



美國行願多元文化教育基金協會 - 行願蓮海月刊 Amita Buddhism Society - Boston, USA
25-27 Winter Street, Brockton MA 02302 歡迎流通, 功德無量

Tel : 857-998-0169

歡迎光臨: Welcome to <http://www.amtb-ma.org>

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Essence of the Infinite Life Sutra - Venerable Master Chin Kung



EXCERPT TWENTY FOUR

What they have said is sincere and true. They delve deeply into the meanings and flavor. They enlighten all sentient beings. They show by example and teach the proper Dharma.

“What they have said is sincere and true.” “Sincere” means that what they [the bodhisattvas of the Western Pure Land] say is the truth; it is absolutely not a lie. This excerpt sentence is praising the teachings in the Buddhist sutras—where every word and every sentence are words of truth.

The word “meanings” in “they delve deeply into the meanings and flavor” means principle. “Flavor” refers to the flavor of the Dharma. When we truly delve deeply into the meanings and flavor, we will find that the meanings and flavor in the sutras are boundless. Not only that, but we will also find the name of Amitayus Buddha to have boundless meanings and flavor.

How do we get to taste the flavor? By single-mindedly chanting the Buddha-name, we will taste boundless meanings and flavor. After we taste the flavor of the Dharma, there will be no stopping us. During our learning, we will truly feel joy and will definitely be making courageous and diligent progress.

Now, when we chant the Buddha-name we do not taste any flavor of the Dharma because when we chant “Amitufo” we are thinking of other things. This is the reason that our cultivation has not gone anywhere. We should diligently continue with our chanting. Anything that obstructs us from single-mindedly chanting should be discarded. In addition, we should chant with a sincere, pure, and respectful mind. After chanting in this way for half a year, we will taste the flavor of the Dharma. When we do, we will have confidence in attaining rebirth in the Western Pure Land. The more we chant, the firmer our confidence. We will be able to know in advance the time of our rebirth.

Those who are very advanced in their cultivation can attain rebirth at their own will. They can go anytime they want. If they want to go now, they can. If they want to go at a later time, they can. They have truly attained freedom in life and death.

Frankly, every one of us can achieve this. The question is whether we are willing to concentrate on chanting. Jueming Miaoxing Bodhisattva clearly said in *Pointing Clearly to the West* that our chanting should not be intermingled with anything. Intermingling is not concentrating.

“They enlighten all sentient beings. They show by example and teach the proper Dharma.” “Enlighten” means to help. They help their students; they show by example and lecture on the true Dharma.

How does one show by example? By practicing according to the teachings. If we teach people to act one way but we ourselves act another way and do not practice what we teach, then those who listen to us may not believe our words. For example, if I tell you to mindfully chant the Buddha-name and I do not do so myself, would you believe my words? You would not.

One must practice what one teaches. This is “show by example.” One is not putting on a show; one understands the teachings and principles in the sutras and actually practices them fully. One does what the Buddha teaches one to do and does not do what the Buddha teaches not to do.

All the methods that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas use to teach the beings are expedient teachings, which serve as guides [to the ultimate teachings]; they are not the latter. The ultimate teaching is the teaching of mindfully chanting the Buddha-name and seeking rebirth in the Western Pure Land. The *Avatamsaka Sutra*, in its conclusion, teaches practitioners to mindfully chant the Buddha-name and seek rebirth in the Western Pure Land. But most ordinary beings do not believe or accept this Buddha-name chanting method. It is a method that is hard to believe. To make people believe and accept this method—this is the difficulty.

Buddhas and bodhisattvas are compassionate. They earnestly and patiently urge, and skillfully use various means to lead us to cultivate and to achieve the state of attainment. When we achieve this state, we will truly feel grateful to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas for their kindness. Only by practicing the Buddha-name chanting method can we succeed^[27] in one lifetime. If we do not practice this method, we will only plant a few good roots in this lifetime and will continue to transmigrate within the Six Paths.

[27] Success in one lifetime refers to transcending the Ten Realms and attaining Buddhahood in one lifetime. The Ten Realms consists of the Six Paths and the Four Sage Dharma Realms.—Trans.

EXCERPT TWENTY FIVE

They travel to all the Buddha Lands. There is none that they like or dislike; and there is no thought of wanting or of not wanting. Neither do they have thoughts of “others” or of “I,” nor thoughts of dissatisfaction and enmity.

The bodhisattvas of the Western Pure Land go often to the Buddha Lands in the ten directions to teach and help all beings. Some Buddha Lands are magnificently adorned with seven jewels, but others are very polluted or unpleasant. When there is affinity, the bodhisattvas will go there, whether a situation is favourable or not. Moreover, they do not like or dislike any situation. In other words, they travel around all the Buddha Lands without feeling attachment or aversion. They do not give rise to any thought, discrimination, or attachment.

When we go abroad to visit other countries, if we feel like or dislike, then our minds are polluted. We should cultivate meditative concentration and wisdom during the trips. When we see and understand everything clearly, we have wisdom. When we do not have any like or dislike, we have meditative concentration. Therefore, when we visit other countries we should simultaneously cultivate meditative concentration and wisdom.

Furthermore, in daily life when we interact with people and engage in tasks, we should also cultivate meditative concentration and wisdom. For example, if someone tries to anger us and we are able to not give rise to any thought, we are cultivating One Mind Undisturbed. The person who tries to anger us is a good teacher for us. Without him or her, how can we achieve the paramita of patience?

These situations—someone says charming words to us but we do not attach to the words, or someone tries to stir up trouble but we feel no anger—help us to cultivate and attain meditative concentration and wisdom.

One Mind Undisturbed and the Buddha-name Chanting Samadhi taught in Pure Land Buddhism are both attained in this way. If one’s mind is perturbed by others gossiping or starting rumors about us, one should immediately feel remorse: “I am wrong again. I am affected by the external environment again.”

Daily, in every thought, stay awakened and do not be deluded when interacting with others and engaging in tasks. Any situation at any time is a good teacher for us.

“And there is no thought of wanting or of not wanting.” It is erroneous to wish for something. When one wishes for something, suffering follows. When one gains something, something will be lost. Both are painful.

It is also erroneous to [have thoughts of] not wishing for something, because one would reject all opportunities. [Thoughts of] wishing for something is seeking affinities. [Thoughts of] not wishing for something is also seeking affinities. Therefore, bodhisattvas practice the Middle Way: when they teach beings, they are according with conditions, not seeking affinities.

"Neither do they have thoughts of 'others' or of 'I,' nor thoughts of dissatisfaction and enmity." The thoughts of "others" and "I" are in the four marks taught in the Diamond Sutra: the Mark of Self, the Mark of Others, the Mark of Being, and the Mark of Life Span. "Dissatisfaction and enmity" means that one bears resentment and hatred when others go against one's wish, and one forms attachment when they go along with one's wish.

Therefore, we should be impartial to all people in any situation, whether they are good or bad. An impartial mind will lead to a pure mind. Attachment as well as dissatisfaction and enmity are wandering thoughts. When one is free of all wandering thoughts, all discriminations, and all attachments, one will attain a pure and impartial mind. When the mind is pure and impartial, one will definitely be awakened, not deluded. One will then realize the goal of "purity, impartiality, and enlightenment."

Web link to the article:

<http://www.purelandcollege.org.au/page79.html>

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