

Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion -Amida Sutra (22)

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“Joy in Body and Mind”

When the Buddha delivered this sutra, Shariputra and all the monks, together with beings of the whole world, including devas, humans and asuras, rejoiced at what they had heard and reverently accepted it. Having worshipped him, they departed. (from Amida-kyo, translated by Hisao Inagaki)

This is the ending of the Amida Sutra. Here we see that all humans and other beings rejoice in the Buddha's discourse, which reveals the true world of enlightenment. In other words, enlightenment brings true joy and happiness to those who hear it, accept it and practice it.

Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, explains joy, or “Kangi,” in his *Notes on Once-calling and Many-calling*.

Joy (kangi) means to be gladdened in body (*kan*) and gladdened in heart (*gi*). It means to rejoice beforehand at being assured of attaining what one shall attain.

Thus, those who hear and practice the Nembutsu path selected by Amida Buddha's Wisdom and Compassion experience joy even before they have realized the state of ultimate enlightenment. Their enlightenment is assured by Amida Buddha, and witnessed and protected by all the Buddhas. The Nembutsu brings joy into their mindful heart as well as their everyday living.

In conclusion, I would like to quote Master Shinran's hymn on the Amida Sutra.

Seeing the sentient beings of the Nembutsu
Throughout the worlds, as countless as particles, in the ten quarters,
The Buddha grasps and never abandons them,
And therefore is named "Amida."

The Buddhas, countless as the sands of the Ganges or as particles,
Reject the small good of the various practices
And all alike wholeheartedly encourage beings
To realize *Shinjin*, entrusting mind to Amida Buddha, that is the inconceivable working of the Name.

The Buddhas of the ten quarters, countless as the sands of the Ganges,
Teach this dharma that is most difficult to accept;
For the sake of the evil world of the five defilements,
They bear witness to the teaching and protect beings who take refuge in it.

The Buddhas' protection and witness
Arise from the fulfillment of the Vow of compassion;
So let those who attain the Diamond(Vajra)-like Mind
Respond in gratitude to Amida's great benevolence.

To the evil sentient beings of wrong views
In this evil age of the five defilements, in this evil world,
The Buddhas, countless as the sands of the Ganges,
Give the Name of Amida, urging [them to entrust themselves to it].

Jumping into the ocean of the Amida-Dharma
Out of vast inconceivable wisdom and compassion,
You and I can rejoice our life in “namo-amidabu” with deep gratitude. (by Kenjitsu)