

The Great Joy of Nirvana

When we arrive in Sukhāvātī, the afflictions of delusion, discrimination, and attachment will not arise again. Amitabha blesses us with this Vow: All will absolutely accomplish Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. It brings our roots of six senses to quietude. This does not mean that they do not contact the external world but denotes that, when they contact the external realms, their heart would not move and arise thoughts, nor would they have discrimination and attachment.

In this realm of quietude and stillness, they can see the continuous phenomena of arising and ceasing in the cosmos. They know the doings and thinkings of all beings. But they will not covet this realm, nor exclude it. They can receive and utilize it, yet they have no discrimination and attachment. Their heart always remains in quietude and unmoved. All bodhisattvas in Sukhāvātī are like this. We will also be instantly like this if we are born into Sukhāvātī. We attain this kind of realm at that very moment. This realm is “the great bliss of nirvana.” If we do not attain this great nirvana, Amitabha said He would not procure Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi.

In this realm, our delusion, discrimination, and attachment will indeed fall off as time goes by. They would not fall off immediately, but they are subdued and no longer arise due to Amitabha's blessing. After being subdued for a long time, they then fall off naturally. Why? Because there was nothing intrinsically. They are essentially delusions, delusions are not real. So, after being subdued, it will be eradicated as time passes by, we will then attain great nirvana and become a Buddha. Therefore, we will undoubtedly attain Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi once being reborn into Sukhāvātī.

This Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi is not the one stated in Hinayana Buddhism—the nirvana that arhats attain. It is the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi that is stated in Mahayana Buddhism, which refers to the consummate realization of Wondrous Enlightenment. Why? Because Hinayana people would not be born into Sukhāvātī, all inhabitants in Sukhāvātī are Mahayana people.

In *The Infinite Life Sutra*, both chapter 24: The Three Ranks of Rebirth and chapter 25: The True Cause of Rebirth state that all three ranks of rebirth need one condition: bring forth bodhicitta and recite Amitabha with one focus. This bodhicitta is a great bodhicitta, a heart that is resolute to liberate all beings universally. So, if we do not bring forth bodhicitta, we will not be born into Sukhāvātī. That is why the ancient virtuous ones said that Sukhāvātī is created for us to attain Buddhahood. In this Land, “people with the spiritual proclivity and capacity of the two-yana (vehicle) of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas won't be born.” This suggests that people with the predisposition of this two-yana cannot attain Sukhāvātī rebirth, because they did not bring forth a big enough heart. They only sought self-liberation and did not ask themselves to liberate all beings, so they cannot realize Buddhahood. As such, if we want to be born into Sukhāvātī, we must understand and bring forth a great bodhicitta.

The nineteenth Vow that we shall see later specifically speaks of the Vow of “bringing forth bodhicitta upon hearing Amitabha’s name.” If we don’t bring forth bodhicitta, we will not resonate with Sukhāvātī. In Sukhāvātī, all inhabitants are Mahayana bodhisattvas; there are no srāvaka or pratyekabuddha. Even though there are inhabitants with the title of srāvaka and pratyekabuddha, it refers to the realization they attained before they were born into Sukhāvātī. They are actually Mahayana people.

How do we bring forth bodhicitta? We will talk about it in detail later. Can we bring it forth? The answer is definite. But why? It is because Amitabha had made this 19th Vow of “One will bring forth bodhicitta upon hearing my name.” The power of this Amitabha’s Vow will bless us; so long as we have heard His name, we will definitely bring forth bodhicitta. We don’t have to worry if we bring forth bodhicitta or not. Even if we have not brought it forth yet, we will bring it forth without a doubt as long as we hear the name, and genuinely and explicitly understand the merits of these Forty Eight Great Vows. If we don’t, Amitabha would not procure Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. So, we should neither be afraid nor worry.

In this life, if we have an affinity to hear the name, we definitely will bring forth our bodhicitta and be reborn for sure. This benevolence of Amitabha is vast and profound. It is inconceivable! It has given us the biggest assurance, assuring us to attain Buddhahood. Fundamentally, we will not slip through the net. This is the Vow of “All will absolutely accomplish Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi.”

How to become the Same Genre as the People in Sukhavati

Some may ask that all people in Sukhāvātī are able to “keep away from the mind of discrimination and their roots of six senses dwell in quietude,” would we be able to do that? How did they do that? How do we learn? Actually, in the Pure Land method, the knack is very simple. All you need to do is to conscientiously and persistently recite this name of Amitabha, then all the roots of your six senses will be in quietude and you will keep away from the mind of discrimination.

No matter what realm you see, you just need to recite Amitabha. When prosperity comes, you recite Amitabha and do not let avarice arise. When adversity comes, you also recite Amitabha, do not let resentment emerge and cause contradictions. When good people come, you are very happy and recite Amitabha; when wicked people come, you are also very happy and recite Amitabha. You then keep away from the mind of discrimination, and your heart will always dwell in this mighty virtuous name of Amitabha. This is what all the bodhisattvas of Sukhāvātī do.

Of course, the condition of Sukhāvātī is very good, even the six dusts exhort its inhabitants to recite Amitabha. The conditions in our world are unfortunately not so splendid, we get contaminated more easily. But, as long as we resolutely have a sincere and imperative aspiration to seek rebirth and practice reciting the name of Amitabha regardless of prosperity,

adversity, or good and bad conditions, we will surely be reborn when we train ourselves to the extent similar to bodhisattvas in Sukhāvātī.

We are the same genre as the supreme good people of Sukhāvātī. As the saying goes, “Birds of a feather flock together.” If we are the same kind of people as them, we naturally go to their place. It is impossible for us not to go, we will certainly go. So, we must train ourselves not to have discrimination and attachments when encountering any condition. Everything is a good thing, everyone is a good person. Do not wrangle about it, furthermore, do not contradict or start a conflict with others.

The Shallow Taste of “Receiving All Sorts of Bliss with no Sufferings”

A person who genuinely recites Amitabha can renounce everything; good things are good, bad things are also good. You will think, “I am going to Sukhavati, why should I still worry about so many things? Let others fight, I’ll just yield. No matter how much they want, I’ll give whatever they want.” They want everything, they can’t bring anything to their next life and are heading to the three evil paths, while I yield everything and will be born into Sukhāvātī. If we completely comprehend this *truth*, we can relinquish this world and indeed let go. Let go of all, we will then obtain ease of mind.

When the roots of our six senses are in the realm of stillness and quietness, we regard the joy of dhyana as food, and we will be filled with Dharma-bliss. This is absolutely not something that the worldly enjoyment of wealth, lust, fame, eating, and sleeping, all satisfaction provoked by form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and concept, or the possession of fame, prestige, gain, and offerings can compare to. Actually, what is the satisfaction of desire? A sort of stimulus. It stimulates us, making us suddenly feel pleasure. It is a pleasure of possessive desire. In fact, after the desire is satisfied, afflictions will follow.

Look at those rich people, the more money they have, the more they want to make; their desire can never be satisfied. When people have no money, they probably think that “I’ll be satisfied when I make ten thousand.” But when they have ten thousand, they will think about 100 thousand. After they have 100 thousand, they will think about 100 million. Their desire gets bigger and bigger and cannot be satisfied. As the saying goes, “It is impossible to fill up the deep ravine of desire.” How can you say that this is happiness?

Real happiness is Dharma-joy, which, from the quiet and still inner nature, flows out like spring water. What you enjoy is the joy of Sukhāvātī; the joy of “without all sorts of sufferings but receiving all sorts of bliss.” We can also taste this kind of joy in a shallow manner in our world. The principle is very simple, the method is “letting go.” So, we must dissociate ourselves from the mind of discrimination, and let the roots of our six senses quiet down.

Thanks for watching, see you later! Namō Amitabha!