

Amitabha Teaches Me to Recite Amitabha

Senior laity Xia Lian Ju describes the realm of anuṭpattika-dharma-kṣānti that we mentioned in the last episode with a poem, which is very simple and easy to understand. This poem is called *Reciting All the Way*, four sentences, each containing two “Amitabha,” very simple.

*“Amitabha teaches me to recite Amitabha.
Recite Amitabha by mouth and heed my own recitations of Amitabha,
Amitabha, Amitabha..., recite all the way.
It turns out that Amitabha recites Amitabha.”*

Enlightened! Look! The last sentence is the realm of single-mindedness-in-noumenon!

The beginning is “*Amitabha teaches me to recite Amitabha.*” Indeed, whoever teaches me to recite Amitabha are all Amitabha—the transformation of Amitabha. It is Amitabha’s blessing, thus he can teach me to recite Amitabha. Whoever teaches me to recite Amitabha will also surely be blessed by Amitabha. Therefore, in our eyes, those who teach us to recite Amitabha are Amitabha. In fact, everyone is Amitabha! But those who teach us are even considered as Amitabha all the more.

How do we recite Amitabha? “Recite Amitabha by mouth and heed my own recitations of Amitabha.” This is the method for reciting Amitabha. It is essential. Reciting it out by mouth, Amitabha, this is “addressing the name.” Then you listen with your ears crystal clearly, four syllables, A-mi-ta-bha. Lastly, you let it enter into your heart.

The key of the second sentence is to recite Amitabha by mouth, heed your own recitations of Amitabha with your ears, and let it flow into your heart without intermixing with any wandering thoughts. Once it is mixed with wandering thoughts, you will not hear the sound of your Amitabha recitations. What you hear will be wandering thoughts like “Now school is over, who will pick up my son?” or “There is a pot of stew cooking in my kitchen, I must remember to check it later.” Look! When reciting with these wandering thoughts, you will not hear your own recitations of Amitabha at that time.

When you do not hear Amitabha, you must be alert immediately. “How did I lose Amitabha?” Quickly, do not think of it anymore, you must pull yourself together. Amitabha, Amitabha,... you hear Amitabha again. When you hear it, you do not have wandering thoughts. When you cannot hear it, you are having wandering thoughts. This is very easy to check. We must use the root of our ears well!

Master Yin Guang taught us the Method of Ten Recitations. You can count from one to ten, every ten recitations is one unit; after ten recitations, you go from one to ten again. One recitation after another, along with counting numbers, you can better withdraw your heart, you do not have leisure time to let wandering thoughts interrupt you. Once you give rise to

wandering thoughts, you will forget what number it is, right? You must force yourself to withdraw the roots of your six senses.

Listening to Self-Nature

In the Saha world, the root of our ears is sharpest. Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva teaches us “Withdraw the root of our auditory sense inward to heed self-nature.” Mahâsthâmaprâpta Bodhisattva teaches us “Congregate the roots of our six senses to enable our pure thoughts to be continuous.” We apply the methods of these two Bodhisattvas together.

However, congregating all the roots of our six senses together is quite difficult. Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva thus teaches us to withdraw the root of our auditory sense inward. Once the root of our auditory sense is withdrawn, the roots of all our six senses will be withdrawn as well. Simply listen with your ears intently! This is to “withdraw your auditory sense inward to heed the self-nature.” But we have not realized the self-nature, there is no way that we are capable of heeding self-nature. So I teach you to simply draw your auditory sense inward to heed your recitations of Amitabha, because “the name of Amitabha is exactly the self-nature.”

Treatise on Rebirth states, “This Dharma-phrase (**Skt. dharma-pada*) is the phrase of purity. And this phrase of purity is thusness-wisdom—the unconditioned (**Skt. asamskṛta*) dharmakāya (*Dharma-body*).” Nâgârjuna Bodhisattva in this statement tells us that this name Amitabha is the phrase of purity, the Dharma-phrase, the thusness-wisdom, and the dharmakāya. In other words, this name Amitabha is self-nature. When I simply listen to my own Amitabha recitations, I am “heeding the self-nature.”

This method can be applied by us mortals! Withdraw the root of your ears to redirect your auditory sense! Do not listen to external sounds like the sound of a horn, the honking of the car. You ignore them! Listen inward to your inner sound of Amitabha recitations. The sound of reciting does not need to be loud. Even if you recite without sound, you can still hear it. That is called diamond-recitation (**vajradhara*).

Amitabha... the sound is very, very tiny, but every syllable you hear distinctly; this is directing the root of your ears inward. You have achieved the teaching of “Withdraw the roots of your six senses inward to enable your pure thoughts to be continuous.” You simply “recite Amitabha with your mouth and heed your own recitations of Amitabha,” it will be very easy for you to reach an unceasing skill as long as you recite meticulously and conscientiously. Do not brush off even one recitation. You must treat every recitation sincerely.

Who Is Amitabha?

The third sentence “Amitabha, Amitabha..., recite all the way.” This is entering the Samadhi of Reciting Amitabha. You recite unceasingly without any mixed thoughts or doubts until you go from upholding phenomena to upholding noumenon, from single-mindedness-in-phenomena to single-mindedness-in-noumenon.

What is single-mindedness-in-noumenon? This name of Amitabha sheds off naturally and the self-nature consummately reveals. What is the reason? Your delusion, discrimination, and attachment have been shed off, there are no more. By reciting Amitabha, this enlightening and illuminating self-nature thus appears in front of you! At this time, you have become a Buddha.

When you “let go of everything, return to self-nature, and re-examine the realm, you only see flowers blooming with red, white, cyan, and yellow.” It turns out that Sukhāvātī was always in front of you and you are intrinsically Amitabha. Who is reciting Amitabha? Amitabha is reciting Amitabha. Besides Amitabha, who else is there? No one! Your whole heart is Buddha's heart, your entire realm is Sukhāvātī. You have become a Buddha!

The wording of this poem from Laity Xia Lian Ju is very simple, yet its meaning is extremely profound. Shall we read this poem together? Please follow me.
Reciting All The Way.

Amitabha teaches me to recite Amitabha.

~Amitabha teaches me to recite Amitabha.~

Recite Amitabha by mouth and heed my recitations of Amitabha.

~Recite Amitabha by mouth and heed my own recitations of Amitabha.~

Amitabha Amitabha..., recite all the way.

~Amitabha Amitabha..., recite all the way.~

It turns out that Amitabha recites Amitabha.

~It turns out that Amitabha recites Amitabha.~

Let's pay attention to recite Amitabha by mouth and heed our own recitations of Amitabha. Do not listen to any external sounds! We have spoken of the first, second, and third kṣānti, they are all obtained from the merit of “upon hearing the name.”

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namō Amitabha!