

Why Can the Light of Sukhavati Shine Throughout Ten Directions?

Let's join palms and read the text of the 42nd Vow: "When I become a Buddha, the Buddha land in which I dwell will be limitlessly vast, majestic, pure, and brilliant, glowing as a bright mirror. Its light will thoroughly illuminate immeasurably inconceivable Buddha worlds in ten directions. Living beings who see this light will give rise to a rare mind. If it is not like this, I will not procure Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi."

42nd Vow: The light shines throughout ten directions.

Myriad things in Sukhavati are bright, pure, glittering, and translucent as mirrors. They all emit light, which shines on all subtle realms throughout ten directions. The inconceivably measureless and numberless Buddha worlds in ten directions are all under this light, none are left out. What light is this light? It is the light of self-nature! How can this light be everywhere? Since this light emits from self-nature, it can of course pervasively reach ten directions of the cosmos.

The sunlight, moonlight, or the electric light of our world cannot pervasively reach everywhere, they will be blocked by any object such as a wall or a floor. When these lights shine to a place far, the farther they shine the weaker they will become. Conversely, the light of self-nature will not be blocked by anything, it equally, eternally, and pervasively shines everywhere; it will not be particularly bright at a near place or dimmer at a far distance because in self-nature, there is neither the notion of far-near nor coming-going.

Neither far nor near, neither coming nor going, neither eternal nor ceasing, the light shines pervasively; this is the light of self-nature. All worlds are manifested by self-nature, so the inconceivably measureless and numberless Buddha lands in ten directions, being not separate from self-nature, are all illuminated by this light. The sutra states, "No dharma* (*phenomena) can be obtained when departing from self-nature!" So, think about it, what kind of realm is Sukhāvātī? It is entirely the realm manifested by self-nature. As *The Avatamsaka Sūtra* describes: it is like a vast and consummate treasured mirror, in which infinite lands can all be seen. Mountains, rivers, and all forms of living beings such as hells, hungry ghosts all manifest within. In *The Infinite Life Sutra*, Amitabha, coordinating with Shakyamuni Buddha, also gives us this manifestation.

How to See Amitabha

In Chapter 38, Venerable Ananda implored Shakyamuni Buddha, saying that he now also wanted to see Infinite, Pure, and Impartial Enlightenment," which refers to Amitabha. Infinite, Pure, Impartial Enlightenment is the name of Amitabha's virtues. It is also the title of this Sutra. How can we see Amitabha? Shakyamuni Buddha teaches us to prostrate and worship Amitabha as well as recite His name. He said to Ananda, "Facing the direction of the sunset, you respectfully prostrate and recite Namō Amitabha," So, Venerable Ananda demonstrated this

to us. How would we see Amitabha? The method is respectfully and single-mindedly prostrating, worshiping, and reciting Amitabha, facing west. There are no second thoughts or intermixed thoughts in this single-mindedness.

You, facing west, are single-mindedly longing to see Amitabha. Will it work if you face east or south? Yes, it will also work, because Sukhāvātī is intrinsically pervasive in ten directions. Where is it not Sukhāvātī? Is only the west Sukhāvātī? Isn't the east Sukhāvātī? If so, then it can not be said, "Sukhāvātī is pervasive in ten directions" and "This land is the Pure Land, Pure Land is this land." In fact, pointing to one direction is the Buddha's expediency to let all beings have a place for refuge. In reality, east, south, west, north, top, and bottom are all Sukhāvātī.

But why does the Buddha emphasize the west direction? Because the Buddha knows that the spiritual capacity (*Skt. *indriya*) of all beings is inferior, telling us one direction is to allow us to "recite intently in one direction." If we cannot even recite intently in only one direction, we will concentrate even less with ten directions. So, this is the expediency of Buddha's speaking Dharma, emphasizing west to allow us to pay effort in this direction. When we can single-mindedly recite, prostrate, and seek to see Amitabha just like Venerable Ananda did, then we will be able to see Amitabha manifest His transformation body. Venerable Ananda showed us the way of seeing Amitabha right in the Dharma-assembly at that time.

A Returning Bodhisattva of Tenth Bhumi

Venerable Ananda is not an ordinary person, he is a returning Bodhisattva of the tenth Bhumi. He manifested in this Dharma-assembly as a Stream Enterer—*srota-āpanna*, which is like the first grade student of elementary school. Despite being a first grader, Ananda was very clever, very wise. At this time, he requested to see Amitabha and acted immediately according to the instruction of Shakyamuni Buddha. Honestly, obediently, genuinely, Ananda immediately stood up from his seat, prostrated toward the west and said, "I now wish to see Amitabha of Sukhāvātī, making offerings and providing services to cultivate all sorts of good roots."

As soon as he looked up, he saw the manifestation of Sukhāvātī. "Amitabha in His lofty seat (*Skt. *uccatarakâsana*), with formidable authority and virtues in His excellent appearance and radiance." Everyone saw this, not just Venerable Ananda but all 20 thousand people in this Dharma-assembly all saw this. When the Buddha light shone on them, they immediately gave rise to the mind of goodness. Their good roots grew due to their defilements being exterminated. What an immense merit the Buddha light is!

The Light as Kalpic Flood Pervades over the Entire World

When this bright light was revealed, the light of the sun, the moon, the bodhisattvas, and the srāvakas all receded, only the Buddha light was seen. The sutra states, "Just like the kalpic flood pervading over the entire world," which signifies that the Buddha light outshines the entire light of the world. This Buddha light is the disclosure of the light of self-nature. At that moment, the adornment of the direct-reward and circumstantial-reward of Sukhāvātī—the jeweled trees, lotus flowers, pond, palace, as well as the gathering of the supreme good people—are all seen by not only human but all sentient beings of the six paths who have connections to participate in that Dharma-assembly. Even those animals and those small insects that fly, crawl, and wriggle all saw this inconceivable, spectacular scene.

All things in Sukhāvātī emit this kind of light. Once you see this light, you can exterminate defilement and give rise to goodness. When your karma is eliminated and the good root grows, what will happen? You will also love to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth. That's why you can attain the position of non-retrogression once you see the Buddha-light. You can definitely bring forth the aspiration to seek rebirth. You will no longer regress. Look! What an immense merit the Buddha light is!

Single-Mindedness That is Blessed by Amitabha

In the past, Master Hui Yuan, the First Patriarch of the Pure Land School, saw the scene of Sukhavati three times before his rebirth. He saw the Land limitlessly vast, majestic, pure, and brilliant, glowing as a bright mirror. Its light thoroughly illuminates the inconceivably measureless and numberless Buddha worlds in ten directions. Anyone who sees this scene will give rise to a rare mind of realizing how phenomenal and difficult to encounter the Pure Land Method is! Once this rare mind arises, you will no longer be nostalgic for the Saha World, and you will surely give rise to a deep faith and imperative aspiration for Sukhāvātī rebirth. No matter how precious any treasure in this world is, you realize that it is nothing compared to the Sukhāvātī that you have just seen! All beings who see this light will immediately give rise to this kind of mind and no longer regress.

When people seek Sukhāvātī rebirth by reciting Amitabha, at the moment of approaching death, Amitabha and the assembly of holy ones will manifest before them, emitting light to let them exterminate defilements and give rise to the mind of goodness. Accordingly they will reach the level of single-mindedness* (**Skt. eka-samādhi-samāpanna*) on their recitation. *The Amitabha Sutra*, translated by Master Xuan Zang, mentioned that Amitabha "blesses you with great compassion in order to help you reach single-mindedness." This "single-mindedness blessed by Buddha" has no contradiction with the version translated by Master Kumārajīva, "From one day... to seven days, you recite with single-mindedness". This single-mindedness is also Amitabha's blessing!

We must know that, not only at the time of rebirth will we reach "single-mindedness" due to seeing Amitabha and receiving the blessing from His light, but even right now we will also

give rise to this rare mind if we see the Buddha or receive the blessing from His light. Have you received the Buddha light yet?

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namó Amitabha!