



楚石梵琦禪師《西齋淨土詩》（續）

Chan Master Chushi Fanqi's Pure Land Poems of the West Studio (continued)

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Chan Master Chushi Fanqi of Tianning Monastery in Haiyan County of Ming Dynasty
English translation by West Studio Club / Revised by Yong Wei Kwong

懷淨土詩七十七首（並自序）

Seventy-seven Poems on Cherishing the Pure Land (with Preface)

儒者之詩云。
伐柯伐柯。其則不遠。
說者曰。執柯以伐柯。
睨而視之。猶以為遠。
信斯言也。吾宗念佛。
唯我自心。心欲見佛。
佛從心現。
阿彌陀佛。
三十二相。八十種好。

It is said in the Confucian classic, the *Book of Songs*: “Chop wood with a helve, chop wood with a helve; the model is at hand. This is explained as: “You handle an axe by the helve to chop wood, but if you hold the tool askew, you will miss the mark by far.” This statement is true indeed! Our school advocates mindfulness of the Buddha, which is none other than our own mind. If our mind wishes to behold the Buddha, the Buddha will manifest in our mind.

Amitabha Buddha's thirty-two hallmarks and eighty fine characteristics are inherent in our self-nature; there is no need to seek externally. As the brilliance of his spiritual penetrations exhausts the boundaries of the future, he is called Amitayus (Limitless Life).

性本具足。不假外求。
神通光明。極未來際。名無量壽。
至於華池寶座。瓊樓玉宇。
一一淨境。皆自我心發之（真宗匠）。

妙喜有云。若見自性之彌陀。即了唯心之淨土。
如楞嚴會上。佛敕阿難。
一切浮塵諸幻化相。當處出生。隨處滅盡。
因緣和合。虛妄有生。
因緣別離。虛妄名滅。
殊不知生滅去來。本如來藏。
常住妙明。性真常中。
求於去來迷悟生死。了無所得。

既無所得。但是一心。
若淨土緣生。穢土緣滅。則娑婆印壞。壞亦幻也。
若穢土行絕。淨土行興。則極樂文成。成亦幻也。
然此生滅淨穢。不離自心。
心不見心。無相可得。
雖終日取捨。未嘗取捨。
終日想念。未嘗想念。
在彼不妨幻證。在此不妨幻修。



As for the lotus ponds, jeweled thrones, magnificent towers and jade palaces, every single one of the myriad Pure Land states is a manifestation of our inherent self-nature (true spiritual artisan).

Chan Master Miaoxi (Wondrous Joy) once said, “If we can see the Amitabha of our self-nature, we will spontaneously comprehend the mind-only Pure Land.”

For example, in the Shurangama assembly, the Buddha admonished Ananda:

“Ananda, you have not yet understood that the objects we perceive are unreal and illusory. They are subject to change, appearing here and there and disappearing here and there... It is an illusion that they come into being when both their causes and their conditions are present, and it is an illusion that they cease to be when either their causes or their conditions are absent. You simply have not yet understood that, fundamentally, everything that comes and goes, that comes into being and ceases to be, is within the true nature of the Matrix of the Thus-Come One, which is the wondrous, everlasting understanding—the unmoving, all-pervading, wondrous suchness of reality. But, though you may seek within the everlasting reality of the Matrix of the Thus-Come One for what comes and goes, for confusion and awakening, and for coming into being and ceasing to be, you will not find them there.”

If the conditions for the Pure Land appear, the conditions of the Defiled Land disappear and therefore, the “mould” corresponding to the Saha World is destroyed. This destruction, however, is just an illusion. When one’s karmic affinities with the Defiled Land are completely ended, one’s pure practices in the Pure Land flourish and therefore, the “pattern” corresponding to the Pure Land is created. This creation, too, is an illusion! However, the appearance of purity and disappearance of defilement are never apart from our mind. The mind cannot be viewed as an entity, for it is devoid of characteristics. Though one may spend the entire day seeking [the Pure Land] and rejecting [the Saha World], there is essentially no seeking or rejection. Though one may spend the entire day in mindfulness [of the Buddha], there is essentially no subjective mind or object of the mind. This being the case, one’s realization of that [Pure] Land can be considered illusory and one’s cultivation in this [defiled] land can also be considered illusory.

When one brings forth the Bodhi resolve, one has already achieved the Proper Enlightenment! How does that hinder one from the illusory actions of eradicating one’s bondages and habits, sitting in the Bodhimanda, transforming sentient beings and attaining the ultimate fruition? Would that not be putting

一發心時。已成正覺。
何礙幻除結習。
幻坐道場。
幻化有情。
幻臻極果。
豈不了世出世間之幻法。
調御丈夫之事乎。
昔天衣懷禪師。親見明覺。



盡佛祖不傳之妙。常修淨土。
垂問學者曰。若言捨穢取淨。
厭此欣彼。則是取捨之情。
眾生妄想。
若言無淨土。又違佛語。
修淨土者。當云何修。
乃自答云。
生則決定生。
去則實不去（二句交互語也）。
無過此語也。
余謝事閒居。
作懷淨土詩若干首。勸同袍之士。
及同社之人。凡有心者（大宗匠）。
悉令念佛。
前所謂唯心淨土。自性彌陀。
不出戶庭。夫何遠之有。

待續

an end to the illusory dharmas of the mundane and transcendental realms, and accomplishing the work of the Regulating Hero?

In the past, Chan Master Tianyi Yihuai, who personally saw his bright and enlightened self-nature and fathomed the genuine, wondrous Dharmas of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, constantly cultivated the Pure Land practice. He once posed this question to his students, “If one rejects defilement and seeks purity, detests this and looks forward to that, these are sentiments of grasping and renunciation and the discursive thoughts of living beings. On the other hand, if one says there is no Pure Land, one will be contradicting the Buddha’s words.

How then should a Pure Land practitioner cultivate?” He then provided his own answer, “On rebirth, one is definitely born; on going, one does not really go anywhere.” These two antithetical statements encapsulate the principle of seeking rebirth in the Pure Land.

I have set aside all mundane affairs and have now settled down to a leisurely life. My purpose in composing several poems on cherishing the Pure Land is to exhort fellow monastics, members of the Lotus Societies, and those who have set their minds on cultivating the Buddhist path (great spiritual artisans) to sincerely recite the Buddha’s name. As to what was mentioned earlier about the mind-only

Pure Land and the Amitabha of our self-nature, even if one does not step out of one’s abode, how distant can they be?

To be continued

