RESPECTING OUR ANCESTRAL PRACTICE: MORNING BELL CHANT PART 4

Zen Master Hae Kwang

The seventh section of the Morning Bell Chant takes us to the Pure Land that Amitabha established in the West by virtue of his Forty-Eight Vows. One of Amitabha's vows is that anyone who recites his name sincerely will be reborn in the Pure Land, there to receive his guidance and be prepared for enlightenment. Thus Amitabha is our great teacher, the embodiment of great love, great compassion (Dae Ja Dae Bi).

Amitabha's Western Pure Land is a spiritual realm sometimes called a Buddha field ("Bul chal", but note that the same word "chal" in other contexts can be translated as "moment"). In the Hua Yen Sutra, each of the innumerable Buddhas presides over a Buddha field, and all of these Buddha fields interpenetrate each other since they are all coexistent and coextensive with the universe. These Buddha fields are as innumerable as the grains of sand in the Ganges, or dust particles, or blades of grass (colorfully expressed here as "rice, hemp, bamboo, reeds!"). In the same way all the various names of the Buddhas, expressed by the large numbers (the second of which is

►►► 7 The Pure Land

NAMU SO BANG JONG TO GUNG NAK SE GYE Namu western pure land extreme joy world Become one with the western Pure Land, a world of utmost bliss

SAM SHIM NYUNG MAN OK IL SHIB IL MAN GU CHON O BAEK thirty-six billion one hundred nineteen thousand five hundred The thirty-six billion, one hundred nineteen thousand, five hundred

DONG MYONG DONG HO same name same meaning names of the Buddha are all the same name.

DAE JA DAE BI A MI TA BUL great love great compassion Amita Buddha Great love, great compassion, Amita Buddha.

NAMU SO BANG JONG TO GUNG NAK SE GYE Namu western pure land extreme joy world Become one with the western Pure Land, a world of utmost bliss

BUL SHIN JANG GWANG
Buddha body long wide
This Buddha's body is long and wide.

SANG HO MU BYON GUM SAEK KWANG MYONG face good no limit gold color shine bright
This auspicious face is without boundary, and this golden color shines everywhere,

BYON JO BOP KYE everywhere illumine dharma world pervading the entire universe.

SA SHIP PAR WON DO TAL JUNG SAENG forty eight vows free save many beings Forty-eight vows to save all sentient beings.

BUL GA SOL BUL GA SOL CHON not can say not can say opposite.

inexplicably ten times larger than the first) in this section of the chant all reduce to the same name. So Vairochana and Amitabha, the two Buddhas we have met in this chant, and all other Buddhas are all the same Buddha.

And all of these Buddhas and Buddha fields are none other than our own minds. This deep teaching is driven home in the chant's concluding section, the Mantra of Original Mind's Sublimity. This mantra recalls the line earlier in the chant, "All things are made by the mind alone." Zen practice is a deep investigation of the mind. As Mu Mun said, "Buddhism takes mind as its foundation." The expedient means that Buddhism has developed to bring us to our mind's foundation include the sutras, poetry and philosophy that are epitomized in our chanting, especially in the Morning Bell Chant. Zen schools have always used these expedient means freely and in the spirit of genuine practice to instill the essential teachings of Buddhism into the bodyminds of practitioners.

BUL GA SOL HANG HA SA BUL CHAL MI JIN SU not can say eternal river sand Buddha fields fine dust number No one can say, because this Buddha is like the Ganges's innumerable grains of sand, or the infinite moments in all time, or innumerable dust particles,

DO MAK CHUG WI MU HAN GUK SU rice hemp bamboo reeds no limit extreme number or countless blades of grass, numberless number.

SAM BAENG NYUNG SHIM MAN OK IL SHIB IL MAN GU CHON O BAEK three hundred sixty billion one hundred nineteen thousand five hundred The three hundred sixty billion, one hundred nineteen thousand, five hundred

DONG MYONG DONG HO same name same meaning names of the Buddha are all the same name.

DAE JA DAE BI great love great compassion Great love, great compassion,

A DUNG DO SA our guide teacher our original teacher.

KUM SAEK YO RAE NAMU AMITA BUL gold form thus come namu Amita Buddha Homage to the golden Tathagata Amita Buddha.

NAMU AMITABUL (5x)
Namu Amita Buddha
Become one: infinite time, infinite space Buddha.

►► 8 Concluding Mantra

BON SHIM MI MYO JIN ON original mind sublime mystic true words The mantra of original mind's sublimity:

DA NYA TA OM A RI DA RA SA BA HA (3x)