

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS ABOUT AMITABHA SUTRA

Translated from Sanskrit to Chinese by
the Tripitaka Master Kumarajiva at Yao Ch'in

Thus I have heard, at one time Buddha dwelt at Sravasti in the Jeta grove in the garden of the Bene-factor of Orphans and the Solitary together with a gathering of great Bhiksus, 1250 in all, all great Ar-hats whom the assembly knew and recognized: Elders Sari-putra, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakasyapa, Mahakatyayana, Mahakausthila, Revata, Suddhipanthaka, Nanda, Ananda, Rahula, Gavampati, Pindola-bharadvaja, Kalodayin, Mahakaphina, Vakkula, Aniruddha, and others such as these, all great disciples; together with all the Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas: Dharma Prince Manjusri, Ajita Bodhisattva, Gandhastin Bodhisattva, Nityodyukta Bodhisattva, and others such as these, all great Bodhisattvas; and together with Sakra, chief among gods, and the numberless great multitudes from all the heavens.

At that time the Buddha told the Elder Sariputra, "Passing from here through hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhalands to the West, there is a world called Ultimate Bliss. In this land a Buddha called Amitabha right now teaches the Dharma. Sariputra, for what reason is this land called Ultimate Bliss? All living beings of this country endure none of the sufferings, but enjoy every bliss. Therefore, it is called 'Ultimate Bliss'.

Moreover, Sariputra, this Land of Ultimate Bliss is everywhere surrounded by seven tiers of railings, seven layers of netting, and seven rows of trees, all formed from the four treasures and for this reason named 'Ultimate Bliss'.

Moreover, Sariputra, the Land of Ultimate Bliss has pools of the seven jewels, filled with the eight waters of merit and virtue. The bottom of each pool is pure, spread over with golden sand. On the four sides are stairs of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and crystal; above are raised pavilions adorned with gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, mother-of-pearl, red pearls, and carnelian.

In the pools are lotuses as large as carriage wheels: green colored of green light; yellow colored of yellow light; red colored of red light; white colored of white light; subtly, wonderfully, fragrant and pure.

Sariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned.

Moreover Sariputra, in that Buddhaland there is always heavenly music, and the ground is yellow gold. In the six periods of the day and night a heavenly rain of mandarava flowers falls, and throughout the clear morning each living being of this Land, with sacks full of the myriads of wonderful flowers, makes offerings to the hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas of the other directions. At mealtime they return to their own country, and having eaten, they stroll around,

Sariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned.

Moreover Sariputra, in this country there are al-ways rare and wonderful varicolored birds: white cranes; peacocks, parrots and egrets ; kalavinkas and two-headed birds . In the six periods of the day and night the flocks of birds sing forth harmonious and elegant sounds. Their clear and joyful sounds proclaim the five roots,²⁹ the five powers the seven Bodhi shares, the eight sage-ly way shares,³⁰ and dharmas such as these. When living beings of this land hear these sounds, they are alto-gether mindful³¹ of the Buddha, mindful of the Dharma, and mindful of the Sangha.

Sariputra, do not say that these birds are born as retribution for their karmic offenses. For what reason? In this Buddhaland there are no three evil ways of re-birth.³² Sariputra, in this Buddhaland not even the names of the three evil ways exist, how much the less their actuality! Desiring that the Dharma sound be widely proclaimed, Amitabha Buddha by transformation made this multitude of birds.

Sariputra, in that Buddhaland, when the soft wind blows, the rows of jewelled trees and jewelled nets give forth subtle and wonderful sounds, like one hundred thousand kinds of music played at the same time. All those who hear this sound naturally bring forth in their hearts mindfulness of the Buddha, mindfulness of the Dharma, and mindfulness of the Sangha.

Sariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned.

Sariputra, what do you think? Why is this Buddha called Amitabha? Sariputra, the brilliance of that Buddha's light is measureless, illumining the lands of the ten directions everywhere without obstruction; for this reason he is called Amitabha.³³

Moreover Sariputra, the life of that Buddha and that of his people extends for measureless limitless asankhyeya kalpas; for this reason he is called Amitayus.³⁴ And Sariputra, since Amitabha realized Buddhahood, ten kalpas have passed.

Moreover Sariputra, that Buddha has measureless limitless "sound-hearer" disciples,³⁵ all Arhats, their number incalculable; thus also is the assembly of Bodhi-sattvas.

Sariputra, the realization of the Land of Ultimate Bliss is thus meritoriously adorned.

Moreover Sariputra, those living beings born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss are all avaiartika.³⁶ Among them are many who in this very life will dwell in Buddhahood.³⁷ Their number is extremely many, it is incalculable and only in measureless, limitless asankhyeya³⁷ kalpas could it be spoken.

Sariputra, those living beings who hear should vow, 'I wish to be born in that country.' And why? Those who thus attain are all superior and good people, all coming together in one place. Sariputra, one cannot have few good roots, blessings, virtues, and causal connections to attain birth in that Land.

Sariputra, if there is a good man or good woman who hears spoken 'Amitabha Buddha' and holds the name, whether for one day, two days, three, four, five days, six days, as long as seven days, with one heart uncon-fused, when this person approaches the end of life, be-fore him will appear Amitabha Buddha and all the assem-bly of Holy Ones. When the end comes, his heart is without inversion; in Amitabha Buddha's Land of Ultimate Bliss he will attain rebirth. Sariputra, because I see this benefit, I speak these words: If living beings hear this spoken they should make the vow, 'I will be born in that land.'

Sariputra, as I now praise the inconceivable bene-fit from the merit and virtue of Amitabha Buddha, thus in the East are also Aksothya Buddha,³⁸ Sumeru Appearance Buddha,³⁹ Great Sumeru Buddha,⁴⁰ Sumeru Light Buddha,⁴¹ Won-derful Sound Buddha,⁴² all Buddhas such as these, number-less as Ganges' sands. In his own country each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, every-where covering the three thousand great thousand worlds,⁴³ and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue⁴⁴ of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'⁴⁵

Sariputra, in the Southern world are Sun Moon Lamp Buddha,⁴⁶ Well-Known Light Buddha,⁴⁷ Great Blazing Shoulders Buddha,⁴⁸ Sumeru Lamp Buddha,⁴⁹ Measureless Vigor Buddha,⁵⁰ all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges sands. In his own country each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Sariputra, in the Western world are Measureless Life Buddha,⁵¹ Measureless Appearance Buddha,⁵² Measureless Curtain Buddha,⁵³ Great Light Buddha,⁵⁴ Great Brightness Buddha,⁵⁵ Jewelled Appearance Buddha,⁵⁶ Pure Light Buddha,⁵⁷ all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges sands. In his own country each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Sariputra, in the Northern world are Blazing Shoulders Buddha,⁵⁸ Most Victorious Sound Buddha,⁵⁹ Hard to Injure Buddha,⁶⁰ Sun Birth Buddha,⁶¹ Net Brightness Buddha,⁶² all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges sands. In his own country each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Sariputra, in the world below are Lion Buddha,⁶³ Well-Known Buddha,⁶⁴ Famous Light Buddha,⁶⁵ Dharma Buddha,⁶⁶ Dharma Curtain Buddha,⁶⁷ Dharma Maintaining Buddha,⁶⁸ all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges sands. In his own country

each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Sariputra, in the world above are Pure Sound Buddha,⁶⁹ King of Past Lives Buddha,⁷⁰ Superior Fragrance Buddha, ⁷¹ Fragrant Light Buddha,⁷² Great Blazing Shoulders Buddha,⁷³ Vari-colored Jewels and Flower Adornment Body Buddha,⁷⁴ Sala Tree King Buddha,⁷⁵ Jewelled Flower Virtue Buddha,⁷⁶ Vision of all Meaning Buddha,⁷⁷ Such as Mt. Sumeru Buddha,⁷⁸ all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges sands. In his own country each brings forth the appearance of a vast and long tongue, everywhere covering the three thousand great thousand worlds, and speaks the sincere and actual words, 'All you living beings should believe, praise, and hold in reverence the inconceivable merit and virtue of this Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective.'

Sariputra, what do you think? Why is it called Sutra of the Mindful One of Whom All Buddhas Are Protective? Sariputra, if a good man or good woman hears this Sutra and holds to it, and hears the names of all these Buddhas, this good man or woman will be the Mind-ful One of whom all Buddhas are protective, and will irreversibly attain to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. There-fore, Sariputra, all of you should believe and accept my words, and those which all Buddhas speak.

Sariputra, if there are people who have already made the vow, who now make the vow, or who are about to make the vow, 'I desire to be born in Amitabha's Country', these people whether born in the past, now being born, or to be born in the future, all will irreversibly attain to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Therefore, Sariputra, all good men and good women, if they are among those who have faith, should make the vow, 'I will be born in that country.'

Sariputra, just as I am now one who praises the merit and virtue of all Buddhas, all those Buddhas equally praise my inconceivable merit and virtue saying these words, 'Sakyamuni Buddha can complete extremely rare and difficult deeds. In the Saha Land, in the evil time of the five turbidities,⁷⁹ in the midst of the kalpa turbidity, the view turbidity, the affliction turbidity, the living beings turbidity, and the life turbidity, he can attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi and for the sake of living beings, speak this Dharma which in the whole world is hard to believe.'

Sariputra, you should know that I, in the evil time of the five turbidities, practice these difficult deeds, attain anuttara-samak-sambodhi and for all the world speak this dharma, difficult to believe, extremely difficult!"

After the Buddha spoke this Sutra, Sariputra and all the Bhiksus, all the gods, men, and asuras, and others from all the worlds, hearing what the Buddha had said, joyously welcomed, faithfully accepted, bowed and withdrew.