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25-27 Winter Street, Brockton MA 02302 歡迎流通, 功德無量

Tel : 857-998-0169

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Buddhism Sutras Introduction

The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality and

Enlightenment of the Ma-hayana School

Preface

The full name of this sutra is The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Ma-hayana School.

Buddha is a Sanskrit (Skt) word meaning a perfect, enlightened being. He has gained complete awareness of the nature, phenomenon and function of the whole universe, in the past, present and future.

There are three kinds of realization: self, helping others to achieve their own and complete all-encompassing realization.

An Arhat (Skt) is one who has reached self-realization; a state in which one possesses no erroneous perceptions, views, speech or behavior.

A Bodhisattva (Skt) is one who helps others to reach realization after achieving their own.

A Buddha is one who has reached perfection in both self-realization and helping others to reach realization.

Names of each Buddha and Bodhisattva represent their specialties within the teachings.

Shakyamuni (Skt) is the name of the historical and latest Buddha in our world who lived over 2500 years ago.

"Shakya" means kindness, which represents the way we should treat others. "Muni" means stillness, which represents freedom from agitation, the state in which our mind ultimately should exist.

Buddhists regard Buddha Shakyamuni as our "Original Teacher." Buddhism is an educational system, for the title of teacher is not found in religions, only in education.

The aspiration of a Buddha is to help all beings to be free from suffering, to reach full realization. When the time comes for beings to accept the Pure Land teachings, great joy arises in all the Buddhas.

The power of visualization is tremendous. Everything in the universe is derived from one's mind. Constant contemplation of the Buddha leads to becoming a Buddha, whereas a mind constantly harboring ignorance, greed and anger leads one to the three lower realms of animals, hungry ghosts and hells.

A Buddha's mind, in essence, is equal to that of an ordinary being. However, a Buddha has a clear mind without any greed, anger, and ignorance, whereas, an ordinary being has a deluded one. This makes an ordinary being different from a Buddha.

Amitabha (Skrt) is a Buddha's name, primarily meaning Infinite Life.

"Infinite Life" is the most important meaning within "Amitabha." Others include infinite light, boundless wisdom, virtue, talent, etc.

"Amitabha" virtually encompasses every word from the Infinite Life Sutra. The Western Pure Land is also contained within this name. No virtue is beyond the scope of the name "Amitabha."

Contemplation of Buddha Amitabha's name all the time, persistently and without any doubt or intermingling with other thoughts leads one to true realization.

By purifying one's body, mind and speech through the practice of chanting "Amitabha," one is adorned with magnificence radiated from within.

The Western Pure Land, Amitabha's world, is a world of truth, grace, splendor and wisdom. All beings there develop their purity from within.

Many great masters in China, even ones from other Buddhist schools, have chosen to be reborn into the Pure Land, for example, the Zen masters Yung Ming of the Sung Dynasty and Cher Wu of the Ching Dynasty.

Chanting only one Buddha's name, Amitabha, contributes to the benefits of purifying one's mind and of being reborn into the Western Pure Land within the shortest period of time.

The Western Pure Land has all the wonderful things that other Buddhalands have, but none of the unpleasant ones. That is why it is called the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

All other Buddhas admire Buddha Amitabha and praise the Western Pure Land. Therefore, they strongly encourage all sentient beings to seek rebirth into Buddha Amitabha's world.

The practice of Buddha name chanting will work effectively with pure conviction and strong determination. The practitioner is as-sured to go to the Western Pure Land and become a Buddha in one lifetime when one also practices according to the teachings.

Buddha Amitabha is a Buddha within one's self-nature. His world also appears in one's mind. Everything essentially is a reflection of and cannot be separated from one's true nature.

In order to attain a pure mind, one must overcome the internal obstacles of worry, delusion and habit accumulated over aeons of lifetimes, and the external obstacles of the enticements of too many adverse conditions which surround us.

It is just a matter of thought whether we remain in or transcend the cycle of birth and death. We make the decision. Realizing this, we can escape from this cycle by cultivating a pure mind and vowing to go to the Western Pure Land.

How does one check to see whether one's practice is progressing? A good sign is when we have less worry and wandering thoughts.

The Buddha has taught us many methods to be freed from worry and delusion. If one method, sincerely practiced, does not work, one can try another, just as a doctor would give different prescriptions to patients with different illnesses.

Master Yin-Guang, the thirteenth Patriarch of the Pure Land School, recommended people in this Dharma Ending Age practice the Pure Land teachings.

The study and practice of the Buddha's teaching follow three guidelines: 1. Following the precepts 2. Cultivating deep concentration and 3. Uncovering wisdom.

The primary methods of practice are reciting the sutra and Buddha name chanting. When reciting, one also practices the Six Principles or Paramitas (Skt) of giving, precept observation, endurance, diligence, concentration and wis-dom. When no other thought is concerned, it is "Giving." When no erroneous thought occurs, it is "Precept observation." When staying with this process without interruption, it is "Endurance." When reaching one's goal in recitation, it is "Diligence." When focusing on recitation, it is "Concentration." When insight is obtained from within, it is "Wisdom."

Diligently reciting the sutra helps one to eliminate karmic obstacles, worry and established habits acquired over aeons. Consequently, one attains purity, equality and finally, ultimate realization.

Duality is not equality. Oneness is equality. A wandering thought arising in one's mind disturbs this oneness and renders everything unequal.

The Infinite Life Sutra can help everyone to become a Buddha. Everyone who follows this teaching, from a Bodhisattva to an Arhat, from an ordinary being to one in the three lower realms can turn into a Buddha.

The benefits from this Pure Land teaching are so inconceivable that initially they are extremely difficult for people to believe.

Boston Amita Buddhism Society new website: <http://www.amtb-ma.org/>

Group Buddha Recitation Every Saturday 9:30am

For details please call ABS (857)998-0169 or email to amtb.ma@gmail.com