

## Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion –the Meditation Sutra (25) Comprehensive visualization: Being a Participant IN the Pure Land

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*“After you have contemplated thus, next visualize yourself as born in the Western Land of Utmost Bliss sitting cross-legged upon a lotus flower. Visualize this lotus flower as closed; as it opens, five hundred rays of colored light illuminate your body; then your eyes are open and you see Buddhas and bodhisattvas filling the sky and hear the sounds of the water, birds and trees, and the voices of the Buddhas all expounding the wonderful Dharma in accord with the twelve divisions of the scriptures. When you rise from meditation, keep those things in mind and do not forget them. Seeing them thus is called the visualization of the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Buddha Amida. This is the comprehensive visualization, and is known as the twelfth contemplation.*

*“Innumerable transformed bodies of Amida, together with those of Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta, will always accompany those who contemplate thus. To practice in this way is called the correct contemplation, and to practice otherwise is incorrect.” (Translation by Hisao Inagaki)*

Now the Buddha Shakyamuni instructs Queen Vaidehi to visualize herself as born in the Buddha Land, and to visualize everything of the Pure Land. At the end of visualization, one needs to be IN the Buddha Land and to experience all as a personal matter.

We tend to be observers rather than participants. It is very important for learners of the Buddha path to be active participants. Many of us travel to different places for our vacation. We read tourist books and study where to go, what to do, where to eat, and so forth. We know reading information in books is one thing, and actually visiting these places is another. I remember that when I first came to New York, it changed totally, in my understanding, from a fearful place to an enjoyable place. When I first visited India, it was very different from what I expected, though I studied it a lot before I went. We all have similar experiences in our lives.

Learning the Buddha-Dharma is the same. We need to be there to experience the teachings with our own bodies and minds. Finding yourself in the Dharma, or teaching, is the key to being a Buddhist. On the other hand, studying Buddhism in a classroom at colleges does not require that one should experience the teaching, but rather requires that one be able to observe it intelligently and even scientifically. I sometimes see this approach at the temple: people talk about things intelligently, but they are just commenting, without participating and even helping. Again, be an active participant!

According to Yuien, the author of “Tannisho,” The Master would often say, “When I consider deeply the Vow of Amida, which arose from five kalpas of profound thought, it was entirely for myself, Shinran, alone!” You see here that Master Shinran has really personalized the Amida’s Vows, and lived IN the Nembutsu teachings as an active participant. Let us find ourselves sitting in the Buddha Land of Amida, surrounded by boundless wisdom and compassion!

“Please eat it, and taste it!

And then you will know how great it is.”

Reading the Buddha’s teachings, and

Thinking of the Buddha Dharma

Intelligently and scientifically

Can be nice and interesting.

“I”-less learning is for knowledge,

Perhaps, the way of school learning these days. However,

Another system of learning is essential for wisdom.

Nothing is really understood

Till “I” am present in the Dharma. (by Kenjitsu) 🌀