

## Regard Everyone as Amitabha and Be Embraced by Amitabha

Shifu reminded me many times, "We must regard everyone as Amitabha." This "regard" is not forced. It is from the bottom of our hearts. We sincerely regard all beings as actual Amitabha. And the truth is that *they are Amitabha innately*. Only when we admit this point of view, can we then possibly resonate with the Buddha's realm. If we still insist that all beings are not Amitabha, then we can never become a Buddha. What is "attaining Buddhahood" really about? It is "Knowing that all beings are innately buddhas who demonstrate different ways to help us attain Buddhahood."

So, to become a Buddha, I must bring forth the Four Universal Vows. All beings are countless, I vow to liberate them all. Only when we see there are beings can we mortal beings bring forth this bodhicitta. Buddhas are very compassionate, they thus manifest all beings to let us bring forth our bodhicitta. This is true, we must believe and undertake it.

According to *The Chapter of Cultivation and Vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra*, "Buddhas and bodhisattvas are flowers and fruits, all beings are roots." In consequence, bodhisattvas cannot depart from all beings." Without all beings, they would be unable to attain bodhi; as if a tree separated from the root, it cannot grow flowers or fruits. Why do bodhisattvas liberate all beings pervasively? Why do Buddhas also liberate all beings universally? Because they feel grateful for the benevolence that all beings bestow upon them. Without the manifestation of all beings to help them sense the sufferings, their bodhicitta would not be initiated.

When Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva was still a Brahmin woman, she saw the suffering of hell beings, she then initiated her bodhicitta to liberate all beings eternally. She said, "If the hells are not empty, I vow not to become a Buddha." After all beings are all liberated, I will then attain Buddhahood; the initiating of her great bodhicitta was helped by all beings. Who are those "all beings"? They are buddhas. They manifest for us! So when we become a Buddha, why do we help all beings to liberation? It is to repay all buddhas' benevolence!

We must contemplate and comprehend these truths carefully. Even if you do not comprehend completely or accept what I have said now, it doesn't matter; you should just listen first and then repeatedly reflect and ponder. When you contemplate based on this truth and gradually accept this concept, you will transform a mortal heart into a Buddha heart.

Shifu imparted this method to me. He told me that he has always been like this, regarding all beings and all things as Amitabha. Sometimes I feel it is hard to do for me, but I am working earnestly towards this goal. So, when others humiliate me, impede me, I would think that this is Amitabha's arrangement. He is Amitabha coming to test me and see if I would still give rise to resentment. So, all conditions are all arranged by Amitabha. Good things, bad things, are all good. There are no bad things anymore. Everything is a good thing.

Why does Amitabha make such an arrangement? It must be to help us eradicate some kinds of defilement and to eliminate our certain karmic habits. If our karmic habits are not tested throughout various realms, they probably can never be eliminated. As we contemplate this carefully, indeed, we can only be grateful, especially to those who come to harm us, to make things difficult for us, and to obstruct us. Those are the people who are most worthy of our gratitude because they help us to eliminate our karmic habits and eradicate our defilements.

This bodhicitta is the mind of enlightenment and the heart of great wisdom. This wisdom refers to the wisdom of giving rise to our mindfulness\* (\*Skt. [samyak-smṛti](#)) to observe people, matters, and things around us, and then bring forth the bodhicitta in accordance with noumenon. When we are clear about the noumenon, we can then bring forth the mindset of “regarding all people as Amitabha.”

## **Whose Delusion and Attachment Prevents Us from Becoming a Buddha?**

The 13th Patriarch of Pure Land School Master Yin Guang regarded all people as bodhisattvas, only I am truly mortal. Our Shifu said, “Regarding all people as Amitabha, only I am an actual mortal.” We will really agree with this view when we become a Buddha, and we will affirm what is stated in *The Diamond Sutra*, “In this way, you liberate immeasurable, numberless, and boundless living beings to transcend samsara, but actually there are no living beings who obtain transcendence and liberation.” Fundamentally, there are no beings at all due to the fact that they are all buddhas.

*The Avatamsaka Sutra* states, “All beings have the same wisdom, virtues, and great features (Skt. [lakṣaṇa](#)) of Tathagata, but they cannot prove and attain them due to the delusion and attachment.” When I heard this phrase in the past, I had a very shallow comprehension. I thought, all beings are innately buddhas but they cannot prove and attain that they are innately buddhas because they have delusion and attachment. I comprehended it this way originally. Probably many people here also comprehend it this way.

Now I have understood, how could *they* have delusion and attachment? They are innately buddhas, they do not have delusion and attachment. It is *I* who have delusion and attachment. My delusion and attachment made me think that they are not buddhas and think that they are ordinary beings. I was wrong! So, what is really not proven and attained due to our own delusion and attachment? We cannot prove that they are all buddhas, and thus we regard them as ordinary beings and look down on them. Consequently, we are unable to give rise to the heart of “paying homage to all buddhas.” When we really regard them as buddhas, how is it possible that we do not pay homage to them? Comprehending this truth, we will naturally pay homage to all, respecting all.

So, we must delve deeply into the principle of these doctrines. We must cultivate earnestly and intently, only then can we comprehend the principle of this doctrine deeper and

agree that “attaining Buddhahood is our own business.” Others are innately buddhas, complete and consummate buddhas, they do not need us to worry about liberating them at all. Do not flatter ourselves!

## No More Regress, How?

Indeed, we just need to liberate ourselves. Yet, liberating ourselves is no different from liberating all beings. This is very wondrous. When we ponder meticulously, we will realize that we cannot liberate ourselves without liberating all beings. However, we should not take any credit for liberating all beings either, because all beings are in fact Buddhas’ manifestation to help with our self-liberation. This is “Initiating bodhicitta in accordance with noumenon.” When we genuinely resonate with this realm, we will no longer regress. Why? Because there are no conditions for us to regress. Think about it, all people, matters, and things are Amitabha, we are embraced by Amitabha and have no way to be deprived. When our hearts keep in the state of admitting that all is arranged by Amitabha, how could it be possible that we regress? We will be the same as in Sukhāvātī.

Sukhāvātī is like this. Our bodies and the environment are all Amitabha. The direct reward is Amitabha. What about the adornment of the circumstantial reward? The jewel pond, the lotus, the water of eight meritorious virtues, the rows of seven-jeweled trees, and even the birds are all Amitabha. We are embraced by Amitabha, internally and externally all are Amitabha; thus we do not regress.

The bodhisattvas of Sukhāvātī know that “everything is Amitabha,” so they do not regress. When we know that our surroundings are all Amitabha, even the carpet—the thing we walk upon on the floor—is also Amitabha, He holds us. The meals we eat are also Amitabha, even the stools we make are Amitabha as well. According to a story from Zen Buddhism, a Shifu asked, “Where is Buddha?” The disciple answered, “The feces is Buddha.” This statement is not wrong. Isn’t Buddha pervasively everywhere? Doesn’t the feces have Buddha? Where does it not have Buddha?

If we bring forth this kind of heart genuinely, our sincerity and respect will then be complete and consummate. With every thought of “Buddha is in my heart, by my side,” we will naturally respect all. At the moment we are doing so, aren’t we the people of Sukhāvātī? In the eyes of all beings, even though our bodies are still in the Saha world, our minds are already in Sukhāvātī. Our feeling is that our bodies and minds are all in Sukhāvātī. This ease and joy are incomparable with even those of the heavenly beings.

Thanks for learning with us. Namo Amitabha!