

The Dragon-Maiden Becomes a Buddha

The Lotus Sutra tells a story of “The Dragon-Maiden Attains Buddhahood.” This dragon-maiden was only eight years old, and it is not a human but a dragon. Dragons are beings of the animal path. Yet this female dragon was enlightened, became a Buddha, and immediately transformed into a male body.

All Buddhas are male, there are no female Buddhas. You absolutely cannot find a female Buddha. Once becoming a Buddha, you will only manifest the image of a male. But bodhisattvas, for the expediency to liberate all beings, can manifest in a female form. When appearing as a female, she is definitely not a manifestation of a Buddha; Buddhas only manifest the image of male.

The dragon-maiden can become a Buddha in an instant, it is attributed to an extreme consummate and instant method that is imparted in *The Lotus Sutra*. However this method is very difficult for us mortals to practice. In theory, becoming a Buddha is just within one thought to let go of delusion, discrimination, and attachment. But it is very difficult to implement it.

Come on, try it! Can you let go of delusion, discrimination, and attachment in an instant to attain Buddhahood? You can't! So, it is very difficult to practice and achieve it. Only this dragon-maiden in *The Lotus Sutra* had made it. She has proven it to us, but it is difficult to find a second example. Patriarchs throughout generations unanimously agree that “*The Śūraṅgama Sūtra* helps us to reveal wisdom, and *The Lotus Sutra* teaches us to attain Buddhahood.” In theory, all beings can become a Buddha instantly, but it is very difficult in practice because we mortals cannot find a point where we can initiate our effort.

Luckily, the Pure Land Method also teaches us to become a Buddha in one lifetime and it is easy to start. How? By hearing Amitabha’s name we initiate the faith and aspiration to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth through reciting Amitabha. We can definitely be born within ten recitations. Once being born into Sukhāvātī, we will transform a female body into a male body just like the dragon-maiden. When arriving in Sukhāvātī, we attain the position of Buddha-Successor-in-One-Life* (**eka-jāti-pratibaddhā*), and of course we can attain Buddhahood. The Vow of “detesting her female body and transforming into a man” thus can be implemented.

Despite having the same theory as *The Infinite Life Sutra*, *The Lotus Sutra* is very difficult to practice. *The Infinite Life Sutra* is easy to practice. By reciting Amitabha to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth, everyone can do it. From this point of view, *The Infinite Life Sutra* has implemented *The Lotus Sutra*.

Master Ou Yi said it well, the Pure Land Method is “the profound hidden jewel of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, and the secret quintessence of *The Lotus Sutra*.” Among Buddhist sutras, patriarchs and great virtuous ones throughout generations have regarded *The Lotus Sutra* and *The Avatamsaka Sutra* in the highest esteem. They called these two sutras “the Definitive

Doctrine of One Vehicle.” It is the “eka-yana method of Perfect Teaching.” So, *The Lotus Sutra* and *The Avatamsaka Sutra* are the supreme sutras.

Where does *The Avatamsaka Sutra* lead to? At the end of *The Avatamsaka Sutra*, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva guides a homecoming to Sukhāvātī with The King of Ten Great Vows. It leads us to be born into Sukhāvātī, which has been implemented by *The Infinite Life Sutra*. This suggests that *The Avatamsaka Sutra* leads to *The Infinite Life Sutra*—the Pure Land method. As for *The Lotus Sutra*, it tells us that we can become a Buddha in an instant as soon as we let go of delusion, discrimination, and attachment. It makes sense in the principle of noumenon, yet to practice in phenomena, we still need to implement it with *The Infinite Life Sutra*, which is reciting Amitabha to seek Sukhavati rebirth and to become a Buddha. Only then can we implement *The Lotus Sutra*.

So, “the profound hidden jewel of *The Avatamsaka Sutra* and the secret quintessence of *The Lotus Sutra*” are right in this sutra: *The Infinite Life Sutra*.

All Will Be Born through Transformation in Lotus Flowers

The following text states, "All kinds of beings in all worlds of ten directions, through transformation, will be born into the lotus flowers in the seven jeweled ponds." There is no exception, all beings in the worlds of ten directions are all included! Once being born, you instantly obtain a golden body, and your appearance and brightness is the same as Amitabha. As stated In *The Verse of Praising Amitabha*, you “regard the nine grades of lotus flowers as your parents.” The “parents” here are an implication of Dharma, which connotes that you are not growing up from a baby gradually but instantly have the body of an avaiavartika bodhisattva as all supreme good people in the Land.

The seven-jeweled pond of the Land has the water of eight merits that nurtures the lotus flowers. This lotus flower is induced and accomplished by your recitation of Amitabha. When you recite earnestly, the flower will grow bigger and Amitabha will bring this flower to escort you in the future. The flower even has your name on it. At the time when you see Amitabha coming to escort you, you will know that “my lotus is here.” You then ascend to the lotus and attain rebirth. So, these lotus flowers are naturally transformed and manifested, they do not have any contamination.

Transform Affection-Attachment Into Dharma-Affinity

In our Saha World, giving birth is a very troubled and dangerous matter, especially in ancient times when medical technology was not developed; if the fetus had some problems, it was very possible that the baby might die in the mother's womb, which would cause grave danger for the mother. So, giving birth to children in the past was like going to hell and back. For this reason, we should be grateful for our mother's profound benevolence. The contribution and

sacrifice that our mother made for us is truly enormous. The best way to repay this debt of gratitude is to convince her to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth and to genuinely help her be reborn. Only then can she be free from suffering and obtain ultimate bliss eternally. This is an all-round repayment for the debt of gratitude we owe.

After giving birth, it is even harder to raise the children. You put your heart and soul into it, yet they are not necessarily filial. If what you get in return is their unfilial deeds, you would truly feel that life has too much suffering. Why are they unfilial? The root-cause is *education*. Education should be started from the prenatal stage, because the fetus is a complete life with a soul. They can perfectly perceive external stimulation. So, it is very important for us to set a good example for our children by being filial to our own parents and cultivate our own virtues. Leading them to implement *Dizigui*—guidelines for being a good person in Confucius’ teaching—is a great way. This sage teaching enables us to root children’s innate foundation. With a solid intrinsic foundation, their good personality can then be established. Look! How much effort you have to make!

There are no such troubles in Sukhavati where only two relationships exist: teacher-student relationship with Amitabha and classmates relationship with all supreme good people. How pure it is! They do not have affection-attachment. Unlike in our Saha **world where there are five ethical relationships: parents-children, siblings, husband-wife, leader-subordinate, and friends, the** beloved affection between parents and children in a family makes them differentiate others as outsiders. Once there are insiders and outsiders, they will give rise to discrimination and all kinds of affection-attachment, leading them to become selfish and egoistic, feel injustice, and thus create karma by harming others to benefit themselves. Once creating karma, they must suffer retribution, which makes them become more deluded and muddled, they will then fall into endless reincarnation.

Amitabha saw these situations, He thus gave up the five ethical relationships like parents-children and husband-wife. He chose to let us transform through lotus flowers, and only kept the relationships of teacher-students and classmates. These relationships are most pure and are all Dharma-affinity. Now we want to be reborn, we must know how to transform our affection-affinity into Dharma-affinity, even the closest relationships like husband-wife and parents-children should all be transformed into Dharma-affinity. When everyone has the same goal of seeking rebirth, our five ethical relationships will become classmate relationships—the relationship of Dharma-brothers.

People who do not study Buddhism when hearing this will think, “Why are you forsaking the five ethical relationships? Confucius talked about the five ethical relationships, how could you forsake them?” In fact, it is not like what it sounds, it is actually transcending the five ethical relationships. When we put ourselves in a higher realm, we can better deal with the five ethical relationships. Why? Because we will be more rational and wiser due to not having affection-attachments.

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namō Amitabha!