

To Enlightenment-2

Amitabha's 48 Great Vows

Venerable Ding Hong

The Ultimate Method of Environmental Protection for Our Planet Earth

The purpose of giving lectures is to help everybody be clear about the principle and to understand the reciting method. When we clearly understand the principle and method, our recitation will resonate with the Buddha realm, and the effects of disaster-relief and world-protection will then be tremendous while resonating. Not only can we help our planet but also benefit the present life tremendously. More amazingly, we can obtain an acquisition of the assurance of Sukhāvātī rebirth as soon as possible, and in our vowed future return from Sukhāvātī, we would be an avaiivartika bodhisattva (non-retrogression bodhisattva). We can help all beings in all dharma-realms find relief from disasters and prevent misfortunes. This is the fundamental, the ultimate, and the consummate method of disaster-relief and world-protection.

Some practitioners asked me, "Where would be the safest place to hide when a disaster hits?" I told them that taking refuge in Sukhāvātī would be the safest. If you are still thinking of finding a place on this planet, let me tell you, when your life here is meant to end, all efforts to escape and hide will be futile. It is true, only Sukhāvātī is most secure. Wouldn't it be great if we can go earlier?

Despite not knowing how much help we can offer to the world, we can recite Amitabha and give Dharma lectures with a sincere heart to help resolve disasters to protect our environment. It is the best "Environmental Protection" for our planet Earth because it would induce blessings from Amitabha to resolve disasters. This is our unrelinquished duty!

A Sincere Intention Would Induce the Blessings of All Buddhas —an amazing story of the past life of the Buddha.

In fact, can we resolve the disaster? We have firm confidence!

I have told many practitioners a story of Shakyamuni Buddha's past.

Immeasurable kalpas ago, Shakyamuni Buddha once was a little bird. One day, this bird saw a big fire sweeping across the forest cutting off the escape routes of many

animals. The situation was very dire. The bird flew around and saw the raging flames; at that time, this bird was only thinking about how to put out the fire.

He flew to a river nearby, soaked his wings with water, then flew above the fire while shaking down the water from his wings. Of course, a few drops of water cannot put out the fire. He again flew back to the river, used his wings to collect more water, and returned above the fire shaking down the water from his wings. Who knows how many trips he had made. At last, this little bird was exhausted. With his last gasp he fell to the ground. When he saw that the forest fire kept burning, he was still anxiously thinking of only one thing, “How do I put out the fire?”

His selfless actions had touched a deva (a divine being) of Trayastrimsa who put out the forest fire with his supernal power. When this bird saw that the forest fire was finally out, his heart felt very comforted. Then his consciousness took rebirth in the Trayastrimsa.

When I told this story to fellow practitioners, they asked, “Now we are going to Japan, are we going to be little birds?” I said, “Exactly! Look, we have more than one hundred birds—bodhisattva birds. We are going to put out a fire.”

Can we put out the fire? Well, we’ve got to find help from a deva of Trayastrimsa. Where do we find a deva of Trayastrimsa? No need to look!

*As long as we invoke a sincere intention
for disaster-relief and world-protection,
not only can we touch the devas
but also touch and elicit blessings from all Buddhas in ten directions.
Then disaster-relief and world-protection
will surely be accomplished effortlessly.
Nevertheless, we must not have any doubts!
We must do it wholeheartedly.*

Look! If that little bird had any doubts and questioned himself, “Can I put out this big fire with my meager ability? How do I do it effectively? Will it work with my minuscule power?” If he had all these doubts, he definitely would have regressed because it would be considered a mission impossible for him. Yet, he had no doubts at all. He simply relied on genuine faith and strong determination to induce the blessings from a deva to put out the fire.

Our present mission of disaster-relief and world-protection is also based on faith and determination, so is Sukhāvātī rebirth. Simply relying on our own truthful faith and imperative aspiration, we can elicit the blessings of Amitabha’s Fundamental Vows to realize our wish. The key is genuine faith and imperative aspiration; we may comprehend this principle more deeply from the example of this little bird.

Why do all Buddhas in ten directions
aspire to speak of the merits of this name Amitabha?
They wish all beings in ten directions
to hear the name of Amitabha due to His inconceivable merit!

The Pure Land Method is to use our sincerity, the genuine faith and imperative aspiration, to elicit Amitabha's power to resolve disasters and ultimately to transcend samsara; especially for the Degenerate Dharma Era, we must rely on our sincere heart to evoke Buddha's power to help us. Because sentient beings have heavier karma than in the True Dharma Era and Semblance Dharma Era, it is extremely difficult to rely on self-power to obtain achievement. Only by relying on Buddha's power can we attain achievement. So, by reciting Amitabha with utmost sincerity and respect to purify our minds, we can definitely help our Earth transform from disasters and further escalate our spiritual realm in the future.

In our next video, we would like to share with you the original commentary from Venerable Ding Hong for your reference. With the original videos and our edited versions, we hope that they can offer a better picture for anyone who is interested in delving deeper. Thanks for watching, see you later.

Master Ou Yi, the ninth patriarch of Chinese Pure Land Method, told us in *The Essential Annotations of Amitabha Sutra*,

*Success in Sukhāvātī rebirth hinges entirely on
whether your faith and aspiration exist or not;
as for the rank of your rebirth,
it all depends on the proficiency of your Amitabha recitation skill.*

Many practitioners are still not confident about their Sukhāvātī rebirth, especially now we see many disasters; when a disaster hits, will I be sure to be reborn? What if I cannot make it? All these doubts and fears are all due to a lack of faith. Secondly, your aspiration of rebirth is also not imperative enough.

We will talk a lot about the wonderfulness of Sukhāvātī during this seven day retreat. You get clothing when thinking of clothing and get food when thinking of food. You will have whatever food you desire, and those delicacies come in containers made of seven kinds of jewels. When finished, no clean up is even needed, it will automatically disappear. It is so good that it would be a waste not to go.