

THE SMALLER SUKHAVATIVYUHA SUTRA

or

The Sutra on the Buddha Amitayus

Translated from the Chinese Version of Kumarajiva

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1. Thus have I heard: Once the Buddha was dwelling in the Anathapindada Garden of Jetavana in the country of Shravasti together with a large company of Bhikshus of twelve hundred and fifty members. They were all great Arhats, well known among people, (to wit): Shariputra the elder, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakashyapa, Mahakatyayana, Mahakaushthila, Revata, Shuddhipanthaka, Nanda, Ananda, Rahula, Gavampati, Pindola-Bharadvaja, Kalodayin, Mahakapphina, Vakkula, Aniruddha, etc., all great Shravakas [*lit.* disciples]; and with many Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas, (such as), Manjushri, Prince of the Lord of Truth, Bodhisattva Ajita, Bodhisattva Gandhastin, Bodhisattva Nityodyukta, etc., all great Bodhisattvas; and also with a large company of innumerable devas, (such as) Shakrodevanam-Indra, etc.
2. Then the Buddha addressed Shariputra, the elder, and said, 'Beyond a hundred thousand kotis of Buddha-lands westwards from here, there is a world named Sukhavati. In that world there is a Buddha, Amita(-ayus) by name, now dwelling and preaching the law. Shariputra, why is that country named Sukhavati? The living beings in that country have no pains, but receive pleasures only. Therefore, it is called Sukhavati.
3. 'Again, Shariputra, in the land Sukhavati (there are) seven rows of balustrades, seven rows of fine nets, and seven rows of arrayed trees; they are all of four gems and surround and enclose (the land). For this reason the land is called Sukhavati.
4. 'Again, Shariputra, in the land Sukhavati there are lakes of the seven gems, in which is filled water with the eight meritorious qualities. The lake-bases are strewn with

golden sand, and the stairs of the four sides are made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal. On land there are stories and galleries adorned with gold, silver, beryl, crystal, white coral, red pearl and diamond [*lit.* agate]. The lotus-flowers in the lakes, large as chariot wheels, are blue-colored with blue splendor, yellow-colored with yellow splendor, red-colored with red splendor, white-colored with white splendor, and (they are all) the most exquisite and purely fragrant. Shariputra, the land Sukhavati is arrayed with such good qualities and adornments.

5. 'Again, Shariputra, in that Buddha-land there are heavenly musical instruments always played on; gold is spread on the ground; and six times every day and night it showers Mandarava blossoms. Usually in the serene morning [*lit.* dawn] all of those who live in that land fill their plates with those wonderful blossoms, and (go to) make offering to a hundred thousand kotis of Buddhas of other regions; and at the time of the meal they come back to their own country, and take their meal and have a walk. Shariputra, the Sukhavati land is arrayed with such good qualities and adornments.

6. 'And again, Shariputra, in that country there are always various wonderful birds of different colors, -- swan, peacock, parrot, Chari, Kalavinka and the bird of double-heads [*lit.* double-lives]. Six times every day and night all those birds sing in melodious tune, and that tune proclaims the Five Virtues [*lit.* organs], the Five powers, the Seven Bodhi-paths, the Eight Noble Truths, and other laws of the kind. The living beings in that land, having heard that singing, all invoke the Buddha, invoke the Dharma, and invoke the Sangha. Shariputra, you should not think that these birds are in fact born as punishment for sin. What is the reason? (Because), in that Buddha-land there exist not the Three Evil Realms. Shariputra, in that Buddha-land there are not (to be heard) even the names of the Three Evil Realms. How could there be the realms themselves! All those birds are what Buddha Amitayus miraculously created with the desire to let them spread the voice of the Law. Shariputra, (when) in that Buddha-land a gentle breeze happens to blow, the precious trees in rows and the begemmed nets emit a delicate enrapturing tune, and it is just as if a hundred thousand musical instruments played at the same time. Everybody who hears that music naturally conceives the thought to invoke the Buddha, to invoke the Dharma, and to invoke the Sangha. Shariputra, that Buddha-land is arrayed with such good qualities and adornments.

7. 'Shariputra, what do you think in your mind, for what reason that Buddha is called Amita(-abha)? Shariputra, the light of that Buddha is boundless and shining without impediments all over the countries of the ten quarters. Therefore he is called Amita(-abha). Again, Shariputra, the life of that Buddha and of his people is endless and boundless in Asamkhya-kalpas, so he is named Amita(-ayus). Shariputra, since Buddha Amitayus attained Buddhahood, (it has passed) now ten Kalpas. Again, Shariputra, that Buddha has numerous Shravakas or disciples, who are all Arhats and whose number cannot be known by (ordinary) calculation. (The number of) Bodhisattvas (cannot be known) also. Shariputra, that Buddha-land is arrayed with such good qualities and adornments.

8. 'Again, Shariputra, the beings born in the land Sukhavati are all Avinivartaniya. Among them is a multitude of beings bound to one birth only; and their number, being extremely large, cannot be expressed by (ordinary) calculation. Only can it be mentioned in boundless Asamkhya-kalpas. Shariputra, the sentient beings who hear

(this account) ought to put up their prayer that they may be born into that country; for they will be able to be in the same place together with those noble personages. Shariputra, by means of small good works [*lit.* roots] or virtues no one can be born in that country.

9. 'Shariputra, if there be a good man or a good woman, who, on hearing of Buddha Amitayus, keeps his name (in mind) with thoughts undisturbed for one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, six days, or seven days, that person, when about to die, (will see) Amitayus Buddha accompanied by his holy host appear before him; and immediately after his death, he with his mind undisturbed can be born into the Sukhavati land of Buddha Amitayus. Shariputra, as I witness this benefit, I say these words; Every being who listens to this preaching ought to offer up prayer with the desire to be born into that country.

10. 'Shariputra, as I now glorify the inconceivable excellences of Amitayus Buddha, there are also in the Eastern quarters Buddha Akshobhya, Buddha Merudhvaja, Buddha Mahameru, Buddha Meruprabhasa, Buddha Manjughosha, and Buddhas as many as the sands of the River Ganga, each of whom, in his own country stretching out his long broad tongue that covers three thousand greater worlds completely, proclaims these truthful words; All you sentient beings believe in this Sutra, which is approved and protected by all the Buddhas, and in which are glorified the inconceivable excellences (of Buddha Amitayus).

11. 'Shariputra, in the Southern worlds there are Buddha Candrasuryapradipa, Buddha Yacahprabha, Buddha Maharciskandha, Buddha Merupradipa, Buddha Anantavirya, and Buddhas as many as the sands of the River Ganga, each of whom, in his own country stretching out his long broad tongue that covers three thousand greater worlds completely, proclaims these truthful words: All you sentient beings believe in this Sutra, which is approved and protected by all the Buddhas, and in which are glorified the inconceivable excellences (of Buddha Amitayus).

12. 'Shariputra, in the Western worlds there are Buddha Amitayus, Buddha Amitalakshana, Buddha Amitadhvaja, Buddha Mahaprabha, Buddha Mahanirbhava, Buddha Ratnala kshana, Buddha Shuddharashmiprabha, and Buddhas as many as the sands of the River Ganga, each of whom, in his own country stretching out his long broad tongue that covers three thousand greater worlds completely, proclaims these truthful words: All you sentient beings believe in this Sutra, which is approved and protected by all the Buddhas, and in which are glorified the inconceivable excellences (of Buddha Amitayus).

13. 'Shariputra, in the Northern worlds there are Buddha Arciskandha, Buddha Vaishvanaranirghosha, Buddha Dushpradharsha, Buddha Adityasambhava, Buddha Jaliniprabha, and Buddhas as many as the sands of the River Ganga, each of whom, in his own country stretching out his long broad tongue that covers three thousand greater worlds completely, proclaims these truthful words: All you sentient beings believe in this Sutra, which is approved and protected by all the Buddhas, and in which are glorified the inconceivable excellences (of Buddha Amitayus).

14. 'Shariputra, in the Nadir worlds there are Buddha Simha, Buddha Yacas, Buddha Yashaprabhava, Buddha Dharma, Buddha Dharmadhvaja, Buddha Dharmadhara, and Buddhas as many as the sands of the River Ganga, each of whom, in his own country stretching out his long broad tongue that covers three thousand greater worlds completely, proclaims these truthful words: All you sentient beings believe in this Sutra, which is approved and protected by all the Buddhas, and in which are glorified the inconceivable excellences (of Buddha Amitayus).

15. 'Shariputra, in the Zenith words there are Buddha Brahmaghosha, Buddha Nakshatraraja, Buddha Gandhottama, Buddha Gandhaprabhasa, Buddha Maharciskandha, Buddha Ratnakusumasampushpitagatra, Buddha Salendraraja, Buddha Ratnotpalashri, Buddha Sarvarthadarsha, Buddha Sumerukalpa, and Buddhas as many as the sands of the River Ganges^{^1}, each of whom, in his own country stretching out his long broad tongue that covers three thousand greater worlds completely, proclaims these truthful words: All you sentient beings believe in this Sutra, which is approved and protected by all the Buddhas, and in which are glorified the inconceivable excellences (of Buddha Amitayus).

16. 'Shariputra, what do you think in your mind, why it is called the Sutra approved and protected by all the Buddhas? Shariputra, if there be a good man or a good woman who listens to those Buddhas' invocation of the name (of Buddha Amitayus) and the name of this Sutra, that good man or woman will be protected by all the Buddhas and never fail to attain Anuttara-samyaksambodhi. For this reason, Shariputra, all of you should believe in my words and in what all the Buddhas proclaim. Shariputra, if there are men who have already made, are now making, or shall make, prayer with the desire to be born in the land of Buddha Amitayus, they never fail to attain Anuttara-samyaksambodhi, and have been born, are now being born, or shall be born in that country. Therefore, Shariputra, a good man or good woman who has the faith ought to offer up prayers to be born in that land.

17. 'Shariputra, as I am now praising the inconceivable excellences of those Buddhas, so all those Buddhas are magnifying the inconceivable excellences of myself, saying these words: Shakyamuni, the Buddha, has successfully achieved a rare thing of extreme difficulty; he has attained Anuttara-samyaksambodhi in the Saha world in the evil period of five corruptions -- Corruption of Kalpa, Corruption of Belief, Corruption of Passions, Corruption of Living Beings, and Corruption of Life; and for the sake of all the sentient beings he is preaching the Law which is not easy to accept. Shariputra, you must see that in the midst of this evil world of five corruptions I have achieved this difficult thing of attaining Anuttara-samyaksambodhi, and for the benefit of all the beings I am preaching the Law which is difficult to be accepted. This is how it is esteemed as (a thing of) extreme difficulty.'

The Buddha having preached this Sutra, Shariputra and Bhikshus, and Devas, men, Asuras, etc., of all the worlds, who have listened to the Buddha's preaching, believed and accepted with joy, made worship, and went away.

Buddhabhashita-Amitayuh-Sutra

Note: ^{^1} original reads "Ganga".