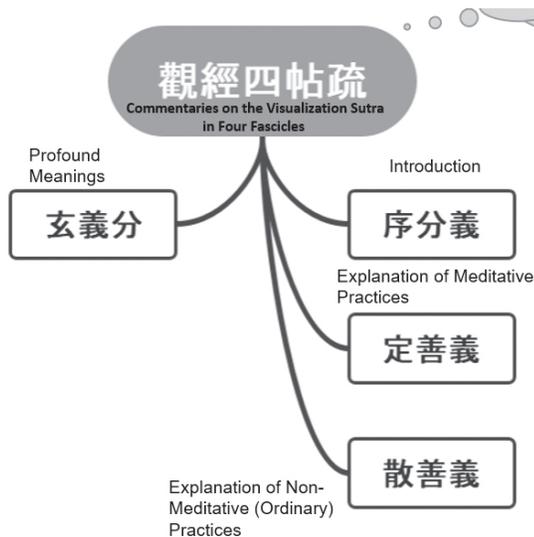


A Brief Introduction to the *Buddha Speaks the Sutra of Visualizing the Buddha Infinite Life* (continued)

《佛說觀無量壽佛經》簡介（續）

比丘尼近育講於2022年10月7日加拿大溫哥華金佛寺網絡講座系列

A Dharma Talk Given by Bhikshuni Jin Yu in the Online Lecture Series
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Great Master Shàndǎo's (善導) central Pure Land teachings are fully expressed in his *Commentaries on the Visualization Sutra in Four Fascicles*. Having witnessed many past and present misinterpretations of this sutra, he resolved to compose this commentary to clarify its true meaning.

Remarkably, while writing the commentary, he reportedly dreamed each night of a venerable monk guiding his work—none other than Amitābha Buddha himself. Upon completing the commentary, for three consecutive nights, there were Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appeared in his dreams to affirm that this commentary faithfully conveyed the true intent of Amitābha's vows.

For this reason, Master Shàndǎo's *Commentaries on the Visualization Sutra in Four Fascicles* has long been regarded as the definitive and orthodox explanation of the text. He taught that common people—whether good or evil—all can rely on the power of Amitābha's vows to attain rebirth in the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

The Four Fascicles of this commentary are structured into four main sections:

- Profound Meaning
- Preface and Introduction
- Explanation of Meditative Practices
- Explanation of Non-Meditative (Ordinary) Practices

Section One: Profound Meaning

Let us begin by examining the title of the sutra: *The Buddha Speaks the Sutra of Visualizing the Buddha Infinite Life*. “The Buddha” refers to Shakyamuni Buddha, the one who expounds the Dharma. What Dharma does he teach here? It is the Dharma of visualizing the Buddha of Infinite Life—Amitābha.

How do we visualize or contemplate? The term “visualization” here refers to inward contemplation—not outward observation.

說到善導大師的淨土思想，主要體現在《觀經四帖疏》當中。大師因為看到古今有不少人錯解《觀經》，於是著手寫這部疏。

奇妙的是，大師寫作時，每晚夢中都有一位聖僧前來指導，這位聖僧就是阿彌陀佛。等《四帖疏》寫完，連續三晚，諸佛菩薩都在大師夢中證明，說：「這本註疏，深合彌陀本願，決定沒有錯誤。」所以，善導大師的《四帖疏》也被古來大德稱為「楷定疏」。疏中認為，一切善惡凡夫都可以仰仗彌陀願力，往生極樂淨土。

善導大師的四帖疏分為四個部分：

- 玄義分；
- 序分義；

- 定善義；
- 散善義。

第一玄義分。首先解釋經的名字。《佛說觀無量壽佛經》。佛，是釋迦牟尼佛，是說法的人；說甚麼法呢？說觀想無量壽佛的法。

怎麼觀想呢？這裏的「觀」，不是往外看，是往心裏觀察。可分為事觀和理觀。事觀，《往生論》上說，可以觀察無量壽佛的依報莊嚴，或西方三聖的正報莊嚴，又或者觀想蓮花開，三聖放光。這是事觀。

理觀的「觀想」又是怎麼作觀的呢？明代幽溪傳燈大師有一首偈頌說得很好，他說：

法界圓融體，
作我一念心，
故我念佛心，
全體是法界。

怎麼說呢？首先「法界圓融體，作我一念心。」，說我們的心應該以一念的清淨心為住。千萬不能向外攀緣，因為攀緣心會帶來煩惱，同時也會帶動生死的業力！由此可知，觀經是凡夫轉妄識成智慧的法門。

再來「故我念佛心，全體是法界」。起觀時，「藉相修心」。藉佛的莊嚴相，生起我們的善根，生起一種往生的願望。同時感應阿彌陀佛，進入阿彌陀的功德法界，所謂「是心作佛，是心是佛」！在修行當中，如法的觀想，會產生兩種功德：第一個「淨除罪障」；第二個「生諸佛前」。

☞待續

There are two types of contemplation:

1. Contemplation of phenomena (specific forms and appearances)
2. Contemplation of principle (underlying truth or essence)

Contemplation of Phenomena. According to the *Rebirth Shastra*, one may visualize the splendid features of the Land of Ultimate Bliss, the radiant forms of the Three Sages of the West (Amitābha Buddha, Guanyin Bodhisattva, Great Strength Bodhisattva,) or scenes such as a lotus flower blooming and the Three Sages emitting light. These are all examples of phenomenal visualization—contemplating distinct, visible aspects.

Contemplation of Principle. How do we contemplate the principle? This is beautifully explained in a verse by the Ming Dynasty Youxi Chuandeng:

*The perfect essence of the Dharma Realm is
none other than this very present thought.
When the mind is fully mindful of the Buddha,
It itself embodies the entire Dharma Realm.*

This expresses the insight that a single thought of true mindfulness encompasses the entirety of the Dharma Realm.

How is this so? The first half of this verse “*The perfect essence of the Dharma Realm is none other than this very present thought*” teaches us that the mind should remain grounded in pure thoughts. When we chase after external conditions, not only do we give rise to afflictions, but we also stir the karmic forces that bind us to the cycle of birth and death. Thus, this practice becomes a Dharma door for ordinary beings to transform deluded views into wisdom.

Next, the second half of this verse “*When the mind is fully mindful of the Buddha, It itself embodies the entire Dharma Realm*” points to the method of contemplation—we cultivate the mind by focusing on the Buddha’s image. By visualizing the majestic form of Amitābha Buddha, we awaken our innate roots of goodness and generate the vow to be reborn in the Pure Land. At the same time, we evoke a heartfelt response from Amitābha and enter into the realm of his vast and meritorious Dharma. This is why it is said, “The Buddha is created by the mind; the mind itself is the Buddha.” When we practice visualization in accordance with the Dharma, two meritorious virtues naturally arise:

1. The elimination of karmic obstacles
2. Rebirth in the presence of the Buddhas

☞To be continued