

## The Realm Is Too Subtle and Wondrous to Cogitate

Sukhāvātī is not an ordinary land, it is the Dharma-nature-land, which is realized by all Buddhas. Master Ou Yi said, "It is not something that can be believed and comprehended by all beings of the nine dharma-realms." The nine dharma-realms refer to the six-paths plus the realms of śrāvaka, pratyeka, and bodhisattva. All beings in these nine dharma-realms, even bodhisattvas, are unable to even believe and comprehend it, let alone enter into that realm.

Since it is difficult to even believe in it, you would be awestruck upon hearing what I told you about this realm and marvel: it is too inconceivable! Therefore, it is very difficult to believe and it is very normal for people not to easily believe it. This is the realm that can only be realized by all Buddhas! Now, you can not only believe in it—even if it is just a superficial belief—but you can further comprehend a little and accept it, you are not an ordinary person!

Such a subtle and wondrous method, it is impossible to find a second one. A mortal in the **lowly land** can instantly attain bodhi! This is the most perfect among all perfections, the most swift among all swiftness. It is more consummate than the Perfect Teaching in *The Avatamsaka Sutra* and *The Lotus Sutra*, more swift than the realm stated in Zen Buddhism: "Dropping the butcher's knife (**defilements**), you become a Buddha instantly."

Swiftness implies within one thought you have attained bodhi. The key is that your faith and aspiration must not regress. This is speaking of the subtleties of this land that are very hard for people to cogitate. Let's first leave an impression in our minds, if you wish to be fully clear about it, you will certainly be all clear when we arrive in Sukhāvātī.

Of course, it is also beneficial to be clear about this principle now. But how do we comprehend the Avatamsaka World that is co-integrating and co-assimilating, which is a realm stated in The Avatamsaka Sūtra: "One contains many, many contain one. Plus big and small also accommodate each other; small can accommodate big and big can accommodate small"?

## Small Contains Big, Big Enters Into Small, and Layers Upon Layers

Let me make an example, you will then be clear about it. For example, I now have a mirror, it can reflect its external world. The mirror is not big, right? Probably one square inch, yet the realm of tens of miles away is indeed all reflected inside. There are mountains, rivers, lands, all kinds of things. The very big area of the external realm will all be reflected in a mirror that is as small as my palm. Isn't this "small contains big," "big enters into small"? Now if this mirror is as small as a mustard seed, it can also reflect the external world that is as big as Mt. Sumeru.

There are also layers upon layers which implies the boundless dharma-realms, how do we comprehend this? Now if I have another mirror, these two mirrors, each reflect in one direction. Inside of my mirror, I can see that mirror. That mirror reflects the mountains and rivers

behind me. And the mirror that is reflecting these mountains and rivers of my mirror reflects in my mirror again. These are two layers.

Now inside of that mirror, there is also my mirror. The image of the mountains and rivers reflected from my mirror again enters that mirror. And the image that mirror reflects from my mirror again enters the mirror inside of my mirror. It goes on and on like this, boundless layers. Can you all imagine this realm?

In the Tang Dynasty, the Emperor did not know how to comprehend the boundless layers of the Realm of Avatamsaka. Master Xian Shou, the Third Patriarch of the Avatamsaka School, thought of a good idea. He asked the Emperor to build an octagonal pavilion in the garden. The octagonal pavilion had eight side mirror walls, all sealed with only the top open to allow the light to shine in. When the Emperor entered this octagonal pavilion, she saw her body pervasively everywhere. What is the reason?

When one mirror and another mirror reflect each other, it is not only reflecting one body but the bodies inside of one mirror as well as the mirrors in the opposite direction, plus the image of the side mirrors. Since there are a total of eight sides, each mirror contains the images of the other seven mirrors. Each reflected image also includes reflected images of seven other mirrors. And each mirror that was reflected into the images of the other seven mirrors includes the images of the other seven mirrors again. When you look, they are infinitely far-reaching, making them boundless layers. When the Emperor entered the octagonal pavilion, she saw her infinite bodies and was deeply amazed by the realm of "one is many, many is one."

## **The Projecting Manifestation of Transformation-Bodies**

At the time of listening to Shifu speaking of this scripture, I spoke on a special topic, "*The Scientific View of the Universe in the Avatamsaka School*." I also thought of an idea. I was facing the camera when giving the lecture. There was a TV set under the camera, which captured my image, so I could see my own image while speaking, observing whether I sat straight or not.

At that time, I held a mirror, pointed directly to the camera lens. The person in the TV set was me, holding the mirror. The image in the mirror inside the camera was also reflected in my mirror. The TV set under the camera reflected these images. When pointed at the right angle, it can show endless layers of reflections. Inside the mirror were endless Zhong Maosens, I was Zhong Maosen at that time. Each Zhong Maosen held a mirror in his hand.

The transformation bodies of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are like this. What is a transformation body? The true body does not move, it sits here, yet the transformation bodies are infinite. This is Buddhas' projecting manifestation. Where do they project their manifestations? They project their manifestations in the hearts of all beings. All beings' hearts are like mirrors, they can reflect images; so a Buddha can project His manifestation in the

mirrors of all beings' hearts. What they see is only the projection of a Buddha. But all beings are deluded and thus regard this projection as real. They think what they see is really the "Buddha." In fact, the "Buddha" they see is an illusive phenomenon. They do not see the true body. The true body is not in the mirror.

## **Different Hearts Produce Different Kinds of Mirrors**

All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas can enter all beings' thinking, which is just a mirror, equal to a reflection. But this mirror is not very smooth and clear, so the image reflected is distorted. If the mirror is smooth, the image reflected will be as real as the original. The realm manifested by a heart without distortion, a true heart, is called one-true-dharma-realm. Buddha's heart is a true heart, that's why He can manifest the true phenomena.

What kind of mirror do we have in our hearts? They are a bit like distorting mirrors, they are concave, convex, and askew. Moreover, all reflections are not only distorted but with different colors. I wonder if you have ever seen a distorting mirror? When I was a child, there was a distorting mirror in the Children's Amusement Park. We laughed when we saw that mirror. How could people become like this? They are round, flat, inverted, all kinds. The hearts of all beings have distorted Buddha's original form. In other words, the hearts of all beings have turned all Buddhas into all beings and they regarded all Buddhas as the same as them.

A Buddha uses a true heart, all beings manifested in His heart are all buddhas. Therefore, with a Buddha heart, one sees all beings as all buddhas, because He can perceive that all beings are innately buddhas. Conversely, with the heart of all beings, they view all Buddhas as all beings. It is not because Buddhas have become all beings but because Buddha's image has been distorted. As a result, in the heart of an ordinary being, he sees that everyone is all beings, he does not see a Buddha.

So, when a Buddha manifests the same form as all beings, it does not mean that the Buddha intentionally shows the same look as them. The form of the Buddha's manifestation is the image in all beings' hearts, the Buddha simply manifests that image of their minds. In other words, a Buddha does not give rise to thoughts, they are unmoved yet can manifest all phenomena; whatever thought all beings have, right in the heart of all beings, Buddha manifests the image of their minds.

He can manifest infinite forms, each form will be different in each sentient being's heart. What is the reason? Because Buddha does not have a specific heart. He simply "responds to all beings' minds to manifest the capacity of their perception." This kind of dharma-realm is the Avatamsaka Realm of non-obstruction-among-all-phenomena.

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namó Amitabha!