

答問學佛

Questions on Buddhism

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Q. If one repeats the name of Amitabha diligently and he performs the ten bad deeds, can he be reborn to the Pure Land?

A. Beside repeating Amitabha, the practitioner must adopt the same virtues as the Buddha. If he did as you say, you can't predict if he will be reborn to the Pure Land or not, because you don't know whether the good karma or the bad karma will be the stronger and will produce the fruit during his death.

Q. Has the total number of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and sentient beings from the beginning till now increased or decreased?

A. The number of the substances is the same and the number of the phenomena is different.

Q. Where did the nature of the Buddha and the Alaya Vijnana (basic consciousness) of all beings come from? And from what were they produced?

A. You used the word beginningless and you ask where they came from and what they were produced from. Your question contrasts to the word beginningless. If there would be a first cause, then there should be a cause of it and it was not the first.

Q. Buddha Sakyamuni had been a Buddha predicted by Buddha Dipamkara (Lamp Flame) and appeared to the earth as Sakyamuni. Why did he again practice for nine years before becoming Buddha?

A. All the events were performed intentionally to serve as an example to the people.

Q. After taking the precepts, if one is thinking of killing or is dreaming of killing, has he broken the precept? How can he repent?

A. The breaking of the precept depends on deeds. Beginners can't control their thoughts. If you have a bad thought you at once repeat Amitabha. Precepts will not be broken by dreams. It is better to repent. You can do it before a Buddha image.

Q. In the Sutra of the Precepts of Upasaka the breaking of some precepts can be repented and the breaking of other precepts can't be repented. But the effect of repeating Compassion Darani (secret words) is so great that the sin of breaking precepts, even great, will vanish. Does the Darani of the Effort of Buddha have greater power than the repentance of the effort of the person?

A. To repeat the Darani by concentration on the three Karmas is very powerful. The stanza, "You repent the sin by your mind; when you lose your consciousness you lose your sin. In fact there are no sins and no mind; that is real repentance." is the proof. You can't speak of both the Buddha's power and one's own power; the power comes from both sources.

Q. When a woman emits menses can she burn incense, salute Buddha or repeat the name of Buddha?

A. The mense is a kind of body condition. Its cause gives no trouble to the said performance. One should clean his mind, not his body.

Q. Are the Devas (gods) the same as men? Can we see them?

A. The Devas are born by transformation and their bodies are different from our material bodies.

Q. How do you explain the word "patient" in the phrase "The patient rest in the belief in immortality"?

A. The word patient means attainment. To attain is to know it clearly and to rest your mind upon it.