

To Enlightenment-7

Amitabha's 48 Great Vows

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Second Level of Enlightenment —Enlightening Others

Even though we realize that all phenomena are emptiness and all beings and things are non-existent, ultimately empty, and unattainable, we still need to bring forth our great benevolence, bringing forth

*a great compassion to help all beings unconditionally
and a great mercy arising from realizing that all beings are one unity.*

When reaching such realization, we would then equally and universally help all deluded beings be awakened. This is “enlightening others.” We should not be content with only our own enlightenment and ignore others’ sufferings. Others are not awakened, it is because our own enlightenment is still not consummate. Why? Because in the universe, oneself and others are not two separate entities.

As long as there is one being in the universe still not awakened, my enlightenment is then still not complete. Because other beings are manifested by my heart, it implies that one part of my heart is still not enlightened. That part is “all beings.”

Third Level of Enlightenment —The Perfection in Both Enlightenment and Cultivation

Bodhisattvas know all dharmas are empty, yet still very diligently, proactively, and universally liberate all beings. As *The Diamond Sutra* states,

One should dwell on nothing to give rise to a true heart.

“Dwell on nothing” means that they know all phenomena are empty, thus there are no attachments. Yet, they still give rise to a true heart of liberating all beings, which leads them to reach a consummate level of self-enlightenment and enlightening others. When reaching the level of consummate, one is called a “Buddha.” “Buddha” means that the cultivation in both self-enlightenment and enlightening others has reached the

consummate level. He has truly realized the perfect stage of attainment. In this perfect stage of attainment, one will admit a revelation in *The Avatamsaka Sūtra*,

*Sentient beings and insentient beings all possess
the same perfect wisdom-seed for enlightenment.*

At the time of realizing this truth, not only have I become a Buddha, but all beings also become buddhas with me. This is the state of ultimate perfection.

After hearing this, we probably have doubts. How did the Buddha realize His Buddhahood if He regards all beings as having become Buddhas with Him? I have not become a Buddha yet! How could the Buddha complete His enlightenment and cultivation? Right? Since I am not enlightened, the Buddha should not have reached perfection. At least I, this one, have not been enlightened. Others, I do not know, but I am aware that I am not enlightened. How could you say that the Buddha has reached the perfection of enlightenment and cultivation? At least, His enlightening others has not reached perfection yet.

Well, this principle is very profound. In a Buddha's eyes, all beings are indeed buddhas. You say you are not enlightened, that is your illusion. You have delusion, discrimination, and attachment, accordingly you think you are not enlightened and are not a buddha. But Buddhas see you as a complete and perfect buddha, not even the slightest bit insufficiency. *The Avatamsaka Sutra* states it very explicitly,

*All beings have all the wisdom, virtues,
and laksana of Tathagata,
but they could not prove and attain them
due to delusion and attachment."*

Whose delusion and attachment is it? It is yours. You have delusion and attachment. You cannot prove and admit that you are innately a buddha. This is your own mission.

In a Buddha's eyes, which being is not a buddha? He truly reaches the perfection of enlightenment and cultivation. Not only has His self-enlightenment been completed, so has His enlightening of others. So, when we see other people as not Buddhas, it indicates that we are still not a Buddha. How would we become a Buddha? According to the teachings of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, we have gained a very important revelation:

When you see that all beings have become buddhas,

then you are a Buddha.

The problem is that, in our eyes, we do not see all beings as buddhas. We see that all beings are mundane men and even view them as mortals with many defilements, many karmas, and many sins. All day long, we see others creating evil karma. This person is no good, that person did such and such things; all we see are others' faults, thus no being is a buddha in our eyes.

The truth is that he was innately a buddha, yet in our eyes we see him as a mortal. Why is he a mortal? Because we are mortals ourselves.

Thanks for watching, see you later to explore more on this profound teaching.