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Translated by The Dragon Flower Ch'an Temple
THE PURE LAND SUTRA
Being the Buddha's expounding of the Sukhavativyuha-sutra, the Smaller version.
The Buddha's Expounding of the Amitabha Sutra!
Thus have I heard: At one time the Buddha was dwelling at Sravasti in the garden and park purchased for His use by Anathapindaka from the Prince Jeta. With Him was a great company of monks numbering over twelve hundred and fifty. All were Great Arhats and many had achieved the State of Discernment The Venerable Sariputra, Mahamaugalyana, Mahakasyapa, Mahakapphina, Mahakatyayana, Mahakaushthila, Revata, Suddhipanthaka, Nanda, Ananda, Rahula, Gavampati, Bharadvaga, Kaodayin, Vakkula and Aniruddha were among them. Also with him and these Great Disciples were many Great Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas. Among these was the Dharma Prince Manjusri Bodhisattva, the Invincible Maitreya Bodhisattva, the Fragrant Elephant of the North Bodhisattva, and the Constant Unfailing Progress Bodhisattva and also many other Great Bodhisattvas. Also there was Sakra, the Indra-Lord of the Devas and with him were countless numbers of other Devas.
In this way did the Buddha speak to the Venerable Sariputra:

"O Sariputra, if you go from here to the West and pass beyond Ten Ten Thousands of Hundreds of Thousands Buddhas Lands there exists a region called the Land of Ultimate Joy where there exists a Buddha called Amitabha. He is there now, expounding the Dharma, this Arhat.
"Now, Sariputra, why do you think that this land is called the Land of Ultimate Joy? Because in that realm for all living beings there is neither physical pain nor mental pain and the sources of blessings are without number. For this reason is it called the Land of Ultimate Joy.
"Furthermore Sariputra, the Land of Ultimate Joy is adorned with seven terraces and seven rows of wind chimes together with seven avenues of trees. The above are enclosed on all sides by the four precious substances. With such excellent things unique to Buddha Lands is this excellent Buddha Land adorned.
"Furthermore, O Sariputra, in that world called Ultimate Joy there are Lotus Ponds, ornamented with the seven precious stones. The water that fills them has the eight good qualities and the bottoms of these ponds are covered with pure golden sands that extend to their banks. On the four sides of these Lotus Ponds are flights of stairs--golden and silver, with beryl and crystal in splendid perfection. And at the top of these stairs are raised pavilions majestically adorned with gold and silver, beryl, crystal and coral, red pearls and agate. And in the ponds grow Lotus Flowers that are as large as the wheels of a cart blue colored, as if emitting blue radiance; yellow colored, as if emitting yellow light; red colored, radiating redness; white colored of pure white radiating light and their subtle and mysterious fragrances cleanse the air. O Sariputra for this reason is the Ultimate Joy Land perfect in its meritorious adornments.
"Furthermore Sariputra, in that Heavenly Music over the Buddha Land there is continual arising of yellow-golden colored earth. And for each of the six periods of day and night there rain down showers of Heavenly Coral Tree Blossoms. And the living beings of that Land are constantly using their miraculous robes to travel to other Buddha Lands and thereupon shower upon the Tathagatas of those worlds Ten Ten Thousands of Hundreds of Thousands of these wonderfully abundant flowers. Ten Ten Thousands of Hundreds of Thousands of Buddhas are honored in this way before the time for the first meal, and all the inhabitants of this Land then return to it to consume their own meal, nourished by the Dharma Teaching and by their own good roots. Sariputra, for this reason is the Ultimate Joy Land perfect in its adornment.
"And furthermore, O Sariputra, in this land there are all sorts of strange and wondrously colored birds. White Cranes and peacocks, parrots and mynah birds and other sorts of birds having melodious voices and fabulous birds who have two heads and all the many kinds of birds are assembled there. Day and Night, during each of the Six Periods their harmony creates and elegant sound which, if listened to, expounds and makes clear the five spiritual organ roots which are positive and the five powers of Mara which, if springing from the corresponding sensory organs, are negative factors. Likewise do they expound the seven characteristics of Bodhi and the Holy Eightfold Path; Thus do they spread the Dharma everywhere in that land and when living beings hear these sounds, they reflect on the Buddha, they reflect on the Dharma, and they reflect on the Sangha.
"Sariputra, you must not say that these birds are those reborn in this way a retribution for past sins. This is not so. While other Buddha Lands are without the Three Evil Paths Sariputra, in this Buddha Land even the names of these evil paths is unknown. How much more, the, do they have the truth? These many kinds of birds have been created solely to call on Amitabha Buddha and therefore they desire to proclaim these honorable Dharma sounds, and in so doing aid in the transformation of all living beings by their actions.
"Sariputra, in this Buddha Land subtle winds blow and stir along the myriad precious avenues of trees where they reach the preciously appointed gauze covered walkways. There they strike the wind chimes from which spring forth the most subtle and wonderful sounds which thus become one hundred thousand sorts of music all constantly arising together. Those hearing these sounds, even if they still possess the self that creates rebirths, are moved to call on the Buddha, to call on the Dharma and to call on the Sangha with all their hearts. Sariputra, for this reason is this Buddha Land perfect and is thus meritoriously adorned.
"Now, O Sariputra, for what reason do you think this Buddha has been called Amitabha? Sariputra, it is because this Buddha possesses Illuminating Wisdom Beyond Measure which illuminates the lands in the Ten Directions without obstructions or obstacles. For this reason is this Buddha called Amitabha.
"Furthermore, Sariputra, this Buddha can command that His Own Long Life be extended to all men:

Immeasurable limitless countless numbers of eons! For this reason has he been called Amitabha. This Perfect Buddha has already 'come,' indeed, ten eons has He been "He who has Thus Come" to this present moment.
"And furthermore, O Sariputra, this Buddha has immeasurable, limitless countless numbers of 'sound hearing' disciples, Arhats they have all become in numbers not to be counted. Regarding this, you should know there are also myriad Bodhisattva Assemblies. For this reason. O Sariputra, is the perfect Buddha Land meritoriously adorned.
"Furthermore, Sariputra, all living beings who are reborn in this Ultimate Joy Land become 'Bodhisattvas Who Never Recede.' That it, Bodhisattvas who have but one rebirth to attain Buddhahood and this number is indeed very great a number that can neither be counted no known, and is expressed only as 'countless and limitless' for it is beyond expression.
"O Sariputra, all living beings should hear and respond to His Vow, and resolve to be reborn in His Land. And why? So that they can obtain and share together with the many kinds of superior and skillful men to be found there.
"Sariputra, you would not be able to gain rebirth in this land by means of wonderful good roots or even blessed or virtuous causes, but, Sariputra, if a son or a daughter of a good family or a good woman or man hears this expounding on Amitabha Buddha and abides in and holds fast His Name If for one day, if for two days, if for three days, if for four days, if for five days, if for six days, if for seven days and does so with single pointedness of mind and without confusion, then when that person is on the brink if his life's end, he will see Amitabha Buddha together with many members of the Holy Sage Assembly standing before him. When such a person dies, because his mind was without perverted or erroneous views, he will immediately be reborn in Amitabha's Land of Ultimate Joy.
"Sariputra, I see this as a correct benefit and so I have expounded these words so that those who have accumulated rebirths can hear of this and be filled with suitable resolve and thus attain rebirth in Amitabha's Land.
Thus, Sariputra, I now sing the praises of Amitabha Buddha whose merits are so beneficial that they can neither be thought nor discussed.
"In the Eastern Region there is the Unmoved Buddha Aksobhya, the Merudhavaja Buddha, the Great Mystical Mountain Buddha, the Excellent Mountain Illuminating Buddha and the Mysterious Sounds Buddha - thus so everywhere a number of Buddhas that is equal to the sands of the river Ganges, each of them having His Own Land. And from these Buddhas' characteristically broad and long tongues, which can cover three thousand great universes of universes, and which they use to expound truthful and sincere words to all living beings everywhere, come also these praises of Amitabha Buddha whose merits are so beneficial that they can neither be thought nor discussed. Therefore all the myriad Buddhas in that region protect and care for this Sutra.
"O Sariputra, the Southern Region has the Day and Night Lantern Buddha. the Renown Fame Illuminating Buddha, the Great Blazing Shoulders Buddha, the Mystical Mountain Lantern Buddha, the Unlimited Pure Progress Buddha - thus so everywhere a number of Buddhas that is equal to the sands of the river Ganges, each of them having His Own Land. And from these Buddhas' characteristically broad and long tongues, which can cover three thousand great universes of universes, and which they use to expound truthful and sincere words to all living beings everywhere, come also these praises of Amitabha Buddha whose merits are so beneficial that they can neither be thought nor discussed. Therefore all the many kinds of Buddhas of that region protect and care for this Sutra.
"Sariputra, the Western Region has the Boundless Life Buddha, the Immeasurable Characteristics and Marks Buddha, the Immeasurable Pennant Buddha, the Great Illuminating Buddha, the Great Wisdom Buddha, the Precious Marks Buddha, and the Clear Illuminating Buddha - thus so everywhere a number of Buddhas that is equal to the sand in the river Ganges, each of them having His Own Land. And from these Buddhas' characteristically broach and long tongues which can cover three thousand great universes of universes, and which they use to expound truthful and sincere words to all living beings everywhere, come also these praises of Amitabha Buddha whose merits are so beneficial that they can neither be thought nor discussed. Therefore all the myriad Buddhas of that region protect and care for this Sutra.
"Sariputra, the Northern Region has the Blazing Shoulders Buddha, the All-Conquering Sound Buddha, the Difficult-to-Stop Buddha, the Daily Reborn Buddha and the Net of Wisdom Buddha - thus so everywhere a number of Buddhas that is equal to the sands of the river Ganges, each of these Buddhas having His Own Land. And from these Buddha's characteristically broad and long tongues which can cover three thousand universes of universes, and which they use to expound truthful and sincere words to all living beings everywhere, come also these praises of Amitabha Buddha whose merits are so beneficial that they can neither be thought nor discusses. Therefore all the myriad Buddhas of that region protect and care for this Sutra!
"Sariputra, the Nadir has the Lion of Men Buddha, the Renown Buddha, the Famous Illuminating Buddha, the Dharma Buddha, and the Dharma Protecting Buddha - thus so everywhere a number of Buddhas that is equal to the sands of the river Ganges, each of them having His Own Land. And from these Buddha's characteristically broad and long tongues, which can cover three thousand great universes of universes, and which they use to expound truthful and sincere words to all living beings everywhere, come also these praises of Amitabha Buddha whose merits are so beneficial that they can neither be thought nor discussed. Therefore all the myriad Buddhas of that region protect and care for this Sutra.
"Sariputra, the Zenith has the Brahma Voiced Buddha, the Lord of the Constellations Buddha, the Incense Offering Buddha, the Incense Illuminating Buddha, the Great Blazing Shoulders Buddha, the Many Colored Precious Flowers Adorned Bodied Buddha, the Teak Tree King Buddha, the Seeing - all - wishes - fulfilled Buddha and the Like-a-mystical-mountain Buddha - thus so everywhere a number of Buddhas that is equal to the sands of the river Ganges, each of them having His Own Land. And from these Buddhas' characteristically broad and long tongues, which can cover three thousand great universes of universes, and which they use to expound truthful and sincere words to all living beings everywhere, come also these praises of Amitabha Buddha whose merits are so beneficial that they can neither be thought nor discussed. Therefore all the myriad Buddha in that region protect and care for this Sutra.
"O Sariputra, what do you think? Why do those Buddha that I have named protect and care for this Sutra? It is because, Sariputra, if sons or daughters of good families or good men or women who hear of this Sutra

and keep it and who also hear these myriad Buddha that I have named; these myriad sons and daughters of good families or good men or women, because of the pervasive activity of all the many kinds of Buddhas who protect and care for this Sutra, will obtain the 'Never Receding Nor Turning Back From Any Advances Gained' state which proceeds to the Unexcelled Complete Enlightenment.
"Venerable Sariputra, those anywhere in the Universe who have suitable faith and receive my words can then reach to the many kinds of Buddha places of which I have expounded.
"Sariputra, if a man in the past has made this resolve or at this moment obtains this resolve or does attain this resolve in the future ,such a one will be immediately reborn in the Land of Amitabha Buddha. This is equally true of the many kinds of men everywhere---all can obtain the 'Never Receding Nor Turning Back' state which proceeds to the Unexcelled Complete Enlightenment.
"With reference to this Land, if in a past life, the present life, or in a future life, O Venerable Sariputra, the myriad sons and daughters of good families or good men or women have faith in the worthiness of this Vow and respond to it suitably, they will be reborn in the Land of Amitabha .
"Thus, Sariputra, I now sing the praises of the myriad Buddha whose merit is beyond thought or discussion. Likewise the myriad Buddhas also sing praises to me, saying that my own merit is also beyond thought or discussion.
"Therefore with the arising of these words Shakyamuni Buddha has performed a very difficult and rare work by which He was able, in this universe and world, even with its Five Periods of Evil Realms and its Impure Eons, to discern its impurities. Also He discerned the defiling nature of passions impurity and the assembled rebirths impurity and also the reduced length of life impurity and even so, among these impurities, He obtained the Unexcelled Complete Enlightenment. Thereupon His Activity was to expound to all the many kinds of living beings the Dharma that is difficult to have faith in because of the separations caused by impurities.
"Sariputra, I have the suitable knowledge of these Five Evil Periods and have thus acted in this difficult labor because I have attained the Unexcelled Complete Enlightenment. Thus so also is my activity to expound to all the many kinds of living beings that Dharma that is difficult to have faith in because of the divisions in all realms. Although this correct activity is very difficult, the Buddha has expounded this correct Sutra."
Thereupon Sariputra and the many kinds of fully ordained monks and the whole world of Devas, Men and Arhats who all equally heard the Buddha expound this Sutra were strengthened in Joy, Faith and Resolve and each of them made Ten Obeisances to Him.
Thus did the Buddha expound the Amitabha Sutra!

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