

The Western Pure Land of Utmost Happiness

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Good morning!

Spring is coming and everything is coming back to life again. Wish the world peaceful and wish all the living beings free from any attachment and any fear and be liberated from the cycle of birth and death as soon as possible.

Out of all the pure lands in ten directions, there is one land that all Buddhas praise and it the World of Utmost Happiness, the *Western Pure Land, the West, the Paradise, the Pure land of Amithaba*. This pure, magnificent, and equal world forms and exists because of the forty-eight great vows brought up and achieved by Amithaba Buddha who was monk Dharmakara at that time. In the sutra of *the Buddha's Teaching on Amitabha*, Sakyamuni Buddha introduced this buddha land and here I will simply read through this sutra and show this land to you.

The Sutra of the Buddha's Teaching On Amitabha

Thus I have heard, at one time the Buddha dwelt at Shravasti, in the Jeta Grove Anathapindika Gargen, together with a gathering of Great Bhikshus, twelve-hundred fifty in all, all Great Arhats well-known to the assembly: Elders Shariputra, 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: Manjushri, Prince of Dharma; Ajita Bodhisattva, Gandhastin Bodhisattva, Nityodukta Bodhisattva, and others such as

these, all Great Bodhisattvas, and together with Shakra, Chief among Gods, and the numberless great multitudes from all the heavens.

At that time, the Buddha told the Elder Shariputra, "From here, passing through hundreds of thousands of millions of buddha lands to the West there is a world called Utmost Happiness. In this land a Buddha called Amitabha right now is teaching the Dharma."

Shariputra, why is this land called Utmost Happiness? All living beings of this country never suffer, but enjoy every bliss. Therefore, it is called Utmost Happiness.

Moreover, Shariputra, this land of Utmost Happiness is completely 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 it is called Utmost Happiness.

Moreover, Sariputra, in the land of Utmost Happiness are pools of the seven jewels, filled with the water of eight meritorious qualities; the bottom of each pool is pure, covered with golden sands. On the four sides climb stairs of gold, silver, lapis lazuli and glass. Up in the air are pavilions made of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, tridacna stone, red pearl and agate. In the pools bloom lotuses as large as carriage wheels with colors of green light, red light, yellow light, and white light, subtle, rare, fragrant, and pure.

Sariputra, the Land of Utmost Happiness is crowned in splendor and virtues such as these.

Moreover, Sariputra, in this buddha land heavenly music always plays, and the ground is made of 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 offers sacks filled with myriads of wonderful flowers to the hundreds of thousands of million

s of Buddhas of the other directions. At meal time they return to their own countries and after eating they walk about. Sariputra, the Land of Utmost Happiness is crowned in splendor and virtues such as these.

Moreover, Sariputra, in this country there are always rare and unusual birds of many kinds and colors: white cranes, peacocks, parrots, 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 calls proclaim the Five Roots, the Five Powers, the Seven Limbs of Bodhi, the Eightfold Path of Sages, and dharmas such as these. When living beings of this land hear their calls, they are altogether mindful 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 sins. And why not? Because in this buddha land the three evil paths do not exist. Sariputra, even the names of the three evil paths are unknown in this Buddha's land; how much the less could they actually exist! Wishing to proclaim the Dharma's sound far and wide, Amitabha Buddha created these multitudes of birds by transformation.

Sariputra, in that buddha land when the gentle winds blow, the rows of jeweled trees and jeweled nets reverberate with fine and wondrous sounds, as a symphony of one hundred thousand kinds of music played in harmony. All who hear these sounds are naturally mindful of the Buddha, mindful of the Dharma, and mindful of the Sangha.

Sariputra, the Land of Utmost Happiness is crowned in splendor and virtues such as these.

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.

Moreover, Sariputra, the lifespan of that Buddha and that of his people extends for measureless, limitless asamkhyeyas of kalpas. For this reason, he is called Amitayus.

And, Sariputra, since Amitabha became a Buddha, ten kalpas have passed.

Moreover, Sariputra, that Buddha has measureless, limitless asamkheyas of Sound-Hearer disciples, their number incalculable. So too is the assembly of Bodhisattvas.

Sariputra, that buddha land is crowned in splendor and virtues such as these.

Moreover, Sariputra, the living beings born in the Land of Utmost Happiness are all avaivartika. Among them are many who in this very life will dwell in Buddhahood. Their number is extremely many; it is incalculable. And only in measureless, limitless asamkyeyas of kalpas could they be counted.

Sariputra, those living beings who hear of this should vow: I wish to be born in that country. And why? Because those who are born there assemble in one place with people whose goodness is unsurpassed. Sariputra, if one has few good roots, blessings, and virtues, one cannot be born in that land.

Sariputra, if there is a good man or good woman who hears of Amitabha and holds his name whether for one day, two days, three, four, five days, six days, as long as seven days with one mind unconfused, when this person nears the end of life, before him will appear Amitabha and all the Assembly of Holy Ones. When the end comes, his mind will not be utterly confused, and in Amitabha's Land of Utmost Happiness he will quickly be reborn. Sariputra, because I see this benefit, I speak these words; and, if living beings hear this teaching they should make the vow: I wish to be born in that land.

Sariputra, just as I now praise the inconceivable benefits arising from the merit and

virtue of Amitabha, so too in the East does Akshobya Buddha, Sumeru Likeness Buddha, Great Sumeru Buddha, Sumeru Light Buddha, Wonderful Sound Buddha; all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges' sands, each in his own country gives forth a vast and far-reaching sound that pervades the threefold, great, thousand-world realm and proclaims these sincere and honest words: All you living beings should believe in this sutra which all the Buddhas praise for its inconceivable merit and virtue, a sutra they protect and bear in mind.

Sariputra, in the Southern World, Sun-Moon Lamp Buddha, Celebrated Light Buddha, Great Radiant Shoulders Buddha, Sumeru Lamp Buddha, Measureless Vigor Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges' sands, each in his own country gives forth a vast and far-reaching sound that pervades the threefold, great, thousand-world realm and proclaims these sincere and honest words: All you living beings should believe in this sutra which all Buddhas praise for its inconceivable merit and virtue, a sutra they protect and bear in mind.

Sariputra, in the Western World, Measureless Life Buddha, Infinite Features Buddha, Measureless Curtain Buddha, Great Light Buddha, Great Clarity Buddha, Jeweled Likeness Buddha, Pure Light Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges' sands, each in his own country gives forth a vast and far-reaching sound that pervades the threefold, great, thousand-world realm and proclaims these sincere and honest words: All you living beings should believe in this sutra which all Buddhas praise for its inconceivable merit and virtue, protecting and bearing it in mind.

Sariputra, in the Northern World, Radiant Shoulders Buddha, Most Glorious Sound Buddha, Invincible Buddha, Sun-Birth Buddha, Luminous Net Buddha, all Buddhas such

as these, numberless as Ganges' sands, each in his own country gives forth a vast and far-reaching sound that pervades the threefold, great, thousand-world realm and proclaims these sincere and honest words: All you living beings should believe in this sutra which all Buddhas praise for its inconceivable merit and virtue, a sutra they protect and bear in mind.

Sariputra, in the World Below, Lion Buddha, Well-Known Buddha, Celebrated Light Buddha, Dharma Buddha, Dharma-Curtain Buddha, Upholding Dharma Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges' sands, each in his own country gives forth a vast and far-reaching sound that pervades the threefold, great, thousand-world realm and proclaims these sincere and honest words: All you living beings should believe in this sutra which all Buddhas praise for its inconceivable merit and virtue, a sutra they protect and bear in mind.

Sariputra, in the World Above, Pure Sound Buddha, Constellation King Buddha, Superior Fragrance Buddha, Fragrant Light Buddha, Great Radiant Shoulders Buddha, Varicolored Jewels-Adorned Body Buddha, Sala Tree King Buddha, Jeweled Flower of Virtue Buddha, Discerning All Meanings Buddha, Like Sumeru Mountain Buddha, all Buddhas such as these, numberless as Ganges' sands, each in his own country gives forth a vast and far-reaching sound that pervades the threefold, great, thousand-world realm and proclaims these sincere and honest words: All you living beings should believe in this sutra which all Buddhas praise for its inconceivable merit and virtue, a sutra they protect and bear in mind.

Sariputra, what do you think? Why is it called Sutra which all Buddhas protect and bear in mind? Sariputra, if a good man or good woman hears this sutra and upholds it, and

hears the names of all these Buddhas, this good man or good woman will also be one whom all Buddhas protect and bear in mind, and will attain non-retreat from anuttarasamyaksambodhi. Therefore, Sariputra, all of you should believe and accept my words and the words all Buddhas speak.

Sariputra, if there are people who have already made the vow, who now make the vow, or who will make the vow, I wish to be born in Amitabha's country, these people, whether born in the past, now being born there, or to be born there in the future, will all attain non-retreat from anuttarasamyaksambodhi. Therefore, Sariputra, all good men and good women who believe should make the vow, I wish to be born in that country.

Sariputra, just as I now praise the inconceivable merit and virtue of all Buddhas, all those Buddhas also praise my inconceivable merit and virtue, saying these words:

Shakyamuni Buddha can accomplish extremely difficult and rare deeds in the Saha Land during the evil time of the Five Turbidities: during the time turbidity, the views turbidity, the affliction turbidity, the living beings turbidity, and the lifespan turbidity. He can attain anuttarasamyaksambodhi and for the sake of living beings proclaim this Dharma, which the whole world finds hard to believe.

Sariputra, you should know that I, in the evil time of the Five Turbidities, perform these difficult deeds, attain anuttarasamyaksambodhi, and for the entire world proclaim this Dharma which is difficult to believe, extremely difficult!

After the Buddha spoke this Sutra, Sariputra, all the Bhikshus, and the entire world of gods, humans, asuras, and others, hearing what the Buddha had said, joyously delighted in it, faithfully accepted it, bowed and withdrew.

This is the end of the Sutra of the Buddha's Teaching on Amitabha.

Next week, we will go through another sutra about the Pure Land of Amitabha, *the Buddha Speaking Infinite Life Sutra*. We will see what are the forty-eight great vows that lead to the land of Utmost Happiness, In this sutra, Sakayamuni Buddha also described this buddha land in more detail.

Look forward to seeing you next week.

Thank you for listening!