

佛學問答 Questions on Buddhism

解答者：李炳南居士

Answered by Mr. P. N. Li

譯者：李恆鉞居士

Translated by Mr. H. Y. Li



Q. I was told that the name of Amitabha represents all the Sutras and it is the king of Sutras and Mandaras. If that is so, is Amitabha a real person? Or is it a merely representation of Sutra king or mandara king? (P. 27)

A. This can be answered in two parts. First, "A" is the first of the alphabet. If there were no "A", there would be no Sutras. The word "A" is the heart of the eighty four thousand Dharanis or secrete words. If there were no "A", there would be no eighty four thousand Dharanis. Only this letter "A" would be the king of Sutras and Mandaras. It is important both in Plain Sect and Secrete Sect. All the great Sutras explain the importance of this word Amitabha in the Plain Sect. In the Secrete Sect, "A" represents Buddha department, containing the meaning of the uniformity of Truth and Wisdom, "Mi" represents Lotus department, containing the meaning of the emptiness of person and fact. "Ta" represents Diamond department, containing the meaning of indestructibility. Therefore it may represent all the Sutras. Second, this name Amitabha represents a real person. It is clearly stated on the three Sutras of Pure Land Sect. Amitabha is the preceptor, of the Pure Land. His name has many inclusive meanings.

Q. The Dharma body does not appear and vanish; does not increase or decrease. Why the living beings are increasing from time to time? (P. 28)

A. You cannot count this world only. There are six paths of beings. One path in creases as other path decreases like the wave of the ocean rolling to and fro. The total is not increased or decreased.

Q. The Dharma and the Buddha which is the earlier? If the Buddha is the earlier,

how can he get the Dharma and be enlightened? (P. 29)

A. The Dharma is from the mind. The mind is the Dharma. The Buddha is also from the mind, The mind in also Buddha. The mind, Buddha and Dharma are one. There is nothing earlier. I explain it in common way. Anyone who has his Dharma covered is called a Satva (opposite to Buddha). Anyone who uncovers his Dharma is a Buddha. You can say that the Dharma is earlier because the Buddha attains enlightenment by following the Dharma. You may also say that the Buddha is earlier because he preaches the Dharma to the people.

Q. The Amitabha Sutra says "The people there often rise in the morning, bring fine flowers and offer to the billions of Buddhas in other Pure Lands. They return in the diner time and take their meals". The Pure Land is the Holy Land, why they still eat? Has Buddha still eagerness for food? (P. 34)

A. There are not necessary to eat in the heavens of Devas. Of course Buddha has no eagerness for food. The people in the Pure Land bring the habit of eating from this world. Or the eating is a figure of speech to make the people of this world eager to go there.

Q. Some one doubts that the Diamond Sutra emphasizes nothing to be stuck, but the Pure Land Sect emphasizes to stick on the reincarnation. How to understand the difference? (P. 34)

A. The method is different but the purpose is the same. The ultimate performance in the Pure Land is also nonsticking.

Q. The Meditation Sutra says "Bodhisatva Avalokitesvara (kuanyin) radiates six beams of lights to save the beings in the six paths of life". To what place the beings in the three bad paths be saved and brought? (P.35)

A. This depends upon the karma of the beings. Those having good karma will be saved suddenly and those having bad karma will be saved gradually stage by stage.

Q. We must sleep by the requirement of the body. But sleep is one of the five evil desires. To sleep is to enter the dullness. How shall we, Buddhists avoid dullness? (P.38)

A. To eat less, to lessen the evil desires, to reduce the burden of the brain and to save the body from weariness the dullness will be less.