

The Chapter of Bodhisattva Dashizhi (Mahāsthāmaprāpta – the arrival of the great strength)’s Perfect & Complete Realization of Samādhi is an extract from Chapter Five of the famous Śūraṅgama Sūtra (楞严经) . This extract is added by Master Yinguang (the 13th Patriarch of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism) to be included as one of the five Pure Land sutras in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. In this short extract, Bodhisattva Dashizhi tells of how he attained Samādhi (enlightenment) through the practice of Nianfo, that is, to perfectly control the six senses with continuous pure thoughts of Amitābha Buddha.

Namo Fundamental Teacher

Shakyamuni Buddha (three times)

Namo Amitabha Buddha (three times)

Sutra Opening Verse

The Unsurpassed, Profound, Subtle & Wondrous Dharma
is difficult to encounter in hundreds of millions of kalpas.

I now see and hear it, receive and uphold it,

May we understand the true meaning of the Tathagata.

The Chapter of Bodhisattva Dashizhi
(Mahāsthāmaprāpta)'s

Perfect & Complete Realization of
Nianfo Samādhi

(an extract from Chapter Five of the Śūraṅgama Sūtra)

大势至菩萨念佛圆通章

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Translated by Master Paramiti of the Central North India from Sanskrit to
Chinese (Tang Dynasty, A.D.705)

大势至法王子，与其同伦五十二菩萨，即从座起，顶礼佛足，而白佛言：‘我忆往昔，恒河沙劫，有佛出世，名无量光；十二如来，相继一劫。其最后佛，名超日月光；彼佛教我，念佛三昧。譬如有人，一专为忆，一人专忘；如是二人，若逢不逢，或见非见。二人相忆，二忆念深；如是乃至从生至生，同于形影，不相乖异。十方如来，怜念众生，如母忆子；若子逃逝，虽忆何为？子若忆母，如母忆时，母子历生，不相违远。若众生心，忆佛、念佛，现前当来，必定见佛，去佛不远；不假方便，自得心开。如染香人，身有香气；此则名曰：香光庄严。我本因地，以念佛心，入无生忍；今于此界，摄念佛人，归于净土。佛问圆通，我无选择；都摄六根，净念相继，得三摩地，斯为第一。’

Dharma Prince Dashizhi (Mahasthamaprapta), together with his group of

fifty-two Bodhisattvas, rose from his seat, prostrated himself with his head at the feet of the Buddha and declared: “I still remember that in the remotest of kalpas countless as the sands in the Ganges, there was a Buddha named Amitabha. In that kalpa, there were twelve Tathāgatas who succeeded each other respectively, the last of whom was named the Buddha Whose Light Surpasses that of the Sun and Moon. That (Those) Buddha(s) taught me Nianfo Samadhi.

For instance, if one concentrates his mind on someone else while the latter always forgets him, both may meet and see each other as if they don't meet at all. However, if both are keen on thinking of each other, their keenness will grow from one incarnation to another until they become inseparable like a body and its shadow.

The Tathāgatas in the ten directions have compassion for all living beings and always think of them, like a mother who never ceases thinking of her son. If the son runs away, her thoughts of him will not help. But if he also thinks of her with the same keenness, they will not be separated in spite of the passing transmigration.

If the hearts of living beings remember and think of the Buddha, they are bound to behold Him in their present or future incarnations. They will not be

far from the Buddha and thus without expedients, their hearts will naturally open.

They are like those whose bodies, perfumed by incense, give out fragrance, hence the name Adorned by Fragrance and Light. From my fundamental cause-ground, with the heart of mindfulness of Amitābha Buddha, I have realized the dharma of no birth.

Now I help all living beings of this world to return to the Pure Land through being mindful of Amitābha Buddha. As the Buddha now asks about the best means of perfection, I hold that nothing can surpass the perfect control of the six senses with continuous pure thoughts (of Amitābha Buddha) in order to realize Samadhi.”