

## A Land without Evil Paths

Bhiksu Dharmakara then said, "May the Lokanatha listen to and examine my vows with great compassion."

"When I realize the supreme bodhi and attain perfect enlightenment, the Buddha land that I shall accomplish will be replete with boundless, inconceivable merits, virtues, and adornments. There will be no realms of hells, hungry ghosts, animals, and neither flying, wriggling creatures nor the like. All beings, including those in the Yamaraja realms and three evil paths, who are born into my Buddha land and are edified by my Dharma, will all attain Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi (the Supreme True Enlightenment, or Unexcelled Perfect Enlightenment) and never again fall into the evil paths. Only having fulfilled such vows will I become a Buddha; otherwise, I will not procure Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi."

**1st Vow: The Land is free from evil paths.**

**2nd Vow: The inhabitants will never again fall into evil paths.**

This first Vow, a Land without evil paths is very realistic, especially for all beings in our Saha World, because it is very easy for all beings in our Saha World to fall into the three evil paths.

*How do the three evil paths manifest?*

*They are induced by greed, resentment, and ignorance.*

*Greed induces the realm of hungry ghosts,*

*Resentment induces the hell realm.*

*And ignorance induces the animal realm.*

There is no need to ask others, just look at ourselves. Is our greed, resentment, and ignorance eradicated yet? Not only have we not eradicated them, but we probably let them grow every day. In other words, if we let our greed, resentment, and ignorance grow every day, we are marching towards the three evil paths. In the future, we will then be aggressively plunged into the three evil paths, it is too horrifying.

## Why Did Amitabha Make This Vow?

*We have practiced for infinite kalpas, why are we still reincarnating?*

*We are nowhere near arhathood, let alone attaining Buddhahood.*

*What is the reason? It is because we have not eradicated greed, resentment, and ignorance. As a result,*

*the three evil paths account for the vast portion of our samsara.*

It is very difficult to cultivate in the three evil paths because they only exist to receive their retribution. Look! How can animals cultivate? They are ignorant and unable to comprehend Dharma, many receive retribution through being slaughtered. This is excruciating misery for them, how could they have the mind to cultivate? What about the realm of hungry ghosts and hells? The hungry ghosts are extremely hungry, and the hells are the place with the most suffering, how could they cultivate? Therefore, it is impossible to cultivate in the three evil paths.

Despite having learned for infinite kalpas, we might end up in the three evil paths if we do not attain accomplishment in this lifetime. We would forget everything we had learned when we finally leave after a long time of reincarnations within the three evil paths, but what we have learned will be accumulated as good roots and planted as seeds in our “eighth consciousness”\* (\*Skt. alaya-vijnana). These seeds accumulate continuously every time we encounter Buddha-Dharma, then they are cut off until the next Buddha comes and then they are accumulated little by little again. From infinite kalpas ago until today, the good roots finally can be regarded as deep-seated, but we must know that we had experienced inconceivable sufferings within the three evil paths as we accumulated these deep-seated good roots.

In this life, we must liberate ourselves! Because if we engage in samsara, we will be still deluded even in the heaven or human realms; once deluded we will definitely create karma, and once creating karma, we will definitely receive the retribution of the three evil paths.

### **Why Is There No Greed, Resentment, and Ignorance in Sukhāvātī?**

The reason that Sukhāvātī is marvelous is because it has no three evil paths, which means that you will not degenerate. Why does it not have three evil paths? Because there is no greed, resentment, and ignorance in Sukhāvātī. Greed, resentment, and ignorance are the cause of the three evil paths. If we do not create these karmas, we will not fall into the three evil paths. Even though we have these seeds in our alaya consciousness, they won't arise in Sukhāvātī because there are no conditions to let them arise.

In our world, we get jealous and give rise to greed when seeing jewels like gold, silver, and pearls. Why? Because they are very rare in our world. The more scarce, the

more precious. We get greedy when seeing them and think of taking possession for ourselves. There are no such problems in Sukhāvātī. Why? For example, you see the gold, what is it used for? For paving roads, just like cement in our world. If you buy a golden necklace and wear it, you take so much pride in its beauty. But people in Sukhāvātī see it, they don't know whether to laugh or cry. This is just like the people in our world taking cement to hang on their necks, it is frightful and makes you not know whether to cry or laugh. No one does this kind of silly thing.

In Sukhāvātī, you can take gold, silver, pearls, seven jewels, and whatever you want as you wish; Sukhavati has it all, no one gets greedy. When you think of eating a meal, seven jeweled bowls are naturally full; one hundred dishes appear before you as your thought arises. One hundred dishes! Only the ancient emperors had the fortune to enjoy this. When you get to Sukhāvātī, you are more fortunate than emperors. Will you get greedy to eat it? Absolutely not. What is the reason?

### **The Body of Subha and the Noumenon of Amita**

Seeing the delicacies, you give rise to righteous thoughts immediately and realize that eating is just the manifestation of your karmic habit! In fact, how could you need food in Sukhāvātī? You have the body of śubha\* (\*purity and clarity) and the noumenon of amita\* (\*infinity). This body is unlike our physical body which is of five skandhas that needs food to recharge for energy. The five skandhas in Buddhism refers to matter, sensations, perception, formations, and consciousness; they make up the physical and mental existence of each person. In Sukhāvātī, food is fundamentally not needed, because you regard dhyana-joy as food, you are suffused with Dharma-bliss.

But why would you still have a moment of wanting to eat after arriving in Sukhavati? This is because people from the desire-realm have the karmic habit of eating, they still give rise to tiny thoughts like "It's been so long since I arrived, how come I haven't eaten yet?" Once such tiny thoughts arise, the seven-jeweled vessels filled with one hundred delicacies immediately appear in front of you. You do not need to prepare it by yourself at all.

In our world, you have to work hard for one meal. You have to go shopping, then wash, cut, cook, fry, possibly spend one or two hours to make a meal, yet only spend twenty minutes to enjoy it. Afterwards, you still have to clean it up...

When you are in Sukhāvātī, you do not need to do these at all. Whenever you want to eat, it appears. When you do not want it, the food will naturally disappear. You do not even need to wash dishes! How wonderful it is! How could you still get greedy?

Thanks for watching, see you later. Namo Amitabha!