

Records of the Pure Land

Once there was a monk named Dau An who lived during the Tang Dynasty. He had studied many of the Great Vehicle Sutras and as a result had opened much wisdom. He lectured on the Avatamsaka Ten Grounds Shastra in a Dharma Assembly held every evening. It was always very dark in the hall and sometimes there weren't even any candles, so he would lift up his hands. Light came out from his hands and made the hall bright. This always surprised people but he would always say, "It isn't really strange at all. There is always light coming from the hands." (everyone's)

One time he announced that he would be going to the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss in the beginning of August. When the time came he had no sickness whatsoever and asked if it was time for lunch yet. When lunch time came he ascended the high seat. The incense emitted a strange and special fragrance that no one had ever smelled before. He then transmitted the Bodhisattva Precepts to those in the four assemblies who wished to take them. He gave instructions and everyone listened attentively. Suddenly he looked up and saw many gods coming down from the heavens. They were playing heavenly music that was extremely wonderful. Then he spoke to the assembly, "The gods from the Tushita Heaven have come to receive me, but in the heavens one still has to undergo birth and death. I always hoped to be born in the Western Land--why can't my vow be fulfilled?" After he had spoken the gods from the heavens slowly rose still playing heavenly music and disappeared back into the heavens.

Then flowers began to stream in from the West and music drifted in from the same direction. The sounds pervaded everywhere. This time the whole assembly could see what was happening. The Dharma Master addressed the assembly, "Everybody take care of yourselves, I'm going to go!"

Since he had just transmitted the Bodhisattva Precepts, he was still holding the incense burner used to request the sages to come certify the precepts transmission. Right when he said he was going it suddenly dropped from his hand and he left while still in the high seat. He was then 69.

translated by Bhikshuni Heng Wen, Ph.D.

transcribed by Bhikshuni Heng Bin