

西方極樂是君家

The Western Pure Land is Your True Hometown

萬佛聖城方丈和尚恒律法師2019年12月7日開示於萬佛聖城大殿

A Dharma talk given by Dharma Master Heng Lyu, Abbot of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, on December 7, 2019



2019年是萬佛聖城開光四十週年，那麼阿彌陀佛的極樂世界開光多少年了呢？佛陀在《阿彌陀經》中說：阿彌陀佛成佛於今十劫了，也就是說極樂世界已經開光十劫了。

宣公上人在講解《阿彌陀經》時說，這個「十劫」是十個大劫，而一個大劫，是一個世界從生存到毀滅的時間，可分為成、住、壞、空四個中劫；而每一個中劫，又包含了二十個小劫，也就是說一個大劫包含了八十個小劫。

我們不要小看這一個大劫，因為我們所在的這個「娑婆世界」，從形成到毀滅，一次所經歷的時間就是這個大劫，而我們現在所處的這個大劫，會有一千尊佛出世，所以叫做「賢劫」，而我們的本師釋迦牟尼佛就是這賢劫中的第四尊佛，而未來的彌勒菩薩，會在八百八十萬五千年後成佛，是賢劫的第五尊佛。

阿彌陀佛的極樂世界已經開光十劫了，我們也可以說才剛剛開幕十天，為什麼呢？因為在《大方廣佛華嚴經》<壽量品>第三十一中告訴我們，在這個娑婆世界的一大劫，等於在阿彌

The year 2019 marks the fortieth anniversary of the opening of the City of the Ten Thousand Buddhas. Here is a question: how many years has the Western Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha been open? The *Amitabha Sutra* says that since Amitabha Buddha realized Buddhahood, ten *kalpas* have passed. In other words, the Western Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha has been opened for ten *kalpas*.

When the Venerable Master explained the *Amitabha Sutra*, he said that the ten *kalpas* mentioned in the *Amitabha Sutra* are ten great *kalpas*. One great *kalpa* is a period of time between the creation and extinction of a world, and is subdivided into four median *kalpas* including: the *kalpa* of formation, the *kalpa* of existence, the *kalpa* of destruction and the *kalpa* of emptiness. Each of the four median *kalpas* is divided into twenty small *kalpas*, so that a great *kalpas* consists of eighty small *kalpas*.

However, we should not think little of a great *kalpa*, which is a period of time between the creation and extinction of all Saha Worlds. In this great *kalpa*, we are now in what is called the *kalpa* of Sages, because there are a thousand Buddhas who will realize Buddhahood. Our fundamental teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha, is the fourth Buddha in this great *kalpa*. Maitreya Bodhisattva, will be the fifth Buddha after 8.805 million years.

However, we could also say that the Western Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha has been open recently for ten days. Why is this? That is because the *Lifespan Chapter in Avatamsaka Sutra* tells us that one great *kalpa* in the Saha World is a day and night in the Land of Bliss, the bodhimanda of Amitabha Buddha. In other words, ten days in the Western Pure Land are about ten *kalpas* for us, which is 13.44 billion years, that is about three times the age of the earth. Therefore, the *Amitabha Sutra* says

陀佛極樂世界的一日一夜。換句話來說，阿彌陀佛極樂世界的十天，就等於我們在地球的十個大劫，也就差不多一百三十四億四千萬年，這是我們地球年齡的三倍。所以，《阿彌陀經》說：「彼佛壽命及其人民，無量無邊阿僧祇劫」，這是對我們在這個娑婆世界的人而言的。

有人說：從古至今有很多人都往生到西方極樂世界，但為什麼只有幾個人，幾位菩薩，從西方極樂世界回來，告訴我們西方極樂世界的殊勝呢？

原因就出在這裡，因為只有上品上生往生到極樂世界的人，才能夠立刻花開見佛，證得無生法忍。

如果是差一截的，上品中生而往生到極樂世界的人，那要在蓮花中待一個晚上，蓮花才會開放，那時候我們娑婆世界已經是過了六億七千萬年了。屆時賢劫千佛世界的最後一尊佛樓至佛也已經出世，並入涅槃了。

那有人或許會說，阿彌陀佛西方極樂世界的一日一夜，就是我們這個娑婆世界的一大劫，而在這一大劫中，我們所在這個娑婆世界就會有一千尊佛出世，那麼我們為什麼還要捨近求遠，往生到西方極樂世界去呢？我們可以這麼簡單地回答說，那是因為在這個娑婆世界修行成佛，要能夠得到解脫成就，實在是太困難了！為什麼呢？因為我們修行要能夠得到解脫成就的基本條件，就是要無欲無求，證得我空，這是最基本的要求。

而我們生在這個娑婆世界，所擁有的是雜染的基因，身心充滿著種種的慾望和疾病；而我們所處的環境資源有限，而充滿著各種天災人禍，如旱災、水災、火災、地震、海嘯、颱風、龍捲風、暴風雪、戰爭等等，這些災難隨時都可以將我們生命財產毀之於一旦。譬如說美國東岸的颶風，西岸的大火，就讓很多人喪失了寶貴的生命，更不要說無數的財產了。

不僅如此，娑婆世界到處充滿了叢林法則，也就是弱肉強食，乃至有人說人類的歷史就是一部戰爭史，到處各種的鬥爭不斷，

that the life of that Buddha and those of his people extend for measureless, limitless *asamkhyeya kalpas*, to people in the Saha World.

Someone may ask: “Since those who recite Amitabha Buddha’s holy name will attain rebirth in the Western Pure land, then from ancient times, there must have been many people who have attained rebirth there. Why do only a few people or Bodhisattvas come back to tell us what happened there?”

That is because only the lotus flowers of those who are reborn in the Western Pure Land with the highest level of the highest grade open immediately after rebirth. Therefore, they will immediately see Amitabha Buddha and become enlightened to the patience for the nonproduction of phenomena.

The lotus flowers of those who are reborn in the Western Pure Land with the middle level of the highest grade open after one night. That is equivalent to 670 million years for us. At that time, the last Buddha (Louzhi [Rudita] Buddha) in the *Kalpa of Sages* will have entered Nirvana.

Someone may say: “One day and one night in the Western Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha is a great kalpa in this Saha world. Now, in this *Kalpa of Sages*, there are a thousand Buddhas in this Saha World, so we should stay here. Why should we go round the Sun and meet the Moon, and be reborn in the Western Pure Land?”

In simple terms, it is very difficult to attain liberation in the Saha World. Why is that? It is because the basic requirement for liberation is to let go of all desires and attachments to self.

However, our genes in the Saha World are too impure and poor. Our bodies and minds are full of desires and diseases. Our environments have limited resources, but are full of all kinds of disasters, such as droughts, floods, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornados, snowstorms, wars, etc. that threaten our lives and property. For example, there are hurricanes on the East Coast and wild fires on the West Coast that cause the deaths of many people, not to mention the numerous properties which are destroyed.

In the Saha World, living beings follow the law of the jungle. This means that “every man for himself” – “eat or be eaten.” There are problems and fighting everywhere. Therefore, some say the history of mankind is a history of wars.

As we know, out of loving and kind compassion, our fundamental teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha, came to the Saha

煩煩惱惱。而我們都知道，我們這個娑婆世界充滿著百千萬億兆的六道眾生，如天人、阿修羅、人類、鬼神、動物、昆蟲、精怪以及地獄的眾生……等等。而我們的本師釋迦牟尼佛大慈大悲地來到這裡，勤苦地度化眾生，但是所能夠得到解脫的眾生，卻是少之又少。

而相反的，在西方極樂世界修行，一定是可以得到解脫成就的，乃至成佛，為什麼呢？因為我們往生到極樂世界去之後，會經過蓮花化身的改造，那時我們的基因就會變成清淨的基因，這會使我們身心清淨，沒有種種的慾望和疾病，不但沒有出生的苦痛，而且身體香潔，會現真金色。換句話來說，只要往生到西方極樂世界去，就可以說是已經贏在起跑線上了。

在加之修行所需要的財、法、侶、地，在西方極樂世界都是無比的殊勝，非常的完美，可以幫助我們來修行得到成就的，這可以說是如虎添翼。

那我們要往生到西方淨土去，我們應當要發何種的菩提心呢？

至少必須要發了生脫死的菩提心，乃至上求佛道，下化眾生的菩提心，那就更好了。如果我們連了生脫死的菩提心都發不出的話，那就是我們求生西方極樂世界的信願不夠誠心，反而是貪戀此娑婆世界，自然是無法往生到西方極樂淨土去的了。

所以，我們唯有真正地體會到這個娑婆世界的苦，才會發起強烈的生脫死的菩提心，進而堅定求生西方極樂國土的信、願、行，這樣才能夠必定往生到西方極樂世界去。

接下來想在這裡跟各位大家一起學習有關上人對於淨土法門的問答、開示。

問：念佛一聲，罪滅河沙，我們應該要怎麼樣地念法，才能夠真正達到這個效果呢？

上人：要專一其心地念。

World, and crossed living beings over diligently. However, there are only a few living beings who will attain liberation among billions and trillions of living beings in the Saha World, including the heavenly beings, *asuras*, people, ghosts, spirits, animals, insects, hell beings, etc.

On the contrary, those who cultivate in the Western Pure Land will definitely attain liberation and even accomplish Buddhahood. Why is that?

In the Western Pure Land, you are born with pure genes by transformation in the lotus flower, free from desires, free from diseases, even free from the pain of birth. Your body is dignified, fragrant, clean, and pure, and shines with golden light. In other words, those who are reborn in the Western Pure Land win at the starting line.

Additionally, there are wonderful resources, Dharma, companions, and a wholesome environment in the Western Pure Land to help us cultivate – this is like giving wings to a tiger. (That is to say there are no obstacles and one can vigorously advance.)

If we want to attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land, what kind of *bodhicitta* (bodhi resolve) should we bring forth?

If we want to attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land, we should at least bring forth the *bodhicitta* to end birth and death, or even bring forth the *bodhicitta* to seek the path of Buddhahood above and transfer sentient beings below. That is much better.

If we don't bring forth the *bodhicitta* to end birth and death, this means our faith and vow to be reborn in the Western Pure Land are insincere, and we are attached to the Saha World, so it will be impossible to attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

Therefore, we should truly understand the suffering in the Saha World, so we can bring forth strong *bodhicitta* to end birth and death, as well as have strong faith, vows, and practices. Then, we will definitely attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

Next, I would like to share some of the Venerable Master's answers to questions about Pure Land Dharma-door.

Question: Chanting the Buddha's name once eradicates offenses equal in number to the grains of sand in a Ganges River. How should we chant the Buddha's name in order to achieve that?

問：要如何穩定心性地來專心念佛呢？

上人：少吃一點飯。

問：散亂心念佛應當如果調伏呢？應該用什麼樣的方法來調伏呢？

上人：念多了，就不亂了，你若念一日、若二日、若三日、若四日、若五日、若六日、若七日，一心不亂，你不常常念，當然就散亂了。

問：念佛是不是就要出家了？

上人：念佛，怎麼要出家的呢？如果念佛就要出家了，那出家人要念什麼呢？

問：到底是要專心專意地念阿彌陀佛，還是要專心專意地念觀世音菩薩呢？還是兩個都要念呢？

上人：你喜歡念觀音菩薩，觀音菩薩就來接引你；你喜歡念阿彌陀佛，阿彌陀佛就來接引你，不論你念哪一個，比不念都好，就怕你念念念，把觀世音菩薩也給忘了，阿彌陀佛也想不起來了。

問：念觀世音菩薩聖號與念阿彌陀佛的聖號，兩者有沒有區別呢？效果是不是相同的呢？

上人：你這一分別，效果根本都沒有了。

問：上人，您提到在西方極樂世界就不會墮落了，那是不是會有的人會去躲在蓮花裡面，就不出來的呢？

上人：你要是能夠躲，也不錯啊！你有機會去躲一躲也好啊！

問：打坐是練自性的佛，離開了自性的佛，就沒有什麼佛好求了。在《金剛經》說：以色見我，以音聲求我，是人行邪道，不能見如來。那我們念佛到底是念自性的佛，還是說是求一個外在的佛菩薩來保佑我們，有這一個外在的佛嗎？

The Venerable Master: Stay focused and concentrate when you chant.

Question: How can we transcend our minds and focus on chanting the Buddha's name?

The Venerable Master: Eat a little less.

Question: How do we conquer the scattered mind whenever we chant the Buddha's name? What method can we use?

The Venerable Master: The more you chant, the less scattered your mind will be. You should chant one day, two days, three, four, five, six up to seven days single-mindedly. Since you do not chant regularly, of course, you cannot stay focused.

Question: When we chant the Buddha's name, does that mean we are going to leave the home life?

The Venerable Master: Why should chanting the Buddha's name indicate that you are going to leave home? If chanting the Buddha's name means that you are leaving home, then what should the monastics chant?

Question: Should I focus on reciting Amitabha Buddha's name, or Guanyin Bodhisattva's name? Or both of them?

The Venerable Master: If you like to recite Guanyin Bodhisattva's name, Guanyin Bodhisattva will come to welcome you to the Western Pure Land; if you like to recite Amitabha Buddha's name, Amitabha Buddha will come to welcome you. Reciting either name is better than not reciting. It is only to be feared that you forget to recite Guanyin Bodhisattva's name, and also forget to recite Amitabha Buddha's name.

Question: What is the difference between reciting Guanyin Bodhisattva's name and Amitabha Buddha's name? Will the result be the same?

The Venerable Master: The moment you start differentiating, you definitely won't get any result.

Question: The Venerable Master mentioned that when people are reborn in the Western Pure Land, they will never fall into a lower state again. Therefore, is it possible for someone to hide inside the lotus flower and never come out?

The Venerable Master: If you could hide inside, that would not be bad. If you get a chance, you can try to hide inside it.

上人：這個問題非常的好！念佛法門，念自性佛和念他方佛是一樣的，你念自性佛就是念他方的佛，念十方的佛；你念十方佛，也就是念自性佛，自他不二，二而不二，你分不開的，因為佛光都是一個的，佛佛道同，光光相照的。

問：人在往生以後，在四十九天之中，我們要怎麼樣做才能夠幫往生者往生到西方極樂世界去呢？

上人：最好的方法就是去救人，幫助人，度人比度鬼還好。臨命終時要有正念，你平時念佛，就是預備那最後一分鐘的工作。往往有人平時念佛，在要往生的時候就失去了正念了，就不能念阿彌陀佛了。而無論在十方世界，只要能夠稱念阿彌陀佛的名號，都是可以往生的。

淨土宗的第八代祖師，蓮池大師，他建議我們在念佛的時候，可以觀想我們自己在一個大蓮花中，結跏趺坐，而阿彌陀佛也在其中接引著我們，這樣子可以幫助我們一心持名念佛。蓮池大師也建議，當我們在禮佛的時候，也可以觀想我們自己在大蓮花當中禮佛，而阿彌陀佛就在我們的眼前，來接受我們的禮敬。

蓮池大師他結論說：在從前，昔有二僧做蓮花開合想，遂得往生，況復加一心持名而不生者乎？這意思就是說，在過去有兩位法師觀想綻開以及合攏的蓮花，就能夠往生到西方極樂世界去了；更何況我們一心持名阿彌陀佛的聖號，這是一定可以往生到西方極樂世界去了。❀

Question: When we meditate, we are mindful of the Buddha of our nature. If leave the Buddha of our nature, there is no other Buddha we can ask for help. The *Vajra Sutra* says that those who seek me in form or sound walk down the wrong path, and cannot see the Thus Come One. When we recite the Buddha's name, are we mindful of the Buddha of our own nature? Or are we reciting the name of external Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for their blessing? Is there an external Buddha?

The Venerable Master: This is a very good question. The Dharma door of reciting the Buddha's name is the same whether you are mindful of the Buddha of your nature or an external Buddha. When you are mindful of the Buddha of your nature, you are actually being mindful of the external Buddha and the Buddhas of the ten directions. When you are mindful of the Buddhas of ten directions, you also are mindful of the Buddha of your nature. They are non-dual. It is two, and it is not two. You cannot separate them, because the light of the Buddha is one. All Buddhas are on the same path, and all of their lights mutually shine upon each other.

Question: After a person dies, what should we do for the next 49 days to help the deceased be reborn in the Western Pure Land?

The Venerable Master: The best way is to save people. To help people is better than to help ghosts. You must have proper mindfulness at the time of death, and chant the Buddha's name regularly to prepare for the final moment. Often, people chant the Buddha's name regularly, but when it comes to that critical moment, they lose proper mindfulness. They are not able to chant anymore. No matter where you are within the worlds of the ten directions, if you chant Amitabha Buddha's name, you will be reborn in the Western Pure Land.

The eighth Patriarch of the Pure Land School, the Great Master Lianchi, said: "When chanting the Buddha's name, Pure Land practitioners should imagine themselves chanting in sitting posture in a great lotus flower and Amitabha Buddha is there gathering them in. Then, this will help them focus on chanting Amitabha Buddha's name single mindedly."

He also said: "Likewise, when bowing down to the Buddha, Pure Land practitioners should imagine themselves bowing down in a lotus flower, and Amitabha Buddha acknowledging their bows."

The Great Master Lianchi concluded that, in the past, two monastics who meditated on the opening and closing of the lotus flowers were successfully reborn in the Western Pure Land. Now, we are doing more by chanting the Buddha's name; how could we fail to be reborn in the Western Pure Land? ❀