

LITURGY FOR BIRTH

往生礼讃

(OJORAISAN)

Compiled by Monk Shan-tao

*Translated from Chinese
by Zuio H. Inagaki
October, 2000*

*Reference:
An Introduction to Shan-
tao's Liturgy for Birth
by Zuio H. Inagaki*

Revised September 28, 2002

Introduction

Shan-tao (613-681) was the fifth of the seven patriarchs in the tradition of Jodoshinshu and also the third of the five Pure Land masters in China. His contribution to the development of Pure Land Buddhism was so great and far-reaching that it would be impossible to speak of the growth and spread of this form of Buddhism in China and its neighboring countries, including Japan, without reference to him.

Shan-tao's *Liturgy for Birth - Ojoraisan* - is a collection of passages and hymns from Pure Land sutras and discourses, arranged in six sections according to the six different times of the day. This is a formula of daily devotional practice.

Each section consists of a quotation from a canonical source, words of praise of Amida's virtues, a number of worshipful prostrations, and confession of Shan-tao's own karmic evil.

TRANSLATION

<Index to services at six periods>

1. Sunset service	4. Service at the last watch of the night
2. Service at the first watch of the night	5. Morning service
3. Service at midnight	6. Midday service
 Notes

TAISHO TRIPITAKA REFERENCE
<TT.47, 438>

[Preface]

(1)

Verses of liturgy to be recited at six times of the day, compiled for the purpose of urging all people to aspire for birth in the land of Amida Buddha, the realm of the Utmost Bliss in the West.

I have reverently compiled into a one-fascicle book, liturgies for birth from the *Larger Sutra* and those of Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu and monks of this country. I have arranged them in six divisions corresponding to the six periods of a day. My sole wish is, first, to encourage people to be mindful of the Buddha continuously in order to facilitate their attainment of birth and, second, to benefit the ages of the distant future by enlightening those who have not yet heard the Dharma. First, respectfully based on the *Larger Sutra* which states that Shakyamuni and Buddhas of the ten quarters glorify

Amida's twelve lights¹) and recommend recitation of his Name, worshiping this Buddha and being mindful of him as the sure way of attaining birth in his land, I prostrate myself in worship nineteen times at sunset.
 Second, respectfully collecting important passages from the *Larger Sutra*, I compose liturgical verses and prostrate myself in worship twenty-four times at the first watch of the night.
 Third, respectfully based on Bodhisattva Nagarjuna's liturgical verses of aspiration for birth,²) I prostrate myself in worship sixteen times at the second watch of the night.
 Fourth, respectfully based on Bodhisattva Vasubandhu's liturgical verses of aspiration for birth,³) I prostrate myself in worship twenty times at the third watch of the night.
 Fifth, respectfully based on Master Yen-ts'ung's⁴) liturgical verses of aspiration for birth, I prostrate myself in worship twenty-one times in the early morning.
 Sixth, using the liturgical verses of aspiration for birth composed by Monk Shan-tao based respectfully on the sixteen contemplations,⁵) I prostrate myself in worship twenty times at noon.

[Introduction]

(2)

Question: I wish to encourage people to seek birth but do not know how to teach them to establish faith, perform practices, and do meritorious acts so that they may definitely attain birth in that land.

Answer: If you wish to attain birth in that land unfailingly, you should possess the three minds as mentioned in the *Contemplation Sutra*⁶) and, then, ensure birth there. What are the three minds? First, sincere mind; worshiping that Buddha as the bodily act, praising and glorifying him as the verbal act, and concentrating on and contemplating him as the mental act - in performing those three kinds of acts, you are required to be sincere. Hence, this is called 'sincere mind.'

Second, deep mind; this is the true faith which accepts that you are an ordinary person full of evil passions, possessed of few roots of good, subject to transmigration in the three worlds, and unable to escape from the 'burning house'; nevertheless, now you recognize the fact that Amida's Universal Primal Vow definitely ensures birth in the Pure Land of those who recite the Name even ten times or down to once. Since you do not entertain even a single thought of doubt, such a state of mind is called 'deep mind.'

Third, making aspiration for birth through merit-transference; you aspire for birth through transferring all the roots of good towards it; hence, such a state of mind is called 'making an aspiration for birth through merit-transference.' Those who possess all the three minds unfailingly attain birth. If one of them is lacking, birth cannot be attained. Detailed expositions are given in the *Contemplation Sutra*.

(3)

Again, it is stated in Vasubandhu's *Discourse on the Pure Land* (to the following effect):⁷)

If there are people who wish to be born in that land, I will urge them to perform the Five Mindful Practices. If the five practices are accomplished, one can certainly attain birth. What are the five?

First, the Gate of Worship, the bodily act: it is to worship Amida Buddha with a concentrated mind, with palms joined together in reverence and with an offering of incense and flowers. In the act of worshiping, one should exclusively worship that Buddha; continue this practice right up to the end of your life, and refrain from doing other types of worshiping. This is called 'the Gate of Worship.'

Second, the Gate of Praise, the verbal act: it is to praise single-mindedly the Buddha's physical glory, his light, the physical glory and light of all the sages, and all the jeweled ornaments and effulgence of light of that land.

Third, the Gate of Concentration and Contemplation, the mental act: it is to concentrate one's thoughts and contemplate the physical characteristics and light of the Buddha and all the holy sages and the glorious features of that land. As stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*, you should be continuously mindful of, remember, think of and contemplate these. Hence, this is called 'the Gate of Contemplation.'

Fourth, the Gate of Aspiration: it is to aspire with sincere heart to be born in that land by single-mindedly transferring to that end all the merits of the three kinds of acts which are performed in all the four modes of posture,⁸) at all times and places, day and night, whether in the beginning of practice, in the middle or at the end. Hence, this is called 'the Gate of Aspiration.'

Fifth, the Gate of Merit-transference: it is to concentrate your thoughts and rejoice deeply at your own good acts and the good acts done by all the sages of the Three Vehicles⁹) and ordinary people in the five realms of Samsara.¹⁰) Rejoicing just as Buddhas and bodhisattvas do, <TT.47, 439> you share with sentient beings the merits of the good acts that accrue from rejoicing in this way and those of your own good acts and transfer

those merits to the Pure Land. This is called the Gate of Merit-transference. Also, after having reached the Pure Land, you will acquire the six supernatural powers,¹¹⁾ with which you enter Samsara and guide sentient beings in all future ages without getting weary until you attain Buddhahood. This is also called 'the Gate of Merit-transference.'

When all the five gates of practices are accomplished, you will certainly attain birth in the Pure Land. If each gate of practice is performed with appropriate acts accompanied by the above-mentioned three minds, it is called 'the true act,' irrespective of the number of acts one undertakes. You should be aware of this.

(4)

Further, I encourage the practice of the four modes of acts, which, coupled with the three minds and the Five Mindful Practices, enable you to attain birth quickly. What are the four? First, reverential practice: this is to revere and worship the Buddha and all the holy sages in his assembly; hence, this is called 'reverential practice.' Perform this act continuously with determination until the end of your life; this is a long term practice.

Second, exclusive practice; this is to recite the Buddha's Name exclusively, be mindful of, contemplate, worship and praise the Buddha and all the holy sages exclusively without mixing other acts with these; hence, this is called 'exclusive practice.' Perform these acts continuously with determination until the end of your life; this is a long term practice.

Third, uninterrupted practice: this is to perform acts of reverence, worship, recitation of the Name, praise, mindfulness, contemplation, making aspiration and transferring your merits uninterruptedly with continuous concentration, without mixing other acts with these; hence, this is called 'uninterrupted practice.' Do not allow evil passions, such as greed and anger, to arise to interrupt your practice. Whenever you commit faults, repent immediately. Without awaiting moments, passage of time, and days, keep your practice pure and unadulterated; and so this is called 'uninterrupted practice.' Perform these acts continuously with determination until the end of your life; this is a long term practice.

Bodhisattvas have already escaped from Samsara, and are now seeking to attain Buddhahood by transferring their good towards it; this is self-benefiting. Teaching and guiding sentient beings until the end of all future ages is the benefiting of others. Sentient beings today are bound by evil passions and so have not yet escaped from the suffering of birth-and-death in evil realms¹³⁾ and other realms of Samsara. Let us set about practicing in accordance with appropriate conditions and quickly transfer all the good we may do towards the land of Amida Buddha, aspiring to be born there. When we have reached that land, we will have no fear any longer. While performing the above-mentioned four kinds of practice, we will naturally and spontaneously benefit ourselves and others fully. We should be aware of this.

(5)

It is stated in the *Prajnaparamita Sutra Expounded by Manjushri*,¹⁴⁾ "I wish to expound the Single-practice Samadhi. I only encourage you to dwell alone in a quiet place, concentrate on one Buddha without visualizing his countenance, and exclusively recite his name. Then, while in the recitative practice, you will be able to see Amida and all other Buddhas."

Question: Why do you teach me to recite the name exclusively instead of urging me to practice visualization? What is your intention?

Answer: Sentient beings have heavy karmic hindrances, the objects of contemplation are subtle but the contemplating mind is coarse, and their consciousness is agitated and their mind is distracted; therefore, it is difficult to accomplish contemplation.

For this reason, the Great Sage, out of compassion, straightforwardly encourages people to recite the name exclusively. Since the recitative practice is easy to follow, they can attain birth in the Buddha-land through continuous practice of it.

Question: Why do many objects appear when only one Buddha's name is recited? Is this not a mixing of the right object of practice and wrong ones and also a confusion of one and many objects?

Answer: Buddhas have attained the same enlightenment, and their forms are indistinguishable. Even if you visualize many Buddhas by concentrating on one Buddha, this does not create any breaching of the Great Principle, does it?

Further as it is stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*, the Buddha encourages sitting contemplation, worshiping, mindfulness, and so forth. In all these acts, to face west comes before anything else, just as a tree topples in the direction it bends. If there is some hindrance which keeps you from facing west, you can just imagine that you are facing west.

Question: I understand that all Buddhas have equally realized the three bodies¹⁴⁾ and their results of compassion and wisdom are perfect and non-dual. If one, facing the appropriate direction, worships and concentrates on one Buddha and recites his name, one should attain birth in his land. Why do you only praise the Buddha in the west and encourage an exclusive practice of worshiping, concentrating on him, and so forth?

Answer: Although all Buddhas have attained one and the same enlightenment, when viewed in terms of vows and

practices, their causes and conditions are not indiscernible. Now, Amida the World-honored One formerly made deep and weighty vows, and embraces beings of the ten quarters with his Light and Name. They are only expected to establish faith. By reciting the Name until death or reciting it even ten times or once, one can easily attain birth in his land through the Vow-Power of that Buddha. For this reason, Shakyamuni and other Buddhas especially urge people to face west. This does not mean that recitation of other Buddhas' names cannot remove karmic hindrances and extinguish karmic evils. One should realize this.

(6)

Those who are mindful of Amida continuously until the end of their lives as stated above will be born in the Pure Land, ten out of ten and a hundred out of a hundred. The reason is that they are free of miscellaneous influences from outside, they have attained the right mindfulness, they are in accord with the Buddha's Primal Vow, they do not disagree with the Buddha's teachings, and they accord with the Buddha's words.

Those who set aside the exclusive practice and seek to perform miscellaneous acts will rarely attain birth, perhaps one or two out of a hundred or three or five out of a thousand. The reason is that miscellaneous influences arise in confusion and disrupt one's right-mindfulness. Such practitioners are not in accord with the Buddha's Primal Vow, they are in disagreement with the Buddha's teachings, they do not accord with the Buddha's words, their mindfulness does not continue, their recollecting thoughts are intermittent, their aspiration for birth by transferring their merits towards it is not deep-rooted and sincere, evil passions such as greed, anger and various wrong views arise to interrupt their mindfulness, and they lack the mind of repentance.

There are three kinds of repentance: principal, short, and extensive, which are explained in detail below.¹⁵⁾ Any of the three can be done as one pleases. Otherwise, one will not be continuously mindful of repaying the Buddha's benevolence, one will give rise to haughty thoughts which allow one's acts to be tainted with desires for reputation and profit, one will be covered with self-attachment which alienates one from fellow-practitioners and good teachers, and one will be drawn to miscellaneous influences, resulting in hindering oneself and others from performing the right practice for birth in the Pure Land.

The reason I say this is that I have recently witnessed and heard about the fact that priests and laypeople have different understandings and perform different practices and that some of them take to the exclusive practice [of the Nembutsu] while others follow miscellaneous practices. If only one practices with singleness of heart, ten out of ten will be born in the Pure Land. Those who perform miscellaneous practices and lack sincerity of heart fail to attain birth, even one in a thousand. The gain and loss of these two types of practice have already been discussed above.

I reverently advise you, all the aspirants of birth, to consider your capacities. If you wish to attain birth, you should necessarily strive, mind and body, day and night, without abolishing the practice, whether walking, stopping, sitting or lying down, until the end of your lives.

To keep practicing all through life appears somewhat painful, but the moment life ends, the next moment you will be born in that land, where you will everlastingly enjoy the Dharma-bliss of No-action¹⁶⁾ and will no longer be subject to birth-and-death until you attain Buddhahood. Is this not wonderful? You should be aware of this.

[Main body]

<1. Sunset service 日没讃>

[Return to Top](#)

(7)

First, reverently based on the Larger Sutra in which Shakyamuni Buddha urges us to pay homage to and glorify the Twelve Names of Amida Buddha's Light, aspiring to be born in his land, I prostrate myself in worship nineteen times at sunset. You may conduct the middle or lower level of repentance.

(8)

I take refuge in Shakyamuni and all the other Buddhas, their Dharmas, and Sanghas. I bow to them in worship, aspiring to be born in the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life by transferring the merits of this act towards it.

This Buddha is the Master of priests and laypeople of the present age. The Three Treasures are the field of immeasurable merits. To bow to them in worship even once is to repay the Master's benevolence and accomplish one's own practice. By transferring the merit of this single act, I aspire to attain birth.

I take refuge in all the Three Treasures of the ten quarters in the three periods, existing in the lands, as numerous as the dust-motes, throughout the universe even to the extreme limit of the open space. I bow in worship to them, aspiring to be born in the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life by transferring the merit of this act towards it.

Since the open space extending throughout the ten quarters is boundless, the Three Treasures therein are inexhaustible. Even one act of worship offered to them yields immeasurable virtues and inexhaustible merits. By offering an act of worship to them with sincerity of heart, one will acquire the roots of good for emancipation in one's bodily, verbal and mental acts from each Buddha, each Dharma, each bodhisattva, each holy sage, and each Buddha's relics. These merits will come and benefit the practitioner, and fulfill one's required practices. By transferring the merit of this single act, I aspire to attain birth.

(9)

I take refuge in and worship Amida Buddha of the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May all beings join me in taking refuge in him.
For this reason, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring to be born in his land.

Question: Why is the Buddha called 'Amida'?

Answer: It is stated in the *Amida Sutra* and the *Contemplation Sutra*¹⁷⁾ that the Buddha's light is immeasurable, illumining the lands throughout the ten quarters without hindrance. He watches over only those who practice the nembutsu, embraces and does not forsake them; for this reason, he is called 'Amida.' Also it is stated that the Buddha's lifespan and that of the inhabitants are immeasurable, boundless and incalculable kalpas long; for this reason, he is called 'Amida.' Again,

Shakyamuni and other Buddhas throughout the ten quarters glorify Amida's Light with twelve names¹⁸⁾ and extensively urge beings to recite the Name and worship him continuously without interruption, for such people will gain immeasurable merits in this lifetime and, after death, definitely attain birth.

It is stated in the *Larger Sutra*:¹⁹⁾

"If sentient beings encounter his light, their three defilements are removed; they feel tenderness, joy and pleasure; and good thoughts arise. If sentient beings in the three realms of suffering see his light, they will all be relieved and freed from affliction. At the end of their lives, they all reach emancipation. The light of the Buddha of Infinite Life shines brilliantly, illuminating all the Buddha-lands of the ten quarters. There is no place where it is not perceived. I am not the only one who now praises his light. All the Buddhas <TT.47, 440> shravakas, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas praise and glorify it in the same way. If sentient beings, having heard of the majestic virtue of his light, glorify it continually, day and night, with sincerity of heart, they will be able to attain birth in his land, as they wish. Then the multitudes of bodhisattvas and shravakas will praise their excellent virtue."

The Buddha continued, "The majestic glory of the light of the Buddha of Infinite Life could not be exhaustively described even if I praised it continually, day and night, for the period of one kalpa."

I say to all practitioners, "The Tathagata Shakyamuni could not exhaustively describe Amida's physical characteristics and light even if he praised them continually for the period of one kalpa."

The *Contemplation Sutra* says,²⁰⁾ "Each light shines universally upon the lands of the ten quarters, embracing, and not forsaking, those who are mindful of the Buddha."

Now that the *Contemplation Sutra* testifies to this inconceivable supreme power of embracing the practitioners, why do we not continuously recite the Name, contemplate and worship the Buddha, aspiring for birth in his land? This one should discern.

(10)

I take refuge in the Buddha of Immeasurable Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Boundless Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Unhindered Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Unequaled Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of King of Flame-Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Pure Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Joyful Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Wisdom-Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Uninterrupted Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Inconceivable Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Ineffable Light in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in the Buddha of Light Outshining the Sun and Moon in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

(11)

I take refuge in Amida Buddha in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss;

May the Buddha enfold and protect me with compassion
And let me multiply the seeds of the Dharma;
In this life and in the life to come,
May the Buddha always embrace me.

May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in his land.

I take refuge in Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss;

May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in that land.

I take refuge in Mahasthamaprabhata Bodhisattva in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss;

May I take refuge in him together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in that land.

At the end of the lives of all sentient beings, these two bodhisattvas bring flower-seats and give them to the practitioners. Amida Buddha sends forth great floods of light which illumine their bodies. Furthermore, innumerable transformed Buddhas, bodhisattvas and shravaka monks extend their hands to them all at the same time, and so, in the time it takes to snap one's fingers, they attain birth. To repay my indebtedness to the Buddha, I offer him an act of worship with sincerity of heart.

I take refuge in the great ocean of hosts of pure sages, the bodhisattvas in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

May I take refuge in the Buddha together with all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to him, aspiring for birth in that land.

May all these bodhisattvas follow the Buddha to welcome the practitioners.
To repay my indebtedness to him, I offer an act of worship with sincerity of heart.

(12)

I take refuge in the Buddha and repent before him so that my teacher, parents, good friends of the Way, and sentient beings of the universe may destroy the three karmic hindrances²¹) and together attain birth in the land of Amida Buddha.

Sincere repentance: (*Principal repentance*)

I take refuge in and repent before Buddhas of the ten quarters;
May all the roots of my karmic evil be destroyed.
I will transfer to others the good which I have cultivated since long ago
So that it may become the cause of birth in the Land of Peace and Bliss for them and for myself.
I always wish that at the time of death, everyone will see
All the wonderful objects and manifestations.
I wish to see Amida, the Lord of Great Compassion,
Avalokiteshvara, Mahasthamaprapta and Honored Ones of the ten quarters.
I pray and wish that their divine light embraces me and they extend their hands towards me;
May I ride the Buddha's Primal Vow and be born in his land.

After having thus repented, transferred my merits and made an aspiration, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.

(13)

Next, recite the following hymns (from the *Discourse on the Jewel-Nature*) and make an aspiration :

With all the merits of worship and repentance, at the time of death, I wish to see the body of immeasurable merits of the Buddha of Infinite Life. May I and other aspirants behold the Buddha, acquire the eye of non-defilement, be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss, and realize the supreme Enlightenment.

(14)

Having worshiped and repented, I take refuge in all the Three Treasures.

I take refuge in the Buddha. I will attain the Bodhi-mind and will not regress from it at any time.
May I attain birth in the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life together with all sentient beings by transferring all the merits towards it.

I take refuge in the Dharma. I will realize omniscience and attain the great dharani gate.²²)
May I attain birth in the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life together with all sentient beings by transferring all the merits towards it.

I take refuge in the Sangha. I will stop idle discussions and join the ocean of unity and harmony.²³)
May I attain birth in the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life, together with all sentient beings, by transferring

all the merits towards it.

May all sentient beings purify their three kinds of action, uphold Buddhism, and revere all the sages.
May I attain birth in the Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life together with all sentient beings by transferring all the merits towards it.

(15)

All of you, please listen. I will recite the following hymns on impermanence for the sunset service.

Alas, people are busily engaged in secular matters,
Taking no notice of their lives wearing away by day and by night,
Like a lamp in the wind - how long can it last?
In the six realms²⁴) of the vast Samsara there is no fixed abode.

Until we are emancipated from the sea of suffering,
How can we rest peacefully? Why should we not be terrified?
Let each one of us hear the Dharma while young and strong;
Let us strive and diligently seek the path to Eternity.

(16)

Having recited these hymns, make an aspiration in mind and utter it with your mouth.

I wish that my disciples, at the time of their death, hold their minds unperturbed, undistracted, and mindful and that their minds and bodies be free of pain and affliction and dwell in happiness as when one is in meditation. I wish that holy sages appear before them and, riding the Buddha's Primal Vow, they attain the upper grade of birth²⁵) in the Land of Amida Buddha. Having reached it, they will acquire the six supernatural powers, with which they enter worlds of the ten quarters and save and embrace suffering beings until the universe throughout the open space comes to an end. My vow shall be like this. Having thus made a vow, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.

(17)

The hymn for the service at the first watch of the night²⁶) (based on the *Meditation-Samadhi Sutra*):

Deep and bottomless are our blind passions;
Boundless is the sea of birth-and-death.
Until we board the ship to cross the sea of suffering,
How can we enjoy sleep?
Let us make courageous efforts
And keep our thoughts absorbed in meditation.

(18)

The hymn for the midnight service (based on the *Great Wisdom Discourse*):

You should not lay your foul-smelling bodies in bed.
An aggregate of impurities is temporarily called a 'person.'
When you are attacked by a serious illness, it is like an arrow penetrating the body;
All sorts of pain will assemble to torment you. How can you sleep peacefully now? <TT.47, 441>

(19)

The hymn for the service at the last watch of the night²⁷) (based on the *Garland Sutra*):

Time has passed in the swiftness of light;
It is already early fifth watch.²⁷)
Impermanence rushes upon me at every moment;
The King of Death²⁸) follows me in every step.
Let me urge you, practitioners of the Way,
To strive diligently to attain Nirvana.

(20)

The hymn for the early morning²⁹ service (based on the *Mahasamghika-vinaya*):

If you are seeking the pleasure of Tranquility,
You should learn to live the frugal life of a mendicant.
Clothes and food are just to sustain your bodies;
Let them be as they are given, whether good or not.

(21)

The hymns for the midday service (based on the *Sutra on Worshipping the Six Directions*):

Man's life, if wasted in idleness,
Is like a plant without roots
Or like a cut flower placed in the sun;
How long can it remain fresh?

Man's life is like this.
Impermanence will seize you at any moment.
I urge you, all the practitioners of the Way,
To practice diligently to attain Truth.

<2. Service at the first watch of the night 初夜>

[Return to Top](#)

(22)

Second, I, Monk Shan-tao, reverently collected important passages from the Larger Sutra to make liturgical hymns. I prostrate myself in worship twenty-four times at the first watch of the night accompanied by repentance as specified before and afterwards.

(23)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The ocean of Amida's Wisdom and Vow
Is deep, broad and boundless;
Those who hear the Name and aspire to be born
All, without exception, reach that land

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (1)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter

There are in this land
Sixty-seven kotis
Of unretrogressive bodhisattvas;³⁰
They will all be born there.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (2)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Bodhisattvas of little practice
And those of small merits,
Whose number is uncountable,
Will all be born there.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (3)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**In the Buddha-lands of the ten quarters
Dwell bodhisattvas and monks,
Whose number is uncountable even for many kalpas;
They will all attain birth there.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (4)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**All bodhisattvas, each carrying
Exquisite heavenly flowers,
Jeweled incense, and priceless robes,
Make offerings to Amida Buddha.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (5)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**Playing heavenly music in concert,
Producing harmonious and elegant sounds,
And praising the Peerless One with hymns,
They make offerings to Amida Buddha.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (6)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**Illumining the world with the sun of wisdom,
Amida disperses the clouds of birth-and-death;
Having reverently walked round him three times,
They pay homage to the Unsurpassed One.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (7)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**Having seen the glorious Pure Land,
Exquisite, wonderful and inconceivable,
They awaken the highest aspiration
And wish their lands to be like his.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (8)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**Then Amida, the Enlightened One,
Changes his countenance and smiles;
From his mouth come forth innumerable rays of light,
Which illuminate the worlds in the ten quarters.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (9)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**These rays of light return, encircle his body
Three times, and enter the crown of his head.**

All devas and humans are delighted to see this
And are filled with great joy.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (10)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Amida's majestic voice is like thunder,
Producing wonderful sounds in eight qualities of voice;³¹
'I am fully aware of the vows of the bodhisattvas
Who come from the ten quarters.'

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (11)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

'When you go to his glorious Pure Land,
You will instantly acquire supernatural powers.
Having, without fail, received the prediction from Amida, the Enlightened One,
You will attain perfect Enlightenment.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (12)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

'In order to serve millions of Tathagatas,
You can assume various forms and fly to those lands;
After worshipping them with joyful hearts,
You will return to the Land of Peace and Provision.'

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (13)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Without a stock of goodness from past lives,
One cannot hear the Name of the Buddha;
Arrogant, corrupt and indolent people
Cannot readily accept this teaching.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (14)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

One who has met Buddhas in the past
Can accept this teaching.
Such a person respectfully worships, hears
And upholds it, and rejoices so greatly as to dance.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (15)

(24)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Those who have been able to hear
The Name of Amida Buddha
And rejoice even with one thought of mindfulness
Will all attain birth in that land.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (16)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**Even if the whole world is on fire,
Be sure to pass through it to hear the Buddha's Name;
Those who, having heard the Name, rejoice and praise him
Will all attain birth in that land.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (17)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**When the Three Treasures perish ten thousand years from now,
This sutra will remain for a hundred years more;
Those who hear it during this period and awaken even one thought of mindfulness
Will all attain birth in that land.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (18) <TT.47, 442>

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**It is extremely difficult to encounter an age in which a Buddha appears in the world;
It is also difficult for the people to realize the wisdom of faith;
To be able to hear the rare Dharma
Is among the most difficult.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (19)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**To accept it in faith and teach others to believe in it
Is the difficulty among all the difficulties;
To spread the Great Compassion everywhere and guide others
Is truly to repay the Buddha's benevolence.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (20)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**May the Buddha enfold and protect me with compassion
And let me multiply the seeds of the Dharma.
In this life and in the life to come,
May the Buddha always embrace me.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (21)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (22)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (23)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to the great ocean of hosts of pure sages, the Bodhisattvas in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (24)

(26)

I take refuge in the Buddha and repent before him so that my teacher, parents, good friends of the Way, and sentient beings of the universe may destroy the three karmic hindrances and together attain birth in the land of Amida Buddha.

(27)

Third, reverently based on Nagarjuna Bodhisattva's Hymns of Worship and Praise Aspiring for Birth,³²) I prostrate myself in worship sixteen times at midnight accompanied by repentance as specified before and afterwards.

(28)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

With reverence I bow my head to Amida, the Sage,
The Most Honored One, who is revered by humans and devas.
You dwell in the wonderful Land of Peace and Bliss,
Surrounded by innumerable children of the Buddhas.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (1)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Your spotless golden body is like Sumeru, the king of mountains;
Your steps while you are absorbed in shamatha³³) are like an elephant's;
Your eyes are as pure as blue lotus-flowers.
Hence, I prostrate myself to the ground and worship Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (2)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Your face is a perfect shape and serene like the full moon;
Your majestic light shines like a thousand suns and moons put together;
Your voice sounds like a heavenly drum or a cuckoo.³⁴)
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (3)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

You reside in the crown which Avalokiteshvara wears on his head;
Your excellent features are adorned with jewel-ornaments;
You destroy anti-Buddhist views, devilish thoughts and conceited ideas.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (4)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Incomparable, spotless, broad and pure
Is your virtue; it is serene and clear like space.
You have attained freedom in giving benefit to beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (5)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Bodhisattvas in your Land, renowned everywhere in the ten quarters,
Are always glorified even by innumerable devils;

You dwell with the Vow-Power for the sake of all sentient beings.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (6)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

In the jewel-pond strewn with gold sands grows a lotus;
The excellent throne on its dais has been produced by your acts of merit;
On the throne you are seated like the king of mountains.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (7)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

From the ten directions the Buddhas' children come in flocks;
Manifesting supernatural powers, they reach the Land of Peace and Bliss.
They look up at your august face adoringly and worship you without interruption.
Hence, I prostrate myself to the ground and worship Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (8)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

All things are impermanent and selfless,
Like an image of the moon in the water, lightning or morning dew.
Your sermons to the multitudes are, in reality, wordless.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (9)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

In the Revered Buddha's Land exist no evil names,
Nor are there beings in the female form, nor fear of evil realms.
All worship the Honored One in sincerity of heart.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (10)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

In the Buddha's Land accomplished with innumerable skillful devices,
There are no samsaric realms, nor evil teachers;
Upon attaining birth there, one reaches Bodhi without falling back.
Hence, I prostrate myself in worship to Amida, the Holy One.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (11)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

I have extolled the Buddha's excellent virtue,
Thereby acquiring boundless merit like the ocean.
The roots of pure good I have thus acquired
I wish to share with other beings, aspiring together to be born in his Land.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (12)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

May the Buddha enfold and protect me with compassion;
Let the seeds of the Dharma multiply;
In this life and in the life to come,
May the Buddha always embrace me.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (1)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva in the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Western Quarter.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (2)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva in the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Western Quarter.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (3)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to the great ocean of the hosts of pure sages, the Bodhisattvas in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (4)

(30)

I take refuge in the Buddha and repent before him so that my teacher, parents, good friends of the Way, and sentient beings of the universe may destroy the three karmic hindrances and together attain birth in the land of Amida Buddha.

Sincere repentance: (Brief repentance) <TT.47, 443>

Ever since my existence came to be in the beginningless past,
I have continuously done ten evil acts³⁵) to other beings;
To my parents I have neglected duties and I have abused the Three Treasures;
I have committed the five gravest offenses³⁶) and other evil acts.

As the results of various karmic evils like those,
Delusory thoughts and perverse views have arisen and produced bondages,
Which will cause me to suffer immeasurable pain of birth-and-death.
I bow to the Buddha in worship and repent. I beseech you to remove those evils.

Having thus repented, I sincerely take refuge in Amida Buddha.

Sincere request:

The Buddhas, the peerless Honored Ones of Great Compassion,
Constantly illumine the three worlds³⁷) with the Wisdom of Voidness.
Blind and ignorant, sentient beings are unaware of this,
Sinking eternally in the great ocean of birth-and-death.
In order to free sentient beings from various sufferings,
I beseech the Buddhas to turn the Wheel of Dharma³⁸) always.

Having made this request, I sincerely take refuge in Amida Buddha.

Sincere rejoicing:

Jealousy, haughtiness, and indolence which I have had for many kalpas arise from stupidity;
With the fire of anger and malevolence I have always
Burnt the good roots of wisdom and compassion.
As I contemplate today, I have realized this for the first time;
Then I have awakened the mind of making great efforts and rejoicing (in others' good acts).

After having thus rejoiced, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.

Sincere merit-transference:

Wandering about in the three worlds,
I have been conceived in the womb-jail through blind love;
Having been born, I am destined to old age and death.
Thus I have been sinking in the ocean of suffering.
Now I perform these meritorious acts;
I turn their merit over to the Land of Peace and Bliss to attain birth there.

After having thus transferred the merit, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.

Sincere vow:

I wish to abandon the body enclosed in the womb
And attain birth in the Land of Peace and Bliss,
Where I will quickly behold Amida Buddha's
Body of boundless merits and virtues
And see many Tathagatas
And holy sages as well.
Having acquired the six supernatural powers,
I will continue to save suffering sentient beings
Until all their worlds throughout the universe are exhausted.
Such will be my vow.

After having thus made a vow, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.

..**<4. Service at the last watch of the night 後夜讃>**

[Return to Top](#)

(31)

Fourth, reverently based on Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's *Liturgical Verses of aspiration for Birth*,³⁹) I perform twenty acts of worship at the last watch of the night accompanied by repentance as specified before and afterwards.

(32)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

O World-Honored One, with singleness of mind, I
Take refuge in the Tathagata of Unhindered Light
Shining throughout the Ten Quarters,
Thereby conforming to the Buddha Dharma.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (1)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

When I contemplate the nature of that land,
I find that it surpasses all states of existence in the three worlds.
It is ultimately like space,
Vast and boundless.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (2)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Out of the Great Compassion inherent in the Right Path
And from the root of supramundane good has it arisen.

**It is completely radiant with pure light,
Like a mirror or the sun or moon.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (3)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**It is composed of rare jewels,
And endowed with exquisite adornments.
Its pure and blazing light is brilliant
And serene, illuminating the whole world.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (4)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**A myriad varieties of jewelled blossoms
Are scattered profusely among the ponds, streams, and springs.
When a soft breeze moves the flowers and leaves,
Reflections of light interweave and shimmer in all directions.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (5)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**The palaces and various towers
Command unobstructed views in the ten directions.
There are trees displaying many colors,
All surrounded by railings of precious gems.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (6)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**Nets strung with innumerable jewels
Hang across the sky.
When bells of various kinds ring out,
They proclaim the message of the excellent Dharma.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (7)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**The sacred name enlightens people far and wide;
It is subtle and wonderful and is heard everywhere in the ten quarters.
[The Land] is firmly upheld by Amida,
The Enlightened One, the Dharma-King.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (8)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

**The hosts of sages in the likeness of pure flowers surrounding the Tathagata
Are born there, transformed from within the Flower of Enlightenment.
They enjoy the taste of the Buddhist Dharma,
Taking meditation and samadhi as food.**

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (9)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Forever free from bodily and mental afflictions,
They always enjoy pleasure, without interruption.
In this realm of the goodness of the Mahayana
[All beings are] equal, and not [even] the names of unworthy beings are found there.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (10)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Women, deformed and deficient persons and
[Those having] the seeds of the Two Vehicles are not born here.
Whatever aspirations sentient beings may have,
They will all be fulfilled.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (11)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

[He is seated] on the pedestal of an excellent, pure lotus flower
Adorned with innumerable great treasures.
His physical marks of excellence shine for one fathom;
His form is incomparably superior to that of any other being.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (12)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Heavenly and human beings, unshakable [in their spiritual attainments],
Are born out of the ocean of pure wisdom.
Like Sumeru, the king of mountains,
[Amida is] supreme, wonderful and unequalled.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (13)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Heavenly beings and valiant men
Worship, circumambulate round him and look up to him adoringly.
Showering heavenly musical instruments, flowers, robes and
Excellent incense, they make offerings to him.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (14)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The Land of Peace and Bliss is pure and serene;
[The Buddha] always turns the undefiled wheel [of the Dharma], <TT.47, 444>
Benefiting multitudes of beings
Simultaneously and in one thought-moment.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (15)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

In praising the Buddha's merits and virtues,
I have no discriminative thoughts;
I shall quickly fulfill
The great treasure-ocean of merits.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (16)

(33)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

May the Buddha enfold and protect me with compassion
And let me multiply the seeds of the Dharma;
In this life and in the life to come,
May the Buddha always embrace me.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva in the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Western Quarter.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva in the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Western Quarter.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to the great ocean of the hosts of pure sages, the Bodhisattvas in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

(34)

I take refuge in the Buddha and repent before him so that my teacher, parents, good friends of the Way, and sentient beings of the universe may destroy the three karmic hindrances and together attain birth in the land of Amida Buddha.

<5. Morning service 晨朝讚>

[Return to Top](#)

(35)

Fifth, reverently based on Yen-ts'ung's Liturgy for Birth, I prostrate myself in worship twenty-one times at the early morning service accompanied by repentance as specified before and afterwards.

(36)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Dharmakara's causal practices⁴⁰) began in the distant past,
And the resultant state of the Utmost Bliss is unfathomable.
Rare treasures intermingle to form the ground,
And various gems assemble to produce forests.
Flowers burst open to manifest rare, glorious colors,
And ripples on the water raise the sound of True Reality.
I wonder when the Buddha will extend his hands towards me
And realizes my aspiration for birth in his land.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (1)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

I am loath to be reborn in this defiled world;
My aspiration for birth in the Pure Land deepens more and more.
Golden ropes stretch straight to mark the intersections of roads,

And jeweled nets hang loosely from the trees.
If you see the colors, you will find them to be truly immaculate colors;
If you hear the sounds, you will find them all to be the Dharma sounds.
Do not suppose that the Western Land is far from here.
Solely awaken the mind to say the nembutsu ten times.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (2)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Having become a Buddha who exhaustively realizes the principle of True Suchness,
Amida actually possesses the majestic virtues that pervade the entire space;
But he at times manifests small bodies in the Western Land
Simply to accommodate the needs of the beings.
Leaves and gems reflect each other brilliantly,
And both sand and water shine forth in serene radiance.
If you wish to realize the fruition of Non-arising,
You must necessarily seek it through birth in that land.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (3)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The white curls of hair between the eyebrows as large as five Sumerus put together stand out
magnificently,
And the pattern on the jewel-like hands is always distinct;
Both the ground and water are transparent like a mirror,
And incense-smoke and flowers alike form clouds.
If you have a deep karmic cause, your birth is easy to attain;
If you have a shallow cause from the past, this teaching is indeed difficult to hear.
Be sure to remove doubts
And stand aloof resolutely from the multitudes.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (4)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Amida's mind is full of true compassion
And his light completely encloses the whole universe.
With unconditioned compassion he embraces all beings,
Making it possible for those attached to forms to attain birth with ease.
Flowers appear and change according to one's wishes,
And even though palaces move about, the dwellers' bodies stay calm.
If you wish to know the realm of enlightenment,
You should all enter meditation and visualize it.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (5)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

When the act of merit-transference ripens,
The path to the Western Land becomes passable.
The jewel bannered columns support the thick ground,
And celestial fragrance is carried far by the wind.
Full-blown flowers lie on top of each other on the water,
And decorative nets divide the sky into minor sections.
Why do I aspire for birth so earnestly?
It is precisely because the pleasure there is endless.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (6)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

If you are to choose the place for birth in the next life,
The Western Land is most suited for you to go.
Across the forest multistoried buildings are open for entry,
To the full length of the roads are spread brilliant fabrics.
Sweet-smelling dishes appear as you wish,
And jeweled palaces follow you airborne.
Those who have the proper cause can all attain birth
But rare indeed are the people who actually go there.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (7)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

He realized Enlightenment ten kalpas ago;
The land of glorious adornment attracts multitudes of beings.
Gold sand shines forth through limpid water,
And jeweled leaves cluster all over the branches brilliantly.
Birds are originally born out of mani-gems,
While humans are solely born from the flowers.
I dare to beseech you, the sages in the Western Land,
To come to receive me some day without fail.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (8)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Buddha-lands throughout the ten quarters
Are all homes of the kings of Dharma.
I solely seek to go to the land of close karmic relationships;
May I, thereby, quickly attain freedom from wrongdoing.
The water possessing eight special qualities that wells from the mani-gem
And seven-treasured flowers of natural production -
The land full of these you are sure to born into soon
If you concentrate your thoughts on it.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (9)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The Pure Land is free from decay and changes;
Once established, it continues forever.
Illuminating daises are made of a thousand kinds of treasures,
And the music adrift in the eight winds proclaims the Dharma;
In the ponds abound the birds that preach the teaching,
And in the sky are swarming celestial maidens scattering flowers.
Once born in the Pure Land, there is no fear of falling back;
The lotus-flowers into which they are born open, according to the wishes of the faithful.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (10)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Seated on the flower-dais is not only the single form of the Buddha;
Uncountable holy sages are also there.
As a lotus-flower blooms, a man is sitting there alone;
As the ripples arise, the Dharma is spontaneously proclaimed.

There is no calamity because the land is the state of Tranquility;
You do not regress because you have good friends of the Way.
You may ask those born before you,
"How many kalpas is it since you came here?"

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (11) <TT.47, 445>

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Amida, emitting light, saved people of Vaishali;
Standing in the air, he guided Vaidehi.
Celestial beings come to him holding up incense burners,
And people go and fetch treasure-robles to offer to him.
One hears birds singing harmoniously six times a day,
And the ground with fallen flowers sinks four inches when one steps on it.
As far as one can see, nothing is wrong;
How could there be a long spell of delusion?

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (12)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

I urge all to perform the three acts of merit⁴¹)
To destroy the five burning pains⁴²) completely.
When you awaken aspiration and attain complete merits,
Your karmic evil will be annulled through mindfulness of Amida.
Beautiful birds reflect rays of light issuing from gems,
And refreshing wind harmonizes with the sounds of music.
Be pleased that the practice of walking round is easy;
Why should you worry that the sacred fruition is far away?

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (13)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Colors of mani-gems tinge the water;
Golden light forms daises.
When the time comes, flowers spontaneously fall,
And they bloom again according to one's wishes.
In leisurely pastime on the ponds, you freely submerge and emerge;
In enjoying flight in the sky, you visit each other.
A sincere mind brings you to that land;
Whatever good you have accrued, transfer it towards birth in that land.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (14)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

You wash your mind with the water of amrita⁴³)
And your eyes are pleased to see the cloud of exquisite flowers.
Those born at the same time quickly become acquaintances,
And the lifespans of all are the same and hard to distinguish from each other.
Pleasures are abundant but they do not hinder the practice of the Way;
However far the preaching may be, nothing obstructs hearing it.
How can you greedily attach yourselves to the five defilements⁴⁴)
While calmly allowing your bodies to be consumed by fire?

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (15)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Celestial beings appear from within the flower-dais
And attendants are seen in the rays of light.
In the sky hover four-treasured towers
Surrounded by sevenfold balustrades.
Those who harbor doubts stay long in the Border Land,⁴⁵
And those of little merit cannot attain a higher birth.
Do not have other wishes whatsoever;
The mind settled on the West is peaceful.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (16)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The six sense-organs are always in conformity with the Way,
And even the names of the three evil realms⁴⁶ cease to exist.
In one thought-moment you travel throughout the universe,
And return home with acquisition of the insight.
The ground is level and boundlessly wide;
The wind wafts softly, and the land is pure and serene.
I advise those who have aspiration for birth
To join your efforts to escape from the abode of suffering.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (17)

(37)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

May the Buddha enfold and protect me with compassion
And let me multiply the seeds of the Dharma;
In this life and in the life to come,
May the Buddha always embrace me.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva in the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Western Quarter.

Clear and distinct is the mark of a thousand-spoked wheel⁴⁷ on the
sole of his foot;
The five realms of existence⁴⁸ are manifest in his light.
He compassionately saves beings without ceasing,
And the number of those who take refuge in him is uncountable.
While he expounds the Dharma, his mind dwells in meditation;
While absorbed in tranquility, he flies everywhere with supernatural powers.
May those who hear his name all aspire to be born there;
I wonder how many lotus-flowers bloom every day.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (18)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Mahasthamaprabhata Bodhisattva in the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Western Quarter.

His wisdom and power are unrivaled;
The light emanating from his body protects those who are karmically related to him.
He shakes all the treasure-lands
While seated in attendance on a golden lotus-dais.
Flocks of birds are not real birds;
How can celestial beings be real?

With full knowledge of this, seek to realize the supreme bliss.
Then the virtue of precepts will be perfected.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (19)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to the great ocean of the hosts of pure sages, the Bodhisattvas in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

(38)

I take refuge in the Buddha and repent before him so that my teacher, parents, good friends of the Way, and sentient beings of the universe may destroy the three karmic hindrances and together attain birth in the land of Amida Buddha.

<6. Midday service 日中讃>

[Return to Top](#)

Sixth, the Monk Shan-tao's Liturgy for Birth composed reverently based on the Sixteen Contemplations. Twenty acts of worship are offered at the midday service, accompanied by repentance as specified before and afterwards.

(40)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

When I contemplate Amida's Land of Utmost Bliss,
I find that it is vast and level and made of various treasures,
With its adornments originating in the Forty-eight Vows;
It surpasses other Buddha-lands and is the finest of them all.
The number of ocean-like hosts of sages in this land and those assembling from other lands
Is impossible to know even if one counts for numerous kalpas.
I urge all to turn their thoughts to the West and join the assembly,
For they will spontaneously attain samadhis as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (1)

(41)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Seven-gemmed columns - the underground adornments -
Are immeasurable, uncountable and innumerable kotis in number.
Each, having eight corners and sides, is made of a hundred treasures;
One who beholds it spontaneously realizes the truth of Non-arising.⁴⁹⁾
The Treasure Land of Non-arising⁵⁰⁾ is forever abiding;
Each gem emits innumerable rays of light.
Practitioners should concentrate their thoughts and always visualize the land,
Thereby ensuring birth in the Western Land with great joy and delight.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (2)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Glorious adornments on the ground are limitless;
Gold ropes marking intersections of roads are beyond human craftsmanship.
Amida's Vows and Wisdom have skillfully produced the adornments;
Bodhisattvas, humans and devas scatter flowers over them.
The treasure-land has treasure-colors, which emit treasure-light;
Each ray of light forms innumerable daises;
On each dais are ten million kotis of treasure-towers;
Each tower is surrounded by a hundred kotis of gemmed banners.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (3)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

In the sky above each dais
Are immeasurable musical instruments adorned with gems.
Eight kinds of pure breeze⁵¹) arise from the light;
They play music at appropriate times, producing the sounds agreeable to the senses of the beings.
It is somewhat difficult to perceive the right sound for the right person;
Contemplate with mindfulness whether you are walking, standing, sitting or lying down.
Be always mindful of the objects except when you are sleeping.
When you have attained No-action through samadhi, it is Nirvana.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (4)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

In the jeweled forests of the Treasure Land there are jeweled trees
With jeweled blossoms, jeweled leaves, jeweled roots and stalks;
The forests are divided into different sections by a thousand jewels
Or rows of trees are grouped in a hundred kinds of jewels.
The jeweled trees are in parallel rows, and their leaves are symmetrical;
Their colors are different, so are their radiances. <TT.47, 446>
Their dimensions and heights are the same, measuring three hundred thousand yojanas;⁵²)
When branches and boughs touch each other, they expound the truth of non-arising.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (5)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

There are sevenfold nets and seven rows of pavilions;
Their fine fabrics emit lights, which reflect each other.
Amongst them swarm transformed celestial boys;
The brilliance of their ornaments outshines the sun and moon.
Rows of jeweled leaves have a thousand-fold colors;
The flowers in bloom all look like revolving gold wheels.
The transformed lights of the fruits form canopies of various treasures,
In which are manifested boundless Buddha-lands, as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (6)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The jeweled ponds have jeweled shores, jeweled gold sands,
Jeweled channels, jeweled leaves and jeweled flowers;
The flowers are all twelve yojanas in diameter;
Jeweled ropes, jeweled nets, and jeweled balustrades surround the ponds;
The water of the special qualities⁵³) flows in divided streams among the jeweled trees;
Hearing the sound of ripples and enjoying the music, one realizes Peace and Tranquility.
I tell you, practitioners, who have a close karmic relationship with me:
Make efforts to turn over delusions and return to the home of enlightenment.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (7)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Each gold cord marks a section which divides the area,
In which there are ten million kotis⁵⁴) of jeweled towers and music chambers,
Where celestial boys scatter fragrant flowers.
Bodhisattvas assemble here like clouds from other lands,

Whose number is immeasurable, boundless, and incalculable.
Having bowed to Amida, they stand respectfully.
Sounds produced from the bells and trees as the wind wafts over them fill the whole sky,
Praising the three Holy Ones⁵⁵ in verse endlessly.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (8)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The seat of majestic lotus-flowers produced by Amida's Primal Vow
Is made of all kinds of treasures.
On the dais stand four bannered pillars which are covered with jeweled curtains.
Amida sits there alone manifesting his true bodily form.
The light emanating from the true body pervades the whole universe;
Those who are shone upon by the light attain the non-regressive state of mind.
If one single-mindedly contemplates Amida at six periods of the day,
One ends one's life full of happiness as if one were in samadhi.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (9)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Amida's mind and body pervade the whole universe,
And so his images are perceived in the minds of sentient beings.
Hence, I urge you to contemplate Amida all the time.
Envisioning him in the mind, expect him to show his true body.
When you perceive the jeweled image of his true form on the flower-seat,
Your mind's eye opens and you can see glorious adornments of his land.
The lotus-seats for the three Holy Ones under the jeweled trees fill the land;
The sounds of the bells ringing in the wind and music are just as described in the sutra.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (10)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The color of Amida's body is like the golden mountain;
The light issuing forth from each of his physical marks shines throughout the ten quarters;
Only those who recite the Name receive the benefit of the light's embrace.
You should know that the Primal Vow is most powerful;
The Tathagatas in the six quarters,⁵⁶ extending their tongues, testify to this.
By solely reciting the Name, one can reach the Land in the West.
When one reaches there, the flower one is born into opens and one can hear the wonderful Dharma;
Then the vows and practice in the ten bodhisattva stages spontaneously become manifest in one's mind.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (11)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, out of great compassion,
Does not stay in the Bodhi which he has already realized;
Enfolding all the five states of samsaric existence in his bodily light,
He observes beings at six times of the day and responds to their needs with three kinds of act.
The light of his body of response is the color of purple gold;
His majestic physical characteristics are limitlessly superb.
Extending always a hundred kotis of illuminating hands,
He embraces all who are karmically related to him and takes them back to the home country of Amida.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (12)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva is inconceivable;
His majestic light shines everywhere boundlessly.
Those who have a close karmic relationship with him receive the benefit of the light's illumination,
Whereby they attain higher wisdom and transcend the three worlds.
(When he walks,) the whole universe trembles like tumbleweed in the wind.
Transformed Buddhas assemble like clouds and fill the whole sky.
I urge all who have a close karmic relationship with him to be always mindful of him,
Thereby leaving forever the state of embryonic birth⁵⁷) and attaining the six transcendent powers.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (13)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

As I sit cross-legged in the correct manner and enter samadhi,
The contemplating thought reaches the Land in the West following the direction of mindfulness.
I find that Amida's Land of Utmost Bliss
Is adorned with the seven treasures⁵⁸) from the ground to the sky.
The measurement of Amida's body being limitless,
Shakyamuni further urges sentient beings to contemplate smaller bodies.
Bodies sixteen feet or eight feet high appear in accordance with the needs of the beings;
Transformed Buddhas in the halo resemble the true Buddha-body.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (14)

(42)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The upper grade of aspirants are those of superior capacity who perform superior practices;
Aspiring to be born in the Pure Land, they sever their greed and anger.
According to different types of practice performed, aspirants are divided into three levels.
(The upper grade of aspirants) continuously perform the five (mindful) practices⁵⁹) to strengthen the three causes.⁶⁰
By single-minded diligent practice for one to seven days,
When they die, they mount lotus-daises and leave the world of the six objects of sensation.⁶¹
How joyful! I have encountered what is difficult to encounter.
I shall eternally realize the body of Dharma-nature and No-action.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (1)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The middle grade of aspirants are those of medium capacity who perform the middle level of practices;
They observe the precepts of abstinence⁶²) for one day and so will go to the West enclosed in gold lotus-flowers.
They are taught to transfer the merit of their loving care for their parents to the Pure Land,
So that it may become the cause of bliss to be enjoyed in the Western Land.
The Buddha, together with hosts of shravakas, will come to welcome them,
Enabling them to go immediately near Amida's lotus throne.
Enclosed in the hundred-jeweled flowers, they will spend seven days;
When the flowers for the three grades of aspirants⁶³) open, they will realize Hinayana truth.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (2)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

The lower grade of aspirants are those of inferior capacity who do evil acts;
They commit acts of greed and anger, such as the ten evil acts and the five gravest offenses,
And also violate the four major prohibitions,⁶⁴ steal monks' property and abuse the right Dharma,
Without ever repenting their offenses committed.
At the end of their lives, visions of torture surround them like clouds,
And fierce fires of hell appear before those sinners.
At that moment, they may suddenly meet good teachers of the way to birth,
Who lose no time in urging them to recite the Buddha's Name with singleness of heart.
Responding to the voice, transformed Buddhas and bodhisattvas come to them.
With a single thought of mindfulness at the time of death, they will enter the jeweled pond.
Owing to their heavy hindrances committed with three kinds of acts, their flowers will not open until
after many kalpas.
When the flowers open, they will, for the first time, awaken the cause of Bodhi.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. (3)

(43)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

Amida Buddha's land has come into existence as the due recompense (for his Vows and practices);
The Western Land of Utmost Bliss is inconceivable.
Avidly listening to the teaching of Prajna, one has no desire for drink;
Being fed with mindfulness of Non-arising, one quenches hunger.
All the glorious adornments proclaim the Dharma;
One perceives it without conscious mind and understands it spontaneously.
One enters the flower-pond of the seven factors of enlightenment⁶⁵ as one wishes;
With a mind of concentration, one sees the eight samadhis of emancipation⁶⁶ congealed in a twig.
Innumerable bodhisattvas become one's fellow-students;
All the Tathagatas in the ocean of Dharma-nature are one's teachers.
Amida pours the water of his mind on one's head,
And Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta dress one's body.
Quickly soaring up into the sky, one can enjoy sauntering in the Dharma-realm.
In a moment, one receives a prediction that one will become a Buddha named "No-action."
In the sphere of limitlessness one can thus spend leisurely pastime.
Should I fail to go there this time, when in the future will there be another chance?

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings. <TT.47, 447>

(44)

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Amida Buddha in the Western Quarter.

May the Buddha enfold and protect me with compassion
And let me multiply the seeds of the Dharma.
In this life and in the life to come,
May the Buddha always embrace me.

I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

I take refuge in and prostrate myself with sincerity of heart to Avalokiteshvara, Mahasthamaprapta and the
great ocean of the hosts of pure sages, the Bodhisattvas in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss.
I wish to be born in the Land of Peace and Bliss together with all sentient beings.

(45)

I take refuge in the Buddha and repent before him so that my teacher, parents, good friends of the Way, and sentient
beings of the universe may destroy the three karmic hindrances and together attain birth in the land of Amida Buddha.

(46)

I have above explained the first two levels of repentance and aspiration. If you wish to follow the most essential mode of repentance, take the first one. If you wish to follow the abridged mode of repentance, take the second one. If you wish to follow the most extensive mode of repentance, take the last one. I will recommend the extensive mode of repentance to those who sincerely aspire for birth. Confess and repent your karmic evils to the four groups of Buddhists,⁶⁷⁾ or to Buddhas of the ten quarters, or before the holy relics, images of the sages or assemblies of monks, or to a specific person, or to yourselves, or to the Three Treasures throughout the space in the ten quarters and to all the sentient beings. There are three grades of repentance: high, middle and low. The high grade of repentance is to shed blood from the hair pores of one's body and also shed blood from one's eyes. The middle grade of repentance is to shed hot sweat from the hair pores of one's whole body and also shed blood from one's eyes. The low grade of repentance is to feel feverish all over the body and also shed tears from one's eyes

These three grades of repentance are different from each other, but they can all be carried out by those who have long cultivated the roots of good in the stage leading to emancipation. If people in this life revere the Dharma, pay respect to preachers, practice without regard for their lives, and repent even small transgressions, then their repentance will penetrate to their bones and marrow. If repentance is performed in this way, their heavy hindrances, whether accumulated for a long time or short time, will instantly perish. Unless done in this way, any assiduous practice that one may perform throughout the twelve periods of the day and night will not yield any benefit. Those who do not repent in the proper way should know this. Even though one is unable to shed tears and blood, one will get the same result as described above if one thoroughly attains the True Faith.

(47)

Reverently I announce: May all the Buddhas in the ten quarters, the twelve-divisioned scriptures,⁶⁸⁾ all the great bodhisattvas, all the holy sages, all the eight groups of demi-gods, including devas and dragons, sentient beings in the entire universe, and the audience in the present assembly become my witnesses. I, so and so, confess my offenses and repent them. From the beginningless past up to now, I have killed or destroyed all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have stolen property and belongings of all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have approached with lascivious thoughts all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have deceived with lies all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have ridiculed with insincere words all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have calumniated, abused, and rebuked with harsh words all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, and sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have caused enmity and mutual destruction with calumnious words among all the members of the Three Treasures, masters and monks, parents, relatives down to the sixth blood-relation, good teachers of the Way, sentient beings in the entire universe, whose numbers are beyond calculation. I have broken all the precepts and rules of conduct, including the five precepts,⁶⁹⁾ eight precepts of abstinence,⁷⁰⁾ ten precepts,⁷¹⁾ ten precepts of good acts,⁷²⁾ two hundred and fifty precepts,⁷³⁾ five hundred precepts,⁷⁴⁾ threefold precepts for bodhisattvas,⁷⁵⁾ and tenfold inexhaustible precepts;⁷⁶⁾ not only have I broken these precepts, but also I have incited others to break them, and rejoiced at seeing them do so - this I have repeated uncountable times.

Such transgressions are innumerable, just as the great earth extending in the ten directions is boundless and the number of dust-particles is incalculable. Just as the open space is limitless, my offenses are equally limitless. Just as the means of salvation are boundless, my offenses are boundless. Just as the Dharma-nature is boundless, my offenses are boundless. Just as the Dharma-realm is boundless, my offenses are boundless.

Since sentient beings are innumerable, my offenses of robbery and manslaughter are innumerable. Since the members of the Three Treasures are innumerable, my offenses of destruction, theft, and killing are innumerable. Since the precepts provided are innumerable, my breach of them has been repeated innumerable times.

Any one of the sages, from bodhisattvas down to shravakas and pratyekabuddhas, cannot know the extent of my offenses. Only the Buddha knows it.

Now, before the Three Treasures and sentient beings of the entire universe, I confess and repent my offenses, without hiding them. I pray that all the members of the Three Treasures throughout the ten quarters and sentient beings of the entire universe recognize my repentance and wish that I will be purified of the offenses. From today on, together with sentient beings, I wish to abandon wrong views and take right ones, awaken the Bodhi-mind, see each other with a compassionate heart, look at each other with the eye of the Buddha, become a companion of Bodhi, become a true teacher of the Way, attain birth in Amida Buddha's land together, discontinue committing those offenses forever and never

commit them again.

Having thus repented, I take refuge in Amida Buddha with sincerity of heart.

(48)

When you begin a contemplative practice or go to sleep, you should make this vow, whether sitting or standing, with the palms of your hands joined together with singleness of heart, after facing to the west and repeating the holy names ten times, "Amida Buddha, Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattvas, and the great ocean of the hosts of pure sages": "I, so and so, the Buddha's disciple, am actually an ordinary man of birth-and-death, burdened with heavy karmic hindrances, transmigrating in the six realms and undergoing inexpressible suffering. Today, I have met a good teacher of the Way and have been able to hear from him the Name of Amida's Primal Vow. I single-heartedly recite it, aspiring birth in his land. May the Buddha, out of compassion, keep the original Primal Vow and embrace me, his disciple. Being ignorant of Amida's bodily light, I pray that the Buddha, out of compassion, may manifest for me his bodily features, Avalokiteshvara, Mahasthamaprapta, other bodhisattvas, and the glorious pure light of that land." Having uttered these words, you should concentrate your thought and begin a contemplative practice or go to sleep. Perhaps you will see these manifestations right at the time when you make the vow, or perhaps you will see them while asleep. If you lack sincerity of heart, you will not see them. I have found that this vow often brings about miraculous signs.

(49)

Question: What merit and benefit do we acquire in the present life calling the Name of Amida Buddha and worshipping and contemplating him?

Answer: One utterance of the Name of Amida Buddha can remove the heavy evil karma that will cause one to transmigrate in samsara for eight billion kalpas. Worshipping and focusing our thoughts upon Amida - along with other acts - have the same effect. The *Sutra on the Ten Ways of Attaining Birth* states:

If there are sentient beings who focus their thoughts upon Amida Buddha and aspire for birth in his land, the Buddha immediately sends twenty-five bodhisattvas to protect them, keeping evil spirits and evil gods away from them at all times and in all places, day and night, whether they are walking, standing, sitting or lying down.

It is further stated in the *Contemplation Sutra*:

If practitioners call the Name of Amida Buddha and worship and focus their thoughts upon him, aspiring to be born in his land, the Buddha immediately sends innumerable transformed Buddhas and transformed bodies of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva to the practitioners to protect them. Together with the twenty-five bodhisattvas mentioned before, these transformed bodies surround them a hundredfold and a thousandfold and stay with them at all times and in all places, day and night, whether they are walking, standing, sitting or lying down.

Since there are such excellent benefits, you should accept this in faith. May all practitioners receive Amida's sincere heart and seek to attain birth in the Pure Land.

It is further stated in the *Larger Sutra*:77)

If, when I become a Buddha, all sentient beings in the ten quarters who call my Name even ten times fail to be born in my land, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment.

This Buddha, having attained Buddhahood, now dwells in the Pure Land. You should know that his weighty vows are not in vain. Sentient beings who call his Name will unfailingly attain birth. It is stated in the *Amida Sutra*:78)

If sentient beings hear of Amida Buddha, they should hold fast to his Name, calling it with concentrated and undistracted mind for one day, two days, up to seven days. When their lives are about to end, Amida Buddha will appear <TT.47, 448> before them with a host of sages. When they die, their minds will not fall into confusion and so they will be born in his land. The Buddha Shakyamuni said to Shariputra, "Since I perceive these benefits, I declare: Those sentient beings who hear this teaching should awaken aspiration and desire to be born in that land."

The sutra next states:79)

The Buddhas in the eastern quarter, as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, as well as those as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges in each of other quarters - south, west, north, nadir and zenith - each in their own lands, extending their tongues and covering with them the universe of a thousand million worlds, pronounce these words of truth: Sentient beings should accept this sutra which is protected by all Buddhas. Why is this sutra called 'protected [by all Buddhas]'? If there are sentient beings who call the Name of Amida Buddha for seven days, or one day, or even down to ten times or once or think of him once, they can unfailingly attain birth. Because [all Buddhas] testify to this, this is called 'The sutra which is protected [by all Buddhas].'

Since we have this supreme Vow, we should trust it. Why do all the Buddhas' children not make a firm resolution and strive to go to the Pure Land?

End

NOTES

[Return to Top](#)

1. Amida's twelve lights: Amida's light is distinguished in twelve ways according to the different qualities and functions it has. The twelve lights are as follows: 1. Infinite Light, 2. Boundless Light, 3. Unhindered Light, 4. Incomparable Light, 5. Light of the King of Flame, 6. Pure Light, 7. Light of Joy, 8. Light of Wisdom, 9. Unceasing Light, 10. Inconceivable Light, 11. Ineffable Light, and 12. the Light Outshining the Sun and the Moon. Cf. *larger-sutra-1.htm*.
2. Refers to the *Twelve Adorations*; for an English translation, see *junirai.htm*.
3. Refers to the *Verses of Aspiration for Birth*; see *jodoron.htm*.
4. Yen-t's'ung (557-610), a scholar of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism; in 592, by the imperial order, he dwelled in the Ta-hsing-shan Temple in Chang-an and helped Jnanagupta and others translate Buddhist texts into Chinese.
5. The sixteen contemplations refer to the thirteen contemplations of meditative good and the three contemplations of non-meditative good presented in the *Contemplation Sutra*. Cf. *contemplation-sutra.htm*.
6. For the passage that explains the three minds, see H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 339.
7. Cf. H. Inagaki, T'an-luan's *Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land*, pp. 126-198.
8. The four modes of postures are walking, standing, sitting and lying down.
9. The sages of the Three Vehicles are shravakas, pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas.
10. The five realms of Samsara are hell and realms of hungry spirits, animals, humans and devas.
11. The six supernatural powers are: 1. the ability to go anywhere at will and to transform oneself or any object at will; 2. the ability to see anything at any distance; 3. the ability to hear any sound at any distance; 4. the ability to know the thoughts of others; 5. the ability to know the previous lives of oneself and others; 6. the ability to destroy all evil passions.
12. There are five evil realms: hell and the realms of hungry spirits, animals, fighting spirits and humans.
13. This sutra expounds contemplation of void; it is through the Single-practice Samadhi that one can contemplate True Suchness, and the recitation of the Buddha's Name is an effective method of entering into this samadhi. Shan-tao interprets that the exclusive practice of the nembutsu is the Single-practice Samadhi.
14. The three bodies of the Buddha are Dharma-body, Recompensed Body and Accommodated Body.
15. The three kinds of repentance - principal, short, and extensive - are explained in sections 12, 30, and 46, respectively.
16. 'No-Action' is a translation of 'wu-wei' (*asamskrita*), the ultimate state of Nirvana.
17. See H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 333.
18. See note 1.
19. See H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 255-6.
20. See note 17.
21. The three karmic hindrances: The elements that hinder realization of enlightenment; they are 1. evil passions, such as greed, anger and stupidity; 2. evil karma, such as the five gravest offenses and the ten evil acts; and 3. painful retributions, such as hell and realms of hungry spirits and animals.
22. The great dharani gate: The great stock of sacred phrases that contain the transcendent wisdom leading to enlightenment.
23. 'Unity and harmony' is the literal meaning of 'sangha.'
24. The six realms of Samsara: Hell and realms of hungry spirits, animals, fighting spirits, humans and devas.
25. Nine grades of birth in the Pure Land are distinguished in the *Contemplation Sutra*; for the three upper grades, see H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 339-343.
26. The first watch of the night: Around 8 o'clock in the evening.
27. The last watch of the night and the fifth watch of the night: Around 4 o'clock in the morning.
28. The King of Death: A personification of impermanence.
29. Early morning: Around 8 o'clock in the morning.
30. See H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 310.
31. The eight qualities of voice: 1. a pleasant voice, 2. a soft voice, 3. a harmonious voice, 4. a dignified and wise voice, 5. a masculine voice, 6. an unerring voice, 7. a deep and far-reaching voice, and 8. an exhaustible voice.
32. See note 2.
33. Shamatha: Quietude of mind; cessation of turbidities.

34. A cuckoo: Skt. *kokila*; black or Indian cuckoo frequently alluded to in Hindu poetry; its musical cry is supposed to inspire tender emotions.
35. Ten evil acts: 1. killing living beings, 2. stealing, 3. committing adultery, 4. telling lies, 5. uttering harsh words, 6. uttering words which cause enmity between two or more persons, 7. engaging in idle talk, 8. greed, 9. anger, and 10. wrong views.
36. Five gravest offenses: 1. killing one's father, 2. killing one's mother, 3. killing an arhat, 4. causing the Buddha's body to bleed, and 5. causing disunity in the Buddhist order.
37. Three worlds: The world of desire, the world of form, and the world of non-form.
38. To turn the Wheel of Dharma: To preach the Dharma; 'wheel' has dual meanings: 1. the Buddha's teachings are compared to the wheel treasure of the ancient Indian ideal king, cakravartin, because they crush all the evils of sentient beings; and 2. they are like a wheel in motion because they spread endlessly from one person to another.
39. See note 3.
40. After making the Forty-eight Vows, Dharmakara performed the bodhisattva practices for many kalpas before becoming Amida Buddha.
41. The three acts of merit: The three kinds of non-meditative good recommended in the *Contemplation Sutra* as a means of attaining birth in the Pure Land: 1. worldly good of caring for one's parents, attending to one's teachers and elders, refraining from killing, and doing the ten good deeds; 2. taking the three refuges, keeping the various precepts and refraining from breaking the rules of conduct; and 3. awakening an aspiration for Enlightenment, believing deeply in the law of causality, chanting the Mahayana sutras and encouraging people to follow their teachings. See H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 321-2.
42. The five burning pains: The pains which one receives in the future as retribution for breaking the five precepts, namely, not killing, not stealing, not committing adultery, not telling lies, and not drinking intoxicants.
43. *Amrita*: Literally, 'immortal'; nectar; originally, the drink used by Hindu gods.
44. The five defilements: In this case, they probably mean the five desires which defile one's mind; they arise in connection with the five senses of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Also, they are desire for wealth, sex, food and drink, fame, and sleep.
45. The Border Land: The state of existence provisionally established for those who aspire for the Pure Land but lack true faith; same as transformed land. Cf. the state of embryonic birth, note 57.
46. The three evil realms: Hell and realms of hungry spirits and animals.
47. The mark of a thousand-spoked wheel: One of the thirty-two marks of physical characteristics of a great man.
48. The five realms of existence: See note 12.
49. Skt. *anutpattika-dharma-kshanti*; clear cognition regarding the unproduced nature of all existences; from the viewpoint of voidness, nothing comes into existence and nothing perishes.
50. The Pure Land is a realm of transcendence and non-duality. From the absolute viewpoint, it has not arisen, nor will it perish.
51. Eight kinds of pure breeze: Pure, refreshing breeze that arises from the four cardinal points and the four intermediate directions; also the breeze having eight excellent qualities.
52. *Yojana*: A unit of distance in India, said to be equal to seven miles, or nine miles; also the distance which the royal army could march in a day.
53. The water of the special qualities: There are eight special qualities of the water of the pond in the Pure Land; they are: pure, cool, sweet, smooth, moistening, comforting, thirst-quenching, and nourishing.
54. *Koti*: A numerical unit in India said to be equal to ten million.
55. The three Holy Ones: Amida and the two attending bodhisattvas, Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta.
56. The six quarters: The four cardinal points, zenith, and nadir.
57. The state of embryonic birth: The aspirants for the Pure Land who cultivate merits by doing good acts but fail to awake to the Buddha's wisdom are, metaphorically, born within lotus-buds or confined in a palace, where they stay for five hundred years without being able to see or hear the true Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. See H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 307-8.
58. Seven treasures: According to the *Amida Sutra*, they are: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, red pearls, diamond, and coral.
59. The five (mindful) practices: See section (3).
60. Refers to the three minds which are the cause of birth in the Pure Land: See section (2); see also H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 339.
61. The six objects of sensation: 1. color or form, 2. sound, 3. smell, 4. taste, 5. tactile object, and 6. mental object.
62. The precepts of abstinence: There are eight precepts of abstinence which a lay Buddhist should observe on fixed days of the month; they are: 1. killing living beings, 2. stealing, 3. sexual intercourse, 4. telling lies, 5. drinking intoxicants, 6. such acts as wearing bodily decoration, using perfume, singing and dancing, and going to see dances or plays, 7. sleeping in a raised bed, and 8. eating after noon.
63. The three levels of aspirants: The three levels of aspirants in the middle grade; see H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 343-345.
64. The four major prohibitions: The gravest of all offenses for monks; they are: 1. having sexual intercourse, 2. stealing, 3. killing a person, and 4. telling a lie about his spiritual attainment.
65. The seven factors of enlightenment: 1. distinguishing the true teaching from the false, 2. making efforts to practice the true teaching, 3. rejoicing in the true teaching, 4. eliminating indolence and attaining comfort and relaxation, 5. being mindful so as to keep the balance between concentration and insight, 6. concentration, and 7. detaching one's thoughts from external objects, thereby securing serenity of mind.
66. The eight samadhis of emancipation: The eight ways of meditation for removing various attachments: 1. removing passions by meditating on impurity of one's body, 2. strengthening emancipation from passions by meditating on impurity of external objects, 3. removing passions by meditating on pure aspects of external objects, 4. removing attachment to material objects by meditating on boundless void, 5. removing attachment to void by meditating on boundless consciousness, 6. removing attachment to consciousness by meditating on non-existence, 7. removing attachment to non-existence by meditating on the stage of neither thought nor non-thought, and 8. extinguishing all thoughts and perceptions and dwelling in the stage of total extinction.
67. The four groups of Buddhists: Monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.
68. The twelve-divisioned scriptures: The twelve kinds of Buddhist scriptures distinguished according to different styles of exposition: 1. the Buddha's exposition of the Dharma in prose, 2. verses which repeat the ideas already expressed in prose, 3. verses containing ideas not expressed in prose, 4. narratives in the past which explain a person's present state, 5. narratives of past lives of the Buddha's disciples, 6. narratives of past lives of the Buddha, 7. accounts of miracles performed by the Buddha or deva, 8. an exposition of the Dharma through allegories, 9. discussions of doctrine, 10. an exposition of the Dharma by the Buddha without awaiting questions or requests from his disciples, 11. an extensive and detailed exposition of principles of truth, and 12. prophecies by the Buddha regarding his disciples' attainment of Buddhahood.
69. The five precepts: 1. Not killing, 2. not stealing, 3. not committing adultery, 4. not telling lies, and 5. not drinking intoxicants.
70. The eight precepts of abstinence: See note 62.

71. The ten precepts: The precepts to be observed by male and female novices: 1. not killing, 2. not stealing, 3. not having sexual intercourse, 4. not telling lies, 5. not drinking intoxicants, 6. not using bodily decoration and perfume, 7. not singing and dancing or going to see dances or plays, 8. not sleeping in a big bed, 9. not eating at wrong times, 10. not keeping money or jewels.
72. The ten precepts of good acts: Same as the ten good acts: 1. not killing, 2. not stealing, 3. not committing adultery, 4. not telling lies, 5. not uttering harsh words, 6. not uttering words which cause enmity between two or more persons, 7. not engaging in idle talk, 8. avoiding greed, 9. avoiding anger, and 10. avoiding wrong views.
73. The two hundred and fifty precepts: The precepts to be observed by monks.
74. The five hundred precepts: The precepts to be observed by nuns.
75. The threefold precepts for bodhisattvas: 1. the precept of avoiding all evil acts, 2. the precept of doing all good acts, and 3. the precept of embracing and benefiting sentient beings.
76. The tenfold inexhaustible precepts: The ten major precepts given in the *Brahma-net Sutra*: 1. not to kill or induce others to kill, 2. not to steal or make others steal, 3. not to engage in or make others engage in sexual intercourse, 4. not to lie or make others lie, 5. not to sell or make others sell intoxicating liquors, 6. not to talk of or make others talk of a fault in a bodhisattva, monk, or nun, 7. not to praise oneself and abuse others or make others do so, 8. not to be mean or make others be mean, 9. not to give vent to anger and treat others harshly or make others do so, and 10. not to abuse or make others abuse the Three Treasures.
77. Adapted from the Eighteenth Vow; see H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 243.
78. See H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, p. 356.
79. See H. Inagaki, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, pp. 356-7.