

The Stages of Practice and Practical Spirit in Master Yinguang's Pure Land Instructions: Centering on Reply to Layman Ye Fubei, Letter One

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Abstract: Master Yinguang expounded the Pure Land teaching in plain, earnest, and practical language, bringing profound doctrinal principles into everyday conduct, interpersonal relations, and communal monastic life. Centering on a passage from Reply to Layman Ye Fubei, Letter One in Yinguang Fashi Wenchao Sanbian (The Third Collection of Master Yinguang's Collected Writings), this paper examines the sequence of practice and practical spirit embedded in Master Yinguang's Pure Land instruction by placing it in dialogue with Pure Land scriptures, the Six Harmonies, the six perfections, the Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra, and the three provisions of faith, vows, and practice. The paper argues that the passage is not merely an exhortation to recite the Buddha's name. Rather, it establishes a complete structure of cultivation: reverence and harmony serve as its ethical foundation; patience, giving, rejoicing in others' virtue, and repentance function as supportive conditions for pure karma; uninterrupted recollection of the Buddha's name in walking, standing, sitting, lying down, dressing, and eating is the main practice; humility, repentance, and firm assurance of rebirth in the Pure Land constitute its devotional culmination. This structure moves from communal harmony and the taming of body and mind toward Pure Land orientation. It has significant implications for the education of Buddhist college students, Pure Land curriculum design, and daily norms of Buddhist practice.

Keywords: Master Yinguang; Pure Land Buddhism; Faith, Vows, and Practice; Six Harmonies; Samantabhadra's Vows; Nianfo Samadhi

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1. Statement of the Problem: Entering Master Yinguang's Pure Land Thought through One Instruction

As a major Pure Land patriarch of modern Chinese Buddhism, Master Yinguang's teaching activities were marked by a strong practical orientation. He did not attempt to construct an abstruse theoretical system. Instead, he repeatedly articulated the essentials of practice in language that was close to ordinary moral life and accessible to people of varied capacities: faith and vows, recitation of the Buddha's name, fulfilling one's human duties, guarding sincerity, restraining what is improper, refraining from evil, and practicing all good. His letters and short instructions are plain and condensed, yet they integrate the doctrinal basis of the Pure Land path, the concrete route of cultivation, and the ethical life of daily conduct. In this way, theory and practice are brought together, and practitioners of different capacities can find an entrance into the Dharma and

apply nianfo within ordinary circumstances.^[1]

The central text examined here is a passage from Master Yinguang's letter to Layman Ye Fubei: "Whether one is at home or in a hermitage, one must respect those above and live harmoniously with those below; endure what others cannot endure; do what others cannot do; take on the labor of others; help others accomplish what is good; when sitting quietly, always reflect on one's own faults; in casual conversation, do not discuss the faults of others; while walking, standing, sitting, lying down, dressing, and eating, from morning until evening and from evening until morning, do not let a single recitation of the Buddha's name be interrupted."^[2] Although concise, this passage contains the basic outline of Pure Land cultivation. It may be analyzed in four dimensions. First, the initial path of cultivation lies in reverence, modesty, and harmonious coexistence among people. Second, the progress of cultivation requires such bodhisattva practices as patience, giving, rejoicing, and repentance as supportive conditions. Third, the core of Pure Land practice remains faith, vows, and recitation of the Buddha's name; nianfo must not be separated from daily use, but should enter daily use and accompany it. Fourth, practitioners must constantly maintain a sense of shame, remorse, and humility, giving up self-display and arrogance so that the mind can receive wholesome Dharma.

This paper takes Yinguang's instruction as its central textual basis and interprets it through the Six Harmonies, the six perfections, the Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra, and nianfo samadhi. Its aim is not merely to express devotion to Master Yinguang's teaching, but to clarify, from the three dimensions of doctrine, practice, and everyday life, that the Pure Land path he revealed is not a narrow path concerned only with the final moment before death. It is a complete system of cultivation extending through the practitioner's whole life, permeating daily activities, communal life, and moral formation. In this sense, Yinguang's teaching is practical learning, practical cultivation, and practical realization.

2. Scriptural Foundations of the Pure Land Path and the Basis of Faith, Vows, and Practice

To understand Master Yinguang's Pure Land instruction, one must first return to its scriptural foundation. The Pure Land path takes faith, vows, and practice as its three essential provisions. Faith includes faith in oneself, faith in the Buddha, faith in cause, faith in effect, faith in the factual reality of the Pure Land, and faith in its principle. It is the root and prerequisite of the path. Vows refer chiefly to aversion toward the afflictions and impurities of the Saha world and aspiration for the purity and adornment of the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. Vows provide direction and motivation. Practice means holding fast to the name of Amitabha Buddha and reciting it in an honest and steady manner. It is the actual enactment of faith and aspiration.

The eighteenth vow in the Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life states: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the ten directions, with sincere mind and joyful faith, desire to be born in my land, even with ten thoughts, and yet are not born there, may I not attain perfect awakening." This vow establishes the doctrinal basis of directing practice through vows and gathering the mind through the name. Yinguang's interpretation of the Pure Land teaching always remains grounded in Amitabha's fundamental vow. At the same time, he never abandons the practitioner's own active cultivation of faith, vows, and recitation. Pure Land practice, therefore, does not rely solely on the practitioner's individual meditative power; nor does it negate the practitioner's responsibility. It establishes a dynamic relation between the practitioner's earnest aspiration and Amitabha Buddha's compassionate vow-power. This is one of the distinctive features of Yinguang's Pure Land teaching: self-power and other-power are not opposed but brought into resonance.^[3]

The Amitabha Sutra centers on holding the name, attaining one-pointedness, and being protected by all Buddhas. It shows that name-recitation has a double value: it can discipline and purify the mind in the present life, and it can also serve as the fundamental cause for rebirth in the Land of Bliss at the end of life. When Yinguang urges practitioners to continue the Buddha's name from morning to evening and from evening to morning without interruption, he is translating the scriptural teaching of holding the name and achieving single-mindedness into an everyday discipline. The goal is not a merely external form of recitation, but a daily practice through which scripture becomes lived conduct.^[4]

The Chapter on the Perfect Penetration of Mahasthamaprapta through Buddha-Recollection in the Surangama Sutra offers the famous formula: "Gather in the six faculties, and let pure mindfulness continue without interruption." This became an important doctrinal basis for later Pure Land methods of gathering the mind through nianfo. Recitation is not merely

oral repetition. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are gathered into the Buddha's name so that the scattered mind gradually becomes concentrated and the grasping mind is purified. Yinguang's methods of "reciting with the mouth and listening with the ear," "collecting the mind in nianfo," and "counting in sets of ten recitations" are practical interpretations of this principle. They make a profound contemplative teaching usable for practitioners of ordinary capacities.^[5]

The Contemplation Sutra presents sixteen contemplations and also teaches that even beings burdened with grave karma may, at the final moment, through meeting a good spiritual friend and reciting Amitabha's name with faith, be reborn in the Western Pure Land. This teaching displays the inclusiveness of the Pure Land path, which embraces beings of all capacities. Yet "rebirth with remaining karma" must not be misunderstood as permission for laxity or wrongdoing. Its purpose is to prevent karmically burdened beings from falling into despair. Even if afflictions are heavy, if one gives rise to true faith and sincere vows, repents, reforms oneself, practices good, and recites the Buddha's name with sincerity, one may still rely on the Buddha's vow-power and find a path out of samsara. This is why Yinguang repeatedly links faith, vows, recitation, repentance, and moral reform.^[6]

Seen through the combined lens of the three Pure Land sutras, Yinguang's interpretation maintains a dual perspective. It never leaves the fundamental support of Amitabha's vow, and it never neglects the practitioner's present conduct. If one stresses only Buddha-power and ignores faith, vows, and practice, one risks turning the Pure Land path into a shortcut without responsibility. If one stresses only personal effort and neglects Amitabha's vow, one loses the distinctive character of the Pure Land teaching as a special Dharma-door. Yinguang's skill lies in uniting the two: the Buddha's compassionate vow gives confidence to ordinary beings, while the practitioner's faith, vows, moral reform, and name-recitation give the vow a concrete place to function.

Faith, vows, and practice are mutually dependent. Genuine faith naturally gives rise to the vow to leave the Saha world and be born in the Land of Bliss. Firm vows naturally express themselves in name-recitation and sustained effort. Continuous practice, in turn, strengthens faith and deepens aspiration. This forms a living cycle: faith gives birth to vows; vows guide practice; practice increases faith. When Yinguang exhorts people to practice "honest nianfo," he is not urging anti-intellectualism. He is warning against clever speculation, empty discourse, and neglect of actual cultivation. For Buddhist academy students, this point is especially important: scriptural study is necessary, but if learning does not become reverence, repentance, mindfulness, and conduct, it remains paper knowledge. Pure Land education must therefore bridge doctrinal study and embodied practice.

Ouyi Zhixu states in his Essential Explanation of the Amitabha Sutra: "Whether one attains rebirth depends entirely on whether one has faith and vows; the grade of rebirth depends entirely on the depth of name-recitation." This judgment clearly defines the relation among faith, vows, recitation, and rebirth. Yinguang inherits this understanding. Without genuine faith and vows, oral recitation can become a general good deed without decisive Pure Land orientation. Without actual recitation, faith and vows remain abstract. The three provisions are not isolated elements but an integrated structure of cultivation.^[7]

3. "Respecting Those Above and Living Harmoniously with Those Below": The Communal Ethical Basis of Pure Land Practice

Yinguang places the words "whether one is at home or in a hermitage, one must respect those above and live harmoniously with those below" at the very beginning of the instruction. This arrangement is significant. It shows that Pure Land practice is not isolated from human relations, communal life, or the ordinary discipline of living with others. A person who recites the Buddha's name but remains arrogant, quarrelsome, and fond of disputes fails to correspond with the purity and harmony of the Pure Land path. Recitation that does not transform conduct cannot become truly effective.

The phrase "respecting those above and living harmoniously with those below" can be interpreted through the Buddhist teaching of the Six Harmonies: harmony in views, harmony in discipline, harmony in bodily dwelling, harmony in speech without dispute, harmony in mental joy, and harmony in the sharing of benefits. Respect means reverence toward teachers, the Dharma, discipline, fellow practitioners, and all beings. Harmony means tolerance, support, and non-arrogance toward peers and juniors. In monastic life, this becomes respect for elders, communal practice, avoidance of factionalism, and refraining from disputes. In lay life, it becomes filial respect, family harmony, and support for the order of the Dharma community.

The Six Harmonies and name-recitation are not separate practices. If nianfo practitioners share a common view, they understand that all are moving toward rebirth in the Pure Land and the fulfillment of bodhi. If they share discipline, they restrain the three karmas of body, speech, and mind. If they practice harmony in speech, they reduce disputes and protect a peaceful mental environment for recitation. If they share benefits, they weaken selfishness and cultivate generosity. Thus Yinguang begins with communal harmony because the Buddha's name must be rooted in moral transformation and harmonious conduct.

The saying "if the Dharma is to flourish, monastics must praise one another" is not a canonical quotation, but it captures the importance of harmony in Buddhist communities. A monastery may have solemn rituals and impressive forms, but if the community is filled with contention, jealousy, and rivalry, it cannot nourish the mind of practice. Yinguang's teaching plants the seeds of respect, modesty, communal care, and mutual support. Nianfo then ceases to be merely an individual activity and becomes a shared practice that gathers the strength of a community.

For Buddhist colleges, the Six Harmonies have direct educational significance. Students study together, chant morning and evening services, work in the community, eat in the dining hall, and live in dormitories. All of these situations train body, speech, and mind. If students can discuss doctrine in class but cannot live with others in the dormitory or dining hall without conflict, their learning has not yet become embodied. Yinguang's first point therefore teaches that the foundation of Pure Land practice lies in human relations: reverence, humility, tolerance, and care for others are the ground upon which name-recitation takes root.^[8]

From the deeper perspective of Pure Land doctrine, rebirth in the Land of Bliss is not the escape of an isolated individual. Amitabha's vows gather all sentient beings into a purified field where they cultivate together. If practitioners wish to correspond to that vow-power, they must begin in this world by practicing purity, equality, harmony, and mutual support. The Six Harmonies are the method by which the Pure Land spirit is manifested in the present world. A community that reduces contention, supports others, and cultivates together already reflects something of the Pure Land.

4. "Enduring What Others Cannot Endure and Doing What Others Cannot Do": Bodhisattva Vows and Pure Land Provisions

Yinguang's instruction continues: "Endure what others cannot endure; do what others cannot do." This does not refer merely to ordinary patience or everyday action. It can be understood through the Mahayana practices of the six perfections and the vows of Samantabhadra. Although the Pure Land path has rebirth in the Western Land as its central aspiration, it does not exclude present bodhisattva practice. On the contrary, those with genuine faith and vows should actively cultivate patience, giving, vigor, rejoicing, and repentance amid the conditions of daily life. These practices purify bodily and mental karma and accumulate the provisions for rebirth.

In Buddhist scripture, patience is one of the six perfections and a central bodhisattva practice. The Diamond Sutra uses the story of the patient sage to illustrate the meaning of patience: when the sage's body was cut by King Kalinga, he did not give rise to hatred. This patience expresses the insight that there is no fixed self, person, sentient being, or lifespan to cling to. The connection to nianfo is direct. If a person recites the Buddha's name but is immediately overcome by anger whenever circumstances are unpleasant, the Buddha's name cannot easily enter the mind, and pure mindfulness cannot continue. Patience protects faith, vows, and the continuity of recitation.^[9]

Nagarjuna's Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom also explains the merits of patience. Patience is not cowardice. It is the capacity to observe causes and conditions with wisdom, transform resentment through compassion, and abide in composure through concentration. Whether one is studying, practicing, maintaining a monastery, or teaching the Dharma, patience is indispensable. Without patience, giving becomes superficial, discipline becomes unstable, and recitation is easily interrupted by agitation.^[10]

Chinese classical thought also sheds light on this point. The Mencius teaches that when Heaven is about to entrust a great responsibility to a person, it first tests the mind and body through hardship. This idea of moral formation through adversity parallels Yinguang's call to endure what others cannot endure. Buddhist patience is not passive suffering. It is a positive practice of training the mind in adverse conditions, reducing hatred, expanding compassion, and strengthening resolve.^[11]

“Doing what others cannot do” can be read in connection with Samantabhadra’s Ten Great Vows: paying homage to all Buddhas, praising the Tathagatas, making abundant offerings, repenting karmic obstacles, rejoicing in others’ merit, requesting the turning of the Dharma wheel, requesting the Buddhas to remain in the world, constantly following the Buddha’s teaching, accommodating sentient beings, and universally dedicating merit. Yinguang’s teaching to regard all people as bodhisattvas and oneself alone as an ordinary being embodies reverence, humility, and accommodation. It directs practitioners away from self-centered practice and toward the bodhisattva spirit.

Pure Land recitation without reverence can become empty repetition; Pure Land aspiration without bodhicitta can become narrow self-concern. Samantabhadra’s vows supply the expansive dimension of Pure Land practice. Through reverence, rejoicing, repentance, service, and dedication, the practitioner deepens faith and vows while cultivating compassion. Nianfo is then no longer an isolated personal act, but a practice connected to benefiting beings and realizing bodhi.^[12]

Samantabhadra’s vows occupy a special place in Pure Land cultivation because the Avatamsaka tradition itself leads the vast bodhisattva path toward the Pure Land. Yinguang, though emphasizing name-recitation as the main practice, fills his instructions with the spirit of Samantabhadra’s vows. Respecting those above and living harmoniously with those below is the daily expression of paying homage. Taking on others’ labor and helping them accomplish good is the daily expression of rejoicing in merit. Reflecting on one’s own faults is the daily work of repentance. Continuous recitation and universal dedication bring all practice back to the Pure Land.

Therefore, the Pure Land teaching must not be narrowed into concern only for deathbed rebirth. Genuine Pure Land cultivation unites faith, vows, and practice in present body, speech, and mind. If one vows for rebirth but cannot respect others, rejoice in goodness, repent faults, or endure hardship, the vow remains superficial. Yinguang’s greatness lies in translating the vast vows of Samantabhadra into ordinary daily conduct, so that every practitioner can cultivate the bodhisattva path in sweeping, eating, speaking, working, and living with others.

5. “Taking on Others’ Labor and Helping Others Accomplish Good”: Altruistic Practice and Offerings

The phrase “taking on others’ labor and helping others accomplish good” is one of the most practical elements in Yinguang’s instruction. A Pure Land practitioner who seeks only personal peace and ignores the suffering of others lacks compassion. A person who recites the Buddha’s name but refuses to help others in daily situations lacks bodhisattva practice. Yinguang’s language is simple: when others are burdened, one should help shoulder their work; when others are doing something good, one should rejoice and support them. This is giving, offering, and rejoicing in concrete form.

Giving may be divided into material giving, Dharma giving, and the giving of fearlessness. Taking on others’ labor can be understood as a form of inner giving: one gives one’s time, strength, and effort. Helping others accomplish good is related to rejoicing in merit and Dharma giving, because it supports another person’s wholesome action and encourages right faith and practice. It may also carry the quality of giving fearlessness, for it relieves anxiety and gives confidence to others.

The Diamond Sutra teaches giving without attachment to form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or dharmas. The ideal is to give without clinging to the giver, the gift, or the recipient. Yinguang does not expound this in abstruse language, yet his phrase brings the same spirit into ordinary life. One need not wait for a grand act of charity. Helping another person in concrete matters and rejoicing in another person’s virtue are already ways to practice giving without seeking reward.^[9]

“Helping others accomplish good” also corresponds to Samantabhadra’s vow of rejoicing in merit. Ordinary people are often bound by jealousy. When others do good, receive praise, or succeed in practice, one may feel uneasy. Rejoicing reverses this habit. To rejoice sincerely in another’s virtue weakens self-centeredness and nourishes compassion. For Pure Land practitioners, such rejoicing is not a secondary moral virtue but an important means of purifying the mind and accumulating provisions for rebirth.

In Buddhist colleges and monasteries, taking on others’ labor is not only service; it is a method for breaking attachment to self. Many afflictions arise in small situations: one feels disadvantaged by doing more work, dissatisfied when not recognized, or jealous when others are praised. Yinguang’s instruction brings practice into these subtle places. To be willing to do small tasks, especially when unnoticed, is to test and train the mind. To rejoice in others’ progress is to expand one’s capacity and

cultivate the atmosphere of the Pure Land, where good people gather and practice together.

6. “When Sitting Quietly, Always Reflect on One’s Own Faults; in Casual Conversation, Do Not Discuss Others’ Faults”: Repentance and Purification of Speech

Yinguang’s words “when sitting quietly, always reflect on one’s own faults; in casual conversation, do not discuss the faults of others” provide a crucial method of self-examination in Pure Land practice. If one is constantly discussing others’ weaknesses, spreading criticism, or indulging in idle talk, the mind becomes filled with comparison, arrogance, and agitation. Even if one recites the Buddha’s name, it is difficult for the mind to correspond to purity.

Reflecting on one’s own faults cultivates shame and remorse. In Buddhist practice, having faults is not the greatest danger; not recognizing, admitting, or correcting faults is the greater danger. Pure Land practitioners who reflect on their karmic burden can generate a more urgent aspiration for rebirth and a more sincere reliance on Amitabha’s vow. Repentance is not merely verbal. It means recognizing faults, stopping harmful habits, and resolving not to repeat them.

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch says that true practitioners do not look at the faults of the world. This does not mean losing discernment between right and wrong. It means not using one’s energy to observe, discuss, and spread the faults of others. This accords closely with Yinguang’s instruction not to discuss others’ faults. False speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, and idle speech all damage the mind of practice. To guard speech is to protect nianfo.^[13]

Purification of speech is especially important because the Buddha’s name emerges through the mouth. If the same mouth recites the Buddha’s name and also speaks divisive or harmful words, the power of recitation is weakened by mixed karma. Yinguang’s advice to speak one sentence less and recite the Buddha once more does not deny necessary communication. Rather, it reminds practitioners to prevent language from becoming a vehicle of affliction.

Repentance must be expressed in action. If one says words of repentance but continues to indulge greed, anger, and delusion, repentance remains formal. Yinguang’s emphasis on constantly maintaining a sense of shame and repentance points to long-term vigilance. If one notices excessive speech, one begins by speaking less and reciting more. If one notices anger, one begins by yielding one step. If one notices laziness, one begins by maintaining regular practice. Through such concrete corrections, the Buddha’s name gains a place to function.

Reflecting on one’s own faults also corresponds to Samantabhadra’s vow of repenting karmic obstacles. This repentance is not gloomy self-reproach. It is the clear observation of one’s afflictions and habits, supported by the Buddha’s name. Shame weakens arrogance; repentance removes concealment. When arrogance lessens, recitation becomes more sincere; when concealment is removed, practice becomes more authentic.

7. One Buddha-Name in Walking, Standing, Sitting, and Lying Down: Name-Recitation and Nianfo Samadhi

The heart of the entire instruction is Yinguang’s teaching that in walking, standing, sitting, lying down, dressing, and eating, from morning to evening and from evening to morning, one should not let the Buddha’s name be interrupted. Ethical cultivation, patience, altruistic conduct, and repentance are all supportive conditions; the main practice ultimately returns to holding the name of Amitabha Buddha.

Name-recitation unites simplicity and profundity. It is simple because anyone can recite “Namo Amitabha Buddha,” regardless of social status, intellectual capacity, or circumstances. It is profound because the name gathers Amitabha’s complete merits and can guide the practitioner from scattered mind to concentration, from affliction to purity, and from ordinary consciousness toward uninterrupted pure mindfulness. Yinguang’s encouragement of quiet recitation, silent recitation, and practical methods of counting shows that the key is not external grandeur but sincerity and continuity.

“Not letting the Buddha’s name be interrupted” does not mean mechanical repetition. If the mouth recites while the mind is scattered, the practice does not readily correspond to the Pure Land vow. Recitation must gather the mind. Yinguang’s advice to recite with the mouth and listen with the ear is a concrete method for allowing the name to enter the heart. He does not demand withdrawal from ordinary life. Rather, he teaches practitioners to let the Buddha’s name become the axis of daily life. This is consistent with the Surangama teaching of gathering in the six faculties and continuing pure mindfulness. In ordinary

life, the six faculties are constantly drawn outward by objects. The Buddha's name gathers them back. Eating, walking, sweeping, working, and interacting with others all become occasions for mindful recitation. Nianfo samadhi is not primarily the pursuit of unusual visions or miraculous signs; it is the maturing of a mind that repeatedly returns to the Buddha's name until the name becomes familiar, deluded thoughts become sparse, faith and vows deepen, and the bodhi mind becomes stable.

Yinguang's method shows a strong practical rationality. He does not encourage attachment to visions, signs, or supernatural experiences. He stresses sincerity, attentive listening, and continuity. Soft recitation gathers the ear; silent recitation is suitable when one cannot speak aloud; vajra recitation balances mouth and mind; counting in tens helps counter scatteredness. The methods differ, but their purpose is one: to sustain the Buddha's name and purify the mind.

In this view, practice is not confined to the shrine hall and not postponed until death. Walking on the road, eating a meal, sweeping the floor, or interacting with others can all become moments of nianfo. When the Buddha's name is integrated into ordinary life, it becomes a real force for transforming afflictions and nourishing character. This is the living form of Yinguang's teaching to fulfill one's duties, guard sincerity, and recite honestly.

8. Taming Deluded Thoughts and Cultivating Humility: Seeing All Others as Bodhisattvas

Yinguang continues: when deluded thoughts arise, one must immediately extinguish them; one should constantly give rise to shame and repentance; even if one has some cultivation, one should always feel that one's practice is shallow; one should not boast; one should attend to one's own affairs rather than judge others; one should look at the good examples and not at the bad; one should regard all people as Buddhas and bodhisattvas and oneself alone as an ordinary being. These sentences reveal the spirit of humility and self-guarding that runs through Yinguang's teaching.

One of the greatest obstacles in Pure Land practice is arrogance after small progress. A practitioner may be able to recite scriptures, observe rules, explain doctrine, or sustain recitation, and then begin to look down on others. Yinguang knew that such arrogance easily damages the path and interrupts pure mindfulness. His instruction that one should always feel one's practice is shallow is not self-abasement. It is a way to protect the mind through shame, modesty, and vigilance.

"Attending to one's own affairs rather than judging others" does not mean indifference. It means not using a discriminating mind to measure and criticize others. One should learn from others' strengths and reflect on oneself when encountering others' faults. To regard all people as Buddhas and bodhisattvas extends reverence from the Buddha to all beings. If this view is practiced, arrogance gradually diminishes, reverence increases, disputes decrease, and nianfo becomes easier to internalize. The Daodejing says that the highest good is like water: gentle, humble, and non-contentious. This can illuminate Yinguang's cultivation of character. Pure Land practitioners must have sincere vows for rebirth, but they must also cultivate softness, repentance, reverence, and gratitude. Humility dissolves arrogance; repentance makes practice grounded; reverence supports communal harmony; gratitude strengthens pure karma.^[14]

The instruction to see all others as Buddhas and bodhisattvas and oneself alone as an ordinary being is one of Yinguang's most direct ways of countering self-pride. It does not erase moral judgment. Rather, it places the practitioner in a posture of learning. Every encounter becomes a condition for practice: when seeing virtue, emulate it; when seeing faults, examine oneself. Thus even external disturbances can become causes for inner gentleness and stability.

Humility is closely connected to the depth of Pure Land faith and vows. The Pure Land path relies on Amitabha's compassionate vow-power. A person who is proud of personal learning, practice, or insight cannot easily generate the heart of sincere refuge. By recognizing that one's afflictions remain deep and one's karmic obstacles many, one becomes more able to rely on Buddha-power, recite earnestly, and vow for rebirth. Yinguang's humility is thus not a secondary virtue but a protection of faith and vows.

9. Firm Assurance of Rebirth and the Closed Loop of Daily Practice

Yinguang concludes: "If you can cultivate according to what I have said, you will certainly be born in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss." This sentence gathers the whole instruction. To cultivate according to his words does not mean oral recitation alone. It includes respecting those above and living harmoniously with those below, patience, taking on others' labor, helping

others accomplish good, reflecting on one's faults, avoiding discussion of others' faults, sustaining the Buddha's name, and taming deluded thoughts. Together, these form a complete system of Pure Land cultivation.

The point is to unite faith and practice. Pure Land cultivation is neither mere verbal recitation nor abstract doctrinal discussion. It requires that reverence, service, repentance, restraint of speech, humility, and recitation enter every detail of daily life. The Buddha's name becomes the core that gathers the mind, but the whole ethical field of life becomes the place where faith and vows are tested.

The promise of certain rebirth is not casual. It rests on true faith, earnest vows, and real practice. Only by giving up arrogance, treating cultivation humbly, observing discipline, purifying the three karmas, and reciting sincerely can Pure Land practice move beyond formalism and become verifiable daily cultivation.

Yinguang's Pure Land teaching is thus a complete structure: faith, vows, and name-recitation are the main practice; ethical conduct and bodhisattva vows are supportive conditions; repentance purifies the mind; humility and harmony establish the foundation of character. It accords with the Pure Land principle of relying on Buddha-power and reciting the name, while also embodying the Mahayana spirit of benefiting oneself and others.

For contemporary Buddhist education, this instruction has clear significance. Buddhist colleges should not only transmit doctrinal knowledge; they should also strengthen daily conduct. The Six Harmonies can regulate communal life; patience and giving can cultivate responsibility; honest recitation can stabilize faith and vows. Students should learn to express Pure Land practice in clothing, eating, dwelling, work, speech, and interaction with others. In this way they cultivate their own path while manifesting right faith and right conduct.

The practical, plain, and workable character of this teaching is precisely its value. It does not pursue mysterious states or external display. It roots Pure Land practice in daily life, allowing practitioners to accumulate merit, purify body and mind, and move toward rebirth through steady cultivation. The special excellence of the Pure Land path is then seen not only at death but in every moment of transformation and growth.

10. Conclusion

Master Yinguang's instruction lays out a clear sequence of Pure Land practice in simple language. It begins with respecting those above and living harmoniously with those below, showing that cultivation must first be grounded in interpersonal conduct and communal life. It then proceeds through patience, giving, rejoicing, and repentance, through which body, speech, and mind are purified and afflictions are reduced. Finally, it returns all practice to uninterrupted remembrance of the Buddha's name in daily activities. Its doctrine is deep, but its entry is plain; its goal is high, but its method is near at hand.

For Buddhist academy students, studying this instruction should not stop at memorizing a patriarchal quotation. It should become a norm of daily life: humility in class, harmony in community, careful speech in conversation, reflection on one's own faults, honest name-recitation in practice, patience in adversity, and willingness to serve in communal tasks. If practiced sincerely, the Pure Land path is no longer merely a reliance at the moment of death. It becomes a present method for purifying body and mind, dignifying monastic character, and fulfilling the path.

The contemporary value of Yinguang's Pure Land instruction also lies in its correction of common deviations. One deviation is to emphasize doctrinal knowledge while neglecting practice, turning Buddhism into a topic for discussion and a source of pride. Another is to cling to external forms of recitation and chanting while neglecting intention, repentance, and moral reform. Yinguang's approach avoids both. It recites the Buddha's name with firm faith and vows, reflects on faults within recitation, practices altruism through reform, and accumulates Pure Land provisions through everyday conduct. It is both doctrinally grounded and practically embodied.

The passage examined in this paper is short, yet its meaning is comprehensive. It reminds practitioners that the excellence of the Pure Land teaching lies not only in the hope of being welcomed by Amitabha at the end of life, but also in its present power to transform thoughts, counter afflictions, and purify body and mind. The dignity of a nianfo practitioner lies not only in the sound of the Buddha's name, but also in humility, patience, repentance, and compassion in daily relations. If one practices according to this instruction, the Buddha's name can permeate every part of study and cultivation, and faith and vows can be embodied in every word and act.

In sum, Master Yinguang's Pure Land teaching combines the simplicity of faith, vows, and name-recitation with the depth of discipline, concentration, wisdom, the six perfections, and Samantabhadra's vows. It takes rebirth in the Western Land as its final orientation, yet it also makes moral reform and good conduct the daily work. It encourages personal recitation while emphasizing communal harmony and shared cultivation. For this reason, this instruction still has significant educational and practical value today, offering a clear and workable path for contemporary Pure Land practitioners.

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