



THE EIGHT DISCERNMENTS OF EMINENT MEN SUTRA

A NEW TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY

佛說八大人覺經新中英文版

BRIAN CHUNG

JANUARY 22 2015



---

---

THIS TEXT IS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND HAS NO COPYRIGHT

---

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sutra Text.....	4
Commentary.....	7
The Importance of Right View.....	16
The Dharma-door of Amita Buddha.....	18
Recommended Resources.....	19

### Dedication

**May the merits and virtues accrued from this work  
 adorn the Buddha's Pure Land,  
 repay the Four Kinds of Kindness above,  
 and relieve the sufferings of those  
 in the Three Paths below.**



**May those who see and hear of this,  
 bring forth the heart  
 of understanding and compassion and,  
 at the end of this life,  
 be born together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss**

### No Rights Reserved

**As the author of this text, it is my express intent that the entirety of this text be  
 released into the Public Domain. I reserve no rights to this work. If the laws of a  
 particular jurisdiction should make it impossible to reserve no rights, then I  
 hereby grant permission to anyone who seeks to use and reproduce this work  
 for any purpose.**

*Brian Chung*



NAMO AMITA BUDDHA

南無阿彌陀佛



南無阿彌陀佛



EIGHT DISCERNMENTS OF EMINENT MEN SUTRA

為佛弟子。常於晝夜。至心誦念。八大人覺。

With deep mindfulness and concentration, disciples of the Buddha contemplate the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men through day and night without cease.

第一覺悟。世間無常。國土危脆。四大苦空。五陰無我。生滅變異。

虛偽無主。心是惡源。形為罪藪。如是觀察。漸離生死。

**The First Discernment is this: All that which is temporal cannot be kept and will be short lived. Nation-states can crumble and collapse. The manifestations of the four elements are empty and the five skandhas are not the self. They arise and cease, thus betraying their falseness and lack of substance. The creation of false thoughts gives rise to attachments for the body. This leads to numerous offenses. Contemplate thus and you will gradually transcend the Samsara.**

第二覺知。多欲為苦。生死疲勞。從貪欲起。少欲無為。身心自在。

**The Second Discernment is this: Extravagance leads to suffering. Birth and death are both wearisome. Such pains are caused by craving and attachment. Those with few desires are neither anxious nor fearful. Their hearts and minds are serene and unburdened.**

第三覺知。心無厭足。唯得多求。增長罪惡。菩薩不爾。常念知足。

安貧守道。唯慧是業。

**The Third Discernment is this: Insatiability leads to measureless hankering. Thus, an unquenchable heart causes evil habits and offenses to accumulate. For this reason, Bodhisattvas are always mindful of the benefits of temperance. They are content with simple self sufficiency and devote their attentions to the Way and the propagation of the Dharma.**

第四覺知。懈怠墜落。常行精進。破煩惱惡。摧伏四魔。出陰界獄。

**The Fourth Discernment is this: Slothfulness leads to decadence and failure. On the other hand, unceasing diligence can deracinate afflictions and neutralize the four classes of demons. Allowing you to transcend the Samsara.**

第五覺悟。愚癡生死。菩薩常念。廣學多聞。增長智慧。成就辯才。

教化一切。悉以大樂。

**The Fifth Discernment is this: Ignorance drives the cycle of birth and death. Bodhisattvas understand this. Therefore, in order to explain the Dharma to all, they diligently perfect their wisdom and eloquence through single-minded cultivation. Their efforts allow sentient beings to realize the bliss of liberation.**

第六覺知。貧苦多怨。橫結惡緣。菩薩布施。等念冤親。不念舊惡。

不憎惡人。

**The Sixth Discernment is this: Poverty and deprivation leads to countless grievances and unrest. When Bodhisattvas practice almsgiving, they consider foes to be equal to their dearest kinsmen. They neither harbor grudges nor ostracize criminals.**

第七覺悟。五欲過患。雖為俗人。不染世樂。常念三衣，瓦鉢法器。

志願出家。守道清白。梵行高遠。慈悲一切。

**The Seventh Discernment is this: The five desires are like chronic diseases. Even when living amongst the laity, remain untainted by worldly affairs and temptations. Always think of the three robes, the clay alms bowl and the four requisites. Voluntarily leave the home life, observe the Way, remain pure and cultivate the Vinaya. Be impartial and treat everyone with compassion.**

第八覺知。生死熾然。苦惱無量。發大乘心。普濟一切。願代眾生。  
受無量苦。令諸眾生。畢竟大樂。

**The Eighth Discernment is this: The Samsara is a raging inferno plagued by endless afflictions. Hence, resolve upon the Mahayana aspiration to liberate all beings. Vow to bear the unbearable for the sake of helping sentient beings achieve ultimate bliss.**

如此八事。乃是諸佛菩薩大人之所覺悟。精進行道慈悲修慧。乘法身  
船至涅槃岸。復還生死度脫眾生。以前八事。開導一切。令諸眾生覺  
生死苦。捨離五欲修心聖道。若佛弟子。誦此八事。於念念中。滅無  
量罪。進趣菩提。速登正覺。永斷生死。常住快樂。

**The aforementioned Eight Discernments are fully understood by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Hence, they diligently cultivate the Way and compassionately seek to perfect their own wisdom. Having been ferried to the shores of nirvana by the Dharmakaya vessel, they return to convert and liberate sentient beings. Using these Eight Discernments, they open the doors of wisdom and allow everyone to understand the pains of birth and death. Inspiring them to forfeit the five desires and cultivate the Way.**

**Those who cultivate the Buddha-dharma should recite and contemplate these Eight Discernments. if they do so, all their evil karmas and offenses can be eradicated with each thought. Furthermore, Bodhi draws nearer to them and proper wisdom can be swiftly obtained. They will forever leave the Samsara and abide in true bliss.**

佛說八大人覺經

**The Buddha Speaks the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men Sutra.**

## COMMENTARY

為佛弟子。常於晝夜。至心誦念。八大人覺。

**With deep mindfulness and concentration, disciples of the Buddha contemplate the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men through day and night without cease.**

### COMMENTARY:

The term "deep mindfulness and concentration" is the translation of the Chinese term "至心". This term is elaborated in the Sutra for the Discernment of the Consequences of Wholesome and Unwholesome Karma. According to the Sutra, there are three levels of "至心". The first level is the level of single-mindedness. At this stage, the only thoughts that occupy a cultivator's mind are these Eight Discernments and nothing else. Such focus and concentration represents a kind of samadhi. The highest level is achieved by the cultivator when he thoroughly realizes these principles to the core. This means that he has rediscovered his Buddha-nature and achieved Bodhi.

If we wish to attain single-mindedness, we must first hold right views and intentions. These Eight Discernments are right views as they represent the key reasons for seeking Bodhi. When we are cultivating samadhi, we must carefully avoid being entrapped by demonic states such as those outlined in the Shurangama Sutra. For instance, we should not entertain thoughts of arrogance or superiority. This is because the Diamond Sutra clearly states that: " The ego is false and all Dharmas are attained by forbearance". If we allow thoughts of ego and pride to creep in, our samadhi will become deviant. Those who do not check their pride will eventually fall into the Relentless Hells.

Hence, humility and patience will prove important in ensuring that our practice does not go astray.

第一覺悟。世間無常。國土危脆。四大苦空。五陰無我。生滅變異。

虛偽無主。心是惡源。形為罪藪。如是觀察。漸離生死。

**The First Discernment is this: All that which is temporal cannot be kept and will be short lived. Nation-states can crumble and collapse. The manifestations of the four elements are empty and the five skandhas are not the self. They arise and cease, thus betraying their falseness and lack of substance. The creation of false thoughts gives rise to attachments for the body. This leads to numerous offenses. Contemplate thus and you will gradually transcend the Samsara.**

#### COMMENTARY:

Anything that is created or destroyed is not real. What is real neither arises nor ceases to be (i.e. the Buddha-nature). Hence, our bodies and all things pertaining to this world are impermanent and fake. Therefore, we should not be attached to these volatile and illusory forms, sounds, delusions and sights. People commit karmic offenses because they falsely consider their bodies (composed of the 4 elements and 5 skandhas) to be the self. By contemplating this, we can gradually transcend the Samsara.

The one attachment that is hardest to give up is the love felt towards parents, spouses and children. However, the truth is that people are reborn together as family due to past karmic debts and credits. For example, if you owe someone a favor for kindness shown in past lives, you will likely be reborn as a loving spouse or parent to the person you owe kindness to. If someone owes you money in past lives, you will most likely be reborn as that person's offspring and heir. Once the debt or favor has been repaid, the relationship naturally ends and any remaining affection usually disappears as new karmic relationships manifest. Thus, there really is nothing to be attached to.

This is not to say that we should disregard our obligations towards our family, it simply means that we should not be emotional. As all of us have been turning in the Samsara since time immemorial, all the innumerable sentient beings in existence have at some point been our family members. Hence, we should cultivate the true compassion harbored by Bodhisattvas while shedding the false emotional partialities rooted in the three poisons. For instance, if you achieve Bodhi, countless generations of your family (including those of prior rebirths) will share your merits and become devas or Sages.

第二覺知。多欲為苦。生死疲勞。從貪欲起。少欲無為。身心自在。

**The Second Discernment is this: Extravagance leads to suffering. Birth and death are both wearisome. Such pains are caused by craving and attachment. Those with few desires are neither anxious nor fearful. Their hearts and minds are serene and unburdened.**

**COMMENTARY:**

According to the Infinite Life Sutra, "People of this world all hanker after matters of little importance". Nowadays, material possessions and social standing are highly sought after while important tasks such as amassing merits and cultivating the Way are neglected. We need to understand that luxury and extravagance are a waste of time and create artificial stress. Hankering after things will not yield what we want but will only make us poorer. Beauty, wealth, power, true love and health are the results of doing good. Rewards naturally follow the virtuous while retributions never fail to pursue the wicked. Hence, we should live within our means and consider doing good to be our top priority in life. Why ache for things that will come naturally and automatically?

For instance, if we give up eating meat and hunting, we will no longer be troubled by the wars and violent karmic feuds created by acts of killing and the greed for flavors of meat. The merits thus created will give us peace, long life, health and prosperity.

第三覺知。心無厭足。唯得多求。增長罪惡。菩薩不爾。常念知足。

安貧守道。唯慧是業。

**The Third Discernment is this: Insatiability leads to measureless hankering. Thus, an unquenchable heart causes evil habits and offenses to accumulate. For this reason, Bodhisattvas are always mindful of the benefits of temperance. They are content with simple self sufficiency and devote their attentions to the Way and the propagation of the Dharma.**

## COMMENTARY:

Each and every one of the innumerable paths to Bodhi are based on the cultivation of Sila Samadhi and Prajna. Strong virtue produces the foundation for right concentration which in turn leads to wisdom and liberation. This is why both the Earth Store Sutra and Amitabha Sutra point out that only "good men or women" (i.e. those who cultivate the 5 precepts and 10 virtues) can truly understand and benefit from the teachings contained.

Virtue and precepts are about moderation and simplicity. Those who desire more and more will inevitably commit karmic offenses such as stinginess, fraud and adultery during the course of their pursuit for pomp and power. The virtuous and content are often reborn in the Heaven of Tushita (Contentment) where they enjoy supremely wonderful bliss and live for 4000 celestial years (1 day there is equal to 400 human years). On the other hand, the greedy and miserly sink into deprivation and are reborn as ghosts or paupers as a result of their sins.

Furthermore, simple living also facilitates the observation of stricter codes of morality such as the 8 precepts. According to Buddhist teachings, if a person were to keep the 8 precepts for one day and one night, he will not be poor for six hundred thousand successive rebirths. How much more will that be the case if he regularly observes those precepts for his entire life?

第四覺知。懈怠墜落。常行精進。破煩惱惡。摧伏四魔。出陰界獄。

**The Fourth Discernment is this: Slothfulness leads to decadence and failure. On the other hand, unceasing diligence can deracinate afflictions and neutralize the four classes of demons. Allowing you to escape the shackles of the Samsara.**

## COMMENTARY:

The four classes of demons are as follows:

- 1) The five skandhas.
- 2) Afflictions of the mind and unwholesome mental states.
- 3) Untimely death. This refers to dying before achieving liberation.

4) Heavenly demons. This refers to outside influences such as the temptations and provocations of the six kinds of dust.

Diligence is the main virtue that will counter these demonic obstacles. There is a old saying that if you neglect to recite the sacred texts for three days you will be overwhelmed by evil habits. It is also stated in the Infinite Life Sutra that because this world we inhabit in is so full of evil, the merits derived from doing good for 10 days here are equal to the merits derived from doing good in another world for a whole millennium. Hence, we must always be diligent and cautious.

第五覺悟。愚癡生死。菩薩常念。廣學多聞。增長智慧。成就辯才。  
教化一切。悉以大樂。

**The Fifth Discernment is this: Ignorance drives the cycle of birth and death. Bodhisattvas understand this. Therefore, in order to explain the Dharma to all, they diligently perfect their wisdom and eloquence through single-minded cultivation. Their efforts allow sentient beings to realize the bliss of liberation.**

#### COMMENTARY:

"Single-minded cultivation" is the translation of the Chinese characters "廣學多聞". Nominally, those characters can be translated as: "Simultaneously studying a diverse and broad range of disciplines". However, when taken at face value, the true meaning will escape us. What this phrase actually means is that the Buddha-nature possessed by each of us is self sufficient and capable of generating infinite wisdom and knowledge. Thus, Sages single-mindedly cultivate one Dharma-door until the unlimited wisdom of the Buddha-nature is recovered, at which point there is nothing they do not know.

The Ven. Master Chin Kung often stresses that a student who adheres to the modern academic curriculum will become a jack of all trades but master of none. This is because too many subjects are being studied concurrently. Therefore, he exhorts us to read one sacred text at least a thousand times in order to truly understand the limitless hidden meanings. The key to success is to cultivate one Dharma-door unceasingly. For example, the impressively dense branches of a grand oak tree are supported by one single strong tree trunk.

If we sincerely read and contemplate this Sutra everyday for three years, we would likely be able to reach the state of single-mindedness at the end of that period. Therefore, it is very probable that we may achieve sudden Bodhi as a result of our newfound purity.

第六覺知。貧苦多怨。橫結惡緣。菩薩布施。等念冤親。不念舊惡。  
不憎惡人。

**The Sixth Discernment is this: Poverty and deprivation leads to countless grievances and unrest. When Bodhisattvas practice almsgiving, they consider foes to be equal to their dearest kinsmen. They neither harbor grudges nor ostracize criminals.**

#### COMMENTARY:

The wisdom contained here is particularly important in our day and age. Today, there are plenty of biased views among people and vindictiveness in the judicial system. Such duality runs counter to the wisdom of the Buddhas. Sages harbor no hatred and certainly do not stigmatize and discriminate. This is because they see only the Buddha-nature of everyone and not the various layers of false evil habits that we see. In fact, what a person chooses to see in another actually reveals the person's own character. For instance, Bodhisattvas perceive everyone else as a Bodhisattva while those who look down on others due to their past actually belong to the lowly category themselves.

Furthermore, poverty is the cause of contention, criminal behavior and social unrest. Hence, those with wealth and power should voluntarily and diligently use their wealth and influence to alleviate the pains of those who are deprived. Furthermore, according to the Earth Store Sutra, the merits derived from sincerely helping the poor, sick and needy are equal to the merits gained from making offerings to countless Buddhas.

Thus, we should keep this in mind whenever we feel influenced by hate, bigotry or narrow-mindedness.

第七覺悟。五欲過患。雖為俗人。不染世樂。常念三衣，瓦鉢法器。

志願出家。守道清白。梵行高遠。慈悲一切。

**The Seventh Discernment is this: The five desires are like chronic diseases. Even when living amongst the laity, remain untainted by worldly affairs and temptations. Always think of the three robes, the clay alms bowl and the four requisites. Voluntarily leave the home life, observe the Way, remain pure and cultivate the Vinaya. Be impartial and treat everyone with compassion.**

**COMMENTARY:**

The five desires are: Wealth and resources, fame and prestige, love and lust, oversleeping and overeating. Anyone who is not an Arhat or above will (to varying degrees) be afflicted by these desires and have been since time immemorial. As the text states, they are like chronic illnesses.

According to the Venerable Master Chin Kung, sentient beings still trapped in the Samsara are often unable to control their accumulated emotions and passions. Thus, it is not wrong that they may be influenced by them and they do not incur a offense for acting out. However, if their actions become outrageous and unrestrained, then that is a transgression.

Nevertheless, monks and upasakas who aspire for liberation must have no desires even though they live in a environment overflowing with it. They must exercise right mindfulness and constantly reinforce their Bodhi resolve. In short, they must not allow their six sense organs to connect with the six kinds of dust.

第八覺知。生死熾然。苦惱無量。發大乘心。普濟一切。願代眾生。

受無量苦。令諸眾生。畢竟大樂。

**The Eighth Discernment is this: The Samsara is a raging inferno plagued by endless afflictions. Hence, resolve upon the Mahayana aspiration to liberate all beings. Vow to bear the unbearable for the sake of helping sentient beings achieve ultimate bliss.**

## COMMENTARY:

This realization is the highest of the eight and represents the great vows of Amita Buddha, Earth Store Bodhisattva, Guanyin Bodhisattva and Medicine Master Buddha. All of these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have made profound vows to liberate and save all sentient beings. For instance, Earth Store Bodhisattva has vowed to not attain Buddhahood until the hells and evil paths are all permanently empty.

The term "Mahayana aspiration" refers to the Bodhisattva path. The Buddha taught two paths to liberation. The first path is now known as Theravada Buddhism. Those who practice it understand impermanence and therefore seek personal emancipation by obtaining Arhatship or Paccekabuddhahood. However, those who cultivate the Bodhisattva path aim to become Bodhisattvas in order to liberate all sentient beings across the ten quarters.

While "bear the unbearable" may sound like a daunting task, it is actually effortless for the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas doing so. This is because they have already transcended ignorance, attachments and aversions (the causes of all pain). If we can recite this Sutra to single-mindedness or recite names such as Namo Amitabha (the Buddha name that leads to Pure Land rebirth) to the same level, we can achieve the same benefits and bliss experienced by Arhats and Bodhisattvas.

如此八事。乃是諸佛菩薩大人之所覺悟。精進行道慈悲修慧。乘法身船至涅槃岸。復還生死度脫眾生。以前八事。開導一切。令諸眾生覺生死苦。捨離五欲修心聖道。若佛弟子。誦此八事。於念念中。滅無量罪。進趣菩提。速登正覺。永斷生死。常住快樂。

**The aforementioned Eight Discernments are fully understood by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Hence, they diligently cultivate the Way and compassionately seek to perfect their own wisdom. Having been ferried to the shores of nirvana by the Dharmakaya vessel, they return to convert and liberate sentient beings. Using these Eight Discernments, they open the doors of wisdom and allow everyone to understand the pains of birth and death. Inspiring them to forfeit the five desires and cultivate the Way.**

**Those who cultivate the Buddha-dharma should recite and contemplate these Eight Discernments. if they do so, all their evil karmas and offenses can be eradicated with each thought. Furthermore, Bodhi draws nearer to them and proper wisdom can be swiftly obtained. They will forever leave the Samsara and abide in true bliss.**

#### COMMENTARY:

This part serves as the conclusion. The reason this Sutra is titled the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men Sutra is because those who sincerely seek Bodhi are considered eminent by Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, devas, ghost kings, demigods, virtuous men and women and celestial dragons. Such men (and women) are therefore protected and assisted by them.

Moreover, by simply reciting this Sutra, we can eradicate all of our evil karmas and offenses while also amassing merits and supreme causes pertaining to Bodhi. Hence, we should regularly recite this Sutra as doing so will rectify our karmas and reinforce our Bodhi resolve.

佛說八大人覺經

**The Buddha Speaks the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men Sutra.**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT VIEW

This Sutra is among the most important Buddhist texts because it succinctly outlines the correct intentions and views that must be held in order to successfully seek Bodhi and cultivate the Way. It is very important to have right views. If wrong views are held or entertained, no amount of good deeds or skill in jhana can lead to liberation.

For instance, according to the following abridged excerpts from the Shurangama Sutra:

*"Furthermore, Ananda, there are people who do not rely on Proper Enlightenment to cultivate Samadhi, but cultivate in some special way that is based on their false thinking. Holding to the idea of perpetuating their physical bodies, they roam in the mountains and forests in places people do not go and become Ten Kinds of Immortals."*

*"Some of these beings with unflagging resolution make themselves strong through transformations. When they have perfected their awakening, they are known as immortals of the ultimate level."*

*"Ananda, these are all people who smelt their minds but do not cultivate Proper Enlightenment. They obtain some special principle of life and can live for thousands or tens of thousands of years. They retire deep into the mountains or onto islands in the sea and cut themselves off from the human realm. However, they are still part of the turning wheel, because they flow and turn according to their false thinking and do not cultivate Samadhi. When their reward is finished, they must still return and enter the various destinies."*

Immortals are cultivators of deviant forms of meditation. They accumulate good deeds and use various methods to cultivate false types of deep concentration. As they are still attached to their bodies and the five skandhas, they do not intend to transcend the Samsara. Although they have stilled their desires, they still connect with the six kinds of dust. Hence, after the merits from their good deeds and meditation are exhausted, they will die and be reborn in a lower realm.

Fundamentally, wrong views are caused by the kleshas of greed, hatred, delusion, pride and doubt. For instance, many cultivators of superior skill have been ruined because they entertained thoughts of arrogance and conceit. Such persons adhere to

the precepts and or are able to recite sutras flawlessly for several days. However, because they harbored thoughts of pride (attachments to ego), their arrogance increases in tandem with their skill in cultivation. Demons can sense this and manifest to tempt them. As their six sense organs are still attached to the six kinds of dust due to their pride, they are entrapped and commit outrageous acts. They may slander honest cultivators or rudely chastise people who could not keep the precepts. As Bodhisattvas do not ostracize and discriminate, those afflicted by pride will eventually fall into the Relentless Hells due to their narrow-mindedness and contempt.

Unfortunately, the path to Bodhi is difficult and fraught with all kinds of confusing traps. Countless cultivators have been ambushed by all kinds of false views, demon states and confusing manifestations. Many have honestly and diligently climbed to a high state of jhana only to mistakenly believe that they have obtained Buddhahood. The impermanent bliss and peace of the jhanas can be quite misleading.

However, luckily for us, the Buddha has spoken the Dharma-door of Amita Buddha's Pure Land to help us navigate around these potential pitfalls with effortless ease. The truth is that obtaining Bodhi is only difficult when we rely only on our own abilities. For instance, if we rely on our ourselves, we would have to navigate through each of the 50 classes of skandha demons described in Chapter 9 of the Shurangama Sutra. Even if we managed to do so, we would still have to avoid being misled by the numerous wrong views that successively arise afterwards due to the advanced progress being made (i.e. falsely believing to have attained Buddhahood).

Hence, we should instead turn our attentions towards cultivating the Dharma-door of Pure Land. This Dharma-door can guarantee us rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss within one life. Once we are reborn there, we share the infinite merits of Amita Buddha and become Bodhisattvas at once. Thereafter, we will never retrogress and will achieve full Buddhahood swiftly. Even great Bodhisattvas such as Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva Mahasattva achieved Bodhi via this method.

In fact, all the great sutras such as the Shurangama Sutra, Diamond Sutra and Lotus Sutra are simply expansions of the name of Amita Buddha. They were spoken by the Buddha to serve as indirect ways to help those who doubt the unparalleled advantages of reciting Amita Buddha's name to gradually be converted to this Dharma-door. The best way to achieve liberation is to stand on the shoulders of giants.

## THE DHARMA-DOOR OF AMITA BUDDHA

The Dharma-door of Amita Buddha is very easy to cultivate. The cultivator simply has to be willing to let go of this world and faithfully seek rebirth in Pure Land by single-mindedly reciting the name of Amita Buddha. Once single-mindedness is achieved, Amita Buddha will appear before the cultivator who will either instantly manifest as a Bodhisattva in Pure Land or do so at a later arranged date.

Even if we cannot achieve single-mindedness during our lifetime, we can still achieve rebirth in Pure Land by letting go and becoming mindful of Amita Buddha during our last moment of life. In order to avoid squandering our last moment or becoming distracted by various ghosts and manifestations of karma that usually appear at that critical juncture, we should diligently keep the precepts and do good deeds such as burning incense, printing sutras and creating Buddha images for free distribution. We should also release life, practice veganism, give to the poor and frequently and regularly recite the name of Amita Buddha. By dedicating the merits of these good deeds towards Pure Land rebirth, we can be safe and clear minded during our moment of death. Allowing us to become mindful of Amita Buddha and achieve Pure Land rebirth without hindrance.

We can also help others attain such a rebirth by reciting Namu Amita Buddha into their ears while they are on their death bed. Even if they have already been pronounced dead, it is likely that their consciousness has not yet left the body (it usually leaves 8-12 hours later). Hence, we should not disturb the body during that period as they can still feel and hear even though they have lost control.

The practice of Pure Land Buddhism is summed up in the sutras as "reciting Namu Amitabha's name single-mindedly **with a heart that yearns for Bodhi**".

The part highlighted in bold is of cardinal importance. In Chapter 41 of Upasaka Xia Lian Ju's Infinite Life Sutra, it is stated that three types of people fail to obtain Pure Land rebirth. The three types are composed of those who are still attached to the skandhas, those who hold wrong views and those who are sentimental and attached to forms. All of these attachments and wrong views run counter to the wisdom found in the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men Sutra. Hence, we should recite this Sutra every day to constantly straighten our views and reinforce our Bodhi resolve.

## RECOMMEND RESOURCES



VEN MASTER HAI XIAN PURE LAND REBIRTH DOCUMENTARY  
( VERSION WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES ) :

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoritpHKxm4>

### DESCRIPTION:

The biographic documentary of Ven. Master Hai Xian (1901-2013) is a must see for anyone who wishes to cultivate Buddhism. Furthermore, the Venerable Master Chin Kung often stresses that Ven. Master Hai Xian's life of cultivation is a model example of the Infinite Life Sutra. Hence, we must strive to emulate his conduct and wisdom in order to perfect our own practice.

Moreover, Ven. Master Hai Xian's motivations for becoming a monk when he was 20 wholly mirrors the wisdom found in the Eight Discernments of Eminent Men Sutra. Thus, he is what we call a Sage or Eminent Man. In fact, he has even been nominated by Master Chin Kung to succeed the Great Master Yin Guang as the 14th Patriarch of the Pure Land school.

By viewing this documentary, we can study each of the Eight Discernments being flawlessly practiced and displayed in real life, and in conjunction with the successful cultivation of the Dharma-door of Amita Buddha.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS"

This new translation and commentary would not have been possible if not for the Dharma lectures of the Ven. Master Chin Kung, the Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh and the Ven. Wu Dao. I praise them all for the measureless contributions to Buddhism and interfaith harmony they have made over the past several decades. If I have written anything good in my translation or commentary, it is because I stood on the shoulders of giants.



**Ven. Master Chin Kung (Right) with Hungarian UNESCO Ambassador Katalin Bogyay, FRSA.**



**Ven. Master Chin Kung (Center) in UNESCO group photo**