

Reading Response 3

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Daochuo came to this conclusion from two major parts from the *Sutra of the Bodhisattva Candragarbha*. The first part that he notes is that we are in the fourth five hundred years, where the faith is established through the cultivation of merits and repentance. He also mentions the delivering sentient beings through name, this will eliminate impediments to the Path. And as it is stated in the *Sutra on the Contemplation of the Buddha of Limitless Life*, “If you invoke the name of Amitabha Buddha for even a single instant you will be able to expel sins accumulated over eighty million aeons of lifetimes”. Thus according to this sutra, and as Daochuo mentions, the clear best method is to constantly recite the names of a Buddha. He concludes this because of the ease of achieving enlightenment with this method. Because if all a layperson needs to do is recite the name of Amitabha, and they will be put on the path to enlightenment, then complete devotion should accelerate a monk far along the path.

In *The Difficult Path and the Easy Path* Daochuo says that there is the hard path, where one must fight against misguided teachings, evil people, and the reliance on self-power, which makes the path practically impossible to achieve. Then the easy path is by vowing devotion to Amitabha and making a great determination to achieve Buddhahood. Just this vow is enough to set one the path to be reborn in the Land of Bliss. Then once one is in the land of bliss they are guaranteed to be on their second to the last rebirth. Thus if to jump to such an advanced stage of a bodhisattva to only be one rebirth away from enlightenment, then simply devoting oneself to Amitabha is the most effective method for achieving enlightenment.

In *The Parable of the White Path* a voice from the west bank, which is intended to be compared to the vow of Amitabha, who calls out to the man and says “I can protect you. Never fear falling into the fire or water!”. This voice is claiming that it alone can protect people from falling astray from the path to Buddhahood, and it will protect them. Thus inferring that devotion Amitabha will prevent any monk from being lead astray from the path.

With these considerations in mind, it becomes clear that complete devotion to Amitabha will prevent deviation from the path to enlightenment, and it provides the shortest route to achieving enlightenment, in

only a few rebirths. The other methods of following the path are difficult and are easy to diverge from the correct way. Thus logically the only appropriate way to practice Buddhism is to devote one self to Amitabha and utilize his merit to advance oneself along the path to enlightenment. If Daochuo considered these aspects, then he would have also come to this same conclusion that devotion to Amitabha is the most appropriate Buddhist practice in this current era.

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