

Believe Our Thoughts Being the Cause and the Manifested Land Being the Effect

Only when we are crystal clear about the noumenon and phenomena can our faith be on **solid ground**; we will then have no doubt. We must establish this kind of faith! Master Ou Yi said, "Believe in ourselves, believe in Buddhas, believe in phenomena, believe in noumenon, believe in cause, and believe in effect."

Believing in cause and effect refers to believing in our thoughts being the cause and the manifestation of the land being the effect. When our pure thoughts are continuous, it manifests a pure land. As a phrase reads, "**When your heart is pure, your land is thus pure.**" When we can thoroughly penetrate these principles, we will no longer give rise to any doubt and will resolutely believe and be unmoved.

So within our self-nature, we must transform our minds from the Saha World that is manifested by our contaminated thoughts into the Sukhāvātī that appears from our unceasing pure thoughts. The deluded and contaminated mind does not innately exist in self-nature. Since it does not innately exist, it should be renounced; we should let go of the Saha World. On the other hand, self-nature is intrinsically pure which manifests Sukhāvātī, this is what innately exists in our self-nature. We should procure and realize it! The text of the 42nd Vow states, "Living beings who see the light will give rise to a rare mind." This rare mind is the resolute faith, the sincere and imperative aspiration of seeking Sukhavati rebirth.

The concept of noumenon and phenomena is possibly too deep to comprehend. In general, speaking of the phenomena, it is easy to understand but not easy to believe; speaking of the noumenon, it is easy to believe yet not easy to comprehend. You make your own choice, you can enter either from the noumenon or from the phenomena. Generally speaking, intellectuals find it easier to enter from the noumenon. I personally enter from the noumenon.

What Is Noumenon?

The Avataṃsaka Sūtra states, "**All dharmas** are manifested by the true heart and altered by consciousness." This is the principle of the noumenon. Since it is the principle of the noumenon, it is the *truth*. It can be applied not only to the Saha World but to all worlds. All dharma-realms of the cosmic void are all manifested by this noumenon. We must **accept the principle of this** noumenon. Since all phenomena are manifested by the true heart and altered by consciousness, it connotes that the true heart and the consciousness are one unity. Now we must ask ourselves, what is the state of my mind?

If my mind is pure, a pure heart would manifest a pure land, I should then believe in Sukhāvātī. But my mind is now contaminated, it thus manifests this polluted and turbid land that I see now. Since I have seen this turbid land, I should then believe that Sukhavati can of course be manifested by my pure heart. After having comprehended thoroughly from **the noumenon**, I

will then be resolutely unmoved. It is easier for intellectuals to resonate and enter from noumenon.

However, some people feel it is easier to resonate from the phenomena. “Yes, I just believe in what Buddha said. There is Amitabha, there is Sukhāvātī. I do not care that all phenomena are illusory and I do not understand the noumenon you talked about either; I just believe in the phenomena in which I have even seen Amitabha, how could that be false? It is real!” You simply wholeheartedly seek rebirth! That would be great; as long as you believe in it, it would work.

Faith and Aspiration Must Be Implemented by Genuine Practices

Nonetheless, one must cultivate genuinely in phenomena. If intellectuals only comprehend in noumenon and do not genuinely practice in phenomena, that is “clinging to noumenon and renouncing phenomena.” This is very troublesome. They thought they have faith already, but it is not necessarily a genuine faith. **They are still bogged down in the noumenon, not coming out from it yet.** What does a person who genuinely believes look like? They must be earnestly eradicating evilness, practicing goodness, deeply studying sutra teachings, and wholeheartedly reciting Amitabha unceasingly; this is a person who genuinely believes.

We’d rather be “clinging to phenomena and renouncing noumenon” than “clinging to noumenon and renouncing phenomena.” As if some elders who simply do not understand something such as “manifested by the true heart and altered by consciousness,” or “bringing forth bodhicitta **and reciting in one focus,**” they just practice genuinely in phenomena and recite Amitabha, Amitabha, Amitabha...,” reciting more than 100 thousand recitations a day. In the end, they are reborn with ease at the time of their rebirth! This can then be called “fully possessing faith and aspiration.”

Our speech this time particularly emphasizes faith and aspiration because this is the key to rebirth. Even so, you must practice genuinely. You must not think that “I have possessed faith and aspiration after listening to these lectures.” If you go home still playing mahjong, dancing, and partying, instead of cultivating genuinely, your faith and aspiration are phony. In other words, even if you have comprehended in noumenon but do not genuinely practice in phenomena, your comprehension in noumenon is **null. It is deviated and will lead you to an unreliable rebirth.** That would be scary!

When your lifespan has ended, you wonder “how come I am still in samsara? Didn’t I have faith and aspiration already?” You may even slander Buddha-Dharma at that time by saying, “Buddha distinctly said that rebirth hinges on faith and aspiration, I had them already, how could I still not be reborn?” Slander will bring you even more trouble, you must not slander at that time.

Among these three provisions of faith, aspiration, and cultivation, though faith and aspiration were particularly emphasized, both must be implemented by cultivation. If you do not earnestly recite Amitabha in cultivation, how could your faith and aspiration be genuine? For example, as a child at the time of the college entrance examination, your goal is to go to college. Your action of preparing for the exam must catch up, your aspiration is then genuine. If you say that you have brought forth the aspiration but still play games, indulge on the internet every day, the result turns out opposite to your expectation, it proves that your aspiration is **bogus**. Therefore, we must genuinely practice in phenomena.

We now know that the merit of “upon hearing the name” can enable us to end our reincarnations. We also know that, only when we genuinely “hear the name,” we will then obtain Buddha's blessing to have deep faith, imperative aspiration, and become non-regressed. Since we know that “hearing the name” has such great merit, we must genuinely practice. We must listen to sutra teachings when going home, just like Teacher Liu Suyun listening to the teaching of *The Infinite Life Sutra* ten hours a day, we can then obtain the merit of hearing the name. Otherwise, the merit will not be able to bless us, because we do not accept it.

This is about the 42nd Vow: The light shines throughout ten directions. It specifically mentioned “giving rise to a rare mind.” When this rare mind has indeed arisen, we will then be honest, obedient, and practice genuinely. Because we know it is rare and difficult to encounter this method in immeasurable kalpas. Once we miss this good opportunity, it will be difficult to encounter the same condition again in tens of thousands of kalpas. At that time, It will be too late even if we regret it.

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namó Amitabha!