

## To Be Born in a Buddha's Pure Land

IBDSCL, Feb. 24, 25, 2018, by Nancy Yu

Good morning! Welcome to International Buddha Dharma Society for Cosmic Law to listen the Dharma talk today. Last month, our subject was **Chan** (the self-nature), this month, our subject is **Jing** (the pure lands) and next month, our subject will be **Mi** (the esoteric methods). **Chan, Jing** and **Mi** are the essence of the Buddha Dharma. **Chan, Jing** and **Mi** are ONE. They are not separable.

The flower sermon demonstrated the unspeakable and wonderful Chan Dharma. **Chan** is the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, the self-nature, the original heart. **Jing** (pure lands), is the pure land. If the heart is pure, then the land is pure. If our heart is pure, then we are in the pure land right now at this moment because everything is incurred by our own heart.

We often say that **Chan** (the self-nature) is the body, **Mi** (the esoteric methods) is the application and **Jing** (the pure lands) is where we should return. This week, we will continue our **Jing** talk. We will talk about how to be born to a pure land, especially the western pure land of Utmost Happiness.

In the past three weeks, we talked about that there are countless pure lands in the universe and each one is magnificent and inconceivable. Specially, we talked about the pure land of Aksobhya Buddha and we spent most of our time on the western pure land of Amitabha Buddha. In the eye of Buddha, every pure land is the same. However, in the eye of common living beings, due to their discrimination, each pure land is different

to them. Sakyamuni Buddha recommended the pure land of Amitabha to us many times and said that both good men and good women should vow to be born there in the land of Utmost Happiness, and so the land of Utmost Happiness is a great place that we should pursue to go after this life.

As our teacher said, each buddha country is a certain frequency or frequency range, like a channel of the radio. To be born in one of the pure lands, one should tune his/her frequency to that channel, that buddha land.

What do we exactly need to do to be born in the pure lands? Shakyamuni Buddha expounded in different sutras and let's learn some of them.

In the sutra *Observing Maitreya Bodhisattva Ascending to Tusita Heaven*, the Buddha said, "After I enter Nirvana, my disciples, if you diligently practice and accumulate all merits, hold on to your dignity, clean the stupas and coat the ground, make offerings of good incense and wonderful flowers, practice different kinds of Samadhi, penetrate into the Buddha's teachings, read classic sutras, concentrate your heart without stopping, then it's as if you have six supernatural powers. You should recall the image of Buddha and chant the name of Maitreya Bodhisattava. For these disciples, in a moment of rising of one thought, holding the eight precepts, cultivating the various pure merits, bringing up great resolves, after this life, you will be born in the Tusita heaven in a short moment and sit on the lotus flower in a full-lotus posture.

In the sutra of the *Buddha Speaking of Aksobhya Buddha*, after hearing Sakyamuni Buddha praise the merits of buddha-land of Aksobhya Buddha, a monk became

greedily attached to it and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, now I wish to be born in Aksobhya Buddha’s land.”

The Buddha told the monk, “With your foolishness and delusion, how can you be born there? Why? Because one with any passion or attachment cannot be born in that Buddha-land. Only those who have planted good roots and cultivated pure actions could be born there.”

There is only one door to be born in a buddha’s pure land, which is to deeply believe, sincerely bring up the vow to be born there and then practice diligently.

To deeply believe means to believe that I am the Buddha and I have the buddha nature, to believe that there is the pure land of that Buddha, to believe the causes and effects, and to believe that I am able to be born there with diligent practice and blessings from the Buddhas and Bodhisattva.

To sincerely bring up the vow means to bring up the vow to be born in the Buddha land after this life without any hesitation, without any attachment to things and people in this current world, to bring up the vow with a full heart. At the same time, we also need to make the vow to transform all living beings, which means that we should bring up Bodhicitta/Bodhi Resolve to rescue all living beings that are still in the suffering sea because All is One. The Bodhi Resolve responds with all Buddhas’ resolve and sure one will get blessings from them.

To practice diligently means to practice according to what the Buddha expounded in the sutra and how other buddhas and bodhisattvas practiced, recalling and chanting the

name of the Buddha, making offerings to the Buddha, practicing the six paramitas, and so on.

To deeply believe, to sincerely make the vow and to practice diligently are three methods, but also ONE. One will not be able to be born in the Buddha's pure land with any of them missing.

Now, let's see how Mahasthamaprata Bodhisattva did in the chapter of *Mahasthamaprata Bodhisattva Chanting Amitabha to Attain the Perfect Penetration in the Shurangama Sutra*.

The Mahasthamaprata Bodhisattva, together with fifty-two Bodhisattvas, arose from the seat, and bowed at the Buddha's feet, and said to the Buddha, "I remember that many kalpas (as many as the sands in the Ganges river) ago, a Buddha called Limitless Light appeared in the world. In that same kalpa, twelve Tathagatas lived in turn and the last one was called Light Surpassing the Sun and the Moon Buddha. That Buddha taught me the Buddha-Mindfulness Samadhi (Buddha-recitation Samadhi).

"Suppose there were a person who always remembers someone else, but the someone else he remembers has entirely forgotten about him. If two of such people were to meet, even if they were to see each other, it would be the same as not meeting or seeing each other."

"If two people remember each other until they develop deep memories for one another, thuswise, up to life after life, they will be the same as a form and a shadow, and they will never be inimical or separated."

"Out of pity for the sentient beings, the Tathagatas of the ten directions are tenderly

mindful of them just like a mother remembering her child. If the child runs away, of what use is the mother's concern? But if the child remembers his mother in the same way that the mother remembers the child, then in life after life the mother and the child will not be far apart or against their will."

"If the sentient beings bear the Buddha in mind and are mindful of the Buddha, they will be certain to see the Buddha at present or in the future."

"They will never be far from the Buddha, and without the aid of expedients, their minds will awaken by themselves."

"Such as perfumed by the fragrance, a person carries incense on his body. Such is called an adornment of fragrant light.

"On the causal ground I used the Buddha-Mind to enter into the Dharmas Tolerance of the Non-birth. Now in this world I gather in all those who are mindful of the Buddha and bring them back to the Pure Land.

"The Buddha asks about perfect penetration. I would select none other than gathering in the six organs through continuous pure mindfulness to obtain Samadhi. This is the foremost method."

When we say chanting Amitabha, it seems that we are saying chanting the name of Amitabha with mouth, but actually, the most important is to chant with heart, or thinking of Amitabha from, or recalling of Amitabha or missing Amitabha Buddha. Like a child misses his mother, this missing starts from the heart, maybe out from the mouth, not the brain, instead, it's heart waves, electromagnetic waves from the heart and these energy waves would be received by Amitabha Buddha and he would sure respond back.

So, no matter which Buddha's land you want to go, recite, recall, think of, or miss that Buddha with the most sincere, genuine heart. A sincere and genuine heart is our self-nature and would send out the strongest signal.

Reciting the sutras of that Buddha and going through the great vows of that Buddha will help you understand and know the Buddha well so that you can respond better with that Buddha.

Also, in the sutra of *the Contemplation of Amitabha Buddha*, the Buddha also expounded, "Those who wish to be born in that country of Buddha have to cultivate the threefold goodness. First, they should act filially towards their parents and support them; serve and respect their teachers and elders; be of compassionate mind; abstain from doing any injury; and cultivate the ten virtuous actions. Second, they should make and observe the vow of seeking refuge with the Three jewels, fulfill all moral precepts, and not lower their dignity or neglect any ceremonial observance. Third, they should give their whole mind to the attainment of perfect wisdom, deeply believe in the principle of cause and effect, study and recite the Mahayana doctrines, and persuade and encourage others who pursue the same course as themselves."

"These three groups as enumerated are called the pure actions leading to the Buddha country."

"Vaidehi!" Buddha continued, "Do you understand now? These three classes of actions are the effective cause of the pure actions taught by all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future."

To help the living beings who came after the Buddha's Nirvana to see the Amitabha's land, the Buddha expounded 16 kinds of perception which include the perception of the sun, the perception of the water, the perception of the land, the perception of the trees of the Buddha's country, the perception of the water of eight meritorious qualities in the pool, the perception of the general features of that land, the perception of the flowery throne of the Buddha, the perception of the Buddha, the perception of the forms and bodies of the Buddha, the perception of the real form and body of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, the perception of Mahasthamaprabhata Bodhisattva, the perception of the Buddha country, the joint perception of the Buddha and the two Bodhisattvas, the perception of the superior class of beings in the Buddha's land, the perception of the middle class of beings and the perception of the inferior class of beings. To meditate frequently on Amitabha Buddha, the two Bodhisattvas, and the jeweled trees, the jeweled pools, the water, the lotus throne and so on of the land of Utmost Happiness, one can respond better to that pure land.

In the last three perceptions, the Buddha explained that there are three classes (each includes three grades) of beings in Amitabha's country and according to one's cultivation and accumulated merits, one maybe born in different grades.

You may deeply delve into the Sutra Pitaka and gain an ocean of knowledge. Learn from the Buddha and obtain supreme wisdoms. Next week, we will start a new subject, Mi, the esoteric methods. Mi is secret; Mi cannot be understood, then how to explain Mi?

Thank you for listening! See you next week!