

念佛圓通章集解

Perfect Realization

by Mindfulness of Buddha

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Master Chi Hoi

**An Edited Explication of the Passage from
the *Suramgama Sutra*:**

The Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta's
Perfect Realization by Mindfulness of Buddha

Master Chi Hoi

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From the *Suramgama Sutra*:

Mahasthamaprapta, a son of the king of Dharma, with those of the same standing, together fifty-two Bodhisattvas, presently rose from his seat, paid reverence with his head at the feet of the Buddha, and said to the Buddha:

“I recall, in the distant past, innumerable kalpas as the sands of the River Ganges ago, there was a Buddha appearing in this world called Amitabha (Infinite Light / Infinite Life). Twelve Tathagatas appeared successively in that same kalpa. The last Buddha was called ‘Buddha of Light Outshining Sun and Moon.’ This Buddha taught me the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha.

Suppose there are two people. If the former always remembers the latter while the latter always forgets the former, then two such people may come upon but not really meet one another, and may see but not actually recognize each other. On the other hand, if two people remember each other, and their mutual remembrance and thoughts continue to deepen in this manner, then even from lifetime to lifetime, like a form and its shadow, they will never be in discordance or apart.

The Tathagatas of the ten directions have compassion and thoughts for sentient beings just like the way a mother thinks of her son. If the son runs away, for what use will be the thoughts of him? But if the son also thinks of his mother in the same manner that she thinks of him, then mother and son, through an entire lifetime, will neither be facing away nor far from each other.

If the mind of a sentient being remembers and thinks of the Buddha, then either in the immediate present or in the future he will definitely see the Buddha; he will not be far from the Buddha. Thus, without relying on any other means, his mind will be enlightened. He is like a man perfumed by incense -- his body gives off fragrance. This is so called ‘adorned with and glorified by (Buddha’s) fragrance and light.’

Originally, in the realm of karmic cause, it is with a mind engaged in mindfulness of Buddha that I have entered into the state of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence. Now in this world, I embrace all those who practice mindfulness of Buddha and guide them

toward the Pure Land. As the Buddha inquires about the best means of perfect realization, I do not choose among the sense faculties, but recommend simultaneously controlling all six senses and having continuous and succeeding pure thoughts in order to attain *Samadhi*. This is the first and foremost method.”

The Author

Dharma Master Chi Hoi (“Ocean of Wisdom”) was born in 1926 in a village near Beijing. At the age of seventeen he was initiated at Chi Fu Monastery, in the Hong Luo Mountains north of Beijing, originally founded by the venerable Master Tsou Wu, the twelfth patriarch of China’s Pure Land school. For three years, Chi Hoi learned the teachings of the Pure Land school and practiced the “recitation of Amitabha Buddha.” In 1944 he entered a Buddhist academy in Beijing to study literature, history, and logic in addition to religion. From 1948, Chi Hoi further studied the Pure Land teachings at Mount Lin Yan Monastery in Suzhou, the monastery of the Pure Land school’s thirteenth patriarch, the venerable Master In Kwong. Chi Hoi then learned the Buddhist doctrines of the Tien-t’ai school from the venerable Master Tan shu in Hong Kong between 1952 and 1962. He was later appointed the forty-fifth dharma successor of the Tien-t’ai school. Chi Hoi’s philosophical perspective is based on the fundamental principles of both the Pure Land and the Tien-t’ai schools; his approach to enlightenment likewise combines the faith and devotion to Amitabha Buddha espoused by the former and the one vehicle teaching and emphasis on meditation from the later.

In 1967 Dharma Master Chi Hoi came to the United States to preach Buddhism and in 1972, founded the Buddhist Wisdom Lecture Hall of Fo Shan Monastery in San Francisco. Chi Hoi devotes his time not only to writing Buddhist literature, but also to traveling around the world to lecture on various sutras as well as Buddhist philosophy. Despite his reputation as a scholar, Chi Hoi always emphasizes the importance of both faith and prajna. Master Chi Hoi wishes to introduce Buddhism to all, and to bring harmony and serenity to the modern mind.

Translator's Preface

Traditionally the Pure Land texts refer to the *Amitabha Sutra*, the *Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra*, and the *Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra*. The thirteenth patriarch of China's Pure Land school, the venerable Master In-kwong, has also included the passage from the *Suramgama Sutra* depicting the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta's method of mindfulness of Buddha in reaching perfect realization as a member of this group. He praises this short passage as the most wonderful introduction and initiation to the Pure Land practice. Indeed, in just a few lines, but with the most vivid and apt analogies, this passage espouses the achievement of the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha as an efficient means to perfect enlightenment.

Dharma Master Chi Hoi, a Mahayana scholar and practitioner of both the T'ien-t'ai and the Pure Land schools, promotes the teachings of the T'en-t'ai as well as the Ideas-only schools for studying Buddhist doctrines and advocates simultaneous endeavor in meditation and recitation of Buddha's name for practice. In *Perfect Realization by Mindfulness of Buddha* he thoroughly explains the method offered by the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta with reference to various sutras and commentaries, especially highlighting its expediency as the "short cut of all short cuts to Buddhahood."

The popularity of the Pure Land school may be partly accounted for by its appeal to people of all natural propensities and capacities. In this work Master Chi Hoi most lucidly conveys this universal applicability. He further emphasizes the affinity between the Pure Land practice and that of meditation by pointing out that this method of mindfulness of Buddha is, in essence, a most wondrous and expedient form of meditation.

Master Chi Hoi's work was originally written in Chinese, and his diction and references to sutras are all adopted from the Chinese Buddhist tradition. In translating Chinese characters, the Japanese/English Buddhist dictionary by Hisao Inagaki has been used given its wide recognition by Buddhist scholars. The translation of the passage from the *Suramgama Sutra* follows the Chinese version by Pramiti of the T'ang dynasty, however, some language is adopted from the summary by D. T. Suzuki in *Manual of Zen Buddhism*. References to the three Pure Land sutras are selected from the translations by Hisao Inagaki. For adherence to mainstream vocabulary, attempts were made in some instances to conform to the Buddhist diction used

by Rupert Gethin in *The Foundation of Buddhism* and Nyanaponika Thera in *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*. An apology is in order here to Master Chi Hoi if this translation does not do full credit to his original work

Hui-deng and Hui-yee
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**Ten Leading Specialties
of the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta's
Perfect Realization by Mindfulness of Buddha**

The first leading specialty is its source.

The exact literature of this passage is from the *Suramgama Sutra* (*Sutra of Heroic Deed*). In this *sutra* the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta (One With Great Power of Wisdom) personally relates to our Buddha Sakyamuni how, in the distant past, a Buddha appeared in the world and taught him the way of mindfulness of Buddha and how, by practicing according to this method, he realized the insight into the non-origination of all existence. Presently in this world, the Bodhisattva embraces all those who practice this method of mindfulness of Buddha and guides them to reach the Pure Land.

The second leading specialty is how it is promoted by venerated Buddhist masters.

Throughout the ages there certainly has been no lack of learned Buddhist masters who have promoted the practice of mindfulness of Buddha. Those who were particularly dedicated to promoting this passage on perfect realization by mindfulness of Buddha include Master Hsu-fa of the Ching Dynasty and Master In-kwang of the Nationalist Republic period. During the rule of Emperor Kwong-shi of the Ching Dynasty, Master Hsu-fa, the prefect of Kwang-ding, wrote commentaries, both brief and in detail, fervently promoting this passage. At the time the Master had founded the Flower Ornament (dedicated to the *Flower Ornament Sutra* or *Avatamsaka Sutra*) Dharma Congregation. Once, while reciting this *sutra* up to the section depicting the method of mindfulness of Buddha practiced by the enlightening being (a Bodhisattva) Meghashri (Te-yun) in chapter thirty-nine on Sudhana's journey, Master Hsu-fa thought and meditated in depth. That night he dreamed of the world honored teacher Sakyamuni, who lectured to him the passage on the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta's perfect realization by mindfulness of Buddha. Since then Hsu-fa aspired to write simple and elaborate commentaries dedicated to promoting the practice of mindfulness of Buddha.

During the rule of the Nationalist Republic, Master In-kwang particularly included this passage after the three Pure Land sutras in the usual

Pure Land texts and praised this passage as the most wondrous instrument for introducing and demonstrating mindfulness of Buddha. If sentient beings are indeed able to entirely subdue and discipline the six sense faculties such that present thoughts are followed by pure thoughts, then sooner or later they are certain to see the Buddha. Further, they shall reach perfect realization in the near future and complete the path to Buddhahood in the distant future.

The third leading specialty is how it helps one achieve enlightenment.

As part of the section expounding the twenty-five methods for perfect realization in the *Suramgama Sutra*, this passage depicts the twenty-fourth method -- perfect realization by the great roots, namely, the six senses. It relates that the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta, by means of this method of great roots, practices, understands, and attains perfect realization.

The twenty-five methods for perfect realization refer to twenty-five saints or sages who rely on one method or another pertaining to the six roots (sense faculties), the six dusts (sense objects), the six sense consciousness or the seven greats (earth, water, fire, wind, space, roots and consciousness) to practice and eventually reach perfect realization. Among them the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta practices according to one of the seven greats (the roots), subduing and containing all six senses to practice mindfulness of Buddha. The twenty-fifth method is the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara's perfect realization by regulating the auditory sense.

If those who practice mindfulness of Buddha by reciting Amitabha Buddha's name are able to entirely subdue the six senses according to Mahasthamaprapta's method and use Avalokitesvara's method of listening internally through the organ of hearing to focus their thoughts to the point where their mind and Buddha approach unity, then they are perfecting the three great methods of the saints of the West.

The fourth leading specialty is its efficacy in forwarding enlightenment in these latter days of the Dharma.

Among the twenty-five methods for perfect realization from the *Suramgama Sutra*, the Bodhisattva Manjusri recommends only the method of regulating the auditory sense because he has the experience of the *arhat* Ananda in mind. Ananda (whose near downfall to lust required rescue by the Bodhisattva Manjusri and which constituted the motivation for this *sutra*) has learned the most teaching and memorized the most sermons, yet he ends up not knowing how to listen from within. Of course, Manjusri also considers

this method of "perfect realization through the organ of hearing" a convenient way to seek enlightenment for sentient beings of this world in general.

However, with respect to sentient beings who are heavily burdened with hindrances in these latter days of the Dharma, the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta's method of mindfulness of Buddha is the most suitable for their capacities. *The Great Collection Sutra (Mahasamghata-sutra)* states: "In these latter days of the Dharma, if ten billion people were to carry out Buddhist practice, there may scarcely be one person who is able to reach enlightenment. Only with the practice of mindfulness of Buddha may one cross beyond life and death." Master Shan-tao also said: "This is the only shortcut for practice -- just recite Amitabha Buddha!"

The fifth leading specialty is its broad and expedient suitability for all natural capacities.

The method of mindfulness of Buddha can benefit people of all three karmic roots, catering to those with superior as well as those with disadvantageous capabilities. From a higher perspective, the great Bodhisattvas Manjusri, Samandhabadra, Ashvaghosa, and Nagarjuna, and the great patriarchs Hui-yuan, Chih-che, Yung-ming, Lien-ch'ih, have all practiced mindfulness of Buddha and aspired for birth in the Pure Land. For those from lower standings such as foolish and ignorant men or women, those who have committed the five gravest offenses or the ten evil acts, or even parrots, if they aspire to practice mindfulness of Buddha, they will also be able to reach the Pure Land, though with their past karma still attached. These sentient beings, having been born in the Pure Land, will never fall back to lower realms. Therefore perfect realization by mindfulness of Buddha claims the broadest applicability across all capacities and is foremost in expedience.

The sixth leading specialty is its offering of merits.

1. Those who practice this method are protected by and thought of by all the Buddhas, with Amitabha Buddha, in particular, always abiding over their head, and with endowments from various gods during both night and day.
2. Neither devils nor poison can harm them; the so-called three disasters and eight perils will all be extinguished.
3. Their past karma and present hindrance will all become pure and clear; any retribution or wrong will be relinquished.
4. They will be full of vigor, without accidents or afflictions.
5. They will have peaceful and auspicious dreams, seeing the physical image of the Buddha, and have no unwholesome beings robbing their spirit and strength.
6. In the present world, they will be respected by

many and at the end of their lives, a host of saints will come to receive and guide them.

For example, when I was first ordained, I feared ghosts at night time. My teachers and friends suggested to me to recite the name of Amitabha Buddha, and contemplate the Buddha always abiding over my head, accompanying my walk with shining light. Practicing in this way, in less than a few months, I no longer had any such fears.

The seventh leading specialty is how it brings sentient beings and the Buddha to mutual and reciprocal mindfulness.

1. Sentient beings should keep their minds on the Buddha because sentient beings have Buddha nature inherently in their minds. Therefore, at the exact moment when sentient beings have their thoughts on the Buddha, they are thinking of the Buddha in their minds, and it is just at that moment the Buddha enters their minds. That is why it is said in this passage: "(If the mind of a sentient being) remembers and thinks of the Buddha, then either in the immediate present or in the future he will definitely see the Buddha." 2. The Buddha always thinks of sentient beings protectively because sentient beings are sentient beings already in the Buddha's mind. Therefore, at the exact moment when the Buddha has His thoughts on sentient beings, He is actually thinking of the sentient beings in His mind, and it is that moment when sentient beings enter the mind of the Buddha, that sentient beings are receiving the endowment of protection and care from the Buddha without being aware of it. That is why it is said in this passage: "The Tathagatas of the ten directions have compassion and thoughts for sentient beings just like the way a mother thinks of her son."

In this manner sentient beings and the Buddha approach mutual and reciprocal mindfulness -- one being the exact right karmic cause and the other, the complete corresponding karmic fruit. Together they contribute definitely to the foremost merits. Therefore one should know that the mind is inherently the same as the Buddha. It is only when the mind is not enlightened that the Buddha nature is hidden. If one wants to become a Buddha, he should contemplate his mind. If he does not contemplate his mind, then it will be difficult to become a Buddha. Similarly, the Buddha is indeed the mind. It is when ignorance originates that the mind is in the dark. If one wants to bring forth the mind, then he should practice mindfulness of Buddha. If he does not contemplate the Buddha, then it is difficult for the mind to be illuminated.

The eighth leading specialty is how it transcends horizontally.

If one tries to transcend the three realms (realm of desire, realm of form and the formless realm) vertically, one needs to practice the four noble truths, the twelve-fold formula of dependent origination, and the six perfections, going through many and various positions to eventually realize the fruit of Dharma. Theravada practitioners for the *arhat* vehicle must experience the three sagacities (the five-fold meditation for stopping unwholesome thoughts, the four mindfulness in its entirety, or the four mindfulness each adopted singly) and the four re-enforcement positions in expedient practice (the warm-up position, the peak position, the recognition position and the secular-world premier position) in order to awaken to the fruit of the path of seeing, the fruit of the path of practicing and the fruit of the path of non-learning. Those aspiring to the vehicle of *pratyeka* Buddha must practice the twelve links of causes and conditions (the forward sequence of the origination of sufferings and the reverse sequence of the ceasing of sufferings) in order to realize the truth of dependent arising and to attain the fruit of *pratyeka* Buddha. Mahayana practitioners must carry out the six perfections (generosity, precepts, perseverance, energy, meditation and wisdom) with myriad practices, going through the three sagacities (the ten abodes, the ten practices and the ten dedications) and the ten grounds of the Bodhisattva practice, in order to become a Buddha. Now, figuratively speaking, this method of mindfulness of Buddha can enable the practitioner to transcend the three realms horizontally. This is analogous to a bug trying to get out of a bamboo stem: if it tries to go vertically, then it must pass through each section, difficult to get out; but if it tries horizontally, then it may get through at once. Therefore, this single method of mindfulness of Buddha has been referred to as the shortcut since antiquity.

As said in *The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra*: "All the Buddhas, Tathagatas are the Dharma-body (dharma-kaya), entering the meditating minds of sentient beings. Therefore those of you with your thoughts on a Buddha, your mind indeed will take the form of the thirty-two marks of physical excellence of a Buddha and the eighty secondary marks. In practicing, the mind becomes a Buddha. The mind is itself the Buddha. The ocean of true and universal knowledge of all the Buddhas arises from the meditating mind." (Trans. in Inagaki 1988: 87-117 slightly modified) This *passage* says: "If the mind of a sentient being remembers and thinks of the Buddha, then either in the immediate present or in the future he will definitely see the Buddha." Once seeing the Buddha, then one can become a Buddha within one lifetime. It is because the life spans of the Buddha Amitabha and all who dwell in His Pure Land are of immeasurable and innumerable eons

(kalpas). Therefore they need not go through the three lives (minimum life spans required to become a *arhat*) and sixty kalpas (maximum time required to become an *arhat*) or through three immeasurable eons (the time required for a Bodhisattva to become a Buddha) to eventually attain the fruit of Buddhahood. Thus Master Shan-dao of the T'ang dynasty said: "The only practice is this shortcut method, just recite Amitabha." This is a particular praise for the method of reciting Buddha's name -- the shortcut within a shortcut, the foremost method for transcending horizontally.

The ninth leading specialty is its provision of resources and nourishment.

The Pure Land school regards faith, vow and practice as the three provisions. The practitioners of mindfulness of Buddha rely on these resources to attain birth in the Pure Land.

1. There are six aspects to faith:

1) Faith in oneself -- This means one's present mind that is engaged in mindfulness of Buddha is neither of the flesh nor an illusory mind associated with the images of the objects of the six senses, but the true, thusness mind that reaches vertically without bound and encompasses horizontally in entirety. Be it minute dusts or entire kingdoms, all appear only as the mind perceives, even the western Pure Land is as the mind perceives. If one practices mindfulness of Buddha with such a focused mind, then the determination to be born in the Pure Land that is inherent in one's own mind can admit no further doubt. This is called faith in oneself.

2) Faith in others -- One has deep belief in the teachings of the Buddha as contained in the three Pure Land sutras, trusts that the Tathagata Sakyamuni makes no exaggerated speeches, that Amitabha Buddha, like a loving father, makes no empty vows, and that all the Buddhas of the six directions make no false praises. One should adhere to and follow the true teachings and lectures of all the Tathagatas without further doubts. This is called having faith in others.

3) Faith in karmic cause -- One has deep belief in mindfulness of Buddha as the karmic cause for reaching the Pure Land, the seed for oneself to become a Buddha. The *Lotus Sutra* states: "If people with distracted minds, enter a monastery, recite Namó Buddha once, each of them will have established the way to Buddhahood."

4) Faith in karmic fruit -- One has deep belief that practicing mindfulness of Buddha ensure birth in the Pure Land where all the virtuous sages assemble in one place. It is due to the true karmic cause of the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha that each of them is able to attain the real fruit of

being born into nine different levels in four different Pure Lands. Just as planting squashes means harvesting squashes, and planting peas means harvesting peas, knowing the effort is decidedly not forfeited or wasted is called having faith in the karmic fruit.

5) Faith in phenomenal existence -- Perceiving the outside realm as phenomenal existence, one believes that realm arises from the mind, and that the mind, which is presently engaged in mindfulness of Buddha, is able to perceive all the worlds in ten directions. Hence, one has faith without doubt in the phenomenon that beyond a hundred thousand of a hundred million worlds there really is a Pure Land of utmost bliss.

6) Faith in true principle -- True principle refers to the true state of things of the entire world encountered by the sense of mind. One believes that the phenomenal world beyond a hundred thousand of a hundred million lands is not beyond the true nature of a focused mind. One also believes that the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas of the western Pure Land are all images perceived by one's present meditating mind. The phenomenon is established depending on the true principle, all phenomena are the true principle; the imagined arises depending on the true state, all imagined is the true state; practice begins depending on the true nature, the complete practice is the true nature. The mind of oneself, the mind of the Buddha and the minds of all sentient beings, each encompasses the entire world encountered by the sense of mind, like a thousand lamps in one room, shining over and under the brilliance of one another -- the true principle should have no hindrance or limit.

2. There are two vows:

1) One loathes the Saha world and vows to leave it. The Saha world is the unwholesome land responding to the defiled karmic deeds of one's own mind. In view of principle, it should be logical that one would detest and want to leave the impurity and defilement of one's own mind: 1- One should loathe human existence as suffering -- subject to birth, old age, afflictions and death, one is being simultaneously scorched by suffering and distress. 2- One should loathe human existence as emptiness -- wealth, rank, accomplishment and prestige, none of them is beyond a dream. 3- One should loathe human existence as impermanence -- even human life dangles between one breath and the next. 4- One should loathe human existence as non-self -- when the four great elements part, where is the self? Therefore, one should be weary and vow to leave the Saha world, like a prisoner wanting to escape from his prison, having absolutely no lingering fondness in his mind.

2) One joyfully aspires to seek the realm of utmost bliss. The realm of utmost bliss is the pure land responding to the pure and wholesome karmic

deeds of one's own mind. In view of principle, it is logical that one should be inspired to seek the purity and clarity of one's own mind: 1- Rejoice that there is none of the various sufferings. 2- Rejoice that there is the Buddha who speaks the Dharma, 3- Rejoice that there is the assembly of noble and virtuous sages, 4- Rejoice that there are water, birds and woods, all of them portraying wonderful Dharma, 5- Rejoice that there is clothing and food naturally provided, 6- Rejoice that there is infinite light and life, 7- Rejoice that there is the likelihood of becoming a Buddha in one lifetime. Therefore, one should aspire and vow to be born in the western Pure Land, like a traveler eager to return to his homeland. How can one idle away or lazily put it off!

3. There is practice:

According to the *Amitabha Sutra*, if good men and good women hold fast to the name of Amitabha Buddha with their mind concentrated without distraction, then at the end of their lives, this Buddha, together with a host of holy ones, will appear before them. And since the mind of such people will not fall into confusion, they will consequently be born directly in the Pure Land of utmost bliss.

The thirty-seventh chapter of the *Flower Ornament Sutra*, "The Manifestation of the Tathagata," states: "Sentient beings of various lands all possess the wisdom and virtues of the Tathagata. However because of their delusions and attachments they are not able to realize this. If they come away from grasping delusions and attachments, then all wisdom will manifest directly." Now the teaching of mindfulness of Buddha by reciting Buddha's name employs thought to stop other thoughts, namely, employing thought on the Buddha to stop illusory thoughts. When the mind can focus single-mindedly without distraction, all illusory thoughts will disappear and the wisdom of Buddha will manifest. This is then the so-called state of "the mind becomes the Buddha, the mind is indeed itself the Buddha."

Master Lien Ch'ih said: "From beginningless time, sentient beings have habitual delusions and illusory thoughts which are not easily relinquished or eradicated. Now, to teach them to practice mindfulness of Buddha is to use the method of countering poison with poison, or stopping invading soldiers with counter-attacking soldiers."

Master Ou-i said: "Devotion to reciting Buddha's name is the principal practice. If one, having heard of and learned this practice, starts to have faith in it; and once having faith in it, aspires to practice; he will eventually become willing to hold fast to this practice. This is called attaining wisdom from listening. If one is able to have thoughts after thoughts remembering and concentrating on the Buddha's name, then he is attaining wisdom from thinking."

Suppose one has not yet reached the realm where the mind becomes the Buddha, the mind is the Buddha, and also that Amitabha is my mind, my mind is Amitabha, namely, the true state that mind and Buddha are not two separate entities. Nevertheless, even if one has not yet reached this realm, if he is able to have continuous thoughts on the Buddha, and once his thought is on the Buddha, it stays focused on the Buddha, like the way a child thinks of his mother so that at no time will he forget her even temporarily, then his attaining wisdom from thinking in this manner is called practice by retaining the phenomenal aspect (Amitabha Buddha).

On the other hand, suppose one has actually reached the state that Amitabha Buddha is inherently in my mind, is created by my mind. He has completely realized that beyond the mind which is thinking of the Buddha, there is no Buddha; and that beyond the Buddha which the mind is thinking of, there is no mind. Mind and Buddha has become one entity. The mind thinks of the Buddha until it reaches the realm where there is no thought. And though the mind may have no thought to begin with, it naturally centers on the Buddha. One never lets his mind forget the Buddha, not even for one moment. Attaining wisdom from thinking in this manner is called practice by retaining the true principle (mind and Buddha are one).

The tenth leading specialty is how it leads the practitioner to one-pointedness of mind.

Regardless of whether one keeps up practice by retaining phenomenon or principle, as long as one keeps practicing until the distressing passions are subdued and extinguished, and until the delusions of views and thoughts are eradicated, it is referred to as reaching the state of "one-pointedness of mind with respect to phenomenon." If one keeps practicing until the first-order ignorance is broken down and his intrinsic Buddha nature (*tathagata-garbha*) is revealed such that one can behold the very Dharma-body of the Buddha (*dharma-kaya*) inherent in his own nature, it is referred to as reaching the state of "one-pointedness of mind with respect to true principle."

Accomplishing one-pointedness of mind through phenomenon can break down the attachment to self and thus eradicate the delusion of views and thoughts. Accomplishing one-pointedness of mind through true principle can break the attachment to dharma and thus eradicate both the delusion of views and thoughts and the delusion from ignorance. These accomplishments are all cultivation of wisdom. Once the practitioner is able to practice single-mindedly without distraction with respect to either phenomenon or true principle, and if he continues with diligence, without backing down, then he will see himself initiating wisdom, developing talent for debate, attaining

magical powers, achieving *Samadhi* from mindfulness of Buddha and receiving perfect realization through mindfulness of Buddha. And then, various extraordinary, wondrous, auspicious phenomena will materialize directly.

Edited Explications of this Passage

Mahasthamaprapta, a son of the king of Dharma, with those of the same standing, together fifty-two Bodhisattvas, presently rose from his seat, paid reverence with his head at the feet of the Buddha, and said to the Buddha:

Mahasthamaprapta is the name of this Bodhisattva who is thus distinguished from other Bodhisattvas. “A son of the king of Dharma” is the common reference to all Bodhisattvas. As for the meaning of *Mahasthamaprapta*, *The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra* states: “When this Bodhisattva walks, all the worlds in the ten directions shake... When this Bodhisattva sits, all kingdoms of seven jewels sway.” His power reaches the utmost greatness and is thus named “One with Great Power.” Further, this Bodhisattva shines with blazing light as *The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra* states: “The light emanating from his body illuminates lands in all ten directions and can be seen by any sentient being who has a close karmic relationship with Him.” It further states: “With the light of wisdom this Bodhisattva illuminates everything universally, guiding everyone to be delivered from the three lower realms and instilling in them unsurpassed strength. Thus he is named ‘One with Great Power’”

A son of the king of Dharma -- Here it refers to the Buddha as the king of Dharma, having total liberation from the Dharma, different from any king of humans or king of heavenly beings. All the various great Bodhisattvas are transformed and born through the Dharma and therefore referred as son of the king of Dharma. This is because they are meant to carry on the legacy of the Buddha and succeed the Buddha in the business of promoting Buddhist Dharma. The *Compassion Lotus Sutra (Karuna-pundarika-sutra)* states: “In the distant past when Amitabha was a wheel-turning noble king (*cakravartin*), the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was his eldest son and the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta was his second son. Now, in the Pure Land, these two attendant Bodhisattvas are at the left and right of Amitabha Buddha, helping the Buddha promote the Dharma and, in the future, take His place as Buddhas. When the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara takes Buddha’s place, he will be named the ‘Tathagata Universal-light Merit Mountain King;’ and when the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta takes Buddha’s place, he will be named the

‘Tathagata Virtue-abiding Merit Treasure King.’ Therefore, presently they are referred to as ‘a son of the king of Dharma.’”

With those of the same standing,, and said to the Buddha:

At the Suramgama congregation, the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta, with those of the same standing, all from the western quarters, together fifty-two Bodhisattvas, joined this Dharma conference. This indicates that Mahasthamaprapta’s method of mindfulness of Buddha is able to impress and induce faith in these fifty-two dharma masters regarding this practice.

Bodhisattva means “enlightened sentient being.” With respect to living beings from the six realms of the uninitiated world, although they perceive difference between good and evil, their desire and attachment are not extinguished, and with respect to the practitioners of the three vehicles transcending this world, although all of them are already saints, their consciousness and feeling are not yet completely relinquished, therefore all these beings are referred to as sentient beings. Now, the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta has employed wisdom to seek the fruit of *bodhi* above, and employed compassion to deliver sentient beings below. Not only he is an enlightened sentient being himself, but he also helps enlighten other sentient beings, and is thus called “enlightened sentient being”

Presently rose from his seat, paid reverence with his head at the feet of the Buddha shows deference in performing karmic deed relating to bodily action (karmic deeds may be divided into three types: bodily action, speech and intention). *And said to the Buddha* shows his respectful manner of reporting to the Buddha. Together these illustrate the deference and sincerity in performing the three types of karmic deeds pertaining to bodily action, speech and intention.

I recall, in the distant past, innumerable kalpas as the sands of the River Ganges ago, there was a Buddha appearing in this world called Amitabha (Infinite Light or Infinite Life). Twelve Tathagatas appeared successively in that same kalpa. The last Buddha was called ‘Buddha of Light Outshining Sun and Moon.’ This Buddha taught me the Samadhi by mindfulness of Buddha.

This paragraph states: I, Mahasthamaprapta, recall this event from the very distant past, great kalpas, innumerable like the sands of the River Ganges, ago. At that time a Buddha named Infinite Light appeared in this world.

Also in that same kalpa, there were twelve Tathagatas successively appearing in this world, becoming Buddhas one after another. The last one among them to become a Buddha was named “Buddha of Light Outshining Sun and Moon.” That Buddha taught me to practice the method of attaining *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha.

According to the *Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra (Sukhavativyuha)*, the Amitabha Buddha is reverently addressed by twelve other names (describing different aspects of his light): (1) “Buddha of Infinite Light”; (2) “Buddha of Boundless Light”; (3) “Buddha of Unhindered Light”; (4) “Buddha of Incomparable Light”; (5) “Buddha of Majestically Flaming Light”; (6) “Buddha of Pure Light”; (7) “Buddha of Joyful Light”; (8) “Buddha of Wisdom Light”; (9) “Buddha of Unceasing Light”; (10) “Buddha of Inconceivable Light”; (11) “Buddha of Ineffable Light”; (12) “Buddha of Light Outshining Sun and Moon”. All these names pertain to light for several reasons. First, because at the realm of cause, a Bodhisattva focuses his thoughts on the Buddha inherent in his own nature, namely, the original state of enlightenment of his own mind and thus creates illumination from his mind. Second, because at the realm of fruit, a Bodhisattva attains the wondrous enlightenment of a Buddha and thus manifests illumination from his body. When the mind shines to the utmost, it achieves the twofold wisdom of the sages, namely, the “true state-wisdom” of knowing the ultimate true state and the “expediency-wisdom” of discerning the methods of expedient means of salvation. When the body shines in perfection, it is adorned and glorified by merits and virtues. These lights either shine constantly or blaze from time to time.

The twelve Tathagatas of the remotest past are Buddhas of old times, not referring to the present Amitabha Buddha. They happen to have the same name, just like the old Sakyamuni Buddha or the old Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. It is none other than sharing the same name.

This Buddha taught me the Samadhi by mindfulness of Buddha. – This explains that the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta was telling the Buddha about the karmic causal relationship of how he had aspired to practice and subsequently attained the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha. This is why he was saying: I recall the distant past when the "Buddha of Light Outshining Sun and Moon" taught, guided and demonstrated to me, Mahasthamaprapta, how, by means of the method of mindfulness of Buddha, to reach the state of *Samadhi*. There are two approaches to *mindfulness of Buddha*: mindfulness of phenomenon and mindfulness of principle. For mindfulness of phenomenon, the mindfulness is to single-mindedly remember and think. The object of mindfulness is the Amitabha Buddha. For mindfulness of principle,

mindfulness is the beginnings of enlightenment, and the Buddha is the original enlightened state of the mind. So, the journey from that initial entry to the original state is called mindfulness of Buddha.

There are four ways to practice mindfulness of Buddha:

1. Mindfulness of Buddha by reciting Buddha's name – having heard of a Buddha, one single-mindedly chants His name. The *Manjusri Prajna Sutra (Saptasatika Prajnaparamita)* states: "Sentient beings are foolish and slow, and thus not capable of understanding through contemplation. However, if they let the sound of their chanting go on continuously, they will naturally be born in the Pure Land." The *Amitabha Sutra* states: "Having heard of Amitabha Buddha, one holds fast to His name." These words from the sutras all recommend and urge one to take up the wondrous practice of reciting Buddha's name.

2. Mindfulness of Buddha by meditating on the physical image of a Buddha in two ways -- 1) one meditates on the bright and shining appearance of the immediate presence of an actual Buddha. The *Lotus Sutra* states: "Stand upright and join the palms of the hands together, concentrate the mind on meditating on the Buddha;" and 2) one meditates on the image of a Buddha provided by colorful paintings or sculptured statues. For example, King Udayana had a statue of Buddha made of sandal wood and he reverently looked up and focused his eyes on the image.

3. Mindfulness of Buddha by meditating on the mental image of a Buddha – one meditates on the semblance of a Buddha imagined by his own mind. As *The Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra* states; "All the Buddhas, Tathagatas are the Dharma-body (dharma-kaya), entering the meditating minds of sentient beings. Therefore those of you with your thoughts on a Buddha, your mind indeed will take the form of the thirty-two marks of physical excellence of a Buddha and the eighty secondary marks. In practicing, the mind becomes a Buddha. The mind itself is the Buddha. The ocean of true and universal knowledge of all the Buddhas arises from the meditating mind."

4. Mindfulness of Buddha by thinking of the true state – one focuses the mind on his own nature, which is the Buddha of the true state of thusness. One's own nature is inherently empty, therefore there is really no thought. The true state of thusness stays as such without changing, therefore the nature of the mind always abides thusly – this is called the ultimate enlightenment. The *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (by Asvaghosa) states: "If a sentient being is able to contemplate the void of subjective thought, then it is because he is approaching the wisdom of a Buddha."

Although the above four ways for practicing mindfulness of Buddha start from different approaches, they all arrive at the very same result and are all called the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha. *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha has been referred to as the shortcut for practice since antiquity, and the method of reciting Buddha's name is considered the shortcut of all shortcuts. This is because of the other three methods, the method of meditating on the physical image of a Buddha may be discontinued when the physical image is no longer present; the method of meditating on the mental image of a Buddha may not produce an excellent semblance of a Buddha as the imaginings of the mind is rough while the actual phenomenon is fine; and the method of meditating on the true state may be realized by very few as sentient beings are burdened with heavy hindrances. Therefore recitation of Buddha's name is particularly recommended.

Samadhi is referred to as "right concentration." This clarifies that it is neither the non-concentration of uninitiated sentient beings nor the false concentration of other denominations. It is also named "right reception" as opposed to "false reception." This infers that the method of mindfulness of Buddha proceeds from easy steps to profound levels, perfuming or impressing the mind with the merits of practice continuously until the utmost realm where the karmic cause and effect connect and correspond to each other such that the sentient being and the Buddha reach the one-ness of thusness, and *Samadhi* is attained. Only then may it be called "right concentration." *Samadhi* is a general name. The *Ta-chi-tu lun (Prajnaparamitas Sastra)* states: "All forms of meditation for containing the mind and fixing it on one object are called *Samadhi*." *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha is a specific name – it may be called *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha only if the *Samadhi* is attained by the method of mindfulness of Buddha.

Further, the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha is also exactly the same as the *Samadhi by one practice*, namely, the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of one Buddha. The *Manjusri Prajna Sutra (Saptasatika Prajnaparamita)* states: "The Buddha tells Manjusri that he who wishes to enter into the *Samadhi by one practice* should situate himself in seclusion, relinquish all distracting thoughts, not grasp any form or characteristic, secure his mind to one Buddha and exclusively recite His name. While facing towards the direction of His dwelling and keeping an upright posture, if one can focus and keep his thoughts continuously on this Buddha, then in his meditating mind he will be able to see all the Buddhas of the past, the present and the future. The merit acquired from practicing mindfulness on one Buddha is not different from the merit acquired from practicing mindfulness on immeasurable number of Buddhas. Those who may attain the *Samadhi by one*

practice will be able to understand the methods expounded by all the Buddhist sutras." If one may attain perfect realization by mindfulness of Buddha, then he will be perfectly enlightened to all Buddhist Dharma. Therefore, *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha is regarded as the king of all *Samadhi*; it is able to generalize and encompass all forms of *Samadhi*.

Suppose there are two people. If the former always remembers the latter while the latter always forgets the former, then two such people may come upon but not really meet one another, and may see but not actually recognize each other. On the other hand, if two people remember each other, and their mutual remembrance and thoughts continue to deepen in this manner, then even from lifetime to lifetime, like a form and its shadow, they will never be in discordance or apart.

This passage can be separated into two sections: 1. From *suppose there are two people to may see but not actually recognize each other* is analogous to two people being apart due to merely one-sided attentive thoughts. 2. From *if two people remember each other to they will never be in discordance or apart* is analogous to two people not apart because of mutual remembrance and thoughts.

1. *Suppose there are two people* points to a Buddha and a sentient being. *If the former always remembers the latter* is analogous to the Buddha, whom, with His powerful vow and His great compassion, exclusively focuses his merciful thoughts on the sentient being. *The latter always forgets the former* is analogous to the sentient being, whom, tied down by his delusion and karmic deeds, lacking faith, vow and practice, is incapable of aspiring to think of the Buddha's merits.

Two such people may come upon but not really meet one another, and may see but not actually recognize each other: May come upon and may see means to demonstrate that the Buddha has great compassion and always remembers the sentient being; He often appears in this world and thus may come upon and see the sentient being. *Not really meet one another and not actually recognize each other* means that the sentient being is deluded and subverted and always forgets to think of the Buddha. He does not face the Buddha, does not have the favorable karmic circumstances to see the Buddha, and thus not really meet or recognize the Buddha.

To explain it another way, the sentient being, weighed down by hindrances, always forgets to concentrate his mind on the Buddha. Therefore, although the Buddha particularly remembers the sentient being and is able to meet with and see the sentient being, for the sentient being, despite meeting and seeing the Buddha, he has not really met or seen the Buddha. For example, on seeing the Bodhisattva Manjusri, he sees only an old man, a poor elderly woman or such; like a man lacking merits he sees treasure only as a snake. The sentient being sees the Buddha but does not recognize the Buddha, just like one would see treasure but not recognize it as such. To miss an encounter like this right in front of oneself would be such a great shame!

2. *If two people remember each other and their mutual remembrance and thoughts continue to deepen in this manner:* This analogy refers to a sentient being thinking of the Buddha just as the Buddha thinks of the sentient being: this is called *two people remember each other*. Remembering for a long time not forgetting, and having the mind concentrate deeply on such thoughts, is referred to as *their mutual remembrance and thoughts continue to deepen in this manner*. If one is mindful of the Buddha this way, then as mindfulness prolongs, the effort of practice deepens. Naturally the mind will not leave the Buddha and eventually, the complete form of the Buddha will not be forgotten for even a moment. One will definitely be capable of realizing the correspondence between the Buddha's power and one's receptivity. As the sentient being and the Buddha reach one-ness, the Buddha will not leave the mind either. This way, in this lifetime may one often see the Buddha in dreams or in meditation and thus be able to accompany and follow the Buddha like a form and its shadow, neither different nor separated. Moreover, from this life time till future lifetimes, birth after birth, life after life, he shall always be accompanying and following the Buddha like a form and its shadow, never in discordance, never apart. With the Buddha he will be of the same mind and same characteristics, of the same form and same shadow. His body and mind will join to appear like the Buddha such that he may be named a son of the king of Dharma.

The Tathagatas of the ten directions have compassion and thoughts for sentient beings just like the way a mother thinks of her son. If the son runs away, for what use will be the thoughts of him? But if the son also thinks of his mother in the same manner that she thinks of him, then mother and son, through an entire lifetime, will neither be facing away nor far from each other.

This passage divides into two sections: 1. From *the Tathagatas of the ten directions to for what use will be the thoughts of him* picks up the previous analogy that one-sided remembrance and thoughts are not beneficial. 2. From *if the son also thinks of his mother to will neither be facing away nor far from each other* parallels the previous analogy of *if two people remember each other and their mutual remembrance and thoughts continue to deepen*.

1. *The Tathagatas of the ten directions have compassion and thoughts for sentient beings just like the way a mother thinks of her son:* This parallels the former analogy of *if the former always remembers the latter. If the son runs away, for what use will be the thoughts of him* parallels the former analogy of *the latter always forgets the former*. Previously, the analogy of two people refers more generally to relatives, friends or even less familiar acquaintances; now this analogy of mother and son refers to close relations of flesh and blood, rendering it easier for people to aspire faith and practice.

In the secular world, loving mothers think of their sons, thought after thought without relinquishing. If their sons are rebellious and lack filial piety, forget their indebtedness to their parents, betray principles, run away to distant lands, there will be no benefit if only the mothers think of them. A mother's thoughts may recede, and regret and resentment may come to mind. The Buddhas of the ten directions view all sentient beings equally, and protectively think of them with mercy and compassion even more than loving mothers. The heavier the sentient beings are burdened with rebellion and evil, the deeper the Buddhas think of them. Even for affectionate mothers loving their sons, it can only last for one life time; for Buddhas loving sentient beings, there is no end to their loving kindness, from life to life, through eternal kalpas without limit. This is why it is said that the Buddhas think of sentient beings like a mother thinks of her son.

If the son runs away is analogous to sentient beings running and needlessly losing their way in the sea of life and death, transmigrating in the six lower realms, enduring limitless sufferings. *For what use will be the thoughts of him* is analogous to the Buddhas, though possessing great compassion and merciful thoughts and remembrance, not being able to save the sentient beings. It is because there is no helping circumstance to complement karmic cause, one-sided remembrance and thoughts are not beneficial enough.

2. *But if the son also thinks of his mother in the same manner that she thinks of him:* This parallels the previous analogy of *if two people remember each other and their mutual remembrance and thoughts continue to deepen in*

this manner. Then mother and son, through an entire lifetime, will neither be facing away nor far from each other parallels the former analogy of from lifetime to lifetime never being in discordance or apart. This means that when the son thinks of his mother just the way she thinks of him, then mother and son are mutually kind and loving. Both mother and son will journey through their entire life time enjoying deep affectionate relationship due to favorable karma, never in discordance or separation.

This is analogous to sentient beings, remembering the Buddha's virtue and merits, aspiring to think of the Buddha just as deeply as the way the Buddha thinks of the sentient beings. Only then, will there arise correspondence between the Buddha's power and the sentient being's receptivity. At this point sentient being and Buddha are not two but one. If this may be achieved, then the Buddha and the sentient being, enduring numerous life times and eternal kalpas, will still not be in discordance or apart. This is the case of mutual remembrance and thoughts leading to non-separation.

Here is a question: Given in the previous sections, thinking of Buddha refers more particularly to Amitabha Buddha, why does it mention "the Tathagatas of the ten directions" here? There are two interpretations:

The first perspective: All Buddhas go through the very same Buddhist path and are equal in their enlightenment; there could be no other, no difference. Chapter ten of the *Flower Ornament Scripture*, "An Enlightening Being Asks for Clarification," states: "All the Tathagatas of the ten directions are just one Dharma-body, one in mind, one in wisdom. The same goes for their power and fearlessness [in expounding the Dharma]." Equality exists not only between Buddhas, but actually between Buddhas and sentient beings as well. Fundamentally, the uninitiated and the saint share the same origin; the sentient being and the Buddhas are but of one body. Thus the *Sutra* states: "The mind, the Buddha and the sentient being are three without differentiation."

However, although the Buddha and the sentient being share the same essential qualities, the method through which they acquired qualities are quite different. The Buddhas for immeasurable kalpas (eons) have practiced according to their nature, having thoughts after thoughts flow into the enlightening sea of *bodhi* and thus perfectly accomplishing merits and wisdom. They will forever experience the enjoyment of Dharma. The sentient beings, from beginningless kalpas, have behaved contrary to their nature, with their thoughts upon thoughts drifting toward the deluded path of life and death. They commit various unwholesome karmic deeds and thus go through various sufferings. Hence, all the Buddhas think mercifully of the sentient beings and have the same depth and strength in their compassion and vow to save sentient

beings from their sufferings. The *Samadhi Sutra* states: “The mind of all the Buddhas signifies great loving kindness and compassion. This loving kindness and compassion are closely related to the sufferings of the sentient beings. When they see sentient beings suffering under distress, it is like arrows entering their own hearts and they immediately want to eradicate such sufferings.”

The second perspective: Recommending people to recite Amitabha Buddha is for the sake of having them concentrate on their mind. Moreover, the Buddhas of the ten directions all praise Amitabha Buddha to be the foremost. Being born in the Pure Land of utmost bliss, and being in close attendance to Amitabha Buddha, enables one to see the Buddhas of the ten directions. The *Amitabha Sutra* states: “The sentient beings of that land always, in the serenity of the morning, having their baskets filled with various wonderful flowers, go to make offerings to a hundred thousand kotis of Buddhas dwelling in the worlds of other directions.” Further, the *Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra* states: “Seeing the Buddhas of Infinite Life is exactly seeing the infinitely many Buddhas from all ten directions.” Besides, the vow of Amitabha Buddha has particular karmic relationship with the sentient beings of this defiled Saha world. It is due to this karmic cause and effect that the recitation of Amitabha Buddha is specifically recommended.

If the mind of a sentient being remembers and thinks of the Buddha, then either in the immediate present or in the future he will definitely see the Buddha; he will not be far from the Buddha. Thus, without relying on any other means, his mind will be enlightened. He is like a man perfumed by incense -- his body gives off fragrance. This is so called ‘adorned with and glorified by (Buddha’s) fragrance and light.’

While the previous section relies on analogy, this section focuses more on Buddhist Dharma -- approaching the Dharma through analogy and using the Dharma to explain the true principle. This paragraph has three sections: 1. From *if the mind of a sentient being* to *he will not be far from the Buddha* shows that the Dharma parallels the former analogy. 2. *Thus, without relying on any other means, his mind will be enlightened* demonstrates how thinking of the Buddha leads to seeing the Buddha. 3. From *he is like a man perfumed by incense* to *‘adorned with and glorified by fragrance and light’* establishes the excellent analogy of being perfumed by incense.

1. *If the mind of a sentient being remembers and thinks of the Buddha:* This focuses on a sentient being's mindfulness of Buddha. As for how the Buddha thinks of sentient beings, there is no need for further emphasis. To remember is to hold in memory and to not forget; to think of is to keep the thought firmly in the mind. Also, it may proceed from remembering to thinking of or from thinking of to remembering, and thus it is called *remembers and thinks of*.

Master Tzu-yun of the T'ien-t'ai school said, "Whenever one is involved in or experiencing outside realms, namely, worldly phenomena, and still his mind does not desert or forget the Buddha – this is referred to as remembers and thinks of [the Buddha]. As an analogy, when people in the secular world have important business occupying their mind, though they maybe talking, coming and going, sitting or resting, carrying out various activities, these do not hinder the preoccupation of their mind -- the previous business stays just as fresh in the mind. In practicing mindfulness of Buddha the mind should also be this way. In case the mindfulness becomes lost, it should be repeatedly recalled and drawn back in each instance. Over time, this will become a natural habit such that the mind may function at ease and always remember. Also, whenever the mind perceives any slight arising of unwholesome thought, it should immediately recall the Buddha; if the mental power in remembering the Buddha is strong, the unwholesome thought will naturally cease."

There are two approaches for remembering and thinking of (the Buddha): remember and think of by way of phenomenon and remember and think of by way of principle. To remember and think of by way of phenomenon is, having heard the Buddha speaking of the Pure Land of utmost bliss and of Amitabha Buddha presently expounding the Buddhist Dharma there, one believes in it firmly without doubt, is definitely certain of his aspiration and vow. Thus, his mind is always remembering and thinking of the name of this Buddha and his mouth always reciting the name of this Buddha, just like the way a child remembers his mother -- remembering and thinking of single-mindedly without forgetting. Having completed such effort in practicing mindfulness of Buddha with respect to the above causes and conditions, but not yet reaching and realizing the principle that mind is Buddha -- such practice is referred to as remembering and thinking of (the Buddha) by way of phenomenon.

To remember and think of (the Buddha) by way of principle, one believes firmly that Amitabha Buddha of the western land is the Buddha fundamentally contained in his own mind and is also the Buddha constructed by his own mind. In other words, through the Buddha inherently contained in

and constructed by one's own mind, one again thinks of the Buddha contained in and constructed by his own mind. This is reaching the principle that the mind and the Buddha are not two but one, that mindfulness and the object of mindfulness are not two but one, that the fundamental Buddha nature and the present Buddhist practice are not two but one, and that the entering upon enlightenment and the fundamental state of enlightenment are not two but one. From *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*: "Though practicing mindfulness, there is neither mindfulness nor object of mindfulness." This captures the essence of this method -- mindfulness and Buddha are not two but one.

In general, to remember and think of by way of phenomenon, one relies mostly on the Buddha's power to discipline one's own mind. Because of this reliance on the outside realm (the Buddha), one is able to achieve liberation of mind and attain strength in concentration. To remember and think of by way of principle, one relies mostly on the power of his own mind to realize the true principle, the method of two but not two. Because of this reliance on one's own mind one is able to achieve liberation in the contemplation of his own mind (the contemplation is wisdom and the object of contemplation is the true principle) and attain strength in wisdom. Some people claim: "Those with superior wisdom should specialize in thinking of by way of principle, those with disadvantageous capacity should focus on thinking of by way of phenomenon, and those with medium capacity may assume both thinking of by way of phenomenon and thinking of by way of principle." Actually, the choice of practice should follow whichever way most suitable for the fundamental nature of each individual. One should be flexible in making good use of one's own mind; there is no need to cause oneself unwarranted doubts or restrictions in this respect. After all, the purpose is to achieve the *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha.

Besides, it does not signify whether one remembers and thinks of by way of phenomenon or by way of principle. As long as he thinks of the Buddha until he subdues and extinguishes distressing passions and eradicates the two delusions of view and thought, he may attain the 'one-pointedness of mind through phenomenon' *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha, regardless of method. Similarly, as long as he thinks of the Buddha until his own mind is revealed and the Buddha inherent in his fundamental nature is seen, he may attain the 'one-pointedness of mind through principle' *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha, regardless of method.

Then either in the immediate present or in the future he will definitely see the Buddha; he will not be far from the Buddha: If one really remembers and thinks of the name of the Buddha in the manner as explained above and keeps his mind on remembering and thinking of the Buddha all the time, then

he definitely will be able to see the Buddha. He may behold the Buddha in the immediate present or he may behold the Buddha in the future, but behold the Buddha he definitely and doubtlessly will.

In case of seeing the Buddha in the present, one either sees in dreams or in meditative concentration. For seeing the Buddha in dreams, according to the *Lotus Sutra*, those who carry out the "practices that bring ease and contentment" will in their dreams see the Tathagatas, whose bodies emit light and whose voices expound the Dharma. They will see themselves amidst the Buddhas, extolling the Buddhas with their palms joined. On hearing the Dharma, they will be full of joy and make their offerings. They will also see themselves in some mountain grove practicing according to the good Dharma, realizing the true state of things, entering into deep meditative concentration and seeing the Buddhas of all ten directions. As the *Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra* states, even those with lower grade of karmic root may see the Buddha in their dreams at the end of their lives and thus be born in the Pure Land of utmost bliss.

Fourteen years ago I saw in a dream the great master Chih-che of the T'ien-t'ai school expounding the Dharma in person. I was moved to tears. Even upon waking up, tears were still flowing without stop, and I have not dreamed of it again. As for seeing the Buddha in meditation, the great master Hui-yuen of Mt. Lu-shan saw the Buddha three times in meditative concentration. The great master Chih-che, while practicing the *Samadhi* by the Lotus of the Dharma in meditation, saw a congregation on the Vulture Peak Mountain, currently going on, not yet disbanded.

In the case of seeing the Buddha in the future, one may see Him at the end of this lifetime or at the rebirth in the lotus flower. For seeing the Buddha at the end of one's life, when one nears the end of this lifetime, he sees the Buddha coming to welcome him to the western Pure Land of utmost bliss. The *Amitabha Sutra* states: "When those persons reach the end of their lives, Amitabha Buddha will appear before them with a host of holy ones. When their lives end, the aspirants' mind will not fall into confusion, and so they will be born in Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land of utmost bliss." For seeing the Buddha in the lotus flower, according to the *Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra*, those of the lowest grade of karmic root may attain birth in a lotus bud and see the Buddha when the lotus bud opens.

He will not be far from the Buddha: This refers to those who will behold the Buddha either in the present or in the future. Firstly, the body and mind of those persons will be close and not far from the Buddha. Secondly, after seeing the Buddha, they may proceed to practice without backing down until they are close to Buddhahood.

Suppose a question is posed: there are those who single-mindedly focus on mindfulness of Buddha, yet, they neither behold the Buddha in dream nor in meditation. There are also those who think of the Buddha through their entire lifetime, yet when their lives end, they are not born to the Pure Land of utmost bliss. How does one explain that?

The reply should be: for those who single-mindedly focus on mindfulness of Buddha, but do not see the Buddha either in dream or in meditation, there are two ways to account for this. First, it is because the hindrances from past karmic deeds are heavy. Second, it is because the wholesome power from the present is weak. If one is able to single-mindedly focus on mindfulness of Buddha, although he may not see the Buddha due to karmic causes and conditions not yet ripe, his efforts will not be needlessly given away. Just like someone who studies very hard, though he may not rank first or second, his time will not be uselessly spent or forfeited. This reasoning should not be very difficult to understand.

Further, for those who think of the Buddha throughout their entire life but are not born in the Pure Land of utmost bliss when their lives end, it may be because they are not diligent or sincere enough in practicing mindfulness of Buddha, or perhaps they have doubts in their mind such that their faith is not thorough, or they have greedy and lustful passions not yet relinquished, or though thinking of the Buddha, they do not aspire to be born in the Pure Land, or though seeking to be born in the Pure Land, they become fearful at the end of their lives. It is due to these various hindering circumstances that some persons may not be born in the Pure Land of utmost bliss when their lives end. Amitabha Buddha's vow and power of compassion and mercy most definitely applies to everyone equally.

If those who practice mindfulness of Buddha thoroughly understand this reasoning, then in their daily practice of mindfulness of Buddha, they must be diligent and sincere in effort, must extinguish all doubts, must have steadfast faith, must eradicate greed, must aspire and seek birth in the Pure Land. Further, nearing the end of their lives, they must relinquish myriads of conditions and circumstances, must be fearless, must fix their mind one-pointedly on birth in the Pure Land of utmost bliss. In every thought they should loathe the Saha world and wish to leave it. In every thought they should rejoice and wish to be born in the Pure Land of utmost bliss. When this joyful wish reaches the utmost, the mind and the Buddha will mutually respond for certain, such that a correspondence will arise between the Buddha's power and the practitioner's receptivity. The practitioner will be received and led by the Buddha and, in an instant, born in the Pure Land. From there on he will always meet and be in company with Buddhas,

Bodhisattvas and sages of supreme virtue. And also from that time on he will forever be a citizen of the Pure Land of utmost bliss.

2. *Thus, without relying on any other means, his mind will be enlightened:* This includes two aspects -- at the present, without relying on any other means, his mind will be enlightened; and, in the future, without relying on any other means, his mind will be enlightened. Without relying on any other means at the present means if one focuses single-mindedly on mindfulness of Buddha at the immediate present, then he has no need to rely on or adopt any other method, various expedients such as learning meditation, studying teachings etc.. One just proceeds to enter deeply into the one and only gate of mindfulness of Buddha, to hold fast and recite the name of the Buddha with single-mindedness and absolute sincerity -- this is the unrivaled expedient mean.

One thinks of the Buddha until each thought corresponds to a thought of Buddha, and that all thoughts correspond to thoughts of Buddha, then, like throwing a purifying pearl into the water, one has thrown the name of the Buddha into his mind. After a long time, the mind and the Buddha will fuse into one entity and all of a sudden the practitioner will realize his mind naturally becoming enlightened -- within and without thoroughly bright and clear, full of the realm of Dharma. Reaching this moment, the practitioner will feel his entire body completely filled throughout and infused with the joy of Dharma from mindfulness of Buddha and that there is not a place where the name of the Buddha is not present. Such a practitioner of mindfulness of Buddha can be referred to as having his mind enlightened at the present without relying on any other means.

Without relying on any other means in the future means if a practitioner of mindfulness of Buddha is born in the western Pure Land, once the lotus flower opens, he will see the Buddha, hear the Buddha expounding the wonderful Dharma, and momentarily realize the real state of non-origination of all things. His mind will be suddenly and completely enlightened, the Buddha inherent in his own mind will be revealed. He will understand that of all the principal and circumstantial retributions and the dharmas of form and mind encompassed in the ten directions, none go beyond the present *bodhi* mind which is fixed one-pointedly on the Buddha. At this moment the practitioner will know deeply that the method of mindfulness of Buddha is truly a superior, unrivaled, profoundly wondrous form of meditation.

Hence, Master Yun-ming (of Sung dynasty, the sixth patriarch of the Pure Land school) said:

"Besides meditation, there is the Pure Land,
Ten thousand practicing, ten thousand arriving;
As long as Amitabha Buddha may be seen,
Why worry about not reaching enlightenment?"

Not just enlightenment, Buddhahood is also attainable. Since even Buddhahood may be accomplished, what other method is there that can triumph over this method of mindfulness of Buddha? Therefore, if a practitioner is able and willing to aspire to single-mindedly practice mindfulness of Buddha, then he does not need to rely on other expedient means.

3. *He is like a man perfumed by incense -- his body gives off fragrance. This is so called 'adorned with and glorified by (Buddha's) fragrance and light':* Master Jing-chuan (a great master of the Tien-t'ai school from the Republic era) said: "This analogy is the most wonderful; it is easiest to understand." In the phrase *he is like a man perfumed by incense*, a man is analogous to *the mind of a sentient being* of the previous sentence, *incense* is analogous to *the Buddha*, and *perfumed by* is analogous to *remembers and thinks of*. Together, the phrase *he is like a man perfumed by incense* is analogous to *if the mind of a sentient being remembers and thinks of the Buddha* of the previous sentence. *His body gives off fragrance* is analogous to the previous phrase *see the Buddha and not be far from the Buddha*. If a person perfumes his body with incense, then after perfuming for a length of time his body will naturally acquire an aroma of incense and an air of fragrance. This is analogous to the mind of a sentient being remembering and thinking of the Buddha -- remembering and thinking of the Buddha for a very long time, perfuming his mind with and immersing his mind in the merits and virtues of the Buddha. As the perfuming lengthens and the practice deepens, his mind will correspond with the Buddha and naturally his entire person will have an air of the Buddha. Then he will definitely behold the Buddha and not be far from the Buddha.

Adorned with and glorified by fragrance and light is analogous to the above *without relying on any other means, his mind will be enlightened*. Fragrance and light constitute an analogy for the light of Buddha -- the Buddha accomplishes the great fruit of *bodhi* by adorning and glorifying the Dharma body with the light of wisdom. If a sentient being aspires to remember and think of the Buddha, then he is perfuming and cultivating his own mind with the merits and virtues of the Buddha. When the perfuming is prolonged, his mind will then correspond with the Buddha; and when this

correspondence is at its utmost, the mind that is focused to one-pointedness will become enlightened. Consequently the light of his mind and the light from the Buddha will join and connect, beam for beam, like one source of light merging with another, to adorn and glorify the fundamental enlightened state of one's own mind. This is called adorning and glorifying oneself with the adornment and glorification of the Buddha -- *the so called 'adorned with and glorified by (Buddha's) fragrance and light'*.

Further, *fragrance* is a metaphor for essential qualities and *light*, a metaphor for innate wisdom while *perfuming* is analogous to practicing for acquired qualities. Because of the power of perfuming by the qualities acquired from remembering and thinking of the Buddha, one may gradually release and relinquish the toil of dusts, namely the realms of the five sense objects. Then, one will no longer be attached to the Saha world with its five defilements, will be willing to aspire to birth in the western Pure Land, will be able to stay not far from the Buddha, will be able to see the Buddha and listen to the Dharma, and will be able to emerge from the dark shell of ignorance of one's own mind. At this point, the practitioner will be able to have the mind suddenly enlightened and wisdom revealed, to personally see the essential qualities inherent in oneself and to know that one's essential qualities and the essential qualities of the Buddha are one and the same, not at all different. Thus, the *Flower Ornament Scripture* states: "All the Tathagatas of the ten directions together share one-Dharma-body, one-mind, one-wisdom and the same goes for their power and fearlessness." This is the moment when one's own mind enters from the realm of karmic cause into the realm of karmic fruit of the enlightenment of the Buddha, like entering a room full of fragrance and light. And so, one adorns and glorifies oneself with the adornment and glorification of the Buddha.

Originally, in the realm of karmic cause, it is with a mind engaged in mindfulness of Buddha that I have entered into the state of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence. Now in this world, I embrace all those who practice mindfulness of Buddha and guide them toward the Pure Land. As the Buddha inquires about the best means of perfect realization, I do not choose among the sense faculties, but recommend simultaneously controlling all six senses and having continuous and succeeding pure thoughts in order to attain Samadhi. This is the first and foremost method.

This paragraph here may be divided into three sections. 1. The three phrases starting from *originally, in the realm of cause* briefly

discuss the practice benefiting oneself. 2. The three phrases starting from *now in this world* briefly discuss the practice benefiting others. 3. *As the Buddha inquires about the best means of perfect realization to this is the first and foremost method* constitutes the response to the inquiry on perfect realization.

1. Briefly discussing the practice benefiting oneself: *Originally, in the realm of karmic cause* indicates the time when the practice is intended as a karmic cause; *the state of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence* marks the position on the Buddhist path where the karmic fruit is attained. Here, the Bodhisattva describes how, in the past while he was practicing in the realm of karmic cause, he met the Buddha of Light Outshining Sun and Moon who taught him the method of mindfulness of Buddha. This refers to one remembering and thinking of the Buddha with a mind completely subduing all six senses and having pure thoughts one succeeding the other, like a mind of a son remembering his mother. One should not concentrate his thoughts on the Buddha with discerning consciousness, or with a mind attached to the nine realms (hell, hungry spirits, animals, asuras, humans, heavenly beings, sravakas, pratyeka-buddhas and bodhisattvas); instead, one should concentrate his thoughts on the Buddha with a mind focused one-pointedly on the Dharma realm of the Buddha. Exercising and practicing diligently in this manner, practicing without impurities and without stop in this manner, deepening the practice gradually, and to the utmost in this manner, one suddenly enters into the Dharma realm of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence.

The state of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence: non-origination of all existence refers to the true state of nirvana, and clear cognition means wisdom. From remembering and thinking of the Buddha, the mind will be naturally enlightened, the wisdom of non-origination is attained and distressing passions do not arise. Hence, non-origination of all existence is the state of clear cognition. The power of this clear cognition will help increase the power of concentration such that the mind will not be under invasion by outside realms due to the six sense-objects, and the mind will not be swayed from rightful thoughts. This is referred to as entering into the state of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence.

Also, because through remembering and thinking of the Buddha, the mind will be naturally enlightened and the wisdom of non-origination will be attained, the mind will therefore perceive that all dharmas fundamentally do not originate and presently do not cease. This principle of no originating and no ceasing is the true state of all dharmas, and the realization of this is called achieving non-origination. Having achieved non-origination one has full power of clear cognition; setting this power of clear cognition and a mind

of wisdom to dwell in the principle of non-origination is called entering into the state of clear cognition of non origination of all existence.

Volume fifty of the *Ta-chi-tu lun* states: "The Dharma realm of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence is to believe, to receive and to reach the true state of non-originating and non-ceasing of all dharmas, without faltering and without backing down -- this is called the state of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence." According to the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna, "[Bodhisattvas] above the initial first ground are also able to achieve non-origination." But according to *The Benevolent King Protecting the Country Prajna Sutra*: "Non-origination is achieved at the seventh, eighth and ninth grounds."

2. Briefly discussing the practice benefiting others: in the three phrases, starting from *now in this world*, the Bodhisattva briefly describes, after having entered the state of clear cognition of non-origination of all existence with a mind engaged in mindfulness of Buddha, how by employing a mind of great compassion and mercy and enforced by the power of his great vow, he comes to this Saha world to help the Buddha promote the Dharma and enlighten the sentient beings in this unwholesome world of five defilements. With the wondrous method of mindfulness of Buddha that he has practiced in the realm of cause in his past, and with the wonderful fruit of perfect realization that he has achieved in the realm of fruit, he endows and guides sentient beings who are practicing mindfulness of Buddha in this world. During their lifetime, He takes care of them with loving kindness and compassion in order to strengthen their mind to be strong and steady in practicing mindfulness of Buddha without relapse. Near the end of their lives He takes care of them with the power of His vow in order to reinforce the clarity and precision of their right thought; consequently they may attain birth in and belong to the Pure Land.

The Tien-tai school distinguishes between four Pure Lands: 1.The Pure Land of eternal, tranquil light 2.The Pure Land adorned by the true reward of non-hindrance 3.The Pure Land temporarily established for those with remaining delusions and 4.The Pure Land of shared abode by sages and uninitiated. The lotus flowers, through which beings are born to the Pure Land, of each land consist of nine different grades, some higher and some lower. Master O-i said: "whether attaining birth there or not depends solely on whether there is faith and vow or not; whether reaching higher or lower positions relies completely on whether the practice of recitation of Buddha's name (one form of mindfulness of Buddha) is deep or shallow."

1) Those who have true faith and made sincere vows, but whose practice of mindfulness of Buddha has not achieved one-pointedness of mind and whose karmic deeds of delusions have not been completely subdued and eradicated, may still be born in the Pure Land with deeds of delusion attached. They will then belong to the land of shared abode by sages and uninitiated.

2) Those who have practiced mindfulness of Buddha until achieving one-pointedness of mind through phenomenon, must have extinguished the initial delusions of view and thought. All of them will belong to the land temporarily established for those with remaining delusions. This is the Pure Land inhabited by sravakas, pratyeka Buddhas and Bodhisattvas not yet attaining the Dharma-body.

3) Those who have practiced mindfulness of Buddha until achieving one-pointedness of mind through principle, must have either eradicated the first order ignorance, or eradicated up to forty-one orders of ignorance, and subsequently dwell at the position of enlightenment equal to the Buddha. All of them will belong to the Pure Land adorned by the true reward of non-hindrance.

4) Those who have practiced mindfulness of Buddha until all ignorance have been eradicated and the ultimate one-pointedness of mind is achieved, will belong to the Pure Land of eternal, tranquil light, and wait to take the position of the next Buddha.

From this perspective, in order to truly achieve one-pointedness of mind, one must eradicate delusions, and only after attaining one-pointedness of mind may one be born to the three higher levels of the Pure Land. However, regarding the uninitiated of the latter days of the Dharma, if they can be born in the Pure Land of shared abode by the sages and uninitiated, they too may leave the sufferings of the Saha world, and never drop back for endless kalpas. It is imperative to know this.

Master Tzu-yun said: "There are ten sufferings in the Saha world and ten joys in the realm of peace and sustenance (Pure Land). The ten sufferings are: not encountering the Buddha, not hearing the Dharma, involved with unwholesome companions, distressed by hordes of devils, undergoing cycles of rebirth, falling to evil realms, hindrances from circumstances conditioned by sense objects on the Buddhist path, short and rushed lifetimes, relapse and loss in practice, difficulty in completing the Buddhist practice for countless kalpas like the dusts. The ten joy are: often seeing the Buddha, often hearing the Dharma, meeting with saints and sages, devoid of dealings with devils, ceasing of cycles of rebirth, not falling to evil realms, help from favorable circumstances on the Buddhist path, immeasurable lifetimes, joining those rightfully established to reach enlightenment or *samyaktvaniyata-raci*, (according to the Mahayana, these beings, with their faith perfected and their

aspiration or *bodhicitta*, awakened, dwell at the position of first abode on the Bodhisattva path), practice completed in one lifetime." Therefore, those practicing mindfulness of Buddha, should cultivate the three wonderful wisdoms arising from listening, contemplating and practicing, and possess the three provisions of faith, aspiration and practice. Only then may they be called a true practitioner of mindfulness of Buddha.

Question: May those who have, in their past, committed the five gravest offenses and the ten evil acts but still retain the three provisions and three wisdoms (as mentioned above), be born in the western Pure Land?

Reply: Though they have committed various offenses, because they have faith, aspiration and practice toward that Buddha Land, they may yet be born to the lowest level of the lowest grade in that Land.

Hence, the *Buddha of Infinite Life Sutra* states: "But excluded are those who have committed the five gravest offenses and abused the right Dharma." Therefore it should be noted that if one commits the five gravest offenses and also slanders the rightful Dharma, then he will be excluded (from the Pure Land). But if one does not also abuse the Dharma, one may yet not be excluded. By slandering one shows no faith, and without faith there will be no birth there. On the other hand, the *Meditation on the Buddha of Infinite Light Sutra* states: "Those who have committed the five gravest offenses may be born there." From this it follows that although people may have committed the five gravest offenses, as long as they do not abuse the rightful Dharma, they will definitely attain birth there. If they slander the Dharma as well, then they cannot be born there. So, it is faith that determines birth in the Pure Land.

3. Responding to the Buddha's inquiry about perfect realization: from *as the Buddha inquires about the best means of perfect realization to this is the first and foremost method* constitutes the last section of this passage on perfect realization. This is motivated by the Suramgama congregation where various saints and sages, each responds to the question posed by the Buddha and relates his own practice in the realm of cause. Everyone differs in their practice, from one who enters *Samadhi* and reaches perfect realization by means of the sense faculty of eye, to one who enters *Samadhi* and reaches perfect realization by means of the five greats -- earth, water, fire, wind and space.

As Mahasthamaprapta says, however, it is only I who make no distinction in general among the senses, but keep the mind on right thought, simultaneously controlling all six sense faculties like a fist capturing all five fingers. Specifically, by focusing on the present single-minded sincere state of mind as right mindfulness, and by keeping this right mindfulness as the

principal engagement of the mind, I, as Mahasthamaprapta, am thus able to control the six senses, and remember and think of the Buddha. Having continuous and successive pure thoughts without stop in this manner and maintaining this for a length of time, practice will deepen and laziness and confusion will be left behind. Then, concentration and wisdom will uphold the mind and one will enter into *Samadhi*. This is the method I, as Mahasthamaprapta, have attained for reaching perfect realization.

Perfect denotes perfect completion. From the perspective of self practice, it encompasses the various wonders and embraces the myriad dharmas. *Realization* denotes reaching and realizing, and from the perspective of enlightening others, it means to reach the entire secular world, completely, without holding back. It also refers to the mutual reinforcement of perfect realization from the two perspectives of benefit -- benefiting self through self practice and benefiting others by enlightening others.

Do not choose among the sense faculties: Unlike Aniruddha who chooses the sense faculty of the eye, nor like Subhuti who chooses the sense faculty of the mind, Mahasthamaprapta does not choose the external characteristics of the six senses such as the eye, the ear, etc., or the internal functions of the six senses such as sight, hearing, etc., but relies solely on the single origin of all senses by holding fast to the mind, focusing on one-pointedness, not exercising the functions of the six senses, yet being able to *simultaneously control all six senses*.

Having continuous and succeeding pure thoughts:

If all six sense faculties are not under simultaneous control by the mind, then depending on the six senses the six sense consciousness will arise. These six sense consciousness in turn will be defiled by, and will associate with, and grasp without release, the six sense objects. These should not be called pure thoughts. In this case, the seventh-consciousness (klista-manas) internally grasps the alaya-vijnana (the eighth-consciousness or store consciousness) as the self and externally identifies the realms of the sense objects as dharmas; it grasps a real self and real dharma and perfumes the eighth alaya consciousness with such graspings. When the seventh-consciousness encounters conditions of the outside realms, together they will give rise to present actions, and as a result, retributions from wholesome and unwholesome karmic deeds will continue accordingly and precisely, keeping the person drifting without end.

Only if the person simultaneously controls all six sense faculties, and keeps every thought on remembering and thinking of the Buddha with the utmost sincerity, can he begin to leave the outside realms and approach enlightenment. He may gradually turn consciousness into wisdom, turn back from delusion, return to the true state, and turn defilement into purity. Purifying and further purifying without stop until genuine, focused, pure thoughts continue; only then will the mind coincide with enlightenment. And coincide with the Buddha. This is borrowing enlightenment from the realm of fruit to control the mind that is still in the realm of cause and conversely, using the mind from the realm of cause to condition the enlightenment in the realm of fruit. In this way, cause may condition fruit and fruit may control cause, cause and fruit are not two and mind and Buddha are but the one thusness. As a result, the wonder from the taste of Dharma and the joy from *Samadhi*, are like honey which once tasted, bees never tire of gathering.

If a practitioner of mindfulness of Buddha is able to simultaneously control all six senses and have continuous and succeeding pure thoughts, then he will naturally attain *Samadhi* and the joy of *Samadhi* will directly be with him. His mind will dwell steadily in the rightful state of a Buddha and will no longer be involved in the turning and drifting (of rebirth). Thus it is said that *Samadhi* by mindfulness of Buddha is *the first and foremost*.

Thus, the *Great Collection Sutra (Mahasamghata-sutra)* states: "If people will only keep Amitabha in thought and in recitation, it shall be called the supreme, most profound and wondrous meditation." The wonder of this method depends on whether the practitioner is able to discipline the mind to his advantage. For example, when playing the piano, the ability to create wonderful music depends on how wonderfully the player can manage his fingers. For us practitioners of mindfulness of Buddha, the point is how well we can simultaneously control the six senses. However, how does one control the six senses? I shall present, as a gift to all those who practice mindfulness of Buddha, a story about how to simultaneously control the six senses.

When the Buddha was still dwelling in this world, there was a practitioner of the Buddhist way living by the Ganges River. He had carried out ascetic practice for twelve years but his mind and thoughts were still wandering and distracted, greedily attached to the realms of the six sense objects. Thus he was not yet able to enter the path to enlightenment. One day the Buddha came to his place, and they sat together under a tree. Soon, a turtle came upon the beach. A dog saw the turtle and went over to tease and bite it. Whereupon the turtle promptly withdrew his head, tail and four feet into his hiding-six shell, and thwarted the dog. When the dog left, the turtle

stretched back out his six extremities. Seeing this, the dog came over again, and the turtle hid himself again. This went on repeatedly confusing and frustrating the dog, and the turtle avoided danger. At that moment, the practitioner unconsciously laughed. The Buddha saw him laugh and laughed too. Then He thus instructed the practitioner:

"Some practicing people,
Are no better than this turtle.
Not guarding their sense-gates,
Indulging in six sense-pleasures,
They let loose the devil's influence.
Form deteriorated, mind distracted,
Drifting through karmic deeds,
Suffering distress -- hundreds, thousands!"

He continued with this verse:

"Hide six like turtle,
Guard thoughts like castle;
Fight devil with wisdom,
Win battle for freedom!"

Now, I look forward to all of us becoming virtuous sages by efficiently learning the Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta's method of mindfulness of Buddha. May we truly be able to simultaneously control all six sense faculties, to have continuous and succeeding pure thoughts, to not only attain *Samadhi* in the present lifetime, but to reach birth in the western Pure Land near the end of this lifetime, seeing Amitabha Buddha when the lotus flower opens and being close to Him day and night. This will far exceed the turtle's feat of hiding his six extremities in both skill and wonder!