

The One-Vehicle-Sea of Amitabha's Vows

We have now completed the interpretation of Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows. Let's make a summary as the finishing touch.

Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows are each peerless in their splendor. Each Vow is to help all beings obtain the unmatched benefit of thusness, which allows all beings to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. There are no other benefits more phenomenal than this. This is the infinite compassion of Amitabha! As sutras describe, the Sea of Amitabha's Vows flowing completely from the purity of self-nature are the intrinsic virtues of self-nature.

Self-nature cannot be conjectured by mortals' delusional minds. We must transcend our mundane perception and depart from our secular **knowledge**, because it is beyond our words and cogitation; our words cannot explain it, nor can our minds reach it. We must be immovable and not give rise to any thoughts in order to comprehend it.

So, Amitabha's Great Vows are completely the consummate embodiment of the virtues of self-nature. We call it the One-Vehicle-Sea of Amitabha's Vows. This is the core of the Pure Land Method. Senior Laity Huang Nian Zu said, "The Pure Land Method being the One-Vehicle-Sea of Amitabha's Vows is the treasure among all treasures, the king among all kings, the core among all cores, and the wonder among all wonders." So billions of mouths and tongues all together to propagate and laud this One-Vehicle-Sea of Amitabha's Vows still cannot completely promulgate it. Even Buddhas in ten directions all extolling it will still not be able to praise it to completion.

To conclude this One-Vehicle-Sea of Amitabha's Vows, it can be simplified into two aspects. It is like weaving, you need nothing more than grasping two kinds of threads, warps and wefts.

One of these two threads refers to the aspect of phenomena: **pervading the cosmic void and throughout the infinite kalpas of the future, all beings in all lands**, regardless of the variety and their godness or evilness—even if they are evil to the extreme and are about to fall into Avīci Hell immediately—as long as they have the faith and aspiration to recite Amitabha and seek Sukhāvātī rebirth, Amitabha will equally escort them. They will be born into Sukhāvati, receive all bliss, and eternally be free from evil paths.

These phenomena are inconceivable! It **transcends our mundane reasoning and perception. It is incomprehensible for mortals!** Even bodhisattvas do not dare to undertake it! It is too phenomenal and rare, all beings of the nine-realms cannot believe and comprehend it.

The other thread refers to the aspect of noumenon: Amitabha escorting all beings to be born is in fact completely due to the hearts of all beings reciting Amitabha resonating with His Vows. It is the method of departing from delusion and attachment to reveal our own intrinsic nature of Tathāgata.

Our self-nature fully and innately possesses Sukhāvātī, and Amitabha never departs from the purity of our heart, so Amitabha's escort is completely the scene manifested by the pure heart of our self-nature. As sutras describe, "Amitabha is our self-nature, and the Pure Land is solely the manifestation of our own heart." Even the facts of all beings' seeking Sukhāvātī rebirth, receiving Amitabha's escort, being born into Sukhāvātī, instantly attaining non-retrogression in one lifetime, and becoming a Buddha Successor are all the consummate virtues of our self-nature!

Neither Duality nor Non-Duality

Master Ou Yi concluded it for us in *The Essential Annotations of Amitabha Sutra*. This paragraph is extremely marvelous. I like reading it very much. Let me read it to you:

"Noumenon and phenomena are neither dual nor non-dual.
Thus, the entire noumenon-phenomena can be circumstantial reward and direct reward, can be Dharma-body (*dharmakāya) and reward-body (*saṃbhogakāya), can be ourselves and Buddha.
Even speaking and spoken, liberating and liberated, believing and believed, wishing and wished, upholding and upheld, arising and arisen, as well as praising and praised, none of them are not the imprint of the true seal of the noumenon-phenomena."

This statement is very profound, let me explain it to you all.

The noumenon and all phenomena are the self-nature, the *truth*, the thusness, the dharmakaya. They are non-dual and have no confrontation. If they were dual, there would be confrontation. Despite having no confrontation, they are not non-dual—not completely without differences. The differences are the manifestations in phenomena; there are Buddhas and all beings, so they are not non-dual.

The entire noumenon(-phenomena) is self-nature. It does not matter whether the phenomena is Sukhāvātī, Saha World, Buddhas, or all beings, they all come from the noumenon(-phenomena) of self-nature. They are "manifested by the true heart and altered by consciousness," never depart from self-nature.

Sukhāvātī is manifested by self-nature. Its direct reward refers to the Buddha and bodhisattvas, and its circumstantial reward refers to the scenes of its splendid land such as the springs, ponds, trees, flowers, birds, wind, moon, and so on. There are three kinds of adornments in Sukhāvātī: the adornment of Buddha, of bodhisattvas, and of the land. This is due to the fact that the entire noumenon(-phenomena) can be both circumstantial and direct rewards. Where do they come from? They are manifested by self-nature.

It “can be both the Dharma-body and the reward-body.” The Dharma-body refers to the pure dharmakaya of Tathāgata, which is self-nature. What about the reward-body? It refers to the body in **the Adornment Land of Absolute Reward**. This body, completely being manifested by self-nature, has infinite laksana (*features) and each laksana has infinite elegance.

It can “be ourselves and Buddha.” Ourselves refers to all beings, Buddha refers to Amitabha and all bodhisattvas. When you are born into Sukhāvātī, Buddha and we are all manifested by self-nature, which makes Buddha and us equal and non-dual. Thus, Amitabha is you, you are Amitabha. They are completely blended like milk and water, not being able to be separated. So, this noumenon can be both Buddha and ourselves.

It can even be “speaking and spoken.”

Shakyamuni Buddha is the one who speaks Dharma, and what is spoken is the Sukhavati Pure Land Method.

It can be “liberating and liberated.” Liberating refers to Amitabha escorting all beings—the expediency of the Pure Land Method. “Liberated” specifies all deluded beings in the six paths who seek the Sukhāvātī rebirth in this life like us.

It can be “believing and believed.”

Those who are capable of believing are all beings like us. We deeply believe without doubts, knowing that *there is* Sukhāvātī, *there is* Amitabha. What is “believed” is Sukhāvātī and Amitabha.

It can be “wishing and wished.”

What is capable of wishing is our own heart. We wish to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth. What is “wished” for is the Pure Land that we seek to be born into.

It can be “upholding and upheld.”

What is capable of “upholding” refers to our heart that can uphold reciting Amitabha. And what is “upheld” is the name Amitabha.

It can be “arising and arisen.”

What is capable of “arising” refers to our heart being able to arise Sukhavati. And what is “arisen” is the Pure Land being arisen from our heart that recites Amitabha.

It can be “praising and praised.”

“Praising” refers to all Buddhas in ten directions, none of them are not praising this Pure Land Method. What is “praised” is this Pure Land Method.

All of the above **are all the imprints of the true seal of the noumenon-phenomena**. In other words, these **doers (being) and recipients (been)**: arising and arisen, reciting and recited, believing and believed, wishing and wished, upholding and upheld, etc., are all manifested by self-nature. They never **depart** from self-nature.

Ultimately, the Sea of Amitabha's Vows is entirely self-nature, existing as thusness. It naturally and intrinsically exists as it is. As long as we now have deep faith and imperative aspiration to recite Amitabha conscientiously, we can then enter this Sea of Self-Nature—the One-Vehicle-Sea of Amitabha's Vows. It is utterly natural and does not have the slightest artificiality. In consequence, when you recite Amitabha and enter the Pure Land, it is nothing for you to be ecstatic about because this is natural, you did not gain anything. Self-nature intrinsically possesses all. It is innately like this.

Sukhāvātī is your intrinsic homeland in self-nature. Amitabha is also the innate Buddha of your heart which is manifested by your Buddha-nature. You are innately a buddha! In other words, if you can recite Amitabha, you can certainly be a Buddha; you are now seeking Sukhāvātī rebirth, of course you can be born in the future.

To Attain Rebirth Is Natural and It Is Our Duty!

Once understanding the noumenon genuinely, you can then deeply believe and imperatively aspire to it. This belief is entirely a faith from wisdom, without the slightest doubt. Our seeking rebirth is also not due to affection-attachment to Amitabha, it is genuinely and innately thusness.

We should go, it is our duty to be born into Sukhāvātī. Once being born, we instantly obtain all capabilities, graceful appearance, virtues, wisdom, supernal power, and adorned land. Those are all ours, not others'.

People who attain rebirth solely relying on the Sukhāvātī that is realized by the Sea of Amitabha's Vows reveal their own consummate self-nature! This is the wonder of the Pure Land Method—relying on Buddha's circumstantial and direct reward to reveal my own true heart. So I recite Amitabha and implore Him to use His consummate world that was realized by the power of His Great Vows to perfectly reveal my intrinsic virtues. After the virtues in my self-nature are revealed, I then realize that the land is my own innate land, and Amitabha is intrinsically myself. The circumstantial reward is mine, and the direct reward, Amitabha, is also me. Our own heart intrinsically possesses all!

When we are genuinely clear about all these truths, our faith will be very solid and our aspiration will be very imperative. We will then “detest the Saha World and joyfully seek Sukhāvātī.” The Saha World is manifested by the contaminated mind in our self-nature, it should be renounced. Sukhāvātī is manifested by the pure heart of our self-nature, it should be sought after. Having thoroughly understood all these principles genuinely, we will absolutely be born in this lifetime with assurance.

Finally, we have completed this series of Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows. It has been a great honor to learn these precious teachings together with you!

In our next series, we will introduce a four-hour lecture, which we found to be the most concise yet comprehensive teaching of Pure Land Buddhism. We believe this marvelous work can benefit people who are interested in learning the Pure Land Method yet are too busy to catch up in this fast-moving world.

May we all embark our journey to the bodhi path by reciting Amitabha conscientiously with genuine faith and imperative aspiration, and meet together in Amitabha's Pure Land. Therefore, we will release our videos irregularly in the future.

Please remember to subscribe and click on the bell to ensure the notification of our newest release. Thanks so much for your continuous support and we hope to see you soon. Namo Amitabha.