

## Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion –the Meditation Sutra (22) “Buddha's Mind”

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*“Those who have envisioned them see all the Buddhas of the ten quarters. Because they see the Buddhas, this is called the Buddha-Recollection Samadhi. To attain this contemplation is to perceive the bodies of all the Buddhas. By perceiving these, one also realizes the Buddha's mind. The Buddhas' mind is Great Compassion. It embraces sentient beings with unconditional Benevolence. Those who have practiced this contemplation will after death, be born in the presence of the Buddhas and realize the insight into the non-arising of all dharmas. For this reason, the wise should concentrate their thoughts and visualize Amitayus.*

*In contemplating him, begin with one of his physical characteristics. Visualize only the white tuft of hair between his eyebrows until you see it quite clearly and distinctly. When you visualize it, all the eighty-four thousand physical characteristics will spontaneously become manifest. When you see Amitayus, you will also see innumerable Buddhas of the ten quarters. Having visualized these innumerable Buddhas, you will receive from each the prediction of your future Buddhahood. This is the general perception of all the physical characteristics of the Buddha and is known as the ninth contemplation. To practice in this way is called the correct contemplation, and to practice otherwise is incorrect.” (translation by Hisao Inagaki)*

The above phrase “Buddha's Mind is Great Compassion...embraces sentient beings with unconditional Benevolence,” is very important for Pure Land Buddhist practitioners to understand Amida Buddha. Amida is essentially the Buddha of Great Compassion. With Buddha's Great Compassion, the Name, namo-amidabu(tsu), was selected. Therefore, by saying the Nembutsu, namo-amidabu, we experience Buddha's Mind of Great Compassion.

The depth of Great Compassion needs to have oneness of all lives, consideration of others' suffering as my suffering, others' happiness as my happiness, as the basis of inter-connectedness. That is the wisdom of non-dualism, of a non-dividing way to see things without discrimination, without I and others, us and them. Instead of building up walls, the wisdom of the Buddha breaks down the walls that divide friends from enemies, likes from dislikes, humans from other creatures, living from death, and I from others. So, you see the contents of the Buddha's Great Compassion are the Great Wisdom of non-dualism.

One of my favorite Sutras, the “Vimalakirti-nirdesa,” has an interesting story. Vimalakirti, a lay Buddhist practitioner living in Vaishali became sick. Manjusri and Buddha's disciples, after first declining, wanted to accompany Manjusri and others. Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, “What caused your sickness?” Vimalakirti replied, “Ignorance creates affliction, that is where my sickness comes from. Because sentient beings are sick and suffer, therefore I get sick and suffer. If all beings are free from sickness and suffering, I will be cured... For example, when one has a child, and the child gets sick, his parents get sick. When a child recovers from illness, the parents also recover. The Bodhisattva is the same way. When sentient beings get sick, Bodhisattvas get sick. Bodhisattvas' love is similar to the love of parents to their child...Bodhisattvas become sick because of their Great Compassion.”

“Great” compassion is raised by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas toward all beings without discrimination unconditionally—even to your worst enemies. On the other hand, “Middle” compassion is raised by sages toward those who they have a relationship without attachment; and “Small” compassion is raised by ordinary beings toward those who are close to them such as a child parent or brother-sister type relationship. Though we may only have limited compassion, we can experience Great Compassion in the Nembutsu-Dharma.

**M**elting the ice-like wall of ignorance of

**I**-centeredness created division -me versus you, us versus. them

**N**on-dualistic wisdom of the Buddha illuminates all and

**D**ays and night, Buddha's Compassion embraces all unconditionally. (By Kenjitsu) 