



# Amitabha Sutra, as Spoken by the Buddha

*Chinese translation by Kumārajīva, Tripiṭaka Master of the  
Yao-Qin Dynasty, by imperial decree*

English translation by Householder Foqing,  
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Thus I have heard. At one time, the Buddha was in Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Monastery in Śrāvastī. He gathered with a sangha of 1,250 senior *bhikkus*. They were all great Arhats, well-known to the public.

[Among them were] Venerables Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Mahākātyāyana, Mahākauṣṭhila, Revata, Śuddhipamṭhaka, Nanda, Ānanda, Rāhula, Gavāṃpati, Piṇḍolabhāradvāja, Kālodayin, Mahākaphiṇa, Vakkula, Aniruddha and other senior disciples such as these. Also [present were] Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas, including Dharma Prince Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva Ajita, Bodhisattva Gandhahastin, Bodhisattva Nityôdyukta (Always Diligent) and other such great Bodhisattvas,

together with Sakra, King of Devas, and countless celestial beings.

At that time, the Buddha told Ven. Śāriputra: “To the west from here, passing 10 trillion Buddha realms, is a land called Bliss. In that land is a Buddha named Amitabha, who is now teaching the Dharma.

“Śāriputra, why is that land called Bliss? The sentient beings in that realm are free from all suffering and experience only manifold joys. That is why it is called Bliss.

“Moreover, Śāriputra, in the Land of Bliss, there are seven rows of railings, seven layers of nets and seven tiers of arrayed trees, all crafted from the four treasures and encircling around.

That is why it is called Bliss.

“Also, Śāriputra, in the Land of Bliss, there are seven-jeweled ponds, filled with Water of Eight Meritorious Virtues. The bottoms of the ponds are laid exclusively with golden sand. Pathways on four sides are forged from gold, silver, vaidurya and crystal. Above them stand mansions and pavilions, also adorned with gold, silver, vaidurya, crystal, tridacna, red pearls and agate. Lotus flowers in the ponds are as large as chariot wheels. The cyan-colored glow with cyan light, the yellow with yellow light, the white with white light, and the red with red light. All are exquisitely wondrous, fragrant and pure. Śāriputra, the accomplishments of the Land of Bliss are so magnificently adorned with merit and virtue.

“In addition, Śāriputra, in that Buddha Land, heavenly music is always played. The ground is made of gold. During the six time periods of each day and night, heavenly *mandarava* blossoms rain down from the sky.

“Early in the morning, sentient beings of that land regularly use their robes to gather various wondrous flowers and offer them to ten thousand billion Buddhas in other realms. At mealtime, they return home to eat and do walking meditation. Śāriputra, the accomplishments of the Land of Bliss are so magnificently adorned with merit and virtue.

“Besides, Śāriputra, in that land, there are amazing birds of diverse colors, including white cranes, peacocks, parrots, *kalaviṅkas* and



*jīvajīvakas* (twin-headed birds). During the six periods of each day and night, these birds emit harmonious, elegant sounds. They expound Dharma teachings, such as the Five Mental Faculties, Five Powers, Seven Factors of Bodhi and the Noble Eightfold Path. Upon hearing these sounds, all sentient beings in that land are mindful of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

“Śāriputra, do not say that these birds are born from retribution for karmic offenses. Why not? In that Buddha Land, the Three Wretched Realms are absent. Śāriputra, in that Buddha Land, not even the names of the Wretched Realms exist, much less their actuality! All these birds are manifestations created by Amitabha Buddha, intended for the dissemination of Dharma sounds.

“Śāriputra, in that Buddha Land, gentle breezes stir the jeweled trees and jeweled nets, producing subtle, marvellous sounds, like hundreds of thousands of musical instruments playing simultaneously. Those who hear these sounds naturally become mindful of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Śāriputra, the accomplishments of the Land of Bliss are so magnificently adorned with merit and virtue.

“Śāriputra, what do you think? Why is that Buddha called Amitabha? Śāriputra, that Buddha’s light is boundless, illuminating the lands of the ten directions without obstruction. This is why he is called Amitabha. Furthermore, Śāriputra, that Buddha’s lifespan, as well as those of the people in his land, are innumerable,

boundless *asamkhyeya-kalpas*. That is why his name is Amitabha. Śāriputra, since Amitabha Buddha's attainment of Buddhahood, ten *kalpas* have elapsed.

“Moreover, Śāriputra, that Buddha has countless and limitless Sravaka disciples, all of whom are Arhats; their numbers are beyond tally. So it is with the assembly of Bodhisattvas. Śāriputra, the accomplishments of the Land of Bliss are so magnificently adorned with merit and virtue.

“In addition, Śāriputra, sentient beings born in the Land of Bliss all achieve non-retrogression. Many of them attain the state of being one lifetime removed from Buddhahood. Their number is exceedingly vast and cannot be known

through calculation, but can only be described as immeasurable and boundless *asamkhyeyas*.

“Śāriputra, sentient beings who hear this should aspire to be reborn in that land. Why? Because they can be in the company of such supremely virtuous people.

“Śāriputra, one cannot attain birth in that land with few virtuous roots and meritorious blessings as causal conditions. Śāriputra, if a good man or woman hears of Amitabha Buddha and steadfastly recites his name for one day, for two days, for three days, for four days, for five days, for six days or for seven days, single-mindedly and without deviation, when death approaches, Amitabha Buddha and the sacred assembly will appear before that person. When death

comes, that person will not be confused and will forthwith be reborn in Amitabha Buddha's Land of Bliss.

“Śāriputra, having witnessed this benefit, I speak these words. If there are sentient beings who hear this teaching, they should aspire to be born in that land.

“Śāriputra, just as I now acclaim the benefits of Amitabha Buddha's unfathomable merit and virtue, in the eastern direction there are also Akṣobhya Buddha, Merudhvaja (Sumeru Appearance) Buddha, Mahameru (Great Sumeru) Buddha, Meruprabhāsa (Light of Sumeru) Buddha, Mañjusvara (Beautiful Voice) Buddha, and countless other Buddhas such as these, innumerable as grains of sand in the

Ganges River. In their respective lands they each extend their long, broad tongues until they cover the three-thousand-fold great chiliocosm, speaking these words of truth: ‘All you sentient beings should have faith in this *Sutra in Praise of Unfathomable Merit and Virtue, and the Protection and Remembrance of All Buddhas*.

“Śāriputra, in realms of the southern direction are Candrasūryapradīpa (Moon and Sun Lamp) Buddha, Yaśaḥprabha (Light of Fame) Buddha, Mahārciḥskandha (Great Flame Shoulder) Buddha, Merupradīpa (Sumeru Lamp) Buddha, Anantavīrya (Endless Energy) Buddha, and countless other Buddhas such as these, innumerable as grains of sand in the Ganges River. In their respective lands they

each extend their long, broad tongues until they cover the three-thousand-fold great chiliocosm, speaking these words of truth: ‘All you sentient beings should have faith in this *Sutra in Praise of Unfathomable Merit and Virtue, and the Protection and Remembrance of All Buddhas*.

“Śāriputra, in realms of the western direction there are Amitayus (Infinite Life) Buddha, Amitaketu (Infinite Sign) Buddha, Amitadhvaja (Infinite Banner) Buddha, Mahāprabha (Great Light) Buddha, Mahāprabhasa (Great Radiance) Buddha, Ratnaketu (Jewel Sign) Buddha, Śuddharaśhmiprabha (Pure Light Ray) Buddha, and countless other Buddhas such as these, innumerable as grains of sand in the Ganges River. In their respective lands they each extend

their long, broad tongues until they cover the three-thousand-fold great chiliocosm, speaking these words of truth: ‘All you sentient beings should have faith in this *Sutra in Praise of Unfathomable Merit and Virtue, and the Protection and Remembrance of All Buddhas*.

“Śāriputra, in realms of the northern direction are Arciḥskandha (Flame Shoulder) Buddha, Vaiśvānara-nirghoṣa (Omnipresent Sounds) Buddha, Duṣpradharṣa (Difficult to Defeat) Buddha, Ādityasaṃbhava (Sun Born) Buddha, Jālāniprabhā (Net of Light) Buddha, and countless other Buddhas such as these, innumerable as grains of sand in the Ganges River. In their respective lands they each extend their long, broad tongues until they cover the



three-thousand-fold great chiliocosm, speaking these words of truth: ‘All you sentient beings should have faith in this *Sutra in Praise of Unfathomable Merit and Virtue, and the Protection and Remembrance of All Buddhas*.

“Śāriputra, in realms of the lower direction there are Siṃha (Lion) Buddha, Yaśas (Famous) Buddha, Yaśaḥprabhāsa (Fame Light) Buddha, Dharma Buddha, Dharmadhvaja (Dharma Banner) Buddha, Dharmadhara (Dharma Holder) Buddha, and countless other Buddhas such as these, innumerable as grains of sand in the Ganges River. In their respective lands they each extend their long, broad tongues until they cover the three-thousand-fold great chiliocosm, speaking these words of truth: ‘All you sentient

beings should have faith in this *Sutra in Praise of Unfathomable Merit and Virtue, and the Protection and Remembrance of All Buddhas*.

“Śāriputra, in realms of the upper direction there are Brahmagoṣa (Brahma Voice) Buddha, Nakṣatrarāja (Star King) Buddha, Gandhōttama (Highest Fragrance) Buddha, Gandhaprabhāsa (Fragrant Light) Buddha, Mahārciḥskandha (Great Flame Shoulder) Buddha, Ratna-kusuma-saṃpuṣpita-gātra (Colorful Jewel Flower Adorned Body) Buddha, Sālêndrarāja (Sālêndra King) Buddha, Ratnôtpalaśrī (Jewel Lotus Virtue) Buddha, Sarvârthadarśa (Revealing All Meanings) Buddha, Sumeru-kalpa (Such as Mt. Sumeru) Buddha, and countless other Buddhas such as these, innumerable as grains of sand in

the Ganges River. In their respective lands they each extend their long, broad tongues until they cover the three-thousand-fold great chiliocosm, speaking these words of truth: ‘All you sentient beings should have faith in this *Sutra in Praise of Unfathomable Merit and Virtue, and the Protection and Remembrance of All Buddhas*.

“Śāriputra, what do you think? Why is it titled the *Protection and Remembrance of All Buddhas Sutra*? Śāriputra, if good men and women, upon hearing this sutra, uphold it, and hear the names of the Buddhas, these good men and women are protected and remembered by all Buddhas. They all achieve non-retrogression on the path to *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. Therefore, Śāriputra, you should all believe and accept my words and

those spoken by the Buddhas.

“Śāriputra, those who have already aspired, are aspiring and will aspire to be reborn in Amitabha Buddha’s land all achieve non-retrogression on the path to *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. They have been reborn, are being reborn, or will be reborn in that land. Thus, Śāriputra, good men and women who have faith should aspire to be reborn in that land.

“Śāriputra, as I now acclaim the unfathomable merit of all Buddhas, those Buddhas also extol my inconceivable merit, saying: ‘Shakyamuni Buddha has accomplished extremely difficult and unusual undertakings. He has attained *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* in the Saha world, a land of Five Turbidities – the turbidities of *kalpa*,

views, afflictions, sentient beings and life. For all sentient beings, he expounds this teaching, which is difficult for the whole world to believe.’

“Śāriputra, you should know that in this iniquitous world of the Five Turbidities, I have accomplished such difficult undertakings. I have attained *Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*, and, for all in the world, I have expounded this teaching, which is difficult to believe. This is indeed difficult!”

After the Buddha spoke this sutra, Śāriputra and the other *bhikkus*, as well as all beings in the world, including celestials, humans and asuras, having heard the Buddha’s teachings, joyfully believed and accepted them. They paid their respects and departed.





