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Essence of the Infinite Life Sutra - Venerable Master Chin Kung



EXCERPT FOURTEEN

He dwelt in true wisdom and courageously made focused and diligent progress.

The Buddha mentioned "true" three times in the Infinite Life Sutra. Here, we have "true wisdom."

Of all the teachings, one gets to know Buddhism. Moreover, one learns the Pure Land method of Mahayana teachings. Also, one chooses "belief, vow, and Buddha-name chanting" and seeks rebirth in the Western Pure Land, and one's mind steadfastly dwells in this. Such is "dwelling in true wisdom."

In practicing the Pure Land method, one follows the principle of "no doubt, no intermingling, and no interruption." One also diligently learns and practices using the method of "the perfect control of the six senses with continuous pure thoughts" taught by Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva. This is "courageously making focused and diligent progress."

Everything in this world is illusory. We need to be truly awakened! People often say "We bring nothing with us at birth and we take nothing with us at death." Only mindfully chanting the Buddha-name and seeking rebirth in the

Western Pure Land, where our life span will be as infinite as that of Amitabha Buddha, is real. Without life, everything is futile. This is true wisdom. Nothing is truer than this!

EXCERPT FIFTEEN

He accumulated and nurtured moral conduct.

He gave no rise to any thoughts of greed, anger, ignorance, or desire.

He was not attached to form, sound, smell, taste, texture, or mind object.

Accumulating merits and virtues should start with “giving no rise to any thoughts of greed, anger, ignorance, or desire” as well as “not being attached to form, sound, smell, taste, texture, or mind object.” When there is no greed, anger, ignorance, desire, or wandering thoughts, and when one does not yield to external temptations—this is merit. If one cultivates this way, one will attain a pure mind, from which wisdom will arise.

When one has meditative concentration and wisdom, one has great benefit. Meditative concentration and wisdom come forth when the true mind is active. As a result, one is able to control one’s destiny anywhere in the universe. When one does not have meditative concentration and wisdom, one is controlled by affliction and temptation. This is pitiable.

Therefore, cultivation is nothing but this: internally, ridding oneself of greed, anger, and ignorance; and externally, cutting off all temptations.

This excerpt teaches us a principle of learning and practice. When we have “thoughts of greed, anger, ignorance, or desire,” our behavior will not be proper and will need reforming. This excerpt is the standard for [differentiating between] proper and deviated.

Master Huineng said, “Originally, there was nothing at all.” He was talking about the true mind because there is nothing in the true mind. Greed, anger, ignorance, and arrogance are the false mind. Because these illusory things are there, even though we have the true mind, it is unable to function. When we eradicate greed, anger, ignorance, and arrogance, our minds will become pure. Even when forms, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and mind objects from the external environment try to tempt us, we will not have any thoughts of greed, anger, ignorance, and arrogance.

The major sutras say “All beings are Buddhas in nature.” So why have we become the way we are? The Avatamsaka Sutra puts it aptly: it is because of wandering thoughts and attachments. Wandering thoughts are ignorance. Attachments turn into greed and anger. These are the root problems of sentient beings.

Web link to the article: <http://www.purelandcollege.org.au/page66.html>

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