

Records of the Pure Land

During the T'ang Dynasty there was a Bhikshuni by the name of Ch'ing Chen (淨真) Pure and True. During her life she strictly upheld ascetic practices and every day begged for her food. She also would only wear old clothing. Throughout her life she cultivated patience and never got angry. She recited the Vajra Sutra 100,000 times and during other times concentrated on holding the Buddha's name. One year she came down with an illness and told her disciples, "For the past five months I have seen Amitabha Buddha ten times, and twice I saw the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. There, in a jeweled lotus flower, I saw some children playing, and I know I will receive birth in an upper grade of lotus flower." Soon after she had spoken these words, she sat in full lotus posture and died. After she died, the entire temple was bathed in a pure light.

translated by Bhikshuni Heng Wen, Ph.D.

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Miraculous Portraits"

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There was a monk during the Ching Dynasty named Wintermelon. Everyone had forgotten his name long ago, and because he like to eat wintermelon, everyone called him Wintermelon. He left the home life at Avatamsaka Temple (華嚴庵). He was very quiet and never spoke. He had a habit of walk-ing. He would spend his whole day walk-ing. People didn't know what he was doing. He walked for more than ten years.

Another monk of similar resolve lived in a nearby temple and the two of them were friends. Wintermelon monk told the other monk, "Next month on the sixth, I'm going to go. You should come to see me off."

When the day came, Wintermelon had forgotten his own plan and had gone to another temple to receive a meal offering. When his friend came looking for Wintermelon to see him off, he couldn't find him anywhere.

When Wintermelon returned he was surprised to see the other monk there. The other monk reminded him, "Didn't you tell me you were leaving on the sixth of this month and that I should come to see you off?"

Wintermelon said, "Oh, if you hadn't reminded me I would have completely forgotten."

Then Wintermelon bathed himself, put on clean clothes, and prepared to go. He asked his friend to write out the following verse for him;

All day long I just walk on the street,
But my mind is busy reciting the Buddha's name.
People don't know at all, that there is a heaven within.

translated by Bhikshuni Heng Wen
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