

To Enlightenment, Amitabha's 48 Great Vows
Venerable Ding Hong -01
阿彌陀佛四十八大願 定弘法師 2012/Japan

Our Deep Affinity and Significant Mission

尊敬的諸位法師, 尊敬的孫會長, 諸位大德同修, 大家早上好, 阿彌陀佛!

Distinguished Venerables, President Sun and all virtuous practitioners, good morning everyone, Amitabha!

阿彌陀佛!

Amitabha!

這次定弘能夠有幸前來東京跟諸位大德同修一起念佛和學習阿彌陀佛四十八大願,

I am very honored to have this opportunity to come to Tokyo to recite Amitabha and to learn about Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows with virtuous practitioners like you.

這是非常殊勝稀有的因緣。

This is a very rare and phenomenal affinity.

定弘感覺到一來我們的緣分很深厚能夠在一起研討學習佛法, 這是宿世我們都在一起學習的因緣, 今生又遇到一起,

Firstly, our affinity must be so deep that we are able to study Buddhism together. This is due to the causal connection that we had learned together in past lives, so we have met again in this life.

第二個呢, 定弘也感覺到, 這次的法會意義非凡, 我們每一位在座的同修, 都有重大的使命。

Secondly, I also feel that this Dharma-assembly has an unusual meaning; each of us here carries a significant mission.

Eliminating Disasters Through Reciting Amitabha

正如剛才孫會長所說的, 我們這次法會的宗旨, 是為了護世息災, 尤其是幫助日本這個地區化解災難,

As President Sun just said, "The purpose of this assembly is to contribute towards disaster-relief and world-protection, especially to help this region of Japan resolve its disaster."

能不能夠把災難化解呢? 這個答案是肯定的, 事在人為,

Can this disaster be resolved? The answer is positive because "Where there is a will, there is a way."

因為大乘佛法裡面很明確地告訴我們，一切宇宙的現象，一切人事物的環境，都是我們自心變現的，

Mahayana Buddhism explicitly tells us that all phenomena of the cosmos, including the physical and living environments of all beings, are all manifested by our own heart. 華嚴經上所說的“唯心所現，唯識所變。”

As elaborated in *The Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, "All phenomena are simply manifested by the heart and altered by the consciousness."

這個地球是我們心性變現出來的，這個宇宙都是我們心性變現出來的，

This means that the Earth is the manifestation of our heart-nature, so is the universe.

那麼它的好與壞，我們自己要負完全的責任。

All manifestations, good and bad, are of our own making and thus entirely our own responsibility.

現在我們看到地球有許多的災難，

Now we have witnessed many disasters happening on Earth.

災難的根源是我們人心有貪瞋痴慢疑這些惡念。

The root-cause of these disasters lies in the people's heart, which are filled with unwholesome thoughts of greed, resentment, ignorance, arrogance, and skepticism.

楞嚴經上把這個道理講得很清楚，所謂貪心就感得水災，瞋恚心感得的是火災，像火山爆發，這都是火災，全球氣候變暖，這都是火災，

The Śūraṅgama Sūtra explains this causal connection very clearly. Greed induces floods. Resentment induces fire, such as volcanic eruptions and global warming.

愚癡所感應的是風災，傲慢不平感應的是地震，

Ignorance induces wind disasters. Arrogance and grievance induce earthquakes.

懷疑，尤其是對聖教，對於老祖宗教誨懷疑，就感應山崩地陷，像我們所看到的泥石流，或者是現在常常有報導的“天坑”，那個地突然就凹下去一大塊，塌了下去了，這都是懷疑所感。

And skepticism, especially towards ancestor's sacred teachings, induces landslides, debris flows, or sinkholes that are reported often nowadays.

那麼要化解我們眼前的這些種種天災人禍，佛法告訴我們，不用往外求，

To resolve all the man-made and natural disasters of the present time, according to the Buddha-Dharma, there is no need to seek external help.

只要把我們自己內心當中貪瞋痴慢疑化解了，外面也就沒有災難了。

Simply by resolving the greed, resentment, ignorance, arrogance, and skepticism within our own heart, the outside disasters will then be eliminated naturally.

那麼如何化解呢？最好的方法莫過於念阿彌陀佛，

How do we resolve them? There is no better way than reciting Amitabha.

因為阿彌陀佛叫淨念，這個念頭是一切念頭當中最善的，

Because Amitabha remembrance is a pure thought. This thought is the purest among all good thoughts.

所以印光大師過去他老人家也在民國時期也提倡護國息災，
Master Yin Guang, during the early stages of the Republic of China era, also advocated
“eradicating disasters and protecting the nation.”

他提什麼方法呢？就是用念佛，

What method did he propose? Reciting the Buddha’s name: Amitabha.

「念佛方能消宿業，竭誠自可轉凡心。」

As a saying goes, “Only in remembrance of a Buddha can we eliminate our past karma,
and with utmost sincerity a mortal’s heart can then be naturally transformed.”

This Land Is the Pure Land, the Pure Land Is This Land

因為我們心在念佛的時候，念佛心所感召的環境那叫淨土啊！

When we keep Buddha in our mind, we will bring about a pure land in our environment.

尤其是我們用真誠的心，用恭敬的心，用清淨的心，平等的心，慈悲的心來念佛，

This is especially so when we use a sincere, respectful, pure, impartial, and
compassionate heart to recite Amitabha.

這個佛號就相應了，

This kind of recitation will then resonate with Buddha’s realm.

「一念相應一念佛，念念相應念念佛。」

“When one thought resonates, one Buddha realm manifests; when all thoughts
resonate, the Buddha realm manifests continuously.”

在念佛的當下，我們已經把眼前的境界轉變成極樂世界了。

During the moment of recitation, we have transformed our realm into Sukhāvātī (Skt.,
The Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss).

大家如果做過三時繫念，

If you have participated in *The Zhong Feng Thrice Yearning Ceremony*...

有沒有做過三時繫念的同修？做過的請舉手。

Is there anyone here who has participated before? Please raise your hand if you did.

哎呦，基本都做過了，謝謝！

Wow, most of you, thank you!

大家可能記得，中峰三時繫念開示裡面有一句話，

You may remember that there are some sentences in the revelation of *The Zhong Feng
Thrice Yearning Ceremony*,

「我心即是阿彌陀佛，阿彌陀佛即是我心。」「此方即淨土，淨土即此方。」

such as “My heart is Amitabha, Amitabha is my heart;

this land is the Pure Land, the Pure Land is this land.”

有沒有這句話？有。這個話語言很簡單，道理很深刻，

Are there these words? Yes, there are. The language of these words is very simple yet the principle is very profound.

當我們的心轉成阿彌陀佛的時候，確實眼前這個世界就轉成淨土了，

When we transform our heart into Amitabha remembrance, indeed, the world before our eyes will transform into the Pure Land as well.

淨土不在外面，正在我們當下的念佛心中，是我們念佛的心影現出來的境界。

The Pure Land does not exist extrinsically, it exists in the heart of the moment of our reciting Amitabha. It is a reflection of our Amitabha remembrance.

那麼如果我們不念佛，我們念貪瞋痴慢呢？

What if we do not recite Amitabha but have thoughts of greed, resentment, ignorance, and arrogance?

我們的心也會變現境界，就是眼前我們看到的各種災難，

By the same token, the impurity of this mind will also manifest a turbid land like ours which is full of all sorts of disasters.

所以化解災難之道，護世息災，那最好的方法就是念佛。

Therefore, the best way to resolve disasters and protect the world is to recite Amitabha.

The Goal of Our Seven Day Buddha-Retreat

所以孫會長他之前邀請定弘來講經，問怎麼個講法？

When President Sun invited me to give the Dharma lectures, he asked, “How do we hold the event to achieve our goal?”

我就提倡說，講經是為了鼓勵大家念佛，大家一定要真的念佛才行，

I said, “The Dharma lectures are to encourage everyone to recite Amitabha, it can work only if everyone is genuinely committed to reciting Amitabha.”

所以我就建議他打一個佛七。在佛七當中，我們一半講經，一半念佛，

So I suggested holding a seven day Buddha-Retreat. During this seven day retreat, half of the time we give lectures and the other half we recite Amitabha.

講經的目的就是幫助大家把道理搞清楚，怎麼個念法。

The purpose of giving lectures is to help everybody be clear about the principle and understand the reciting method. But how?

方法搞明白了你念這一句佛號就能相應，能夠相應那護世息災的效果就大，

When we clearly understand the principle and method, our recitation will resonate with the Buddha realm, and the effects of disaster-relief and world-protection will then be tremendous while resonating.

不僅我們能幫助這個地球，我們自己也能夠儘早拿到往生西方淨土的把握，

Not only can we help our planet but also benefit ourselves with an acquisition of the assurance of Sukhāvātī rebirth as soon as possible.

將來往生西方乘願再來，那你那時候就叫阿惟越致菩薩了，你能夠幫助盡虛空遍法界一切眾生消災免難，

In our vowed future return from Sukhāvātī, we would be an avaiivartika bodhisattva (non-retrogression bodhisattva). We can help all beings in all dharma-realms find relief from disasters and prevent misfortunes.

所以這是根本的，究竟圓滿的護世息災的方法。

This is the fundamental, the ultimate, and the consummate method of disaster-relief and world-protection.

這樣的方法師父淨公上人也常常給我們提倡，鼓勵我們這麼做。

This method is also advocated and encouraged by our Shifu* (*Fatherly teacher, a Chinese way to address one's teacher, because Chinese in ancient times respected Dao heavily, they felt that even if one teaches me for only one day, he is my mentor, like a father, for life), Master Chin Kung.

那實際上，如果我們真正做了，你就能夠體會到老人家所說的那個道理。所以我們這一次要用實修的方法，不光是講經，更強調念佛。

In fact, if we really practice it, we will then experience the truth that he has spoken. So this time we are going to use the practical cultivation method by not only giving lectures but also giving more emphasis to reciting Amitabha.

Securing Our Rebirth with Genuine Faith and Imperative Aspiration

所以大家非常難得，

It is very extraordinary of you!

真正是當代的菩薩，你們發起護世息災的菩提心，一起在這裡念佛，

You all are truly contemporary bodhisattvas by initiating bodhicitta (the aspiration of realizing bodhi wisdom) of disaster-relief and world-protection to recite Amitabha here together.

別看這場地不大，人數不多，一百來人吧！

Although this place is not big, and the people are not many—a bit over one hundred—it should not be underestimated.

我們預計的時候，我跟孫居士講，咱們人數就定在123人。

When we were planning this event, I told President Sun, "Let's set the number of participants at 123."

因為當年淨土宗初祖慧遠大師，在廬山結社念佛，他也是123人，

Because the First Patriarch of the Pure Land School, Master Hui Yuan, who convened a group of practitioners to recite Amitabha in Lushan, also had 123 people.

個個往生西方，我們現在也要個個往生西方。所以大家能夠有這樣的因緣聚會，真的是開經偈上講的：

All of them attained Sukhāvātī rebirth! Now, we must also vow to attain Sukhāvātī rebirth for all of us. We have such a cause and condition to congregate here, it is truly like *The Verse for Opening a Sutra* which states,

「百千萬劫難遭遇」,

"It is hard to encounter even in hundreds of thousands of billions of kalpas*" (*the longest period of time in Indian cosmology, between the creation and recreation of a world or universe, also known as eon).

其因緣殊勝不可思議, 所以大家一定要珍惜這短短七天的時間。時間不長, 但是如果大家真正用功, 成就會非常殊勝。

This affinity is phenomenal and inconceivable. We must cherish the brevity of these seven days. Although it is not a long period, we can achieve an incredible result if we practice conscientiously.

像阿彌陀經上講的, 若一日, 若二日, 若三日, 乃至七日, 一心不亂。你得到一心不亂, 那你往生西方就十拿九穩了。

As *The Amitabha Sutra* described, "Whether for one, two, three or as long as seven days, reciting with single-mindedness..." Your Sukhāvātī rebirth will be practically certain when you obtain single-mindedness.

「其人臨命終時, 阿彌陀佛與諸聖眾現在其前, 是人終時心不顛倒, 即得往生西方極樂世界。」

According to *The Amitabha Sutra*, "When this practitioner approaches the end of life, Amitabha and the assembly of holy beings will manifest before him. At the moment of his death, the Sukhāvātī rebirth will take place immediately if he is not deluded."

大家每一個人都可以辦得到的, 那我們拿到西方的把握了, 你現在雖人還沒到西方, 但是你已經現前證得阿惟越致, 你就有這個能力幫助世界苦難的眾生化解災難,

Therefore, everyone can make it. Once your assurance of rebirth is secured, even though you have not gotten there yet, you will now be an avaiartika bodhisattva. You would then have the ability to help the suffering beings of the world find relief from disasters. ,

所以這是我們本次護世息災佛七法會的宗旨和目標。

This is the tenet and goal of our seven day retreat for disaster-relief and world-protection.

在這次法會當中定弘給大家講阿彌陀佛四十八大願, 講經的目的就是鼓勵大家真信切願

In this Dharma-assembly, I am going to share with you the Forty Eight Great Vows of Amitabha. The purpose of this Dharma-talk is to encourage everyone to establish a genuine faith and an imperative aspiration.

Having No Doubt

藕益大師在彌陀要解裡跟我們講，

Master Ou Yi told us in *The Essential Annotations of Amitabha Sutra*,

「往生與否，全由信願之有無；品位味高下，全憑念佛功夫之淺深。」

“Success in Sukhāvātī rebirth hinges entirely on whether your faith and aspiration exist or not; as for the grade of rebirth, it all depends on the proficiency of your Amitabha recitation skill.”

所以很多同修對往生西方還沒有把握，我想在這裡也問一問大家，您拿到往生西方把握的，請舉手。

Many practitioners still are not confident about their Sukhāvātī rebirth. May I ask all of you, “Please raise your hand if you already obtain a Sukhavati rebirth assurance.”

好，謝謝！我們給他們幾位鼓掌鼓勵。但是我們看到舉手的非常少。

Okay, thank you! Let's give them applause and encouragement. Yet we see very few people have raised their hands.

我們試問，為什麼我們還沒有把握往生？到底問題在哪裡？

It raises the question, “Why do we still not have confidence in Sukhavati rebirth?” What is the real problem?

那藕益大師講，全由信願之有無，那肯定是我們信願不夠，就是信得不真，願得不切。

According to Master Ou Yi, it all depends on whether we have faith and aspiration or not; so it is clear that our faith and aspiration are still not enough. In other words, our faith is not truthful and our aspiration is not imperative.

那有的同學聽了有點不服氣，我信啦！我也真願意往生啊！怎麼說我沒信願呢？

Some practitioners may refuse to concede and insist otherwise. Some may even refute it as a false accusation. “I am also really willing to be reborn, how can you say that I have no faith and aspiration?”

那個信願裡頭水分很大。

Well, at least this much is true: Your faith and aspiration are quite diluted.

信，如果是真信的話，他沒有絲毫的疑慮，絕對沒有疑惑到底我能不能往生？阿彌陀佛到底會不會來接我啊？他接這麼多人，那萬一把我漏掉怎麼辦？

With faith, if it is real, you will absolutely not have the slightest doubt as to whether “I will be reborn or not,” whether “Amitabha will come to escort me,” or whether “He will miss me among so many others being escorted.”

這是心裡有疑慮！尤其是現在我們看到有很多災難，特別是日本，連政府都已經公開地讓國民做避難的一些準備，那到底災難來了，我往生到底能不能有把握啊？我要是去不了怎麼辦？很多的疑慮，很多的恐懼，信心不足

This is skepticism in your heart! Especially now we see many disasters, particularly in Japan, even the government has already encouraged the citizens to prepare for disaster response. When a disaster hits, will I be sure to be reborn? What if I cannot make it? All these doubts and fears are all due to a lack of faith.

Having Insufficient Aspiration

第二個誓願也不夠切，

Secondly, your aspiration of rebirth is also not imperative enough.

你說往生西方，我很願意去，這麼好的地方是吧。

You say, "Talking about Sukhāvātī rebirth, I am very much willing to go, such a great place, isn't it?"

你看西方極樂世界...我們這七天當中講經都講到，極樂世界真好啊！

We will talk a lot about the wonderfulness of Sukhāvātī during this seven day retreat.

思衣得衣，思食得食。想吃啥，就可以吃啥，而且都是七寶鉢器盛在的這些美味食品，

You get clothing when thinking of clothing and get food when thinking of food. You will have whatever food you desire, and those delicacies come in containers made of seven kinds of jewels.

吃完之後還不用洗碗，自動就化去了，真好！不去白不去。你說我願意去啊，怎麼不願意去？

When finished, no clean up is even needed, it will automatically disappear. It is so good that it would be a waste not to go. You say, "I am willing to go! How would I not be willing to go?"

但是又問問他，你這個世界是不是一切都放下了？他就支支吾吾啦，去還是要去，不過我那孫子怎麼辦，誰照顧他呀？我那銀行存款明年到期，沒人去拿怎麼辦？

But when confronted about their readiness in terms of renunciation of this world, they will frequently stammer in their replies. "Yes, but... what about my grandson, who will take care of him?" Or "My bank CD will mature next year, what would happen if no one cashes it?"

種種的想法就是放不下，願就不夠切了，真願意往生的，這個世界還有什麼放不下呢？

All these excuses are signs of not letting go of this world; they are the indication of insufficient aspiration. When one genuinely seeks rebirth, nothing in this world can tie down his resolution.

現在就走，最好啊！

Indeed, the sooner the better! And now is the best time!

Only Sukhāvātī Is Most Secure

有同修還問我，災難來了我們躲到那兒最安全？我告訴他，躲到西方極樂世界最安全，

Some practitioners asked me, "Where would be the safest place to hide when a disaster hits?" I told them that taking refuge in Sukhāvātī would be the safest.

你還想在地球上找個地方，我告訴你，真正你命數該到，你躲到哪兒都逃不了，

If you are still thinking of finding a place on this planet, let me tell you, when your life here is meant to end, all efforts to escape and hide will be futile.

西方才是最安全，早點去，不是好嗎？

It is true, only Sukhāvati is most secure. Wouldn't it be great if we can go earlier?

我來之前，有不少同修勸我：日本災難很多啊，政府都已經正式預告，

Before I came here, many fellow practitioner had tried to stop me, they said, “Japan is going to have a lot of disasters, even the government has formally given warnings,

說未來四年東京發生七級以上的大地震，還是直下型地震，

saying that Tokyo will have an earthquake with a magnitude greater than seven within the coming four years, and it will be an epicentral-type earthquake.

它的機率是百分之八十，我想大家都知道吧，

The probability is eighty percent.” I assume everyone is aware of this.

基本上就是說，很有可能發生大地震，百分之八十，而且這個災難將會是一千年一遇的大災難。

Basically, it means a major earthquake is likely to occur and it would be a once in a millennium event that could cause a huge catastrophe.

我來之前，好像前天吧，這邊聽說有一個小地震，我們看到新聞了，五點五級，大家都很緊張，別去啦，你去萬一回不來怎麼辦？

Before I came, probably the day before yesterday, I heard that there was a small earthquake. We have seen the news, 5.5 in magnitude. Everyone was anxious to persuade me not to go. Some even warned me, “What if you cannot come back?”

我告訴他，我說，去，我回不來不更好嗎？我去西方啊！

I said to them, “I'll go! If I cannot come back, isn't that even better? I will go to Sukhāvati!”

You Wish to Go? First Prepare a Will

連恩師淨公上人都接到同修們的祈請，

Even our Shifu, Master Chin Kung, had received many such petitions.

很多同修勸我勸不動，他直接去找師父，”師父啊，別讓定弘法師去了，他將來還有使命哪。你讓他去萬一回不來了怎麼辦呢？”

After failing to convince me, they went to Shifu (*a Chinese way to address a fatherly teacher respectfully) directly. They said, “Shifu, do not let Venerable Ding Hong go, he still has missions in the future. You let him go, what if he cannot come back?”

師父老人家有一天在攝影棚講經，講經之前他邊在搭衣的時候就邊問我，說現在有很多同修都來信，勸你不要去日本，你好好考慮考慮。

One day in the studio, Shifu was getting ready to give a lecture. He asked me while putting on his robe before the lecture, "Now many fellow practitioners wrote letters to me, asking me to advise you not to go to Japan. You should think it over."

我就跟師父講，弟子早已把生死置之度外。師父笑瞇瞇地點點頭，這樣，那就行。

I said to Shifu, "I have left life and death out of consideration a long time ago." Shifu smiled and nodded his head, "Is it so? Then it will be fine."

然後師父說，那你去就好了，不要勸別人去，萬一有什麼問題，去了沒回來，家屬找麻煩那很不好。

Shifu added, "You just go by yourself, do not convince others to go with you. In case they do not make it back, we will be in trouble with their families and that would not be good."

那我就說，有一些同修他就是拼死都要去，怎麼辦？師父說，那讓他們把遺囑立好。

I then said, "Some fellow practitioners are longing to go, what should I do?" Shifu said, "Have them prepare a will."

雖然是半開玩笑地講，但是這也是老人家測試測試我們自己的信願。

Although Shifu was half-joking, it was also his way of testing our faith and aspiration.

我覺得日本需要我們來，雖然我們不知道能幫助多少，但是我們就以一顆真誠的心，來為這個地區念佛講經，化解災難，

I feel that Japan needs our help. Despite not knowing how much help we can offer, we can recite Amitabha and give Dharma lectures with a sincere heart to help resolve disasters for this region;

盡自己的所能，希望能感得阿彌陀佛加持，能夠化解災難，所以這是義不容辭的。

trying our best and hoping our sincerity would induce blessings from Amitabha to resolve disasters. It is our unrelinquished duty!

而且難得我們海外，就是大陸香港，大概有二十多位同修，他們都好像是敢死隊隊員一樣，都跟著我來了。

It is quite extraordinary! More than 20 fellow practitioners from Hong Kong and China were like members of a suicide squad, they followed me here.

其實能不能化解災難呢？我們有堅定的信心。我跟不少同修都講過，一個釋迦牟尼佛本身的故事。

In fact, can we resolve the disaster? We have firm confidence! I have told many practitioners a story of Shakyamuni Buddha's past.

A Sincere Intention Will Induce the Blessings of All Buddhas

釋迦牟尼佛在無量劫前，曾經做過一隻小鳥，

Immeasurable kalpas ago, Shakyamuni Buddha once was a little bird.

這個小鳥有一天看到它的森林著了大火，那火把這些走獸逃生的道路都給封住了，非常危急。

One day, this bird saw a big fire sweeping across the forest, cutting off the escape routes of many animals. The situation was very dire.

小鳥飛出來，看見熊熊的烈火，當時就一心想把火撲滅，

The bird flew around and saw the raging flames; at that time, this bird was only thinking about how to put out the fire.

怎麼辦呢？於是它就飛到附近的一條小河那裡，用它的翅膀在河那裡沾了一點水，然後就飛回到森林的上空，把它的水抖了下來，

What can be done? He flew to a river nearby, soaked his wings with water, then flew above the fire while shaking down the water from his wings.

當然那麼幾滴水怎麼能滅火呢？所以它又飛回到小河那裡，然後又用它的翅膀點了一下那個河水，又飛到森林的上空，把翅膀上的水抖落下來，

Of course, a few drops of water cannot put out the fire. He again flew back to the river, used his wings to collect more water, and returned above the fire shaking down the water from his wings.

如是這樣不知多少個來回，到最後這隻小鳥已經累得奄奄一息，倒在地上，當它看著森林大火繼續地燃燒，它的心還是那樣地焦慮，只有一個念頭想著如何救火，

Who knows how many trips he had made. At last, this little bird was exhausted. With his last gasp he fell to the ground. When he saw that the forest fire kept burning, he was still anxiously thinking of only one thing, "How do I put out the fire?"

這種行為感動了忉利天人，於是天人就用神力把森林大火撲滅了。當這隻小鳥看到森林大火終於熄滅的時候，它的心非常地安慰，然後它的神識就到了忉利天。

His selfless actions had touched a deva (a divine being) of Trayastrimsa who put out the forest fire with his supernal power. When this bird saw that the forest fire was finally out, his heart felt very comforted. Then his consciousness took rebirth in the Trayastrimsa.

當我把這個故事講給同修聽的時候，同修說，現在我們到日本，是不是要去做小鳥呢？

When I told this story to fellow practitioners, they asked, "Now we are going to Japan, are we going to be little birds?"

我說沒錯，你看這裡有一百多隻小鳥，菩薩小鳥，來滅大火的，

I said, "Exactly! You see, we have more than one hundred birds—bodhisattva birds. We are going to put out a fire."

能不能夠滅呢？那得找忉利天人，上哪兒找忉利天人呢？

Can we put out the fire? Well, we've got to find help from a deva of Trayastrimsa. Where do we find a deva of Trayastrimsa?

不用找，我們自己只要發出真誠的心念，來護世息災，不僅能感動天人，肯定能感動十方諸佛護念，那化解災難豈不就是易如反掌嗎？

No need to look! As long as we invoke a sincere intention for disaster-relief and world-protection, not only can we touch the devas but also touch and elicit blessings from all Buddhas in ten directions. Then disaster-relief and world-protection will surely be accomplished effortlessly.

但是我們不能有疑慮，就是一心地去做。

Nevertheless, we must not have any doubts! We just need to do it wholeheartedly.

Mission: Impossible? No Such Thing

你看那隻小鳥，如果當時它有疑慮，我這個能力可以幫助化解大火這個災難嗎？我怎麼做才能夠有這個效果？我的力量這麼單薄，行嗎？

Look! If that little bird had any doubts and questioned himself, “Can I put out this big fire with my meager ability? How do I do it effectively? Will it work with my minuscule power?”

假如他有這些懷疑，它肯定會退心哪，怎麼可能呢？

If he had all these doubts, he definitely would have regressed because it would be considered a mission impossible for him.

但是它沒有懷疑，它憑著自己的真信切願，感得天人加持，把大火熄滅了。

Yet, he had no doubts at all. He simply relied on genuine faith and strong determination to induce the blessings from a deva to put out the fire.

護世息災的道理跟這個是一樣的，往生淨土的道理也跟這個一樣，就是憑著自己真信切願，感得阿彌陀佛本願功德的加持，實現我們的願望，

Our present mission of disaster-relief and world-protection is also based on faith and determination, so is Sukhāvātī rebirth. Simply relying on our own truthful faith and imperative aspiration, we can elicit the blessings of Amitabha’s Fundamental Vows to realize our wish.

所以真信切願，我們從這個例子去細細體會。

The key is genuine faith and imperative aspiration; we may comprehend this principle more deeply from the example of this little bird.

講經的目的就是把這些道理講清楚了，你這個信願就踏實，當你的信願踏實了，你就拿到往生的把握了。

The purpose of our Dharma-talk is to make this principle clear so that our faith and aspiration can be further solidified. When our faith and aspiration are solid, our rebirth is then assured.

不是說我們自己有什麼能力能往生，如果說能力，恐怕我們在座沒有一個有這個本事，

It is not that we have any ability to obtain rebirth, I am afraid that none of us here is capable of that when it comes to rebirth by self-effort.

為什麼呢？到西方極樂世界那是一真法界啊，誰能夠去呀？

Why? Because Sukhāvātī is a one true dharma-realm* (*thusness). Who can go there by self-effort?

法身大士才可以呀,

Only dharmakaya-mahasattvas* can. (*one who has made a resolution to become a Buddha and attained a high degree on the path of consciousness awakening)

也就是破一品無明, 證一分法身的人, 那就成佛了,

They are people who have eradicated one level of avidyā (*nescience) and attained one level of dharmakaya (*dharma-body). That means that they have attained Buddhahood. 天台家講的, 分證即佛,

According to Tian Tai School, they are Progressive Experiential Proof Buddhas (one of the six forms of buddha in the teaching of Tiantai School. also known as six stages of bodhisattva development).

理即 The first form of buddha: all beings who are of Buddha-nature yet haven't heard of Buddha Dharma.

名字即 The second form of buddha: all beings who have heard the Buddha Dharma and believed that all beings are potentially Buddha.

觀行即 The third form of buddha: practitioners who study Buddha Dharma and cultivate accordingly.

相似即 The fourth form of buddha: practitioners who have cultivated to a semblance stage of a Buddha.

分證即 The fifth form of Buddha: practitioners who reach to a level of discrimination of truth and its progressive experiential proof.

Having eradicated different levels of avidya and attained stepwise Dharmakaya, in other words, this form of Buddhas have seen the self-nature, thus they are real Buddhas.

究竟即 The sixth form of Buddha: one who has reached a perfect enlightenment, attained the fruition of consummate holiness.

真佛, 不是假佛, 你才可能到西方極樂世界,

They are real Buddhas, not false ones. Only by reaching this level can you then get to Sukhāvātī by your own power.

By Relying on Buddha's Power, We Instantly Elevate Our Present Realm

那我們這一生不可能, 反正我是不可能啦, 你們不知道會不會比我好一點? 好也不可能好太多,

This is impossible to accomplish in this lifetime for us. It is impossible for me! I wonder if you are better than me? However, it won't be far better even if you are.

你想想，見思煩惱我們一品都斷不了，見惑八十八品，思惑八十一品，這一品都斷不了
Think about it, we have not even eradicated one level of Affliction of View and
Cognition—there are eighty-eight levels of Delusion of View and eighty-one levels of
Delusion of Cognition—we have not been able to eradicate even one level of them!
反正我自己有自知之明，斷不了。

I know my own limits; I cannot eradicate them in this life.

斷了見思惑，你還只是證個阿羅漢哪，

After eradicating the delusions of view and cognition, you only attain arhathood (* a
state of attaining insight into the true nature of existence and has achieved
enlightenment).

那還只是出三界而已，沒有出十法界，沒有到一真法界。

That is only transcending the three realms (Skt. traidhātuka) of desire, form, and
formlessness. You are still within the ten dharma realms (*six paths plus four saints'
realms), not reaching the “one true dharma-realm” yet.

要到一真法界，那就是要斷塵沙煩惱，斷無明煩惱，後頭的路很長啊。

In order to reach the one true dharma-realm, you must eradicate the delusion of
dust-sand and the delusion of avidya. There is still a long way to go!

所以靠我們自己的本事，真的，不可能到西方，唯有靠佛力。靠佛力，把我們現前的境界一
下拉到跟法身大士，跟阿惟越致菩薩地位是平等的，

So, if we rely only on our own ability, it is indeed impossible to get to Sukhāvātī. We can
only rely on Buddha's power. Once relying on Buddha's power, we instantly elevate our
present realm to be equal to the level of avaivartika bodhisattva which is
dharmakaya-mahasattva!

這全靠佛威德加持，靠阿彌陀佛四十八大願的加持，

This completely relies on the blessing of Buddha's mighty awe-virtues, it relies on the
blessing of Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows.

所以我們自己即使拿到往生把握也沒什麼可傲慢的，為什麼？都不是自己本事。

That is why there is nothing for us to be arrogant about even if we have obtained the
assurance of rebirth. Why? Because it is not our own ability.?

只是什麼呢？自己有堅定的信願，這是能感，阿彌陀佛來接引我們，這是所感，

Our resolute faith and aspiration is the power to induce, and Amitabha coming to escort
us is the result of being induced. "Induction happens when we resonate with Dao.”

感應道交這是往生的道理，

This is the principle of the Sukhāvātī rebirth.

Understanding the Merits and Virtues of Hearing the Name of Amitabha

所以還沒有拿到往生的把握，只要你認真地學，真的把這四十八願聽懂了，你這七天之內就能拿到往生把握，

So, if you still have not gotten the assurance of rebirth, you just need to learn earnestly. When you truly understand the Forty Eight Great Vows, you can then attain the assurance of Sukhāvātī rebirth during these seven days.

這是真的，絕對不會給大家講假話。

This is true, I am absolutely not saying false words to you all.

所以你看，四十八大願裡面，特別強調聞名功德，聞名發心，

These Forty Eight Great Vows particularly emphasize the merit of hearing the name of Amitabha, hearing the name of Amitabha and bringing forth one's bodhicitta (the aspiration to realize bodhi wisdom)!

「聞我名號，十念必生。」

According to *The Infinite Life sutra*, "When hearing my name, within only ten recitations one will definitely be reborn."

十方諸佛讚嘆佛名，就是十方諸佛都講名號的功德，

Therefore, all Buddhas in ten directions praise Amitabha's name. This means that all Buddhas in ten directions speak of the merits of the name Amitabha.

為什麼十方諸佛要講這個名號功德呢？就是因為希望十方眾生能夠聞名，

Why do all Buddhas in ten directions aspire to speak of the merits of this name Amitabha? Because they are hoping that all beings in ten directions can hear the name of Amitabha.

真把名號功德聽明白了，你這個信願就堅定了，

Once all beings really understand the merits of this name can their faith and aspiration be resolute.

信願堅定了，你就有往生的把握了，這個功德是不可思議。

And once their faith and aspiration are resolute, they will then attain the assurance of rebirth. The merits of this name Amitabha are inconceivable!

所以我們這次佛七是信願行三資糧都有，信和願，我們就是學習彌陀四十八大願，這是學經教，加深我們的信願，

This time, our seven day retreat includes all three provisions for rebirth: faith, aspiration and practice. Regarding faith and aspiration, it is that we learn Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows to enforce our "faith" and "aspiration."

然後還有念佛，這是行。所以這次法會我想會非常的殊勝，稀有難逢，

Plus we recite Amitabha, that is "practice." So, by covering all these three provisions, I think this Dharma-assembly will be very splendid, rare, and difficult to encounter.

這裡給大家先簡單介紹一下法會的緣起，就介紹到這兒。

This is my simple introduction to the origin of this Dharma-assembly.

Have a Sincere and Respectful Heart to Listen to the Dharma

因為我們時間有限，總共只有二十堂課，每一堂一個半小時，

We have very limited time, only 20 classes in total, one and a half hours for each class. 要把四十八大願都講清楚講明白，這都要非常抓緊，要言簡意賅，不能夠太詳細講，有些道理也只能點到即止，

In order to make all Forty Eight Great Vows clear and understandable, we must make the best use of our time, speaking concisely yet comprehensively. We will not be able to speak in detail, some principles we can only give a taste of.

大家用真誠的心，恭敬的心來聽法，那你得到的利益就大。

If you use a sincere and respectful heart to listen to the Dharma, the benefit you gain will be immense.

印光大師講：「一分誠敬，得一分利益；十分誠敬，得十分利益。」

Master Yin Guang said, "With ten percent sincerity and respect, you gain ten percent benefit; with one hundred percent sincerity and respect, you gain one hundred percent benefit."

真有誠敬心，那怕聽懂一句，你就功德圓滿了。

As long as you really have a sincere and respectful heart, your merit will be consummate even if you only understand one sentence.

就像六祖惠能大師，當時就聽懂了一句：

This is just like the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism, Hui Neng who, at the time when he heard someone reading *The Diamond Sutra*, only understood this one sentence:

「應無所住，而生其心。」他就成佛了。

“One should dwell on nothing to have the true heart arise.” He had enlightened and become a Buddha!

那我們把這個標準降低一點，我們希望往生，其實往生就是成佛，經上講，你往生就是不退菩薩，你就必定成佛。

Let us lower our standard a little to hope to be reborn into Sukhavati. This is actually obtaining Buddhahood because the sutra states that once obtaining rebirth, you would be a non-retrogression bodhisattva and will definitely become a Buddha.

真聽懂了，那怕一句話，你能契入了，你也就拿到往生把握，

If you truly understand even only one sentence and resonate with its doctrine, you will then grip the assurance of rebirth.

所以我們今天現在就開始來講解。

Let us start our lesson now.

Differences Between *The Infinite Life Sutra* and *Amitabha Sutra*

大家都有無量壽經的經文吧,

Do you all have the scriptures of *The Infinite Life Sutra*?

我們先簡單介紹一下這部經的經題, 這是按照講經的慣例, 把經題講一下, 然後就轉入第六品, 發大誓願第六的正文。

Let's briefly introduce the title of this sutra. This is based on the conventional practice of expounding sutra, talking about the title of the sutra, then we will proceed to Chapter Six "Bringing Forth Great Vows."

首先我們來講一下經題, 經題叫: 佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經,

First of all, let us expound on this sutra's title. The complete title is *The Buddha Speaks the Mahayana, Infinite Life, Adornment, Purity, Impartiality, and Enlightenment Sutra*.

大家都有念過嗎? 念過這部經的請舉手, 好, 大部分同修都念過, 謝謝!

Have you all read it? Have you ever read it? Please raise your hand if you have read it.

Okay, most people have read it. Thank you!

這部經是我們師父淨公上人幾十年來大力提倡和弘揚, 它是淨土宗第一經, 所以稱為淨土大經

This is the sutra that our Shifu, Master Chin Kung, has vigorously advocated and propagated for decades. It is the number one sutra of Pure Land Buddhism, thus it is commended as *The Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra*.

它跟阿彌陀經是同部, 阿彌陀經叫小經, 無量壽經稱大經。

It is of the same work as *The Amitabha Sutra*, which is called *The Smaller Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra*. *The Infinite Life Sutra* is *The Longer Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra*.

大小不二,

Yet there are no differences between larger and smaller.

這兩部經份量上有差別, 可是所講的理論, 講的事相, 講的修學的方法境界, 都是完全一樣, 只是講的詳略不同,

These two sutras have differences in the quantity, but the theory, phenomena, and the state of practice and methodology they expounded are completely the same. The only difference is their explanation on the details.

阿彌陀經講得很簡單, 很濃縮, 一般人學習非常不容易去體會,

The Amitabha Sutra expounds very briefly and is very condensed, it is not easy for most people to comprehend.

無量壽經講得詳盡, 就比較容易體會。所以尤其是初學淨土, 用無量壽經是最好的。

The Infinite Life Sutra is very detailed and thus easier to comprehend. Particularly for beginners who learn the Pure Land Method, it is best to study *The Infinite Life Sutra*.

The Avatamsaka Sutra

古德曾經把釋迦牟尼佛四十九年所說的一切經，做過一個總結和對比，他們一致公認，這是隋唐時代的大德就這樣公認，佛講的一切經中，最好最圓滿最殊勝的經典就是大方廣佛華嚴經，

After comparing all sutras that Shakyamuni Buddha had spoken over forty nine years, ancient masters, since the time of the master of the Sui and Tang Dynasties of China, drew a conclusion and unanimously acknowledged, "Among all sutras spoken by the Buddha, the best, the most consummate, and the most phenomenal sutra is *The Avatamsaka Sutra*."

那麼大方廣佛華嚴經，到末後普賢菩薩十大願王導歸極樂，它是以淨土為歸宿，In the end of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (one of the four most renowned bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism, representing practice) guides homecoming to Sukhāvati with his Ten Great Vows, which suggests that *The Avatamsaka Sutra* regards Sukhāvati as its destination.

換句話說，那就是導歸到無量壽經來了，因為無量壽經就是講淨土，

In other words, *The Avatamsaka Sutra* leads to *The Infinite Life Sutra* because *The Infinite Life Sutra* is exactly speaking of the Pure Land, Sukhavati.

所以清朝彭濟清大居士當時就提到，華嚴經他非常認真地學，他有一個華嚴念佛三昧論的著作，收在大藏經裡頭，

The Great Laity Peng Jiqing of the Qing Dynasty studied *The Avatamsaka Sutra* very scrupulously and left a work, *The Analects of The Avatamsaka Sutra on the Samadhi of Reciting Amitabha*, which was collected in the Tripitaka.

他就講，無量壽經是中本華嚴，換句話說，無量壽經是華嚴經的濃縮本，它的理論境界方法跟華嚴經是一致的，

He had mentioned that *The Infinite Life Sutra* is the middle version of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*. In other words, *The Infinite Life Sutra* is the condensed version of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*. Its theory, realm, and method are in line with *The Avatamsaka Sutra*.

那我們要是讀華嚴讀不過來，我們讀無量壽經是一樣的。

If we have difficulty studying *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, we could study *The Infinite Life Sutra* instead, because the content is the same.

The Avatamsaka Sutra Is Not Easy

華嚴經不容易啊，

The Avatamsaka Sutra is not easy at all.

我在二十四歲那年，還在美國大學留學，去拜見我們師父上人，他老人家就送我一套華嚴經，精裝本五冊，每一冊都這麼厚，

When I was twenty four years old, still studying in America, I paid a respectful visit to our revered Shifu. He had given me a set of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, an edition of five volumes in hardcover. Each volume is this thick.

他說你回家呀，能夠從頭到尾把它念一遍也就相當殊勝了。

He said, "When you go home, if you are able to read it from beginning to end just once, it would be really remarkable already."

因為當時我發心跟老人家學華嚴，那是一九九七年，他當時準備第二年在新加坡開講華嚴經，這說話已經是十五年前的事了，

I was eager to learn *The Avatamsaka Sutra* from him. That was in 1999, he was preparing to start expounding on *The Avatamsaka Sutra* the next year in Singapore. It was fifteen years ago.

當時我三步一拜，從寮房拜到師父那裡，接受師父贈予的華嚴經，

At that time, I bowed every three steps, from my dorm to Shifu's place, to receive *The Avatamsaka Sutra* given by Shifu.

拿回家去讀，結果呢，沒讀完。基本上讀到第一品就讀不下去了，為什麼呢？讀到第一品就感覺到瞌睡，因為裡頭的境界我們不能體會，

I brought it home to read, the result was that I did not finish it. Basically, I couldnot continue after reading the first chapter. Why? I felt drowsy when reading the first chapter due to being unable to comprehend its realm.

第一品很多這些神的名號，不知道它的表法的意義，讀得覺得枯燥，所以讀不下去。There are many deities' names in the first chapter, not knowing their Dharma implication, I felt it quite boring. So I could not continue.

師父告訴我，說你從頭到尾念一遍這個華嚴經，大概每天八個小時，兩個禮拜能讀下來 Shifu said to me, "If you read *The Avatamsaka Sutra* from the beginning to the end once, about eight hours each day, you can finish it in two weeks."

你看，這份量很不小，學習確實非常有難度，份量太大。

Look! Its size is not small at all, it is indeed very difficult to learn. It is way too big!

***The Infinite Life Sutra* Is Easier**

但學無量壽經就簡單很多了，一部經讀下來也就是一個小時。

But learning *The Infinite Life Sutra* is much easier. Reading it once takes just one hour. 我讀無量壽經就讀得很熟，我就感覺學無量壽經，那真是，自己有這樣的把握，能把它學好。學華嚴，沒有把握，真把它弄通還不知道何年何月。

I have become very familiar with *The Infinite Life Sutra*, I feel confident about learning it well. But, to learn *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, I have no confidence. I have no clue as to what year, what month I could really comprehend it thoroughly.

無量壽經它容易啊，容易受持。所以我最後就決定不學華嚴，學中本華嚴，學無量壽經。師父對我的選擇也非常地贊同。

The Infinite Life Sutra is easier, easy to study and uphold. I have finally decided not to learn *The Flower Adornment Sutra*. Instead, I have studied the medium version of *The Flower Adornment Sutra—The Infinite Life Sutra*. Shifu is also very much in approval of my choice.

現代人的根機，搞太長的經典，很難受持，

With the indriya (*Skt., one's spiritual capacity) of modern people, if we engage in a sutra that is too long, it would be difficult for us to study and uphold.

中本華嚴也就是說把華嚴經的精髓都講出來了，

The medium version of *The Avatamsaka Sutra—The Infinite Life Sutra*—includes all the essence of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*.

那華嚴經又是整個釋迦牟尼佛四十九年說法的精髓，它叫根本法輪，經中之王，

And *The Avatamsaka Sutra* is the essence of the Dharma that Shakyamuni Buddha had spoken over His forty nine years' teaching. It is the wheel of the Fundamental Dharma and the king of all sutras.

那也就是說，無量壽經是精髓中的精髓，

That is to say, "*The Infinite Life Sutra* is the essence among all essence.

甚至可以說是十方諸佛所說一切法的精髓，因為十方諸佛所說的一切法，它的總名題就是大方廣佛華嚴經，

We can even say, it is the essence of all the Dharma spoken by all Buddhas in ten directions." Because the general title of all Dharmas that is spoken by all Buddhas in ten directions is *The Avatamsaka Sutra*.

那這是中本華嚴，所以我們遇到這部經非常不容易，

With this understanding of *The Infinite Life Sutra* being the medium version of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, we realize that it is extremely phenomenal to encounter this sutra.

真正是無量劫來稀有難逢之一日。

It is indeed a day that is rare and difficult to encounter in immeasurable kalpas.

The Many Versions of *The Infinite Life Sutra*

這部經在歷史上弘揚的人很少，中國歷史上，

In Chinese history, there were very few people propagating this sutra.

日本大德弘揚這部經的很多，在歷史上註解無量壽經的，日本祖師大德有二十二種註解

But in Japan, many great practitioners propagated this sutra. There are a total of twenty two annotations from patriarchs and great virtuous men in Japanese history.

而在中國收入在大藏經裡面的註解只有兩種，相對來講比日本就少多了，

In China, only two annotations were collected in the *Tripitaka*. Relatively speaking, it is much less compared to Japan.

為什麼呢？因為這部經佛曾經多次地宣講，現在我們能夠統計到的，這部經原譯本有十二種，十二種原譯本。

Why? Because the Buddha had spoken this sutra many times. What we can calculate now is twelve original translated versions.

也就是說當時在古印度的時候，就有十二種譯本，證明佛肯定是講了很多次，所以有多次的結集，就有這麼多種譯本的出現，

This means that there were twelve original versions in the time of ancient India. This is evidence that the Buddha undoubtedly spoke it many times, and many councils (*Skt. saṃgīti; a conference held to settle questions of orthodoxy; to compile and assemble texts) were conducted accordingly. Many translated versions thus appeared.

可惜其中七種譯本已經失傳了，現在大藏經裡面能夠收錄到的只有五個譯本。

However it is regrettable that seven of the translated versions have been lost. Now the *Tripitaka* collection has only five translated versions left.

五個譯本要學起來也不太方便，為什麼呢？因為有些佛講的道理在這部經裡頭，這個譯本裡面，有的是在那個譯本裡面。你要學必須全部五個譯本都要通讀，你才能學得到，

To learn five translated versions is not convenient. Why? Because some of the doctrines taught by Buddha were spoken in this version and some of them were stated in that version. One must read them all in order to learn thoroughly.

所以古來就有大德來做會集。會集的目的是方便我們學習，我們就不需要去遍查五個原譯本了，我們就讀一個會集本就可以了。

For this reason, some great practitioners of the past had compiled them. The purpose of the compilation is to facilitate our learning so that we do not need to go through all five translations. We only need to read one compiled edition.

Compilations of *The Infinite Life Sutra*

從宋朝王龍舒居士就開始做這個事情，王龍舒他的會集本，叫大阿彌陀經，

From the Song Dynasty, Laity Wang Long Shu had started this task. The compilation by Wang Long Shu is called *The Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra*.

會集得相當好，很可惜他只看到四種原譯本，還有一種他沒看到，也就是他會集的不全

He had done a great job. Regrettably, he had only seen four of the original translations.

There was one that he had not seen. This means that his compilation was not complete.

但是他已經相當了不起，你看他的大阿彌陀經也收錄在大藏經裡面。

But it is already remarkable! *The Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra* was also collected in *Tripitaka*.

淨土宗第八祖蓮池大師在註解阿彌陀經疏鈔裡面，就主要引用的是王龍舒的會集本，

The Eighth Patriarch of Pure Land School, Master Lian Chi, when annotating *The Tikā* (*Buddhist commentary or subcommentary literature) of *The Amitabha Sutra*, mostly cited Wang Long Shu's compilation.

那王龍舒居士是站著往生，這功德很大。

Wang Long Shu was reborn into the Pure Land in a standing posture. His merits and virtues are enormous.

因為他會集的不完全，而且他也有添加自己意思的地方，雖然他自己有添加自己的文字在裡面，其實是為會集本增色不少，但這個例子不能開。

However, his compilation was not intact, and he also added some of his own ideas in some places. Even though adding his own ideas has made the compilation more glorious, the example of adding one's ideas should never be started?

原因是如果開了這個先例，後人也在效法，後人那境界不如王龍舒，他看不懂佛經，他就自己用自己的意思改了佛經，加入自己的成分，那到了千百年後，這個經典可能就面目全非了

The reason is that, if this precedent was set, people after him would emulate it. If they have not reached Wang's level, by adding their own ideas to alter the sutras under insufficient understanding, the sutra will lose its identity hundreds or thousands of years later.

所以經典是不能改動的。

For this reason, the sutras must never be altered.

他會集的有瑕疵，於是在清朝 承貫居士，就是魏源居士，他又做了第二次的會集，

Since his compilation has flaws, in the Qing Dynasty, Laity Wei Cheng Guan, also known as Wei Yuan, made a second compilation.

他就比王龍舒要進步了，他能拿到五個原譯本，他就全了。可惜他所會集的也還是有瑕疵，還是有自己的意思在裡面。

He had more progress than Wan Long Shu. He obtained five original translations. His compilation is intact. Unfortunately, his compilation also has flaws, he also added some of his own ideas.

Laity Xia Lian Ju's Compilation of *The Infinite Life Sutra*

最後在民國時期，夏蓮居老居士做第三次的會集，他的會集是將五個原譯本原文彙在一起，沒有添加一個字是自己的意思，

Finally, during the period of the Republic of China, senior laity Xia Lian Ju made a third compilation. His compilation combined all five original translations and not even one word was added from his own ideas.

全是從原譯本上抽出來的，而且會集得非常地好，這是大德們公認的無量壽經的最善本

It was totally extracted from the original translations, an excellent compilation. It is widely regarded as the best edition of *The Infinite Life Sutra* by great practitioners. 那我們現在所讀到的無量壽經的版本，就是夏蓮居老居士的會集本，這是師父上人肯定的，這個版本將會傳未來九千年，

Now, this edition of *The Infinite Life Sutra* we read is the compilation from Laity Xia Lian Ju. This is recognized by our revered Shifu as the edition that will be passed down for the future nine thousand years.

因為佛曾經預言過，當法滅盡的時候，無量壽經將會在這個世間多留住一百年。一百年之後經典都滅盡了，還有一句阿彌陀佛佛號又多留住一百年，可以度很多的眾生

The Buddha had given a prophecy; when Dharma is extinct, *The Infinite Life Sutra* will still remain one hundred years in the world. And after one hundred years, we will still have the name of Amitabha in the world when all sutras are extinct. This name can liberate a lot of sentient beings.

那我們問了，無量壽經留到最後的版本是哪個版本？

Now we have to ask, "Which version of *The Infinite Life Sutra* will stay until the end?" 有五個原譯本，還有三個會集本，還有一個是節校本，彭濟清居士的節校本，總共有九個版本，哪一個版本會留到最後呢？

There are five original translated versions, three compilations and one excerpt of a proofread version from Laity Peng Jiqing, a total of nine versions. Which one would stay until the end?

師父肯定就是我們現在手上所捧的夏蓮居老居士的會集本。

Shifu is positively sure, it will be the edition that is in our hands now, the compilation edition from laity Xia Lian Ju.

我們遇到了，非常稀有難逢，而且我們是屬於非常早期就遇到了，後頭九千年，那都是落後我們了。我們遇到了無量壽經最善本！

For us to encounter this is extremely rare and difficult. We belong to the early group who have encountered it. People encountering it during the nine thousand years after our time will all be behind us. We have encountered the best version of *The Infinite Life Sutra*!

師父上人一生都在弘揚這部經，現在把這部經弘揚到全世界，讀誦這部經的人那多得是不計其數，數以億計。

Shifu has propagated this sutra all his life, now it has spread around the world. The number of people who are reading this sutra is immeasurable, in the hundreds of millions.

過去中國祖師大德之所以沒有對無量壽經做註，就是因為沒有最善本的出現，所以一般都用阿彌陀經做註解。

In the past, Chinese patriarchs did not make annotations to *The Infinite Life Sutra* because the best version had not yet appeared. Thus, *The Amitabha Sutra* was generally used for annotations.

往後我相信，對無量壽經註解的本子也會出現得很多，為什麼？因為有最善本。

In the coming time, I believe that many annotations of *The Infinite Life Sutra* will also be made. Why? Because now we have the best version.

可能在未來，無量壽經註解本不會亞於日本，肯定多於二十二種。

In the future, the annotations of *The Infinite Life Sutra* will probably not be fewer than Japan's, they will certainly be more than twenty two.

所以我們遇到這部經，要用殷重心來學習。

Hence, encountering this sutra, we must learn it with our most sincere and solemn heart.

我們來看，這部會集本的經題它也是會集，「佛說大乘無量壽莊嚴清淨平等覺經」，

Let us take a look, even the title of this compilation—*The Buddha Speaks the Mahayana, Infinite Life, Adornment, Purity, Impartiality, and Enlightenment Sutra*—is also a compilation.

它是從宋譯的本子和漢譯的本子，兩個經的經題會在一起。漢譯的是最早的，我們現存五種原譯本最早的版本，宋譯的是最晚的，

It combines the titles of the versions of the Song Dynasty and the Han Dynasty. The Han translation is the earliest version among five original translations left now and the Song translation is the latest.

這一前一後，兩個經的經題會在一起，就成為我們這部經的經題，

The combination of these two titles of the earliest and the latest has become the title of this compilation.

Who Was Buddha?

我們可以把這個經題分成九個小段落來學習。

We can break down this sutra's title into nine small parts to study.

首先第一個是佛字，佛，我們知道就是釋迦牟尼佛，釋迦牟尼佛大家應該都很了解，

First of all, there is the word “Buddha.” We know that it refers to Shakyamuni Buddha.

Everyone should be very familiar with Him.

他是三千多年前，在古印度，也就是現在的尼泊爾，他出生了，是一個王族裡頭的王子，在迦毘羅衛國，淨飯王的太子。

Three thousand years ago in ancient India—what is now Nepal—He was born as a prince of a royal family in the nation of Kapilavastu, the son of King Śuddhodana.

他十九歲就看到了人世間的生老病死的苦難，所以就出家修行

At the age of nineteen, He saw the suffering of birth, aging, illness, and death in this world. He renounced His worldly home to cultivate.

他要為了尋求解脫痛苦的方法，希望能夠了脫生死輪迴，永遠不再受生老病死的苦難。

He sought a way of liberation from suffering, hoping to end the cycle of samsara and to never experience the suffering of birth, aging, illness, and death.

不僅是自己要解脫，也要幫助一切眾生解脫，所以他出家修道

Wishing not only to liberate Himself but also to help all beings to get liberated, He renounced His worldly home to cultivate Dao.

一開始是向當時的這些宗教長老們學習，他遍訪名師，他自己很聰明，學得也很快，

In the beginning, He visited and learned from those religious elders. He sought all of the famous teachers of His time and learned very fast due to His intelligence.

結果學到最後，把當時所有的這些宗教師的學問都學到了，可是還沒有解決問題，

At last, He had learned all of the knowledge and skills from those gurus, yet His questions had still not been resolved.

他看到... 他已經在定中能見到有六道輪迴，

He had seen the six paths of reincarnation during His dhyana* (*Skt., a state of mind of meditative concentration).

因為當時宗教普遍都修禪定，所以他們都已經看到有六道輪迴，

Dhyana was widely practiced by all religions at that time, they all saw the six paths samsara.

但是六道怎麼來的？為什麼有六道？六道怎麼出去？六道以外還有什麼世界？這些問題，沒有一個宗教師能夠回答他。

But, how did the six paths start? Why are there six paths? How do we transcend the six paths? What worlds are there beyond the six paths? None of the gurus could answer these questions.

釋迦牟尼佛當時就乾脆自己來探索，他到了恒河邊菩提樹下去入定，他入更深的禪定，在佛法裡講，他入九次第定，

At that time, Shakyamuni Buddha made a straight decision to explore on His own. He went to the Ganges River and entered a state of samadhi (a heightened state of meditation) under a bodhi tree. He entered a deeper samadhi, the samadhi of ninth level (*navânupūrva-samāpattayah).

也就是說突破了世間的四禪八定，他能夠看到了無明的緣起，

That is, He had broken through the eight levels worldly dhyana on form-realms and formlessness-realms. He could see the origin of avidya (Skt. nescience).

最後在一個偶然的因緣，夜睹明星就證道，證道的時候他只是三十歲，也就是他成佛了

Finally, under an unexpected condition, He was enlightened when gazing at the stars at night. He was thirty years old when enlightened, which means He had become a Buddha.

成佛之後他才豁然大悟，其實每一個眾生本來是佛。

After becoming a Buddha, He came to a complete realization that “all beings are indeed innately buddhas.”

All Beings Are Innately Buddhas

華嚴經上講：“奇哉，奇哉，眾生皆有如來智慧德相，但因妄想執著而不能證得。”

The Avatamsaka Sutra states, "What a wonder! What a wonder! All beings have the same wisdom, virtues, and lakṣaṇa (*Skt., characteristic, attribute, auspicious mark...etc.) as Tathagata (*Skt., one of the ten epithets of the Buddha), but they could not prove and attain them due to mere delusion and attachment."

每一個眾生，你我他，全是本來是佛。那為什麼現在不是佛呢？

Each sentient being, you, he, and I are all innately buddhas. Then why are we not Buddhas now?

現在是一個生死凡夫，煩惱重重，原因在哪裏？在我們有妄想，有分別，有執著

Now we are mortals who are suffering from birth, death, and endless afflictions. What is the reason? The reason is that we have delusion, discrimination, and attachment.

只要把這些妄想分別執著放下，那你現前就能證得跟如來平等的境界，因為那是你本有的，不是外來的，是你自性中本來具足的，

Once we let go of delusion, discrimination, and attachment, we will then instantly prove and attain a realm that is equal to Tathagata's instantly. Because that is what we innately have. It is not from the external world but from what we innately possess within our self-nature.

所以如來的智慧，如來的德能，如來的相好，那不是從外面得來的，是你自己本來就有

So the wisdom, the virtue, the capability, and the graceful lakṣaṇa of Tathagata are not obtained extrinsically, they are what we intrinsically possess.

Buddhism Is Not a Religion, It Is an Education

所以釋迦牟尼佛看到這一點了，於是他就開始教化眾生，

Shakyamuni Buddha had seen this, He thus began to edify all beings.

教化的目的就是幫助眾生放下妄想分別執著，讓每一個眾生都證得跟他平等的地位，

The purpose of His edification is to help all beings to let go of their delusion, discrimination, and attachment so that every sentient being can prove and attain the same realm as His.

所以他講經四十九年，說法三百餘會，講來講去，就是讓我們自己證得自己的自性，自己作佛。所以佛教不是宗教，它是教育，

He preached for forty nine years, offering more than three hundred Dharma assemblies and speaking in all aspects. It is to let us prove and attain our own self-nature, becoming a Buddha ourselves. As such, Buddhism is not a religion, it is an education.

如果我們總結釋迦牟尼佛一生他所做的事業，就是三十歲證道之後，他做什麼事業呢？

If we conclude the career of Shakyamuni Buddha for His life, what career did He have after enlightenment at thirty years old?

從三十歲到七十九歲，他入滅，這四十九年當中，他就是在做教育的工作，做多元文化社會裡面的教育工作。

From thirty until He went to nirvana at the age of seventy nine, during these forty nine years, what He did was educational work. He did educational work in multicultural societies.

因為社會是多元的，他的教化呢，像孔老夫子一樣，有教無類，不分別，

Since societies are multicultural, His edification was the same as that of Confucius—providing universal education to all beings equally.

只要肯來學的，他都盡心盡力去教。所以當時他的教學對象不分宗教，不分族群，不分地位，男女老少，各行各業，只要願意來學他都教，

As long as they were willing to learn, He would dedicatedly teach them. He did not distinguish people from their religion, ethnic group, and social status. People of all different professions, man, woman, old, or young, He would teach all of them as long as they were willing to learn,

所以他所做的是教育工作，他自己呢，就是多元文化社會裡面的教育義務工作者，他是義務的，他不收學費，連孔老夫子那個束脩之禮他都不要了。

What He did was educational work, He was a volunteer educator in multicultural societies. He did so voluntarily, not collecting tuition. Even the “gifts for the apprentice-ceremony” as Confucius had, He would disregard.

束脩之禮呢，以前學生去拜老師，提兩條乾肉，束脩啊，這是見面禮，拜師之禮，表示尊師重道，釋迦牟尼佛連這個都不需要，

What are the gifts for the apprentice-ceremony? In the past, students who requested to learn from a teacher would bring two pieces of dry meat to formally pay respect to the teacher. This gift was the etiquette for the first meeting when requesting to be one's student. It was to show their “honoring teachers and valuing the Dao.” Shakyamuni Buddha did not even need this.

你只要來學，他就耐心教你，這義務工作。

So long as they came to learn, He would teach them patiently. He did so voluntarily.

佛的弟子們也是做義務工作，所以我們看到佛教，從釋迦牟尼佛從創教以來，到滿清，都是以教育的形象出現，

Buddha's disciples were also doing it voluntarily. As we can see, the Buddhist edification, from Shakyamuni Buddha's time to the Qing Dynasty of China, always appeared as an education.

它不是宗教啊！何以見得呢？

It is not a religion! How can we tell?

The Teacher-Student Aspect of Buddhism

因為宗教是講神與我們眾生的關係，你看宗教裡講我們是神的兒女，神是我們的天父，這個關係叫父子關係。

Religion is about the relationship between God and sentient beings. In religion, we are the children of God, God is our heavenly father. This is the relationship between father and son.

在教育裡面是講師生關係，我們稱釋迦牟尼佛本師，根本的老師，我們自己呢？自稱為三寶弟子，弟子就是學生，

In education, it is about the relationship between teacher and students. We call Shakyamuni Buddha “The Fundamental Teacher,” and we call ourselves “the Triratna disciples.” (*Triratna is a Sanskrit word. It means Three Jewels, comprising the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.) Disciple means student.

所以我們跟佛是什麼關係啊？師生關係。

So, what is the relationship between the Buddha and us? It is the relationship between teacher and student.

那師生關係只有教育裡面有，

This Teacher-Student Relationship only exists in education.

而且佛教我們做什麼呢？作佛呀，教我們跟他平等，告訴我們每一個人都可以做佛，而且應當作佛，

Furthermore, what did Buddha teach us to be? To be a Buddha! Teaching us to be equal to Him! He told us that everyone can be a Buddha and should become a Buddha! 老師教學生都是這樣啊，你們將來都要像老師一樣有成就，而且要青出於藍勝於藍，

This is the way that all teachers teach their students. You should have achievements like your teacher and even surpass your teacher's achievements.

這是老師對學生的期許啊！

This is the expectation that a teacher has for his students.

The Ultimate and Consummate Education

宗教裡就不是這樣了，神只有一個，不可能教每一個人成神，那還了得嗎？

However, this is not the case in religion. There is only one God in religion, it is impossible to teach everyone to become a God. How startling would that be?

宗教裡跟教育是不同的，所以從這個角度來看，佛教不是宗教，它是教育，每個人都應當接受的教育，

Therefore, religion is different from education. From this perspective, Buddhism is not a religion. It is an education, the education that everyone should receive.

這是釋迦牟尼佛對九法界一切眾生至善圓滿的教育。

This is the ultimate and consummate education that Shakyamuni Buddha offered to all sentient beings of the nine dharma-realms* (*The nine states of existence: hell, ghost, animal, human, asura, deva, sravaka, pratyekabuddha, and bodhisattva).

佛的弟子們當時弘揚佛法都是以教學為首務，他沒有搞什麼經懺佛事，

At the Buddha's time, Buddha's disciples made education their primary mission when propagating Buddhism. They did not engage in any Buddhist services such as sutra chanting and repenting rituals.

這些經懺佛事是後人他們為了超度祖先，超度亡靈，

These Buddhist services of sutra chanting and repenting rituals were invented by later generations for liberating their ancestors and the deceased from evil realms.

他們用佛教的這些理論寫成我們現在講的像劇本一樣，寫成這種儀軌，做這些法會，那是... 本來佛的時代是沒有的。

They used Buddhist theories to write some ritual protocol (*Skt. vidhi), just like scripts in our modern terminology. The ritual protocol for Dharma ceremonies did not exist in Buddha's time.

當然這種存在有它的必要性，可是我們要清楚，佛教的本質是教育，它的存在形式應該以教學為主流。

Of course, this practice has its necessity, but we must be clear that the essence of Buddhism is education. The form of its existence should regard teaching as mainstream.

The Monastic School System of Buddhism

佛教傳到中國來兩千年，每一個朝代都有祖師大德講經說法，每一個寺院都是講經說法的學校啊，都做義務辦班教學，

Buddhism had spread to China for two thousand years. In every dynasty there were patriarchs and great virtuous laities expounding Dharma and sutras, and each monastery was a school for teaching Dharma and Buddhist scriptures. They all offered classes of voluntary teaching.

這個寺院是中國佛教的特色，起源於唐朝，“馬祖建叢林，百丈立清規”，

This kind of temple is the characteristic of Chinese Buddhism. It was originating from the Tang Dynasty. “Master Ma Zu founded monastic institutes and Master Bai Zhang set the regulations for practicing purity.”

這是把佛陀教育變成有組織性的，有規模的這種教育，就像我們現在講的大學教育一樣

This turned Buddha's teaching into a large-scale and organized education, just like the college education we have today.

所以你看在寺院裡面都有三大執事，有住持和尚，

There are three major deans in the monastery. First of all, there is the abbot-monk.
和尚意思就是親教師，

Monk means ācārya*. (*Skt. Buddhist terminology for a teacher.)

就是他主持這一方教化工作的人，這是和尚，那就像在學校裡面，就是校長。

An abbot-monk is in charge of edification for this region, it is like the principal of a school.

另外還有首座和尚，首座是指他專門擔負教務工作。

There is also the first-monk who is specifically responsible for the work of academic affairs.

還有監院，監院是擔任總務工作的，

And there is a monastery chief who covers general affairs.

跟學校裡的執事是一樣的。

These are the different divisions of labor, it is similar to the deacons in a school.

還有維那是訓導。

In addition, there is the rector who is in charge of disciplinary affairs.

這些執事都是在學校裡面不同的分工，所以佛教本來都是教育工作。

These deacons are the same as the different divisions of labor in a school. That is why we say that Buddhism is originally an education.

Other Forms of Buddhism Today

那我們要認清楚佛教的本來面目，我們學就不會學偏，因為現在佛教存在著有六種不同的形式，

We must recognize the original features of Buddhism, so we will not deviate from our direction when learning Buddhism, because Buddhism exists in six different forms nowadays.

這佛陀教育的形式是本來的面目，我們要提倡，我們要認真地去學習。那麼現在衍生出來的還有什麼呢？

The Buddha's education is the original form of Buddhism, we must advocate and learn this original form of Buddhism seriously. What other forms of Buddhism have been derived today?

宗教的佛教，做經懺，佛事，搞這些宗教祈禱的儀軌，那宗教特色，那還不算什麼問題，只要行得正，那還是對社會有意義的。

Religious Buddhism consists of Buddhist services of sutra chanting and repenting rituals, engaging in ritual protocol of religious praying. This kind of Buddhism has no harm; as long as it upholds righteousness, it is still meaningful to society.

慢慢又演變出學術的佛教，把佛法當做學問來研究，在大學裡設課程，有碩士有博士的學位，還能夠寫論文，能夠發表著作，這是做研究工作，日本有很多，

Gradually, it evolved to become academic Buddhism which regards Buddhism as knowledge to study. They created courses in colleges, including Master's degrees and PhDs. They write papers and publish their works. This is research work. There are many in Japan.

很多這些佛教大學裡頭很多都是教授，他們做研究工作，但是他們沒有把了脫生死，成佛道，作為自己人生的目標，

Many professors in a lot of Buddhist universities do research work. They do not make “ending birth and death to achieve Buddhahood” their life goal.

所以搞學術他不能斷煩惱，他不能出三界，他不能成佛道，他還是個凡夫，這不是佛所希望的，所以學術的佛教它變成世間法了。

Consequently, they cannot eradicate their afflictions and cannot transcend the three-realms (*trāidhātuka, the three realms of desire, form and formless) of saṃsāra. They cannot achieve Buddhahood and still remain mortals. This is not Buddha's hope. Therefore, academic Buddhism has become secular knowledge.

還有呢，這也是近期衍生出來的，有企業的佛教，

What else? This has also been derived recently—enterprise Buddhism.

這個佛教的機構很大型，甚至還有跨國的企業，做這種慈善的事業經營，規模很大。

This kind of Buddhist organization is very large, some of them are even international.

They run charity work on a large scale.

還有旅遊的佛教，這中國大陸特別多，到處都蓋寺院，為什麼呢？能增加當地旅遊收入，這是旅遊佛教。

There is also tourist Buddhism. Particularly in Mainland China, they build temples everywhere. Why? To increase the local tourism income. This is tourist Buddhism.

最後還有邪教的佛教，那就完全搞偏了

At last, there is heretical Buddhism which is a complete deviation.

利用佛法這個招牌謀取自己名聞利養，欺騙善男信女達到自己邪惡的目的，這就是邪教

They use the reputation of Buddhism to reap fame, prestige, gain, and offerings of their own, deceiving devout men and women to achieve their evil purpose. This is heresy (*cult).

所以現在佛教存在這六個形式，我們要認清楚自己要學哪一種。

So, there exist six forms of Buddhism nowadays. We must recognize clearly which one we want to learn.

我自己立場非常堅定，我是要學教育的佛教，

I have a very resolute standpoint, I am to learn educational Buddhism.

我不搞宗教的儀式，我也不懂，你說讓我做一個什麼什麼主法和尚，我也不會做，

I do not want to engage in religious rituals, I do not know any of them. If you let me be a host-monk in a ceremony, I would not know how to do it.

我也不搞學術佛教，我原來就是搞學術的，在大學裡教書，寫論文，發表著作，

I also do not want to engage in academic Buddhism. Originally I was engaging in this, teaching finance in a university and writing papers to publish new works; those things seem to not have much meaning to society, even no particular meaning to myself at all.

我要搞的是教育的佛教，我自己學，自己修，然後有機會跟大家來分享修學的心得，跟大家一起提升，希望我們這一生都能夠了脫生死，往生淨土，

I am to engage in educational Buddhism—to learn and cultivate myself, to share my experience of learning, and to upgrade cultivation level together with you. I hope that we all end the cycle of birth and death in this life, all achieving Sukhāvātī rebirth.

這個是非常有意義的工作，我也做得非常歡喜。

This is very meaningful work and I am also doing it with great joy.

Traditional Culture Is the Foundation of Buddha-Dharma

六年前，我辭掉大學工作，專門跟我們師父上人學習佛法，學習傳統文化，

Six years ago, I quit my teaching job in university to specifically learn Buddhism and traditional culture with our Shifu.

傳統文化它也很重要，它是佛法的基礎，有這個基礎，可以入大乘。

Traditional culture is also very important, it is the foundation of Buddha-Dharma.

With this foundation, one can enter Mahayana Buddhism.

傳統文化主要以儒道為主，所以我之前就深入學習過一些儒和道的經典，更重要的是落實自己三個根的學習。

Chinese traditional culture is mainly based on Confucianism and Daoism, so I have learned some scriptures of Confucianism and Daoism in depth. More importantly, it is to implement the learning of these three roots of myself.

儒之根是弟子規，道的根是太上感應篇，佛家的根是十善業道經

The root of Confucianism is *Dizigui—Guidelines for Being a Good Person*. The root of Daoism is *Treatise on Response and Retribution*. And the root of Buddhism is *The Sutra of Ten Virtuous Deeds*.

這樣的學是真在學佛了。

This kind of studying is indeed learning Buddhism genuinely.

Studying One Sutra in Depth to Attain Dhyana (Wisdom)

現在我就選定無量壽經，我是去年七月份出家的，出家之後我就一門深入無量壽經，其他經典通通放下了，為什麼呢？

Now I have firmly chosen to cultivate *The Infinite Life Sutra*. Two years ago in July, I was ordained. And I have been focused in depth on one subject—*The Infinite Life Sutra*. I have let go of all other scriptures. Why?

搞得太雜了，很難得三昧，很難出三界，

If engaging in too many subjects, it is very difficult to attain samadhi and to transcend the three-realms of saṃsāra.

所以我現在什麼經都不搞了，就搞無量壽經，

Therefore I engage in nothing but *The Infinite Life Sutra* now.

所以到那裡別人請我，我都只講一部無量壽經，或者講其中的一章一節，或者大意，總不離開這個經典，

No matter who invites me, I will only give lectures of *The Infinite Life Sutra*. It could be one chapter, one paragraph or just the main idea of this sutra—never leaving this scripture.

一經通一切精通，我們相信我們這樣深入下去，十年會有所成就，

“When proficient in one sutra, one would be proficient in all sutras.” I believe if we keep focusing in depth like this, ten years later we will obtain achievement.

這是師父老人家也是大力提倡的，我們學習要懂得一門深入，長時薰修，

This is the method that our Shifu advocates fervently. Our learning must be “to delve deeply into one subject and to immerse in practice for the long-term.”

千萬不能夠學多，學兩門，你的心思就雜，就不容易專，就很難得三昧，

We must not learn many subjects. Because if we learn two subjects, our minds will be scattered. It will be difficult for us to concentrate and attain samadhi.

三昧就是定，你很難得定，不得定你怎麼開智慧？智慧是從定中得到，

Samadhi is dhyana, it will be very difficult for us to attain dhyana. Without attaining dhyana, how can we reveal “the wisdom of prajna”* (*the direct insight to the *truth*)? “

The wisdom of prajna” comes from the mind of dhyana.

所以佛教到底教什麼？我們要懂得，佛四十九年說法，內容就是宇宙人生的真相，

We must understand what Buddhism really teaches. The content of the forty nine years of Buddha’s lectures is about the *truth* of the universe and life.

佛經裡面講諸法實相，我們把這些宇宙人生真相都徹底搞明白了，這個人就是佛，就是他是覺悟的人，

In Buddhist terminology, it is called “the noumenon and phenomena of all dharmas.” If one completely understands the *truth* of the universe and life, this person would be a Buddha. This means that he is an awakened person.

所以佛教教智慧，怎麼得到智慧呢？要從定中得來，定呢，我們修學就要懂得一門深入，長時薰修。

In conclusion, Buddhism teaches wisdom. But, how do we obtain wisdom? It has to come from dhyana. So our learning must be 'to delve deeply into one subject and immerse in practice for the long-term'.

The Three Eras of Buddhism

淨土宗是釋迦牟尼佛當年已經預言了... 佛教它的發展, 它的法運總共一萬兩千年, Shakyamuni Buddha had predicted the development of Buddhism—its Dharma fate would last twelve thousand years.

大分來講, 頭一千年叫正法時代, 佛告訴我們以戒律成就, 你能持戒, 你就能得定開智慧。Generally speaking, the first thousand years is the True Dharma Era. The Buddha told practitioners to attain achievement by upholding precepts. As long as they were upholding the precepts, the practitioners would then attain dhyana and reveal wisdom. 第二個一千年呢, 佛告訴我們以禪定成就, 靠持戒你都很難了, 你必須要多增加修定, 你才能開智慧。

For the second thousand years, the Semblance Dharma Era, Buddha told practitioners to attain achievement with dhyana. Because it would be difficult to rely on only upholding precepts, one must add dhyana into his practice, he would then be able to reveal the wisdom of prajna.

到後面, 兩千年過了之後, 從第三個一千年開始, 到最後一萬兩千年結束, 總共一萬年都要以淨土成就, 淨土法門。

Later on, after two thousand years, beginning from the third thousand years to the end of the twelfth thousand years, a total of ten thousand years belong to the Degenerate Dharma Era, practitioners have to rely on the Pure Land Method to attain achievement.

Relying on the Pure Land Method in the Degenerate Dharma Era

淨土法門就是讓我們念阿彌陀佛求生淨土, 為什麼呢?

The Pure Land Method is to let practitioners recite Amitabha and seek Sukhāvati rebirth. Why?

因為末法時代眾生的根機又更差了, 就是業障更重了, 外面的境界誘惑又更多, 不容易得定, 連持戒都很難做到,

Because the indriya (spiritual proclivity) of sentient beings in the Degenerate Dharma Era is inferior, which means our karma is heavier. Plus, there are many more external temptations, it is difficult to even uphold precepts, let alone to attain dhyana.

那怎麼辦呢？佛就告訴我們，要念阿彌陀佛求生淨土，蒙佛力加持，我們往生西方，What can we do? Buddha told us, we must recite Amitabha and seek Sukhāvati rebirth. Relying on the blessing of Buddha's power we can then be born into Sukhāvati. 這是二力法門，靠自己的力量很難成就，我們要靠佛力。

This is the method of relying on two powers. Relying on only our own power, it is very difficult to attain achievement. We must rely on Buddha's power!

這一萬年當中，現在過了一千年了，後頭還有九千年，都要以淨土法門成就，

Within this ten thousand years of the Degenerate Dharma Era, the first thousand years have now passed, there are still nine thousand years ahead, we all have to rely on the Pure Land Method to attain achievement.

所以我們遇到無量壽經這部經，淨土第一經啊，真正把它弄清楚弄明白了，我們往生就有把握，這就是佛他所希望我們的，這一生就能成佛。

We have now encountered *The Infinite Life Sutra*— the first sutra of Pure Land Buddhism! When we can really comprehend it clearly, we will then attain the assurance of rebirth. This is Buddha's expectation for us—to achieve Buddhahood in this lifetime. 現在早上第一堂課的時間就到了，

Now, it is the end of the first class of this morning.

我們只是剛剛簡單地介紹了品題的第一個字，佛這個字，

We have just briefly introduced the first word of the title: Buddha.

主要是把佛教是什麼跟大家講清楚，起點正確了，以後方向目標就很正確，

The main purpose is to give a clear idea about what Buddhism is. Having the starting point correct, the direction and goal in the future will then be very correct.

如果一開始錯了，以後就一直錯下去了，所以一開始要有正確的認知，

If it is wrong in the very beginning, we will be wrong down the road. So, we must have a proper understanding in the beginning.

下一堂課我們就正式從經題到經文的學習。

For our next class, we are going to formally learn the title and the content of Chapter Six.

好，上午我們第一堂課就講到此地，謝謝大家。

Okay, our first class will end here. Thank you everyone.