

# To Enlightenment-8

## Amitabha's 48 Great Vows

### Venerable Ding Hong

*In sentient beings' eyes they view a Buddha as a sentient being,  
while in a Buddhas' eyes He sees all beings as buddhas.*

To put it more frankly, in the eyes of a good person, all people are good because he has a good heart. He is never suspicious of others, he never goes against others. His heart is kind, thus he views everyone as a good person.

#### **A World without Thieves**

I wonder if you have seen a movie called "A World without Thieves"? I have not seen this movie but have heard of it. A few years ago when I was teaching at the University of Queensland in Australia, one colleague mentioned it to me after he watched it. Its content is very philosophical.

It is about a worker in Tibet taking a train back to his homeland after making some money, probably going to build a house or something. With 50,000 RMB in cash, he encountered two groups of thieves on the train. Both fought for his money. They exhausted all means to get the worker's money bag. The money was swapped stealthily, yet the worker had no idea at all. Some plainclothes police were involved at that time. They were fighting and killing right on the train.

This worker was very honest, with a simple good-nature, he knew nothing. He met a woman trying to con him out of his money, he gave rise to a compassionate heart, saying, "I can lend you this money, just pay me back whenever you can." Look! In his eyes, there were no thieves in the world.

A very interesting scene was presented in the movie, right in front of the thief who lied to him and told him, "If you do not secure this money, thieves will steal it." He said, "Where is the thief?" Right in front of that thief, he said, "Where is there a thief? If there is a thief, stand up and let me see you!" No one stood up, no thief....

At the end of the fighting, the money bag was snuck back to him. He had his original money when getting off the train and happily returned home. Look! There are no

thieves in his eyes. The thieves standing in front of him are all good people. Why? His heart is good, so he sees no thieves in the world. But, if we have an unkind heart, we see all others as bad guys; whoever comes, we suspect that he must have bad intentions. We often see the faults of others, this kind of heart creates thieves in the world.

*There were no thieves in the world originally, but we created thieves.*

## **How Did Master Chin Kung Recite Amitabha**

If we extend this theory, originally everyone was a buddha, unfortunately, we happen to see others not as buddhas but as mortals who are making evil karmas, we thus confront others, making conflicts and contradictions with them. We cannot accommodate others and we even disrespect them, the world thus falls into huge chaos. Who creates it? Our own hearts create it.

If we let go of all these discrimination, attachment, and delusion, regarding all beings as real buddhas and acknowledging them as buddhas from the bottom of our hearts, then who would we be? We would be Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, the King of the Ten Great Vows who pays homage and respect to all buddhas. In the eyes of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, all beings are buddhas, he thus attained Buddhahood.

After understanding this principle, we must implement it in our daily life. Other people, no matter good or bad, are all buddhas and bodhisattvas in my eyes. "Only I am a mortal and have not attained Buddhahood," this is just like the implication in "The Fifty-Three Visits of Sudhana" in *The Avatamsaka Sutra*. When the youth Sudhana went to visit spiritual guides, in his eyes, these guides were all Buddhas and were all dharmakaya-mahasattvas. A dhammakaya-mahasattva is a Buddha even if he manifests lust, anger, and ignorance.

Look! Vasumitra, a lustful woman who committed the evil karma of sexual misconduct, represents craving, King Anala represents resentment, and Brahmin Jayôsmāya represents ignorance; greed, resentment, and ignorance are three poisonous defilements, yet those people who made such evil karmas are all Buddhas, all manifested from dharmakaya-mahasattva in Sudhana's eyes. As a result, the spiritual state of Sudhana kept escalating after encountering these people. For this reason, we should regard all beings as Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

This teaching from our fatherly teacher, Master Chin Kung, is even more thorough,

*“Regard all people, all matters, and all things as Amitabha.”*

I once asked him, “Shifu, how do you recite Amitabha?” I rarely see him holding reciting beads, moving his mouth and beads to recite Amitabha, Amitabha... He is usually very quiet and does not talk. He said to me, “How do I recite Amitabha? I see this table, this table is Amitabha. I see this chair, this chair is Amitabha. Here comes a person, that person is also Amitabha. All people, all matters, and all things are Amitabha. Nothing is not Amitabha. Both favorable and adverse circumstances are all manifested by Amitabha.”

As *The Amitabha Sutra* says, “in Sukhāvātī, when the root of your six senses (\*eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) contact with the realm of six-dusts (\*form, sound, odor, taste, touch, and concepts), everything is the Triratna—the three jewels of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. They are all Amitabha.” That is why the Dharma being proclaimed in Sukhāvātī is unceasing. Even little birds are also Amitabha, they are the transformations of Amitabha. Why does Amitabha manifest these transformations?

### **Why Does Amitabha Manifest Transformations?**

In Sukhāvātī, nothing is not Amitabha. Its inhabitants and the land are not two but one entity. The land refers to the material world, which is also transformed by Amitabha. If we can enter this realm, there is no need to go to Sukhāvātī; right in front of our eyes, what we see in our world are all the transformations of Amitabha. Think about it, the birds in Sukhāvātī can speak Dharma, are the birds in our Saha World not speaking Dharma? Are those birds not Amitabha’s transformations?

Here comes a person, no matter how he treats us, good or bad; they are all Amitabha’s manifestations. Why does He manifest those transformations? To have the Dharma proclaimed constantly. It is Amitabha's intentional transformation; He manifests as a good person to remind us to learn to be good, He manifests as a bad person to help us eliminate our bad karma.

He comes to reprimand us, harm us, obstruct us, and even vilify us, it is Amitabha helping us to eliminate our karma, so that our forbearance skill can escalate, so that we can really see through to the truth and let go of the mundane world. Isn't this Amitabha's intentional transformation in order to have Dharma constantly proclaimed?

The six-dusts of Sukhāvātī all proclaim Dharma. Are the six-dusts of our world not proclaiming Dharma? On this account, "The Pure Land is this land, this land is the Pure Land."

Our Shifu recites Amitabha in such a way, I came to a realization, this is "The Avatamsaka Samadhi of Reciting Buddha" stated in *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, "Sentient beings and insentient beings all possess the same perfect wisdom seed." Shifu totally immerses his mind in Amitabha, never leaving Amitabha; if *he* could not be reborn, then who would?

As the sutras state, "Keeping the mind in remembrance of Buddha, one will become a Buddha." When we recite Amitabha like this; our heart is Buddha's heart and we will regard all external phenomena as Amitabha, and thus our heart and the external world will become one unity. Since our world changes in accordance with our heart and is created by our heart, the world that we create will also be Buddha's realm if our heart is the Buddha's heart. With this way, we would definitely attain Sukhāvātī rebirth. We would not be persons of the Saha World, we are now persons of Sukhāvātī. This is called "perfection in both the enlightenment and cultivation". It all depends on the heart of our own. So far, this is our explanation of the word "Buddha."

Thanks for watching, see you later!