

Samadhi of Reciting Amitabha Attained by Listening to Sutra Teachings Every Day

Often, some fellow practitioners said to me, "Ding Hong Shifu*(fatherly teacher), I have created very heavy karma, I will probably fall into hell in the future." They were very afflicted. I comforted them and said, "The karma created in the past, you should not think about again. One more time thinking about it, it is like one more time doing it. Isn't that increasing your karma? Let the past be the past, do not think of it again. What should you think of? Think of Amitabha, think of seeking Sukhāvātī rebirth by listening to sutra and Dharma teachings every day incessantly.

Isn't the text of the 21st Vow clear? "If someone committed evil faults in the past, upon hearing my name, he will spontaneously repent those faults, practice Dao, do goodness, uphold sutras and precepts, and aspire to be born to my land. When his life comes to an end, he will not fall into the three evil paths but instantly be born into my land." This is a powerful assurance of not falling into evil paths that Amitabha gives us.

Listening incessantly to the sutra teachings is to remind ourselves. Just like Teacher Liu Suyun, who stayed at home listening to the sutra teachings ten hours a day, immersing herself in it every day. Will she regress to the evil paths? She will not. She has obtained 100% the merit of "hearing my name" and has firmly obtained bodhicitta.

Our shifu, Master Chin Kung, validates that she has attained the Samadhi of Reciting Amitabha. How did she attain it? The secret is to listen to sutra teachings every day. By simply listening to one sutra, *The Infinite Life Sutra*, she has attained the Samadhi of Reciting Amitabha. So, how will the Samadhi of Reciting Amitabha be attained? It is through the merit of "hearing the name."

Genuine Repentance —Never Doing It Again

Understanding this, we realize that it is useless to be afflicted no matter what karma we made in the past. Feeling afflicted and guilty is not repentance. Repentance is to "never do it again." Not only we never do it again physically but never do it verbally and mentally. Do not think about it, only think of Amitabha, think of seeking Sukhāvātī rebirth; this is true repentance. The text has made this point crystal clear: when we repent our evil faults of the past—including yesterday or even one hour ago—and think of only Amitabha and rebirth, we will, at the end of life, not fall into three evil paths but instantly be reborn into Amitabha's land.

This proves that Amitabha's compassion truly reaches the extreme. Even if we have created deep and heavy karma of hell, as long as we can turn back now and are willing to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth, Amitabha can save us from falling into the three evil paths. Because Amitabha said, "If such a vow is not realized, I will not procure Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi."

Look! How resolute and decisive His words are! Now that Amitabha has become a Buddha, it indicates that His Vows have been completely realized.

We will not fall into the three evil paths as long as we are willing to be born into Sukhāvātī. This is phenomenal! Relying on self-power, we cannot make it. We can only rely on the Pure Land Method! No matter how heavy our karma is, we can **bring** them all with us to be reborn. Amitabha will take care of everything for us. We can totally rely on Amitabha and do not need to worry about a thing.

The biggest trouble is that we are not willing to be reborn.
How can we be reborn? As long as we are willing to.
This is the simplest and most direct way to interpret it.

When I told my grandpa, I said it just like this. My grandpa was only educated to the third-grade, and he did not learn Buddhism until he was near ninety. He is ninety-four years old now. I arranged for him to practice with some fellow practitioners in a small monastery. At that time, I lived with him for one year and spoke the Pure Land Method to him every day. If I spoke too deeply, he would not understand. He was old and his ears did not function well. So, I could not speak to him like I speak to you all now. He would not have the patience to sit that long. I had to explain with the most simple language to let him “hear Amitabha’s name.”: How can you be reborn? As long as you are willing to go.

I asked, “Are you willing to go?” He said, “yes.” Great then! But we must explain to him the real meaning of “willing to.” It is to let go of secular matters. I asked him, “Have you ‘let go’ yet?” He said, “Now, I am still a little concerned about my grandchildren sometimes.” I said, “This is not willing to. If you are willing to, you must let go of this world.” He pondered on it and said, “It is still better in Sukhāvātī.”

Great! As long as he is willing to go, it will work. So, speaking to elderly people, we must use the most simple language yet not state it wrong. What is the biggest karma? It is “not willing to go.” Once “willing to go,” it will work. But, we must immerse ourselves in “hearing the name” due to our very heavy karma from our past lives often impeding us from bringing forth our bodhicitta.

Seeing Amitabha Twice But Not Being Reborn, Why?

One time my grandfather became seriously ill and did not want to eat. We were worried, “Is he about to be reborn?” We started to do “**assisting recitation**” for him. I encouraged him by his side, “Grandpa, you must seek Sukhāvātī rebirth.” He agreed. I said to him, “Now you must let go of everything.” I wrote a will on his behalf and let him sign it. He did not have much to hand over. I only wrote one sentence on his will, “All belongings I leave behind will be taken care of by my wife.”

At that time, he could not eat, yet had many bowel movements. It looked like the time had come. My maternal grandmother was like this when she was reborn—**only out, nothing in**. How long can one endure in this condition, right? His body will be gradually emptied. We recited Amitabha with the dharma bell striking. The sound of the bell is **pure and melodious**, it can make people **wide awake**. We recited incessantly for about fourteen days. He neither ate nor drank, only took a bit of water a day during these two weeks. Wow, it was really rare. We were wondering how long he could endure? We thought it should be three or four days, yet it turned out that he was still not reborn after two weeks.

After two weeks, he said that he was hungry. We gave him some rice milk and noodle soup, and then gradually gave him some thicker food. Three days later, he had recovered to a normal diet. The result is that his illness was cured without any treatment.

Do not applaud so quickly everyone. What he had obtained from reciting Amitabha is the small benefit. Being cured from a serious illness by reciting Amitabha, this is a small benefit. It is a pity that he did not obtain the great benefit of rebirth. Later, he said to me, "Amitabha came twice during the fourteen days of our **assisting recitation**. One time in midair, Amitabha was right outside the window. Another time Amitabha came into the house." He really saw Amitabha twice, not in his dreams. I asked, "Did you ask Him to escort you to Sukhavati?" He said, "I forgot." I stared at him wide-eyed and said, "How could you forget to be reborn? Still not willing to go."

We recited twenty-four hours every day unceasingly, taking turns with a shift system, quite hard work, yet he did not want to be reborn. This does not belong to "aspire to be born to my land." He did not have a real aspiration because he had not asked to be escorted when seeing Amitabha. However, his illness was cured and his karma was eliminated due to the blessing of the Buddha light. But this is only a small benefit. The great benefit is "to be reborn."

The Amitabha Sutra states "**One cannot lack good roots, meritorious fortune, cause, and condition to attain Sukhāvātī rebirth.**" My grandfather's karma was actually pretty heavy. But his **cause and condition** was particularly good. I accompanied him from dawn to dusk almost every day in that one year, talking to him about the merits of "hearing Amitabha's name," about the Pure Land Method. I even made an excerpt of *The Amitabha Sutra* for him, about 800 words. I let him read it ten times a day. He was quite obedient and honest. He read it every day. He feels that his grandson is pretty filial, and it is quite fortunate that he, over ninety, is still healthy. As for the good roots of my grandfather, it is not sufficient because he did not let go of the Saha world and go with Amitabha. With good roots deeply seated, one will believe, accept, be willing to recite Amitabha and seek Sukhavati rebirth upon hearing it, and of course he will definitely let go of all and follow Amitabha to Sukhavati.

**Reciting Three Days, Seeing Amitabha Once
Venerable Ying Ke Was Reborn, Why?**

Venerable Ying Ke of the Song Dynasty was very different from my grandfather. He closed his door to recite Amitabha for three days and nights without eating or drinking, and finally induced Amitabha to appear before him. Amitabha said to him, "You still have a lifespan of ten years, wait for ten more years, I will come to escort you." Venerable Ying Ke said, "No, no, Amitabha, please take me now. Ten more years with my deep-rooted karmic habits, I do not know how much more karma I will create.

Since he was a monk who violated precepts, he knew that he had created the karma of hell. If he was not reborn, he would definitely fall into hell. Therefore he held on tight when Amitabha came. Amitabha was very compassionate. He said, "Okay, I will come to escort you in three days."

Venerable Ying Ke happily opened the door and said to everyone, "Amitabha is coming to escort me in three days." The Venerables of the temple all disbelieved him. They thought, "This wicked person, behind a closed door, who knows what he was doing inside? After three days, he told us that Amitabha is coming to escort him?! Anyhow, three days is not long, let's wait and watch, see whether or not he is really reborn."

Three days later, in the morning, Venerable Ying Ke asked the monks of this temple, "Can you recite Amitabha instead of Morning Prayer?" Everyone agreed and recited Amitabha for him. In less than fifteen minutes, he was reborn. Look! Venerable Ying Ke was very smart, he implored Amitabha when seeing Him, "Buddha, please quickly take me with you."

My grandfather was not as smart as him, seeing Amitabha twice, he was not willing to go. This is due to his good roots still not being sufficient. What can he do? He must make up for his insufficient good roots. How? He must rely on reciting Amitabha and listening to sutra teachings. I let him listen repeatedly to the special topic of my speech—The Theory and True Cases of Sukhāvātī Rebirth. Hoping the repetitive listening leaves him a deep impression, he can then make up for his insufficient good roots. So, listening to sutra and Dharma teachings can help make up for our insufficient good roots.

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namo Amitabha!