. In this practice, the practitioners clearly see the image of *Amitābha Buddha* whether their eyes opened or closed.

Thus, this method is also difficult. Because, requires a great deal of energy, a faithful memory and skillful use of expedients. In this case, there are cases of individuals who have practiced it in an inflexible way and have developed headaches difficult to cure. Moreover, upon examination, this method of seeking rebirth in the Pure Land is not mentioned in the *Sūtras*.

It is merely a technique to assist in the practice of *Buddha*-Recitation, so that the practitioner can harness his Mind and achieve right thought. Still, if we practice this method with a pure, devoted frame of mind, we can obtain a response, eradicate our bad karma, develop virtue and wisdom, and, through an image of *Amitābha Buddha*, realize the true marks of *Amitābha Buddha* and in time they will have and achieve rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

The third method mentioned above is that of *Real Mark Buddha-Recitation*. Whenever the practitioner achieve in this method, even if they try, they also cannot stop reciting the *Buddha’s Name*. This is also called a state of the *Buddha*-Recitation *Samādhi*. Here, the recitation flows like the water and lives within you.

Moreover, this entails entering the Mind’s foremost meaning, and reciting our own original *Buddha* Nature. This method aims to contemplate the *Real Mark Dharma Body* of the *Buddha*, resulting in attaining of True Thusness *Samādhi*.

This method is actually a Zen practice; however, since the realm revealed by the meditational mind is the Pure Land, it also qualifies as a Pure Land practice. This method is not for those of limited or moderate capacities. In other words, if the practitioner is not of the highest capacity, he cannot ‘become enlightened and enter’ into it. For this reason, few Pure Land teachers promote it and the proponents of the method are found chiefly within the Zen tradition. However, according to Master Hsuan Hua, “*Dhyāna* practice
and Buddha Recitation both help you to stop your idle thoughts and sweep away your personal desires and random thoughts, so that your original face can appear. This is called Real Mark Recitation.\textsuperscript{35}

Incidentally, I would venture to say here that while we are still treading the path of practice, not having reached the stage of Perfect Enlightenment, all Dharma methods are expediencies. Thus, Buddha Recitation is an expedient and so is Zen. According to the Three Pure Land Sūtras, Buddha Śākyamuni provided the expedient teaching of the Western Pure Land, and urged sentient beings to recite the Name of Amitābha Buddha seeking rebirth on that Land of Ultimate Bliss. Those who practice this method can escape “Birth and Death”, avail themselves of that wonderful, lofty realm to pursue cultivation, and swiftly attain Buddha-hood. Diligent Buddha Recitation also leads to awakening, as in Zen. However, the principal goal of the Pure Land School is rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, while the degree of Awakening achieved is a secondary consideration.

Thus, Real Mark Buddha Recitation can be clearly attributed to the Pure Land School so far as the ultimate goal is concerned. From the standpoint of an expedient leading to rebirth, however, it does not truly qualify as a Pure Land method within the meaning of the three basic Pure Land Sūtras taught by the Buddha. They are referred to only in the Buddha Remembrance Samādhi Sūtra…and a few sutras or commentaries. This is probably the reason why Pure Land Patriarchs merely referred to it to broaden the meaning of Buddha Recitation, but did not expound it widely.

The fourth method is that of holding the Name of Buddha-Recitation. By this method, whenever we recite the Buddha’s Name such as ‘Namo Amitābha Buddha’ our three karmas of body, mouth, thought must be pure, clear and distinct. The ‘body’ is without of the three evil karmas of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. The ‘mouth’ is also free from the fourth evil karmas of abusive language, profanity, lying and gossip.

And the ‘thought’ is has no greed, no hatred and no stupidity, viz., the practitioner should annihilate all of ‘the ten evil karmas’ or ‘the ten kamma conditions’. Of cause, if whenever one is free from this ten evil karmas then the body, mouth and thought is pure.

In this method, the practitioners can be reciting aloud or silently either ‘Nammo Amitābha Buddha’ or ‘Amitābha Buddha’. However, in the short form, ‘Amitābha Buddha’ should have the advantage of easily focusing the cultivator’s Mind, while the longer version facilitates development of a truly earnest, respectful Mind conducive to a response.

In the light of what has been stated above, this method, taught by the Buddha in the Shorter Amitābha Sūtra, is used most commonly at the present time.”

On the other hand, however, as Master HsuanHua said, if the practitioners can recite so completely that when they hearing the wind, or hearing the rain, etc., every sound we hearing should recite the Buddha-Name as ‘Namo Amitābha Buddha’. Thus, he also has the unique advantage of Pure Land teaching the profound and exalted meaning of Buddha-Recitation; it does enter the Buddha-Recitation Samadhi. It has been stated in the following passage:

“The pure heart is like the moon in the water;
The mind in Samādhi is like the cloudless sky. And
The water flows,
The wind blows,
Proclaiming the Mahāyāna…
The Chinese poet Su T’ungP’o said,
Of the colors of the mountain,
None are not his vast, long tongue.
Of the sounds of the streams,
All are the clear, pure sound.” And moreover he wrote the verse;
If you recite the Buddha‘s Name,
Reciting without cease,
The mouth recites “Amita”
And makes things of a piece.
Scattered thoughts do not arise,
Samādhi you attain.
For rebirth in the Pure Land,
Your hope is not in vain.
If all day you detest
The suffering Saha’s pain,
Make rebirth in Ultimate Bliss
Your mind’s essential aim.
Cut off he red dust
Thoughts within your mind.
Put down impure reflections,
And pure thoughts you will find.”

The above verse clearly explains the principle of reciting the Buddha’s Name. You will naturally attain the Buddha-Recitation Samādhi and be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, according to your will. It implies that you must put down all worldly concerns, worldly pleasures, i.e., reciting the Buddha’s Name is fighting false thinking with false thinking. For instance, your false thinking is like a poison due to which it is imperative to recite ‘Namo Amitābha Buddha’ and chase out your scattered thoughts in order that this Dharma-door fights poison with poison. Thus, constant recitation drives out false thinking so that you may attain the Buddha-Recitation Samādhi. So, seeking rebirth to achieve Ultimate Bliss through this method is also extremely important for highest and profound practitioner’s grade.

To focus on holding the Buddha's Name Recitation embraces people of all capacities, leads to swift results and is easy enough for anyone to practice. If it is practiced earnestly and correctly, it will bring a response. In this life time, we can immediately see the features of Amitābha Buddha and the adornments of the Western Pure Land and awaken to the Original Mind. With this method, the practitioner has developed the mind of Faith and Vows can recite the Name of Amitābha Buddha and engage in cultivation regardless of whether his capacities are highest or profound or limited.

At present, it is the most suitable of the common Pure Land methods. Accordingly, in the book that ‘Buddhism of Wisdom and Faith’, the ten variants of the Holding the Name method which depends on the capacity of each individual has been described in the following way:

1. Reflecting the Name Recitation

With this technique, the ear catches the sound as the mouth recites, examining each individual word and each individual phrase, to make sure they are clear and distinct, and phrase after phrase. There are two ways of hearing, with the ears or with the Mind. Although the ears “hear deep inside,” the sounds do not reside anywhere---the practitioner gradually forgets everything inside and out, even body, Mind, realm, time and space, with only the Buddha’s name remaining. This technique of “reflecting the name,” makes it easy for the cultivator to filter out delude thoughts and swiftly achieve one-pointedness of mind.

2. Counting Rosary Beads Recitation

In this method, as the mouth recites, the hand fingers the rosary. At first, thoughts are tied to the rosary beads, but later on they gradually move away from the beads, leading to the state of one-pointedness of mind. This technique increases the power of
recitation, in the same way that a cane enables a mountain climber with weak legs to ascend higher and higher.

3. Breath by Breath Recitation

This method consists of reciting silently or softly, with each breath, inhaling or exhaling, accompanied by one recitation of the *Buddha’s* name. Life is connected to breath and if we know how to take advantage of it while practicing Buddha Recitation, we will not be apart from the *Buddha* in life, and at the time of death, when breath has stopped, we will be immediately reborn.

4. Continuously Linked Recitation

With this method, the practitioner should recite softly, each word each phrase following the one immediately before, each phrase resting its head on the previous phrase…

In course of this practice, through discretion and patience, there are no empty time frames and therefore ‘sundry thoughts’ cannot intrude.

5. Enlightened and illuminating Recitation

With this method, the practitioner, on the one hand, recites the *Buddha’s* name, and, on the other, returns the light and illumines his True Nature. He thus enters the into the realm of ultimate transcendental emptiness; what remains is only the consciousness that his body-Mind and the True Mind of the Buddha have become one, all-illuminating and all-encompassing.

6. Bowing to the *Buddha*-Recitation

This technique consists of making bows as we recite the *Buddha’s* name. Either we recite once before each bow or we bow as we recite, regardless of the number of recitations. The bowing should be extremely gentle and deliberate, coupled with
recitation, body and mouth as one. If we add a sincere and earnest Mind, the body, mouth and Mind are gathered together. Except for the words *Amitābha Buddha*, there is not the slightest deluded thought.

This method has the ability to destroy the karma of drowsiness. Its virtues and effects are very great, because the practitioner engages in recitation with his body, mouth and Mind.

7. **Decimal Recording Recitation**

This is the inscription method of *Buddha* Recitation, taking each ten utterances of the *Buddha’s* name as a unit. Individuals with short breath spans can divide the ten utterances into two subunits (five utterances each)…

With this practice, the Mind must not only recite, but also remember the number of utterances. In this way, if we are not diligent we must become so; otherwise, it will be impossible to avoid mistakes.

This method, in general, is an excellent expedient forcing the cultivator to concentrate his Mind and is very effective with those subject to many sundry thoughts. Elder Master *Yin Kuang* used to recommend it to Pure Land practitioners.

8. **Lotus Blossom Recitation**

With this method, the practitioner contemplates the four colors of the lotus blossom (blue, yellow, red, and white) as he recites one color after another without interruption. With his first utterance of the *Buddha’s* name, he visualizes a huge, blue lotus blossom before his eyes, emitting a blue light. With the second utterance, he visualizes a yellow lotus blossom, emitting a yellow light. The third and the fourth utterances are accompanied, respectively, by visualization of red and white lotus flowers, each color emitting its own light. He then repeats the visualization in the same sequence
(blue, yellow...). As the flowers appear, he imagines a vague, lingering touch of pure, soft lotus fragrance.

9. Recitation Amidst Light

This method was specially designed for certain practitioners who, as soon as they close their eyes to recite, suddenly see filthy forms and marks (ugly grimacing faces, for example), or dark black colors swirling around.

With this technique, the practitioner, while reciting the Buddha’s name, visualizes himself seated in the middle of an immense, transparent zone of light. Within that zone of light, when his Mind has quieted down, the practitioner feels bright and refreshed. At that time, not only have deluded thoughts been annihilated, filthy, evil forms have also disappeared. After that, right thought is reinforced and Samādhi is, in time, achieved.

10. Contemplation of the Buddha Recitation

The methods of contemplation taught in the Meditation Sūtra are very important and lead to immense virtue, but they are not a popular expedient for sentient beings in the Dharma-Ending Age. Nevertheless, since the ancient masters did not wish to see the special benefits of the meditation method go unused, they selected the easiest of the “Sixteen Contemplations”, the Contemplation of the Buddha, and combined it with the Holding the Name method to form the Contemplation of the Buddha-Holding the Name technique. (Recitation is predominant, with contemplation of the Buddha occupying a subsidiary position.)

Each day, after reciting the Buddha’s name, the practitioner reserves a special period of time for concentrating his Mind and contemplating the Embellishments and
Light of *Amitābha Buddha*. This method is derived from Contemplation of Number Thirteen in the *Meditation Sūtra.*”

Therefore, on the above that mentioned I can say that, the method of Holding the Name of the Buddha-Recitation is the most common and popular form for the practitioners of Pure Land Buddhism, nowadays.

These methods of holding and reciting the *Amitābha Buddha’s* Name appear to be ingrained in the doctrine which can be essentialised in the phrase: ‘grasp it tightly in your fist’. Do not let it go, to recite the *Amitābha Buddha’s* Name thought after thought. That’s why we can say that if the practitioners only make the Faith and Vows without Practice as well as like ‘a boat with a rudder but without oars’. Like that, their body, mouth and mind are continuous practicing the *Amitābha Buddha*-Name Recitation whether walking, standing, sitting or reclining, speaking or remaining silent, moving about, meditating or eating, etc., anywhere and anytime. The book titled ‘*Buddha of Infinite Light*’, which is a collection of *Saichi’s* poetry by D. T. Suzuki, it is stated that:

> “Saved by the Buddha’s Compassion, how grateful I feel.  
> As for *NaMu-Amida-Butsu*, it is ever with me.  
> I am ever with it.  
> While asleep, *Namu-Amida-Butsu*.  
> While walking or resting,  
> While sitting or lying, *Namu-Amida-Butsu*  
> While working, *Namu-Amida-Butsu*.”

Furthermore, even he teaches that when he distracted and a comforting to his thought by the many responsibilities of his life and his own foibles and obsessions, etc., there remains such as ‘when I do not think of it, there is the *Namu-Amida-Butsu*…Even my

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thinking of the Nembutsu rises out of it, How thankful I am for the favor! \[Namu-Amida-Butsu...Namu-AmidaButsu\]. It means that there is the unity in anywhere and any-times when we pronounce the Buddha-Name earnestly and uninterruptedly we dedicate the merits toward rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha.

Hence, of course, the method of reciting the Buddha-Name is the one that is the most all conclusive, embracing people of all mentalities and the one that is easiest to practice. That’s why the compassionate one, Śākyamuni Buddha, explained it to Shariputra without being asked. As a result, the well-founded statement comes, “Reciting the Buddha-Name can be called the number one expedient among all the expedient methods, the supreme complete truths among all the complete truths, the most perfect of all the perfect teachings.”

Similarly, in the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra, the Śākyamuni Buddha stated that; “Sariputra, if there is a good man or a good woman who hears spoken ‘Amitābha’ and holds the name, whether for one day, two days, three, four, five days, as long as seven days, with one heart unconfused, when this person approaches the end of life, before him will appear Amitābha and all the assembly of holy ones. When the end comes, his heart is without inversion; he will attain rebirth in Amitābha’s land of Ultimate Bliss. Shariputra, because I see this benefit, I speak these words: If living beings hear this spoken they should make the Vow, ‘I will be born in that land.’” Or “舍利弗。若有善男子善女人。聞說阿彌陀佛。執持名號。若一日。若二日。若三日。若四日。若五日。若六日。若七日。一心不亂。其人臨命終時。阿彌陀佛與諸聖眾。現在其前。是人終時心不顛倒。即得往生阿彌陀佛極樂國土。舍利弗。我見是利故說此言。若有眾生聞是說者。應當發願生彼國土。”

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42 T12, No. 366, p. 0347b.
In the book ‘Master HanShan’s Dream Roamings’ it is stated that; “To practice Pure Land, one must abhor the condition of suffering [in the Saha world] and seek to reborn in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha. One must practice Buddha Recitation every day, bow to Amitābha Buddha and recite the Sūtras, to eliminate evil karma.

Practitioners must be firm in their Faith, reduce their evil karma day after day and make a Vow to be reborn in the Western Pure Land. Anyone who can really practice in this manner, even though he may be living in this Saha world of Birth and Death, will have a meaningful goal for his practice”. 43 Therefore, when viewed in this point, the great practice is to say the Amitābha Buddha-Name of infinite light and life.

Besides, according to ‘The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine’ by Kenneth K. Tanaka stated that; “The range of practices for Pure Land devotees expanded significantly with the adoption of visualization (anusmrti; kuan) and oral recitation of the name (ch’eng-ming) of Amitābha, which neither the Larger nor Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtras discussed. 44 Especially, in the development of Pure Land Buddhism in India and beyond, both of practices attracted many devotees to the Pure Land path. For instance, ‘A commentary to the Dasabhumika-Sūtra attributed to Nāgārjuna advocates recitation as a means for rebirth in any one of the multiple transcendent world-realms.’ 45

However, in addition, in this method of recitation the Amitābha Buddha-Name that we can say that the more we recite and mindful of Amitābha Buddha-Name, the less our wandering thoughts will arise and the purer our mind will become and the more wisdom will be attain. Therefore, everyone can be enlightened by the true practice for birth in the Pure Land.

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43 Dharma Master Lok To (tr.), Pure Land of The Patriarch: Excerpts From Master Han-Shan’s Dream Roamings, Van Hien Study Group, Rye Brook, New York, 1994, P. 5.
III.2. Complete devotion and rebirth in the Pure Land

Devotion (監誠)\(^{46}\) is an important part of the practice to attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha. Asceticism, meditation, monasticism, and religious ceremonialism, in particular, are held to be too demanding for people of the present age as whole spiritual capacities are weak. In this age, devotion is the best way to reach the spiritual goal, because it is easier. It can be practiced by anyone, by monk and peasant, rich and poor, priest and layman, man and woman, young and old."\(^{47}\) Usually, devotion includes devotional practices of bowing, chanting, reciting, meditating, offerings, pilgrimage, etc.

In Pure Land Buddhism, devotion to the Amitābha Buddha is the main practice and especially recommended. Therefore, we will be looking at the main devotional practices used in the Pure Land Path that is relate to the method of Holding the Name of Amitābha Buddha-Recitation, to get a clear understanding of the purpose of the method and find ways to engage more deeply with these practices in this contemporary relevance.

For the most Asian Buddhist practitioners, devotion is regarded as the key or main gate to entering the integral Pure Land Path. Hence, devotion as it’s practiced in Asia Buddhism is quite an important component of Buddhism.

However, the widespread and approach of Buddhism towards Western Buddhism which will be very much contrasts (i.e., analytical, critical) with the Asian Buddhism. Therefore, the way to practicing the Holding of the Name of Amitābha Buddha-Recitation as well as the recollection and mindfulness of Amitābha Buddha and his Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. The practitioners should visualize the Amitabha Buddha and His Pure Land and recite His holy Name, which is eventually meant to lead to samādhi, a deep meditational state, viz. If a devotional relationship does exist with Amitābha

\(^{46}\) Devotion: in Religion means acts of religion, performance of religious duties, particularly in prayer and meditation in the state of being dedicated with reverence or faith and piety.

Buddha, it could take the form of their receiving an occasional auspicious dream or vision of Amitābha Buddha and His assembly followers. Thus, the popular devotional form of Pure land Buddhism that teaches salvation by the Mind of right Faith. With right Faith that believed on the Amitābha Buddha and the Buddhist’s relationship with Amitābha Buddha is expected to begin immediately rebirth in the Pure Land after death, and the devotee is living on earth with peace, happiness and tranquility, etc.

In this connection, the practitioners who believe in the great Vows of Amitābha Buddha with His Wisdom, Virtue and Compassion, etc, will reborn in the Western Pure Land and never falling back (avaivartika) into this Saha world. Linked this reason, according to the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra referred to the meaning of ‘Other-Power’ stated that;

“And again, O Sariputra, of those beings also who are born in the Buddha country of the Tathāgata Amitāyus as purified Bodhisattvas, never to return again and bound by one birth only, of those Bodhisattvas also, O Sariputra, the number is not easy to count, except they are reckoned as infinite in number.

‘Then again all beings, O Sariputra, ought to make fervent prayer for that Buddha country. And why? Because of they come together there with such excellent men. Beings are not born in that Buddha country of the Tathāgata Amitāyus as a reward and result of good works performed in this present life.

‘No, whatever son or daughter of a family shall hear the name of the blessed Amitāyus, the Tathāgata, and having heard it, shall keep it in mind for one, two, three, four, five, six, or seven nights, when that son or daughter of a family comes to die, then that Amitāyus, the Tathāgata, surrounded by an assembly of disciples and followed by a host of Bodhisattvas, will stand before them at their hour of death, and they will depart this life with tranquil minds. After their death they will be born in the world Sukhāvatī, in the Buddha country of the same Amitāyus, the Tathāgata. Therefore, then, O Sariputra, having perceived this cause and effect, I with reverence say thus, every son and every
daughter of a family ought with their whole mind to make fervent prayer for that Buddha country.\textsuperscript{48}

In the light of the above statement, this method which is appertained to ‘Other-Power’ practice is also called the ‘easy path’ in contrast to the ‘Self-Power’ which relates to the ‘difficult path’. In this connection, the practice of devotion to Amitābha Buddha appeared divided in two categories. Why are they divided into the two paths which called the ‘easy path and difficult path? For these reasons, the way of the most famous Patriarchs in Pure Land practiced must be appear in particular should be noted because they provided the major source of inspiration for the practitioners of Pure Land Buddhism in the past and present movement. Such as the Pure Land Buddhists in East Asia often point to the great Mahayana patriarchs as Indian, Chinese, Japan, etc., they are;

Indian Mahāyāna philosopher and poet Aśvaghoṣa (馬鳴: Ca. 100 C.E) who lived in the first and the second century, is regarded as one of the most important Buddhist authors. His most important works include the drama Shariputra-prakarana, a fragmentarily extent life of the Buddha (Buddhacarita), and the epic Saudarananda-kavya. Tradition also ascribes to him the Mahayanashraddhotpada-sastra. A Brahmin by birth, Aśvaghoṣa is said to have been converted to Buddhism by a monk named Parshva.

All of his works contain easily graspable instructions and similes concerning the Buddhist teaching. The author recounts, for example, in the epic about ‘beautiful Nanda’ the story about the young Nanda, who after his entry into a monastery remains in love with his wife and only after much instruction from the Buddha is cured of this love and renounces the world. Aśvaghoṣa is one of the four great Buddhist sages who are called the ‘four suns that illuminate the world’. The other three are Deva, Nāgārjuna, and

Kumalata, as a sage of the Sautrantika School. It is mainly due to his great contribution he was reputed as the first patriarch of Pure Land School.”

Nāgārjuna (C. 150–250) was another great Indian Mahāyāna patriarch. He is known as the champion of the practice of Pure Land Buddhism. The founder of the Madhyamika school of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, Nāgārjuna was credited with writing the Commentary on the “Ten Stage Sūtra”, the Sūtra which is actually a chapter in the “Flower Garland Sūtra” well known as Daśabhumika-vibhasa, commentary on the Daśabhumika-vibhasa Sūtra portion of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, in which was said that there is a ‘difficult way of attaining enlightenment’ through self-cultivation and another way an ‘easy way of attaining enlightenment’ by thinking of and calling upon the names of the Buddhas of the ten directions. Thus, in this especially connection according to the Sources of Chinese tradition, the great patriarch Nāgārjuna stated that; “There are two paths by which one may seek the stage of non-retrogression in one’s advance to Buddhahood. One is by a path that is hard to tread; the other a path that is easy to tread.

The term ‘difficult path’ refers to the fact that it is difficult to seek the stage of non-retrogression in an age when there is no Buddha present and the world is afflicted with the five turbidities. Actually the difficulties are quite numerous, but in essence we reduce them to five. What are they? The first is the fact that notions of relative good espoused by heterodox teachers intermingle with and confuse the Bodhisattva teachings. Second is the fact that the aims of self-benefit espoused by the Śrāvakas impede development of great kindness and compassion. Third is the fact that evil people who have no regard for others do their utmost to destroy the virtues of others. Fourth is the fact that goals falsely esteemed as good by gods and humans undermine the practice of the brahmacarin (i.e., renunciation and celibacy). Fifth is the fact that people advocate

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50 Śrāvaka (in Sanskrit) in which identifies the etymological root of "sāvaka (in Pāli)" to be śru. Therefore "sāvaka" comes from sāvati, meaning "to declare," and refers either to one declaring the Buddha as their teacher or to one to whom the Dhamma has been declared.
reliance only on Self-Power (zili) and so lack sustainment through Other-Power (tali)…Because it is analogous to travelling overland on foot, it is called ‘the path that is difficult to traverse.

The expression ‘path that is easy to traverse’ refers to the vow to be reborn in the Pure Land through recourse to Faith in the Buddha Amitābha. One puts forth the great determination to achieve Buddhahood, establishes merits, and undertaken various practices. Then, through the power of the Buddha Amitābha’s power one enters the ranks of those properly assured of Buddhahood, which is itself, none other than the stage of none-retrogression. Because it is likened to traveling by boat down a river, it is called ‘the path that is easy to traverse.’

For this reason, Nāgārjuna, ‘he delineated two ways of achieves the stage of nonretrogression, the threshold of Enlightenment from which there is no falling back.’ Hence, the meaning of devotion to Amitābha Buddha is especially recommended by Nāgārjuna. The practice of keeping in mind and visualizing Amitābha Buddha in this commentary is not based upon the aforementioned Triple Pure Land Sūtras but rather upon another early Mahāyāna Sūtra which so called the Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra (Sūtra on the Meditation to Behold the Buddhas).

As we shall see, the Pratyutpanna Sūtra would come to have a great influence on Chinese Buddhist practice, but would eventually lose its place to the Triple Pure Land Sutras within the Pure Land Buddhist tradition. However, Nāgārjuna is considered as the first Indian Patriarch of ‘Other-Power’ School in Pure Land Sect, the easy path which relating to the ‘Other-Power’ is very popular in South East Asia such as in China, Japan, Vietnam, etc.

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Vasubandhu (C. 320-400 CE) was one of the founders of the Indian Yogaçára school of Buddhism. He was reputed as the second patriarch of Pure Land Path. Therefore, patriarch Vasubandhu is one of the most influential figures in the entire history of Buddhism, was an eminent Indian Buddhist teacher who is said to be a younger brother of the great Mahāyāna teacher Asaṅga.

Vasubandhu, first ordained in the Hinayana Sarvastivada School but later converted to Mahāyāna Buddhism. Vasubandhu composed commentaries on various Mahāyāna Sūtras such as the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, Nirvāṇa, Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra, Prajñāpāramitā, Vimalakīrti Sūtra, and Srimaladevi, etc., especially he composed the Ching-t’u-lun (浄土論) wherein he listed the “Five Gates of Mindfulness” and illuminated the doctrines contained in the three Sūtra. In this he tells us that the Vows of Amitābha Buddha are the right cause of our attaining Enlightenment, the end of Buddhist practice. Compressed though the work is in size and expression, what he states constitutes the main point of the Other-Power teaching. Therefore, in addition, “Vasubandhu valued the transference of religious merit the most, for it is the distinguishing feature of the superior religious path belonging to the so-called Bodhisattva, leading to complete Enlightenment and Buddhahood.” However he is great and considered as the second Indian Patriarch of the Pure Land Sect.

Hui-Yuan (334–416 CE) was a disciple of early Chinese Buddhist Scholar Tao-an (道安: 312-385 CE). He was the inspiration of the “White Lotus Society” and also father of the Chinese Pure Land School of Buddhism. Though he spent a lot of time studying Confucianism and Taoism in his early years, he was converted to Buddhism in his 21st year and became the most brilliant disciple of Tao-an (312-385 CE). In 381 CE, he went to Lu-Shan, which was a solitary mountain spot, picturesque and eminently suited as a place of retirement for the Buddhist monk. He drew his inspiration largely from the

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*Longer* and *Shorter Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra* [The *Amitābha Sūtras*-Traditional Chinese: 阿彌陀經], with their vivid descriptions of the ‘Pure Land’ and the infinite compassion of *Amitābha Buddha*.

In 402 CE, he founded the “*White Lotus Society*” (白蓮教 or *Pai-Lien-Chiao*), when he assembled the monks and laymen of his community before an image of *Amitābha*, stressing the importance of worship, the use of icons in meditation and devotion to *Amitābha*. At that point of time, the eighteen wise and clever men with the same intentions practiced the discipline together.

Besides, one hundred and twenty-three monks and laymen were put forth a pledge, committing themselves to the practices of the teachings of the Pure Land. Like this, *Hui-Yuan’s* reputation as a scholar and lecturer attracted over seven hundred of the empire’s most learned monks to *Ching-ying* Monastery. Then, this event was taken the teachings of “*Other-Power School*” in China and it does be very flourish in this time.

Moreover, for *Hui-Yuan*, the gradual entrance comprises a long tortuous path, but sudden awakening is attained in “one leap” without undergoing *Hinayana* practices. Despite the differences between two paths, their end result are the same, as *Hui-Yuan* explains, “Even though the sudden and the gradual are distinct, when the time comes to receive the *Mahāyāna* [teaching, those of the two groups] will dwell together.” As such, *Hui-Yuan* is reckoned and considered the founder of Chinese Pure Land *Buddhism*. He became the first an eminent Patriarch of Chinese Pure Land *Buddhism*. Though, in this time, even he does not seem to make any efforts to spread a Pure Land Path outside of the Mount Lu (Ch: 廬山) community.

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57 Loc. Cit, pp. 55-56.
Tán-Luan (曇鸞: 476–542) was originally a Buddhist scholar but after becoming ill he studied Taoism in order to seek the Elixir of Life. However, after an encounter with the Indian monk who name is Bodhiruci, Tán-Luan became a devotee of the Pure Land teachings. Therefore, Tán-Luan was not only a believer of the Pure Land path but also the first major Pure Land writer with three works to is credit. His major work, the Tán-Luan Commentary, is a commentary to the Rebirth Treatise.”  

The commentaries taught that the all beings could be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha through sincere recitation of the Buddha’s Name as based on the Other-Power of Amitābha Buddha rather than the Self-Power of the practitioners. Tán-Luan is also credited for having developed the six-character phrase Tan-luan is also credited for having developed the six-character phrase "Namo Amitābha Buddha" (南無阿彌陀佛). In this connection, Tán-Luan stressed the concept of the ‘vow power of Amitābha Buddha. The doctrinal justification for the independence of the Pure Land Buddhist path constitutes one of Tán-Luan’s contributions. He took Nāgārjuna’s division of the “easy and difficult paths,” which originally applied to the attainment of the non-retrogressive stage on the Bodhisattva path, and ingeniously adapted the “easy path” to the Pure Land teaching”.  

Hence, Tán-Luan’s doctrinal insights profoundly influenced Shinran of the Japanese Pure Land tradition, who venerated him as the first of the three Chinese patriarchs, the others being Tao-Ch’o and Shan-tao.” Tán-Luan is considered as the second Chinese person in the lineage after patriarch Hui-Yuan.  

Tao-Ch’o (562-645 A.D), in following the tradition teaching of Master T’an-Luan, also determined that to awaken aspiration for enlightenment, and then perform to practice combined the Amitābha Buddha Name’s Recitation with the practice of meditation. Tao-Ch’o asserted that the Pure Land Path was the only teaching whereby  

58 Loc. Cit, p. 17.  
59 Loc. Cit, p. 18.  
60 Loc. Cit, p. 17.
people could attain salvation in the suffering world of the age of the final Dharma by the mode of thinking and adapted it to two further categories that he established ‘the gateway of the Holy Path’ or the teaching that salvation can be reached through Self-Power or one's own efforts, and another is ‘the gateway of the Pure Land’ or the teaching of Salvation through the power of Amitābha Buddha which is so called Other-Power. His main text was the Peace and Bliss collection (安樂集 or An-lo-chi or V: An LạcTập). 61

Specially, the distinctive feature of Tao-Ch’o that is Pure Land teaching was the particular way that he combined the thought of the Sūtra of Immeasurable Life (Wuliang-shou-ching) with that of the Meditation Sūtra (Kuan-wu-liang-shou-ching). Tao-Ch’o maintained that the time has now passed when a saintly life leading to Enlightenment can be lived. In this age people are no longer capable of understanding rigorous religious practices.

Thus, Pure Land is the form of Buddhism best suited to the needs and abilities of sentient beings in this last age (masse), the period of decline.”62 However, Tao-Ch’o, was to greatly influence the next and the greatest of the Chinese Pure Land in the lineage patriarchs.

 Shan-Tao (善導: 613-681) was a prominent champion of the Pure Land School of Buddhism. His teaching spread across China, and eventually to Japan, Vietnam and Korea. The most significant contributions of Shan-Tao is that he was one of the first to propose that salvation through Amitābha Buddha by the focus on the Pure Land tradition to achieved simply through the Recitation of Amitābha Buddha’s Name. For Shan-Tao, the sufficient practice to realize birth in Sukhāvatī. According to him, the only repeat the Name of Amitābha Buddha with all your heart in whenever walking or standing, sitting or lying and never cease the practice of it even for a moment.

Thus, according to the teachings of Shan-Tao, even the incorrigibly evil person can and according to the “Meditation Sūtra” anyone can be born in the Pure Land. In this connection, it seems to corresponding in the Eighteenth Vow.

Among Shan-Tao’s teachings are the Three Minds and the Four Modes of Practice for Pure Land Buddhism which stipulated the devotional practices that lead to Pure such as reciting scripture, meditation, worship, uttering the Name of the Amitābha Buddha, and praises and offerings, e.g., but among all of them the uttering the Name of the Amitābha Buddha considered as the main act and truly guarantee to salvation.

Ultimately, in his writings such marked a change in the way Buddhists viewed of salvation through Amitābha Buddha. He points out to us that Queen Vaidehi to whom the sermon of the Kammuryojukyo is directed is no other than man himself, who is but a common mortal immersed in sin and evil. He says that though the sutra gives the two phases of: (1) Buddha Perfection Samādhi and (2) Buddha Meditation samādhi, the end in view is to lead us to Nembutsu all other practices named in the Kammuryojukyo being after all steps to this final goal. He propounds the two terms ‘Yomon’, i.e. the ‘Essential Gate’, and ‘Gugammon’, i.e. the ‘Gate of the Vow’, saying that though the sutra postulates outwardly the Way of Nembutsu of the Self-Power, the aim is to give one immersed in sin and evil the Way of Absolute Salvation through the Other-Power of Amitābha Buddha.”63

However, in the history of transmission of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, Shan-Tao was considered as the fourth Patriarch of Pure Land School in China. But in lineage with Hui-Yuan, in the genealogy of Shan-Tao become considered as the second patriarch of Pure Land School, and another elevenths patriarch to genealogy of Shan-Tao in China such as Cheng-Yuan (in T’ang dynasty around 1287), Fa-Zhao (766-822), Shao-Jiang (T,ang dynasty 618-907), Yung-Ming-Yen-Shou (904-975), Jing-Ch’ang(?-1020), Zhu-Hong (1535-1615), Ou-I, Chih-Hsu (1599-1656), Shi-Xian (1686-1734), Ji-Jing (1644-63 Kosho Yamamoto, An Introduction to Shin Buddhism, The Karinbunko, Oyama, Ono-ku, Ube City, Yamaguchi-ken, Japan, 1963, p. 102.
Tai-Xu (1889-1947) Yin-Kuang (1861-1940). And the Pure Land School had been joined in Japan in lineage patriarchs such as:

**Genshin** (源信: 942–1017) was an elite cleric who espoused a doctrine of devotion to *Amitābha Buddha*. He is considered as the first Patriarch of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. Genshin, first followed the Tendai sect and investigated its teachings extensively while becoming proficient in the Pure Land doctrine as well he who made the Other-Power method, the Recitation of Buddha’s Name as focal point of his major work. *Genshin* believed that the Recitation of *Amitābha Buddha* Name in its highest form is a meditative practice in which one visualizes *Amida* and His Pure Land while chanting His name, and even for the person incapable of meditation.

Therefore, “*Genshin* recommended chanting the *Nembutsu* to concentrate the mind and to focus thoughts on *Amida*. This was particularly important in the deathbed *Nembutsu* ceremony (*rinjugyogi*), during which the dying believer envisions *Amida* coming to usher the believer into Pure Land.” 64 However the short time Pure Land in Japan, but it is influence very great in the modern time which the genealogy of *Genshin* patriarch such as *Yokan* (1032-1111), *Jippan* (d. 1144), *Chinkai* (1042-1152), *Venku-Honen* (1133-1198), *Shinran* (1173-1263), etc.

While taking a look at the contributions of Patriarchs in the history of Pure Land Buddhism, we should understand clearly that the genealogical transmission of Pure Land Patriarchs is not so clear when we compare it with the genealogy transmission of Zen Patriarchs. But however they are, here the researcher would want to show and produce evidence of those who have practiced the meaning of devotion which means so called Other-Power.

According to Pure Land tradition, whenever a person desires to become a Buddhist, a lotus flower blossoms in the Pure Land. When a person becomes a Buddhist,

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this means that the practitioners will step on the way of Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā, viz., to realize the law of cause and effect following the creation of the perfect world by the Compassion of Amitābha Buddha through the lotus flower symbol of inner spiritual awakening. It amounts to awaiting the rebirth of the practitioners into the realm of spiritual perfection, viz., the so called Western Paradise, the Land of Utmost Bliss and Purity.

Therefore, everything in the Pure Land always teaches the Dharma, even the birds sing the songs of the Dharma, the rivers hum Sūtras as they go flowing by and flowers blossom in harmony with the blossoming of Wisdom, which so called that everything in the Pure Land is a stepping stone on the way to get perfect Enlightenment.

III.3. The Pure Land Buddhist Ethics and its Contemporary Relevance

With the increase in the contemporary relevance of Pure Land Buddhist ethics, it has become a valuable service for the Path that could help all sentient beings to liberate them from all afflictions, worries and sins in this hectic world which people are trying to make sufficient for everyday life, the whole day are busy at work and family’s life. They are not have chance to practice or feed their spiritual life by meditating or chanting the sutras for haft and hour, even fifteen minutes to calm their mind. With the compassionate heart of the Buddha were showed them a way for short cut to purify their mind in anywhere, anytime that they could practice is Pure Land path.

However, the marvels of modern technology have given us enormous power over the forces of nature. We have to face many disasters, the problems of human beings; the basic problem that we face today is life in a hurry-scurry, moral degeneration and misused intelligence.

In spite of all the advances made by science and technology, the world is far from being safe and peaceful. Science and technology have indeed made human life more insecure than ever before. If there is no spiritual improvement in the way we handle our
problems then humanity itself is in danger of being wiped out. Some are in dire need neither of peace nor only in our personal life at home and work, but also at the global level.

A work of this nature, is most likely to give a broad overview of the sources for Pure Land Buddhist Ethics which are many different discussing of the subject in contemporary relevance such as the ethical reasoning of the monastic codes, the five precepts for laity disciples, the Bodhisattva precepts, specially the Buddha mentioned base upon the five precepts for the disciple, i.e. killing, stealing, misconduct, telling lies, and drinking or ten good actions, and base on the filial piety, etc., especially, according to the Amitāyur Dhyāna Sūtra addressed the three pure actions as the opportunity for those who wish to cultivate to be born in the Land of Sukhāvatī world, the world of Highest Happiness.

Therefore, as stated in the Am. Dh. S., “Those who wish to be born in that country of Buddha have to cultivate a “three-fold goodness”. To begin with, they should act filially towards their teachers and elders; be of compassionate mind, abstain from doing any injury, and cultivate the ten virtuous actions. Secondly, they should take and observe the vow of seeking refuge with the Three Jewels, fulfill all moral precepts, and not lower their dignity or neglect any ceremonial observance. Thirdly, they should give their whole mind to the attainment of the Bodhi (perfect wisdom), deeply believe in (the principle of) cause and effect, study and recite (the Sūtras of) the Mahāyāna doctrine, and persuade and encourage others who pursue the same course as themselves. ‘These three groups as enumerated are called the pure actions (leading to the Buddha country)’.”65

Based on the above allusion to an Asian culture, and we can say that the filial piety as was the pillar of contemporary relevance society.

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The highlighting of Pure Land Buddhist ethics has been most involved exploring some of their practical effects in activism and effects on the contemporary Pure Land relevance society. In order to highlight the contemporary relevance of Pure Land Buddhist ethics, we not only feel the urgency to take into consideration resources for the development of ethics but we should also think of significant challenges with a view to elaborating explicitly ethical approaches to Buddhism. Specifically, to explain the sources, there is enough evidence to affirm that all people which the good and the bad, even sin were embraced by the compassion of Amida Buddha.

Furthermore, the Pure Land Buddhist ethics will be the conduct in the world. Because of that will be the opportunity for some cases as evil actions, immoral acts, and so forth, each and all will embraced by the compassion of Amida Buddha including a good acts were equally destined for liberation. On the above that, for the liberation; according to the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra, Amida Buddha in his causal stage as Bodhisattva Dharmākāra, established the supreme, incomparable Vow by selecting the best cause of bringing all sentient beings to Buddhahood and qualities from among of them.

Due to this, the place of Pure Land activism in Buddhist practice will be the path of compassion, to which human beings are attached nowadays, to gain peace and wisdom through their individual practice, in such a way that it pervades their everyday lives and concerns and frames their responses to crises near at hand and around the globe. And furthermore, Pure Land activism is the ethical arguments of peace and nonviolence, which that will contributions to social welfare in the contemporary relevance.

So, the Pure Land social ethics exists around the existing ethical action and forty-eight Vows of Amida Buddha was be the instrumentally related to salvation in Pure Land Buddhism. Here, specially, the influence of Pure Land Buddhist ethics was based on the two principle key of “Self-Power” and “Other-Power”. They are associated with the doctrinal; the reliance on self-power is based in egoistic delusion, is seen as the source of
suffering and evil in the world, while reliance on the “other-power” is seen as providing liberation from the “false-self” and its endless cycling through states of woe. So, the teaching of “self-power” and “other-power” as the teaching of emancipation, which that opened release from suffering to all people in every sector of society.

In the light of what has been stated above, we can infer that the Pure Land Buddhist ethics attaches priority to individual moral behavior. Presently, there are numerous activists and groups working on Pure Land Buddhist ethics devoted to exploring its contemporary relevance and the way it impacts the process of social change.

In the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha Sūtra (佛說阿彌陀經), the Buddha says: “Shariputra, living beings who hear this should generate an earnest desire, wishing to be reborn in that land, why? Because in that land one will be able to meet in one place persons of such high virtue as the many living beings I have described here. Shariputra, one cannot be reborn in that Buddha-field, if one depends on the merit of only a few roots of goodness”66. Or “舍利弗。不可以少善根福德因緣得生彼國”67... by means of small good works [little roots] or virtues no one can be born in that country, etc., So, one should have great merits and virtues, such as upholding the Five Percepts and practicing “Ten Wholesome Deeds,” etc. in order to be born in Pure Land.

So, the concept of that, eventually that’s why becoming an important feature in all major Buddhist sects. And was the source of hope for ordinary people who locked into their social roles, lacked opportunity to enter a monastery and devote their lives to the search for enlightenment. But, on the other hand, for modern people a major question is what is the nature of the Pure Land and where is it? Is it an objective existence somewhere out there?

67 T12, No. 366, p. 0347b.
The sutras place that; “At that time the Buddha said to Elder Sariputra; West of here, past a hundred billion Buddha-lands, there exists a world called “Ultimate Bliss”. In this land there exists a Buddha called Amitabha, who is expounding the Dharma right now.” It mentioned that so many million “miles” to the West and undoubtedly there people go after death. The detailed descriptions of the Pure Land in the Sutras depict it as a realm of perfect peace, freedom and bliss where trees, birds and breezes proclaim the teaching. And most in Mahāyāna Buddhism also mentioned that there were Buddhas and worlds in every direction of the universe, filling the cosmos from macro to micro worlds.

Several modern Pure Land Buddhist thinkers and practitioners have tried to find out what “birth” into the Pure Land signifies and how this relates to ethics in human society. According to them, the Pure Land ought not to be treated as an otherworldly realm located somewhere in absolute isolation from this world. On the other hand, life in the Pure Land essentially means that it will be led here and now, without regard to waiting for the future.

Therefore, the notion of “birth in the Pure Land” refers to the path along which human beings can truly live. The meaning of “birth”, therefore, is not the one that goes to the Land of Ultimate Bliss after death and then lives over there. Instead, “birth” can be described as the continuous spiritual liberation in the present moment.

However, again the question is how we are able to go to the Pure Land. The answer “birth” into the Pure Land which entails the development of compassion and wisdom and the abandonment of egocentric delusion and desires that can take place in some sense of during this lifetime.

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69 T.12, p. 0346c.
Furthermore, in the book “Living in Amida’s Universal Vow” edited by Alfred Bloom also answer is that “the person who truly lives in this world is able to go to the Pure Land. That person is “born”. Therefore, it is not that one goes there and is able to live. If one does not truly live before that, that is, here and now, in this world, then that person will not realize enlightenment in the Pure Land”.\(^{70}\) Thus, the world is alive and harmonious, that is why we say the art of living in the Pure Land is at this time and in this world in which we are living, or we can say that the Pure Land is not actively working in this world is not the true essence of Pure Land. However, this kind of Pure Land Buddhist teaching is that which will be providing an all possible basis for ethical reasoning.

The existence of the Saṃgha in Pure Land Buddhism, characterized by the special status of monks and nuns, laymen and women in Pure Land Buddhist ethics, must tend to fulfill the physical and spiritual needs of the society. “Practicing or Caryā” necessarily means practicing, performing, behavior, conduct.\(^{71}\) It is also related to morality is taken up by many Buddhist thinkers: for instance, to the compassionate aspiration of the Bodhisattva to help others, viz., an action performed with the special purpose or conduct profitable to others, suggesting that this means providing concrete assistance to the needy and working for peace. Because of, in the social status asserts that we only living, working and practicing together in harmonious that we can hope ultimately to transform our world into a Pure Land.

Through this view, the concepts of Pure Land ethics are practicing for purifying the mind and realization of this world as a Pure Land. In the other words, the underscore to defining characteristic of all interpretations of humanistic Buddhism is the only way we must establish a Pure Land in the human realm in our daily life, because of, this world is very beauty through the eyes of who really awakening and realizes to self-emptiness


\(^{71}\) M. Monier Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary, p. 90c. And see: Franlin Edgerton, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, p. 66b.
and interconnectedness, which has ethical implications and specially protecting natural resource.

According to Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, “I think that however beautiful the Pure Land is, it is no more beautiful than the Saha World [this world of endurance]. Everything we see in the Pure Land we are also able to see over here. We have heard the ancestral teachers say the Pure Land is in our mind and in our heart”.  

These above explanations give us suggest that the differences in engaged Pure Land Buddhist ethics activities are the subject emphasizing in part as compassionate activity directed toward benefit others through the actions of body, words and thought in society. In most of the cases, it is also the focus of reform in a social entity, viz., its compassionate service to engage in other social service enterprises.

In connection with these characters, the idea of responding with engaged Pure Land Buddhist ethic activities and compassionate activity is easy to refer them to the right speech, right thought and right action following the teaching of the “Eightfold Path”. And which normally the eight fold path divided into three groups: moral conduct, meditation, wisdom. What is the right action? It is by which someone avoids killing of living beings, and abstains from it. Without stick or sword, conscientious, full of sympathy, he is anxious for the welfare of all living being. He avoids stealing, and abstains from it; what another person possesses of goods and chattels in the village or in the wood that he does not take away with thievish intent. He has no intercourse with such persons as are still under the protection of father, mother, brother, sister or relatives, or with married women, nor female convicts, or even with flower-decked girls. This is called right action. There are two fundamental types of right action. What they are?

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72 T. Nhat Hanh, Finding Our True Home: Living in the Pure Land Here and Now, p. 75.
1. Abstaining from killing, from stealing, and from unlawful sexual intercourse. This is called the Mundane Right Action, which yields world fruits and brings good results.

2. But the abhorrence of the practice of this threefold wrong action, the abstaining, withholding, refraining there from-the mind being holy, being turned away from the world and conjoined with the path, the holy path being pursed. This is called the Ultramundane and conjoined with the paths.

As implied above, the idea of all the Pure Land Buddhist practitioners of different backgrounds and engaged in compassionate activity and being equal companions has been a profound principle. Indeed, it is among the most commonly cited sources for Pure Land Buddhist ethics today.

In this regard, the relevance for the contemporary discussion on the Pure Land Buddhist ethical teachings which refer to the ideal of equality could be overestimated. In this situation, the word of “equality” should be the basic attitude of the morality. For Dr. Ambedkar, as he wrote in The Buddha and His Dhamma (1959): “[The Buddha taught] social freedom, intellectual freedom, economic freedom, and political freedom. He taught equality, equality not between man and man only but between man and woman. It would be difficult to find a religious teacher to compare with Buddha, whose doctrines are so modern, and whose main concern was to give salvation to man in his life on earth, and not to promise it to him in heaven after he is dead”.\(^73\)

In the context of world peace, it’s most urgent that we all operate without distinction. Evidently, it stresses the idea of “equality” and “togetherness” shared by all people and solidarity with the oppressed and suffering. However, another major for exploration is whether and how the concept of equality and togetherness in Pure Land

Buddhism can provide the either to be of equal benefit or of recent benefit or of ultimate support or being intimate, etc., for the benefit of human beings in contemporary society.

Besides, the personal qualities and the qualities for social welfare are also kept in mind. All people working for others are a compulsory conduct for the disciples of the Buddha. It results in ideal holy life in the world. However, in order to work effectively, one should keep in mind the conditions for the welfare, prosperity, and happiness of any community, nation or country. Hence, these following conditions must be considered prior to serving the people.

Every aspect of Pure Land Buddhist ethics discussed above has a vital bearing of morality. Therefore, it appears to be an important theme in this area; while the contemporary thinkers find much precedence for this back into the concept of Bodhisattva in Pure Land Buddhism.

While observing this, many find the idea of the Pure Land to offer a locus from which religion and society can be goes together, with the ideal that will providing a constructive critique for the problem of social peace continues to be in the present and of the future. In this attempt, relates to the tendencies in the modern society, and which sometimes seems to toward based on the traditional Pure Land literature. Besides, to an introduction some of the ways in which Pure Land Buddhist ethics and general concerns about social welfare as expressed through movements related to such issues as ethical education and hospice care, has produced actual reform movements in contemporary relevance of the world.

For what it is worth, the Pure Land Buddhist ethics provided the occasion to emphasize a point of view in the ‘equality and togetherness’ which to give a ways to guide others and the world into the true values while one acts in daily life. So, for all Buddhist practitioners, we would like to say that; do not wait until you die to get to the Pure Land. It may be too late to you. Please listen to what the Buddha teaches and practice, keep mindfulness and concentration on Amida Buddha to purify your mind and
release your afflictions in order the Pure Land will be available to you in here and now in
this world.

III.4. The *Amitābha’s Pure Land is for all human beings*

There are many ways to practice in the Pure Land Path that. But there is also a
shortcut to cultivating practice in the Pure Land. This is just reciting the Name of
‘Amitābha Buddha’. Therefore, the practitioners should think and understand that the
Pure Land is not a place but the state of having a Pure Mind. Whenever the mind of the
practitioner is pure, he is already in the Pure Land. It is identical to a true life situation in
which whenever the Sun comes out, all darkness disappears immediately. So, when we
practice the great Name of *Amitābha Buddha*, then all of the evil deeds will be wiped
away.

However, according to the Pure Land teaching, there is a common definition of
Pure Land *Buddhism* is that the practitioners should to practice and cultivate a good
deeds, and avoid all of the evil, viz., the practitioners should practicing by a good conduct
or not doing anything which can harm ourselves and others, etc., as well as to cultivating
a pure mind which is realized to the easy way to calm their mind through the practice of
visualization or Holding the Name of the *Buddha*-Recitation. So, with practicing all of
good deeds and good conduct, the practitioners can gradually and eventually purify their
minds which are already in the Pure Land. Therefore, the main purpose of *Amitābha’s*
Pure Land for all sentient beings is to achieve a place in the Pure Land. Keeping this in
view, the practitioners should know that according to the passage of the *Smaller Sūtra*
given to us states that one cannot be born in the *Amitābha’s* Pure Land through a minor
of good deeds, blessings, virtues and causal connections. But, in the *Sūtra* teaches us that
the good men or the good women who hear the Name of *Amitābha Buddha*, and recite
that Name in a single mind or sincere mind, without of any confusion, etc, they should
practice for one day or two days, or three days… as far as six days or seven days. Then,
until whenever the practitioners who are relating to the natural of death, then the
Amitābha Buddha, Bodhisattvas and all of sages who are together with the Buddha will appear before them. Therefore, in this an opportunity whenever the practitioners have to take passing away their mind will not fall in delusion, and then they will attain in the Land of Amitābha Buddha [The Land of Ultimate Bliss]. Linked on above that mentioned, the Sūtra stated that;

“舍利弗。若有善男子善女人。聞說阿彌陀佛。執持名號。若一日。若二日。若三日。若四日。若五日。若六日。若七日。一心不亂。其人臨命終時。阿彌陀佛與諸聖眾。現在其前。是人終時心不顛倒。即得往生阿彌陀佛極樂國土。舍利弗。我見是利故說此言。若有眾生聞是說者。應當發願生彼國土”74

As mentioned above, according to F. Max Muller translated as such: “O Śāriputra, No, whatever son or daughter of a family shall hear the name of the blessed Amitāyus, the Tathāgata, and having heard it, shall keep it in mind, and with thoughts undisturbed shall keep it in mind for one, two, three, four, five, six or seven nights, -when that son or daughter of a family comes to die, then that Amitāyus, the Tathāgata, surrounded by an assembly of disciples and followed by a host of Bodhisattvas, will stand before them at their hour of death, and they will depart this life with tranquil minds. After their death they will be born in the world Sukhāvatī, in the Buddha country of the same Amitāyus, the Tathāgata. Therefore, the, O Śāriputta, having perceived this cause and effect, I with reverence say thus, every son and every daughter of a family ought with their whole mind to make fervent prayer for that Buddha country.”75

It implies that, by a small of good works or minor of good roots or virtues, no one can be born in that country. Therefore, the practitioners should get good merits by the practicing of the “Ten Great Actions” and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, much we known as (普賢 十 大 行 願) in Chinese. On the other hand, the practitioners have to

74 T12, No. 366, p. 0347b.
practice such as upholding the Five Percepts and practicing the “Ten Wholesome Deeds”
as well as they have to recite the Name of Amitābha Buddha in order to be born in the
Pure Land. Here, it’s appeared the question; with great scale that how the practitioners
can get the great merit? In order to give the answer that we should follow the teaching in
the book of ‘Pure Land – Pure Mind’ stated that; “There was one a man who despised the
Pure Land [as the easy route to salvation] and did not cultivate it [maintaining that Zen
was the way for superior people]. He said, ‘My type enters office by passing the
examinations. How could we purchase official rank?’

Another man answered, “This analogy is wrong. There are nine grades of those
who arrive in the Pure Land. Why don’t you take the highest: why are you willing to be
in the lowest grade? Here we have three hundred people taking the Pure Land
‘examination,’ and they can be divided into high, middle, and low, and into them? Why
are you willing to be last on the list?

“Well being born in the top grade is taking first prize on the Pure Land ‘examination’.
There is a verse that praises such people:

With faith, vows, and practice fully developed,
Profoundly understanding the principles of the truth,
The Pure Land is wherever they go
As they witness birthlessness.

‘In the Zen school such that people [are said to have] great penetration and great
enlightenment. These are the ones spoken of in the verse [by the Zen adept Layman
P’ang]:

‘Mind empty, having passed the test, they return home.’
[Hearing this], the man [who had denigrated the Pure Land] looked defeated and said; “This has melted my doubts.”

Therefore, the meaning of salvation should have a vision of the practitioners who wish to get the destination of the faithful of practicing the Amitābha Buddha-Recitation Name so that the goal of practitioners would be inconceivable in the grades of Pure Land. It is worthwhile to keep in mind that this conception of rebirth in the Pure Land is appertained to the Buddhist view that there is no abiding essence in things or what we would call a Faith or Soul or Rebirth, etc.

So, we may have to grapple with certain questions as these: How shall one reconcile Buddha’s dying declaration “Be a light into yourself” with the concept of Nirvana caused by the grace of the Amitābha Buddha? What kind of contradiction is there between the Tathāgata’s declaration “Be a light unto yourself” and the view that during the present age, the grace of Amitābha Buddha alone can lead all sentient beings to Nirvana? Moreover, many Western Buddhists have always regarded Pure Land as ‘not real Buddhism’, not the essential teachings of the Buddha to be self reliant. Even they also give evidence in the Dhammapada teaches that;

“By ourselves is evil done; by ourselves we pain endure. By ourselves we cease from ill; by ourselves become we pure. No one can save us but ourselves, no one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the Path, Buddhas only point the way.”

In this regard, it is important to remember that there are much of literatures that have been misrepresented in the West, as being a form of Christianized Buddhism in the West. Much they represented the Pure Land’s literatures as ‘The Buddhism of Faith’, believe in Amitābha Buddha and they will go to the Pure Land.

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76 J. C. Cleary (tr.), Pure Land-Pure Mind, the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan, 2002, p. 103.
Therefore, we should develop a clear understanding of the meaning and teaching of Pure Land in the following way: “the Pure Land methods are Faith, Vows and Practice. These three conditions interact like the three legs of an incense burner; if one is lacking or broken, the incense burner cannot stand.”\textsuperscript{77} Therefore, the critics point out that it will be missing, or we should understand that the Faith and Mind of Vows and sincere Practice in order to develop the Pure Mind.

In order to attain a Pure Mind, the practitioners should overcome internal obstacles of worry, delusion and habit accumulated over aeons of lifetimes, and the external obstacles of the enticements of too many adverse conditions which surround us. Then, there is Pure Mind, viz., there is Pure Land, means that we already in the Pure Land. Hence, Pure Land is not a place elsewhere, but the state of Pure Mind.

In Buddhism, the Tripiṭaka is the collection of Buddhist Scriptures. There is divided into three parts: Sūtras, which deal with Samādhi, Śāstras, which deal with Wisdom, and the Vinayas, which is the study of moral precepts, viz., we should behave to ‘takes the Dharma as our master and gives the Dharma to others’. And in this case related to the Tripiṭaka that, the practitioners should know that if we see the Tathāgata on a mark, then we have made a mistake, that’s why in the Diamond Sūtra stated that;

“If one sees me in a form,
If one seeks me in a sound,
He practices a deviant way;
And he cannot perceive the Tathāgata.”\textsuperscript{78}

In this regard, we can say that the Pure Land Buddhist teachings are not a contradiction because it was spoken by Śākyamuni Buddha himself [in Smaller and Larger Sūtras]. And the later Ananda and Mahakasyapa edited the Sūtras that the assembly with five

hundred Arhats. Then, the so called “Certification of Faith” which proves for the reason of the Sūtra was spoken by the Buddha. Therefore, the Six Requirements are fulfilled such as; (first) Faith; (second) Hearer; (third) Time; (fourth) Host; (fifth) Place and; (sixth) Audience. As the above examples show, to recognize [The Sūtras], the Sutras give discourses in five general ways, as has been described by Nāgārjuna: (first), by the Buddha himself; (second), by [Buddha’s] sagely disciples; (third), by holy recluses ; (four), by celestial spirits; and (five), by apparitional beings.”

However, based on what has been described above, the researcher would want to show in this paper that there is no essential difference between the two traditional schools of Buddhism. So far as the practitioners are concerned, both schools are firmly based in the Buddha Dharma, the original teaching of the Buddha.

Moreover, if we treat Buddhism in the same light irrespective of different schools or traditions, we should concentrate on the way we go instead of looking at it from different angles. Why do the practitioners look for the same essence in Buddhism when it can be viewed from different angles? If, in this case, by the acceptance of the practitioners looking with the same Buddhism or the teaching arose in a various circumstances, etc., but as many of you should aware that both schools of Buddhism are mainly concerned in the Vinaya. We must be together. Although we may be in the different ways of practice, yet we are all on the way to get the Pure Mind or liberation from this Saha world of sufferings. However, related to the main purpose of the practitioners whatever the etiquette which change over time and differ from one society to another.

So, the main teaching of both schools that we all Buddhist should strive to become a Pure Mind or liberation or enlightenment ourselves and thus be instrumental in leading other beings to enlightenment.

In the regard, it must be kept in mind that the community which attaches priority to the doctrine of Pure Land Buddhism is large enough. So, it is imperative for all the practitioners to concentrate on what they find most beneficial. Linked that, the practitioners should understand the ancient master said that, ‘If your Karma were not heavy, you would not have been born in Saha world’. Therefore, the practitioners should strive to have a great merit and virtues which the Pure Land’s teachings in order to be born in the Pure Land. And Pure Land’s practitioners should uphold the Name of the Buddha-Recitation. On the other hand, as stated in the Contemplation Sūtra, those who wish to seek the rebirth in different classes should have different requirements in the practices such as:

a. Rebirth for the inferior class - "Those who wish to be born in that country of Buddha have to cultivate a three-fold goodness. First, they should act filially towards their parents and support them; serve and respect their teachers and elders; be of compassionate mind, abstain from doing any injury, and cultivate the ten virtuous actions."

b. Rebirth for the medium class - "Second, they should take and observe the vow of seeking refuge with the three jewels, fulfill all moral precepts, and not lower their dignity or neglect any ceremonial observance."

c. Rebirth for the superior class - "Third, they should give their whole mind to the attainment of perfect wisdom, deeply believe in the principle of cause and effect, study and recite the Mahāyāna doctrine, and persuade and encourage others who pursue the same course as themselves."
Based on the doctrine described above which ensures the rebirth of Pure Land, the practitioners should practice what is absolutely necessary. That is just the basic goal of Pure Land Path. We can say with a measure of certainty that the religious and social ethical sense of morality and standards of morality must be issues. Therefore, in order to overlook the world we live in at present, we must focus on how much of high technical era will easily destroy this world.

And many more countries now own more powerful nuclear weapons than before, any war happens between any countries will easily lead this world to the vanished level. From this standpoint of view of war, killing, and reprisal breeds reprisal, we really cannot get rid of these evil paths. Because why? Because of the earth we live have three evil paths, and the Pure Land has no evil path. It must be understood when we study the Canon deeply; we will discover that Pure Land is as a matter of fact the greatest institution of learning cosmic reality.

There are countless life forms live in limitless world in the cosmos, most of scientists believe in that, and in some Buddhist Sūtras already describe very clearly about this. For this reason, of course, we easy to understand that the projections of sentient beings in the world we live. If we want this world to be likes the Pure Land. The first thing we should have to do the project to get rid of these evil paths. We have to change the mind of sentient beings and the projections of good deeds in community or the collective accumulation of past activities of all sentient beings, etc., and then the quality of this our world can be changed. But it is impossible to change this world to become a Pure Land. Because is that why?

According to the reality of present environment, we can see the future of the world is that humans are complexion the world. The complexity of human beings including conceit or ego, bragging, boastful, proud, pride, alcohol, said cut, kill, eat living beings, hatred, ignorance, greed of all types, marketnon, jealousy, deception, intrigue, cunning, dishonest, depraved smoking, theft, etc. also how many other bad things after all is not.
Therefore, all sentient beings in this world just thinking that no matter what happen to them, because, there is a unofficial principle or rule of living for sentient beings. Then, the *karma* of human beings is just like magnet. All beings will follow the circle of karma which is made by being itself; they will live in this kind of retribution forever. Throughout the world we live in, if human beings must take the lives of plants and animals and realize that our lives are so dependent condition natural, we must appreciate the sacrifices made by these plants and animals in order to survive them and prevent unnecessary waste with naturally. Therefore, why should we not accept the nourishment in order to live a healthy, meaningful life? Whereas, almost we are carrying with the heavy burden in order to using others lives, to sustain our life only.

On the other hand, from the standpoint of Buddhism in general speaking and Pure Land Path in particular, the life of human beings, plants, and animals are viewed as the same. Thus, the true happiness is here we live, when we should seek to end conflict and killing others, as well as when we think about the true happiness of human beings.

In this connection, the *Buddha* states in the *Dhammapada* verse ‘131 and 132’ of *DandaVagga*: “People who like to be happy and are in search of pleasure hurt others through various acts of violence for their own happiness. These victims too want to be happy as much as those who inflict pain on them.

Those who inflict pain do not achieve happiness even in their next birth and if people who like happiness for themselves and are in search of pleasure for themselves, do not hurt or torture others or give pain to others, they achieve happiness in the next life too”\(^{80}\).

Moreover, in the *Larger Sūtra* says, “Wherever the Buddha comes to stay, there is no state, town, or village which is not blessed by his virtues. The whole country reposes in peace and harmony. The sun and the moon shine with pure brilliance; wind arises and

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rain falls at the right time. There is no calamity or epidemic, and so the country becomes wealthy, and its people enjoy peace. Soldiers and weapons become useless; and people esteem virtue, practice benevolence and diligently cultivate courteous modesty." So, we can say that all we are living a life that is directed toward the Pure Land. On the other hand, we should believe that Amitābha of the Sukhāvatī, as the divinity of Mahakaruna and Salvation can save the living beings of six gatis (six conditions of sentient existence, viz., devas, men, asuras, beings in the hell, pretas and animals).

Generally, there are six directions of reincarnation in different dimensions on our world. Therefore, we easy to understand that if someone who can use the wisdom eyes to look of human society; if, those whose with good education from family, exemplary life, or there are some individual differences are building a new life or virtuous life.

On the conversely, in a world much like human beings which full of greed, anger, ignorance act, then, the society will be terribly upset and the security of each country will have no guarantee for. Although, the governments of the world set up many large-scale prison, to detain the offenders, but did not remove the insecurity in society. The secret it is where? The Intellectual person can see, but cannot say. Because why? Almost the blend of the most of mission leadership, step by step to consolidate their own position only and even they overtake all the mankind. Because they argue with a very skillfully in sweet words, e.g., so their behavior changes very sophisticated so that a good ones can hardly see. And more importantly all the leaders of the world are just following the high techniques of advancement such as those relating to warfare and building more powerful nuclear weapons.

Thus, they are on way to making the world extremely dangerous with lots of problems like ecocide, pollution and so on. For instance, when we look around the world we can see more and more desert crisis in Africa, the violation of forest of the torrid zone in South America, the death of West Germany’s forest because of the sour rain, the death of the forest in Alps area, and the crisis of the corals of oceanic oasis in Japan and the
whole world. These are only part of the problems. Almost all forests are damaged by the sour rain daily. All deserts in this world are expanding day by day. They are disguised by the government’s economic policy growth with building highest technique nuclear weapons, developed industries, automobiles, games or films and movies violence, etc, all of these things will make this world increase of carbon dioxide, and bring about the hothouse effect, then damage and pollute our surroundings, this is also why the average air temperature of our planet is higher and higher than before. Therefore, we must discard all of them.

Apart from that, if we take the time to look back and analyze each face of all the leader of the world, we will see the entire face is that without any leader of the nation can and research in original precepts or the Five Precepts (P: pañca-sīlāni; S: pañca-śīlāni)\(^{81}\) of the Buddha and put into practice for the Buddhists in the country, we see here is the institutional foundation of a peaceful humanity. They are the five precepts (pañca-sikkhāpada) or five virtues (pañca-sīla) rendered in English and Pāli:

1) I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking life: 
\textit{Paṇātipatāveramaṇīsikkhāpadaṃsamādiyāmi}.

2) I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking what is not given: 
\textit{Adinnādānāveramaṇīsikkhāpadaṃsamādiyāmi}.

3) I undertake the training rule to abstain from sexual misconduct: 
\textit{Kāmesumicchācāraveramaṇīsikkhāpadaṃsamādiyāmi}.

4) I undertake the training rule to abstain from false speech: 
\textit{Musāvādāveramaṇīsikkhāpadaṃsamādiyāmi}.

5) I undertake the training rule to abstain from fermented drink that causes heedlessness: 
\textit{Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānāveramaṇīsikkhāpadaṃsamādiyāmi}.

\(^{81}\) In Pāli and Sanskrit, "five precepts" is more literally translated as pañca-sikkhāpada and pañca-sikṣāpada, respectively. For instance, Harvey (2007, p. 199) translates pañca-sīla as “five virtues.” And also see; The Pāli can be found, for instance, in Elgiriye-Indaratana (2002), p. 2.
And in Chinese texts such as the ceremonial version of the precepts can be found in the Treatise on Taking Refuge and the Precepts (歸 戒 要 集) or (歸 戒 要 集):

1) As the Buddha refrained from killing until the end of his life, so I too will refrain from killing until the end of my life.

如諸佛盡壽不殺生，我某甲亦盡壽不殺生

2) As the Buddha refrained from stealing until the end of his life, so I too will refrain from stealing until the end of my life.

如諸佛盡壽不偷盜，我某甲亦盡壽不偷盜

3) As the Buddha refrained from sexual misconduct until the end of his life, so I too will refrain from sexual misconduct until the end of my life.

如諸佛盡壽不淫欲，我某甲亦盡壽不邪淫

4) As the Buddha refrained from false speech until the end of his life, so I too will refrain from false speech until the end of my life.

如諸佛盡壽不妄語，我某甲亦盡壽不妄語

5) As the Buddha refrained from alcohol until the end of his life, so I too will refrain from alcohol until the end of my life.

如諸佛盡壽不飲酒，我某甲亦盡壽不飲酒”

As we can see above, the first precept is that the Buddha refrained from killing. If a country has legislations to completely ban law or iron law of killing and being killed, and instead launch the cultivation of vegetables, then perhaps all people will live peacefully in the country rather than being set up to provide more slaughter serve food to people. We must understand one aspect that people can eat out of habit. If the exercise habits of vegetables in your diet, then people would be vegetarian. If all humanity, then perhaps some vegetarian, then hospital will reduce the prison curtailed. Because of vegetarians tend to lead to the reduction of crime and disease.

82 CBETA, 大正新脩大藏經第十八冊, T18., No. 916<受五戒八戒文>; And, CBETA, 大正新脩大藏經, T24., No. 1488<優婆塞戒經> or Taisho Tripitaka, No. 1488, Vol. 24.
The second precept is that the *Buddha* refrained from stealing. Being to steal something from somewhere or someone Else, this is a very unreasonable. Because the object has owned others, if one who appropriates others’ fortune in bad faith or try to win back from others, then, viz., make the damage for others, e.g., means we make causes anger and hatred, will be accused of theft, because the losers are always angry. About this includes reviews for robbery by force or deception intrigue, loan payment, etc. Therefore the causes of stolen objects as greed growth and causing suffering to others those who lose things from this was the source born of hatred and many other woes.

The third precept is that the *Buddha* refrained from sexual misconduct is indiscriminately promiscuous love, used as position and power or power and influence to break the happiness of others. He does not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their *Dharma*; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man. Misconduct also includes scenes of people seeking run after another women. Thus, misconduct action is the type of person who has no ethical training, their physical desires within temporary time they cannot abstain. They did not enough wisdom to understand or a lucid decision of the consequences of this misconduct. This is a social ethical configuration of mankind in this world is a single husband and wife.

The forth precept is that the *Buddha* refrained from false speech or telling lies is as cheating behavior to raise his ego, flowers or sweet of speech to deceive others, e.g., including said two-way, telling slander…and the fifth is the *Buddha* refrained from alcohol or use narcotic substances drunk, etc, this is also contribute to maintaining social order, and help people not cause madness…Therefore in the *Abhisandha Sūtra/Aṅguttaranikāya* the *Buddha* said that undertaking the precepts is a gift to oneself and others.”

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Therefore, if the world we live to apply the five precepts of the Buddha, thus numberless beings those who are greedy and desirous deeply are ease up. That’s the reason why we call this world ‘the world of pure or happiness’.

Conversely, we called ‘the world of impurity or degeneration’. Therefore, as Buddhist practitioners, when we believe in Amitābha Buddha and chant His Name, then we can concentrate our mind. It is with the focused mind that we will receive the super energy of Amitābha Buddha. When we reach this step, and our mind will be in the deep cultivation of wisdom, our body and mind cannot be tangled, bothered, and mutable, then the color of our brain wave will be changed from the purple of ordinary people to the brilliant gold.

The color in gold does not mean wealth but the highest pure and brilliance. In this connection, relating to the stage of meditation which we know that the beings in deva’s worlds they spend the most of time in deep meditation, all emit their light of mind and materialize their gold, pure, and brilliant appearance, and the degree of appearance are different according to their degree of meditation and degree of virtue and wisdom. And because of gold, pure, and brilliant appearance of all beings, make Pure Land world a pure and brilliant world.

For this reason, the Pure Land Path involves the accomplishments of entering experientially of all Buddhas. Pure Land is, as a matter of fact, the method of becoming Buddha. If one who seeks to learn and understand of Buddha Dharma, one may follow the customary approach to practice the “Three Studies”, namely, disciplines or percepts, meditation and wisdom. Therefore, on the other hand, Pure Land Buddhism is a direct and easy practice leading to the rebirth in the Amitābha's Pure Land, where their root of birth and death will be broken off forever.

That’s why Pure Land Path always whole-hearted admonish the practitioners should practicing the Holding the Name of the Buddha-Recitation Method in daily to helps them to gain mindfulness of Amitābha Buddha and to bring peace and clarity to the present moment. In this method, one should sit up straight and clearly recite Amitābha's Name in
numerous times whilst trying to maintain an undisturbed mind, then ‘May there is peace and happiness in the world we live’.

III.5. The Ideal of Pure Land for Environment

The key features of the Buddhist Pure Land tradition have emerged as salient points of the globalization characterized by frequent interactions between political activism and social service in the contemporary society.

Therefore, going by the most important doctrine in Pure Land Buddhism, we wish all the practitioners who are interested in Pure Land Buddhist doctrine and practices should be realize the new roles that Bhikkhus and Bhikkhuni, laymen and laywomen are playing in Buddhist institutions. The Pure Land Buddhist tradition in which implicit that increasingly stresses on actions such as chanting the Sūtras, recite the Buddha-name, meditation, morality, the art of happiness and the social engagement of Pure Land Buddhism, etc, in which the practitioners wish to achieve the world we live like the Pure Land in order to get rid of the evil paths.

However, many people believe in the literal descriptions of the Pure Land provided by the Sūtras which teach that there are wonderful things to be enjoyed, such as delicious foods, wonderful sound ‘Buddha’, the wonderful sound ‘Dharma’, the wonderful sound ‘Sangha’, the wonderful flowers, the wonderful threes, the moon-bright, the comfortable climate, and all kinds of jewels, etc. These basically signify the new ideas of the Pure Land for environment in this contemporary relevance society.

As per the Four Agamas Sūtra and the Mahāyāna Sūtras, in which they all approve that the world we live is just one of the groups of star light which has life forms in this infinitely great cosmos. That is why according to the Smaller Sūtra the Lord Buddha said to Śāriputra that; “If you travel westward from here, passing a hundred thousand kotis of Buddha lands, you will come to the land called Utmost Bliss, where there is a Buddha
named Amitāyus. He is living there now, teaching the Dharma.⁸⁴ However, most in Mahāyāna tradition believed there are many realms of world.

⁸⁴ Inagaki Hisao, Harold Stewart (Coll.), The Three Pure Land Sūtras, Numata Centere for Buddhist Translation and Research, United States of America, 2003, p. 103.