

## Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion – The Meditation Sutra (18)

### “Amida as Cosmic Buddha”

By T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki, Sensei

**The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi, “After you have seen this, next visualize the Buddha. Why the Buddha? Because Buddhas, Tathagatas, have cosmic (Dharma-dhatu) bodies, and so enter into the meditating mind of each sentient being. For this reason, when you contemplate a Buddha, that mind itself takes the form of his thirty-two physical characteristics and eighty secondary marks. Your mind produces the Buddha’s image, and is itself the Buddha. The ocean of perfectly and universally enlightened Buddhas thus arises in the meditating mind. For this reason, you should single-mindedly concentrate and deeply contemplate the Buddha, Tathagata, Arhat and Perfectly Enlightened One....”**

(“Kanmuryoju-kyo” translated by Hisao Inagaki)

The eighth Meditation on the Pure Land begins with a well-known phrase about “Dharma-dhatu body.” Various Buddhist masters in China wrote a commentary on this phrase. I want you to meditate on the phrase by yourself. “Various Buddhas and Tathagatas have Dharma-dhatu bodies, and so enter into the meditating mind of each sentient being....”

Though “Buddhas and Tathagatas” is plural, in Pure Land Buddhism it means Amida Buddha as the center of all the Buddhas. So, the above should be read as “Amida Buddha has a Dharma-dhatu body, and so enters....” Dharma means both the universal truth-reality, the universal law that keeps the world the way it is, and the teachings that reveal the truth-reality. Dhatu is realm or world. Dharma-dhatu is the world the Dharma governs and, therefore, the entire universe or cosmos. You can also say the Dharma-dhatu is where one can experience the Dharma. The body of the Dharma-dhatu means that the Buddha-body fills the entire universe. It also means that Amida appears as the Buddha-body to embrace and liberate all the beings in the Dharma-dhatu.

When and where do we experience the Dharma-dhatu body, or simply Amida? It is here and now; wherever we are, whenever we are. In fact, there is no place where we don’t meet Amida. Therefore this Buddha is called Amita-abha/ayus or “Amida not-measured-light/life.” When we think of what Amida means (infinite light and infinite life), we can see that Infinite light is associated with “wherever,” and Infinite life is related to “whenever.” From this view, Pure Land is right here, right now.

Chinese Pure Land Master Shantao understood Dharma-dhatu from three aspects, 1) Mind filling: Buddha’s compassion fills the mind of sentient beings; 2) Body filling: sentient beings meditate on the Buddha-body, the Buddha-body appears in their mind; and 3) Unhindered filling: As the Buddha is unhindered in mind and body, sentient beings will be filled with Buddha’s mind and body. This is no other than Buddha’s benefiting-others power, so-called “Other Power.”

If this applies to me, Buddha’s mind fills my mindful-heart, illuminates and breaks the darkness of my mind, nurtures me, and embraces me to experience oneness with the Buddha in mind and body, here and now, in the Dharma-world.

Shinran Shonin said in the Passages of the Pure Land Way, “I realize now that Amida’s beneficent light surpasses even sun and moon. Necessarily then, we will reach the dawn of supreme, pure shinjin (entrusting mind); Whereupon the clouds of birth-and-death in the three realms of existence will clear; Then the pure, unhindered radiance will be luminous, And the true body of the dharma-realm of oneness will become manifest.

Creation by the law of the Dharma is where we live, and  
Oneness with the Buddha is experienced here and now.  
Sentient beings are living in the Dharma, yet  
Many of us may only see the suffering and pain  
In the realm of transmigration  
Caught by attachment of self-centeredness.

Beauty of life  
Oh yes, we will see it,  
Dharma can open our eyes, and  
Your eyes to see the Dharma-nature.

(By Kenjitsu) ●