

## How Do We Receive Buddha Light?

What is Buddha light? Where does the Buddha light shine? The Buddha light will shine where people recite and are in remembrance of the Buddha. Now we are learning *The Infinite Life Sutra*, delving deeply into Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows. You listen to it so joyfully and feel such purity, the Buddha light is definitely shining on us at this moment.

Buddha light is also called pure light, joyful light, inconceivable light, and **the light exceeding the sun and moon**. What does it mean "exceeding the sun and moon"? The light of the sun and moon cannot reach everywhere. The dark corners will not be lit by the light of the sun and moon. Plus, the sunlight only shines in daytime, it does not shine in evenings; and moonlight can only shine at night, it does not shine in daytime.

But Buddha light can shine day and night, everywhere. In the dark corners, if we recite Amitabha, the Buddha light can also shine on us. At the time when we recite Amitabha or listen to the Sutra lectures with a pure mind, it is the moment that Buddha light shines on us. When the Buddha light shines on us, our karma will be eliminated unknowingly, our good roots will constantly grow, and we will obtain Dharma-joy.

## Introspect Our Actions with the Words of the Sutra

We must believe, the merit of "upon hearing the name" is inconceivable. Look, teacher Liu Suyun stayed at home for ten years, listening to sutra teachings and reciting Amitabha. She listened to ***The Infinite Life Sutra*** ten hours a day, her lupus thus got cured. How was it cured? The Buddha light blessed her, exterminating her defilements to enable her goodness to grow. All karmas can be eliminated, and the sufferings of grave illness can also be terminated.

During this Buddha-retreat, I particularly emphasize the benefits of "upon hearing the name." This benefit is the benefit of thusness that Shakyamuni Buddha bestows upon us, telling us the merit of this name of Amitabha. The Buddha light will shine on you when you simply "hear the name" by listening to sutra and Dharma teaching. But, how can we be considered "upon hearing the name"? "Upon hearing the name" is to really comprehend it. It can be counted only when you grasp its essence.

Some people thought that they had understood. Not necessarily. We must introspect our actions with the sutra. The 18th vow states, "All beings in ten directions, upon hearing my name, will believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity." Have you believed and rejoiced with utmost sincerity yet? Do you believe in the Pure Land Method, believe that *there is* Sukhāvātī and Amitabha, and also believe that you can be born into Sukhavati? This belief must not mix with the slightest doubt. If you still have doubts, you have not heard the name enough. You must hear the name earnestly, seriously, and respectfully until you have no doubt at all.

## Tathagata Speaks the Words of Truth

I have encountered some fellow practitioners who said this to me, “Is it possible that Sukhavati is just the expedient saying of Shakyamuni Buddha?” What they mean seems to be that the Buddha wants us to renounce the Saha World, so He deliberately made up Sukhāvātī to let us **yearn for** it. They said, “Is Sukhavati only a blueprint that Shakyamuni Buddha made up to persuade us to go? It is just like coaxing children: come, come, this Sukhāvātī is very good. After we get there, we see nothing. Will we discover that it is all Buddha's expedient talk after we get there?”

This is your doubt. With this doubt, how can you “believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity”? What is expedient talk? To speak the Dharma that matches all beings' spiritual capacity for helping them to understand, this is expedient talk. But what was said is still true, nothing was ever made up to coax all beings. Buddhas would never make up Sukhāvātī in order to coax all beings to go there for cultivation. That's not the case.

Is there really Sukhāvātī? Indeed there is! We must believe that Shakyamuni, Amitabha, and all Buddhas in ten directions will never make false speech. *The Diamond Sutra* states, “**Tathagata is the one who speaks the words of the truth, thusness, un-falsehood, un-heterodoxy, and un-deceit.**” Therefore, what Buddhas' sayings are all true disclosures, they utterly speak the truth of reality, all thusness-words, neither increases nor decreases. Shakyamuni Buddha would never do such a thing: to speak false words in order to make all beings go there for cultivation. This is not the behavior of a Buddha and it is violating the most basic precept. We must know this truth!

## Why You Should Believe Sukhāvātī Is Real

Amitabha used 100 billion years, under His teacher's guidance, learned the pros and cons, as well as good and evil of all Buddha lands in ten directions. Then He used five kalpas to conclude, summarize, sort out, form the blueprint of Sukhāvātī, and make Forty Eight Great Vows. Furthermore, in the immeasurable kalpas, He accrued merits and virtues to adorn this Pure Land and finally realized Sukhāvātī, which has been created for ten kalpas now. This will not be false or illusory. It is **true and real**. *There is* indeed Sukhāvātī!

*The Amitabha Sutra* tells us, “Śāriputra, from here passing through ten trillion Buddha lands to the West, *there is* a world called Sukhāvātī. In this land, *there is* a Buddha named Amitabha.” These two “*there is*” are resolute and decisive. There is! There truly is! Master Ou Yi, in his old age, called himself **The Dao Practitioner of There Is West**. There truly is Sukhāvātī, it is not false. It is absolutely not like the fable of Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi, who loved to tell stories, was an influential Taoist philosopher around the 4th century BC, second to Laozi. He told you fables, made up something to let you understand the principles within. This is the educational method of Zhuangzi. But Buddhas do not use this method. Buddhas only speak the truth.

Shakyamuni Buddha would never make up Sukhāvātī in order to coax you to cultivate. Sukhāvātī is not a fable of Zhuangzi, let alone a dream of fools. This is not a dream. This is **“there truly is.”**

In front of our eyes, you believe that there is the Saha World because you have seen it. There are people, matters, and objects, do you believe in their existence? If you believe in the existence of those people, matters, and objects in this Saha World, Sukhāvātī then exists in the same way. When renouncing the Saha World of this end, you will be in Sukhāvātī of that end. **It is true and real**, not false or illusory at all. Amitabha also truly exists; He truly comes to escort you! You must not doubt it. This doubt must be dispelled, you can then have the utmost sincerity to truly believe in Amitabha's escort.

### **The Saha World and Sukhāvātī Are Manifested by the Same Principles**

Despite all things being true existence in phenomena, they are intrinsically emptiness in noumenon. For instance, in our Saha World, does it really exist? Quantum scientists have discovered that it is an illusive existence because all substances, when analyzed to the end, are only vibrations. Where do the vibrations come from? From our thoughts. Our thoughts create vibrations and form the material world. In reality, there is nothing. Why is there nothing? Because all phenomena are caused by vibrations, which are only your thoughts.

As if one is in a dream, where does the dream come from? The dream is manifested by your thoughts; It intrinsically does not exist, but it is actually there. You really see it! If you were chased by a tiger in a dream, you would really be scared, your feeling was real. If you were bitten in the dream, you would feel hurt; the pain and the retribution you feel were also real.

The world we have now is also like dreams. Your feelings are all real, aren't they? You do not feel that this moment does not exist. Now Venerable Ding Hong, sitting here, speaks sutras and Dharma to you. Isn't this a real existence? But from the perspective of noumenon, it is truly nothing. Where does this Venerable Ding Hong come from? From the vibration of your thoughts. This phenomenon is an illusive existence when all conditions are in place. When the conditions disappear, this phenomenon will also disappear. So from the perspective of noumenon, **“All things are nonexistent, ultimately empty, nothing can be obtained at all.”**

So is Sukhāvātī. Sukhāvātī, arising from your thoughts, is also illusory. What thought is it? Your pure thoughts of reciting Amitabha. Nevertheless, these pure thoughts of yours indeed give rise to Sukhāvātī under the blessing of Amitabha's Vows. This is true, this is definitely not false.

Since you believe in the phenomena of the Saha World, you should then believe in the phenomena of Sukhāvātī. Both Saha World and Sukhāvātī share the only noumenon in the universe, which is our self-nature. The only difference is that Sukhāvātī is solely manifested by

continuous pure thoughts of the true heart, while our Saha World is altered and manifested by the continuous delusional thoughts in our consciousness that arise from our self-nature. When the delusional thoughts of all defilements, such as greed, resentment, ignorance, arrogance, and suspicion, are unceasing, a Saha World thus manifests. We must understand all these principles.

## Noumenon and Phenomena are One Unity

The noumenon and phenomena do not impede each other—it is the realm of non-obstruction-between-noumenon-and-phenomena. When there are phenomena, there must be its noumenon; and when there is noumenon, there must be its phenomena.

From the perspective of phenomena, both lands of Saha World and Sukhāvātī are manifested by our heart-nature. The phenomena are really there. From the perspective of noumenon, the intrinsic nature of **our true heart can manifest various phenomena in accordance with conditions**; it manifests the Saha World in accordance with the contaminated condition and manifests the three evil paths in accordance with the thoughts of greed, resentment, and ignorance. Our current realm is manifested by our contaminated minds, but when we give rise to the continuous pure thoughts by reciting Amitabha, our true heart will manifest Sukhāvātī.

These different phenomena mentioned above share *the only noumenon* in the cosmos. The noumenon and phenomena are one unity, they are the true heart, also known as the heart-nature, self-nature, dhammakaya, or thusness. Since this true heart can manifest the Saha World, how can it possibly not manifest Sukhāvātī? Of course, it can manifest Sukhāvātī as well. It can manifest everything, as long as the condition arises, it can manifest all worlds due to self-nature being intrinsically and fully possessing everything. It possesses both the Saha world and Sukhāvātī, it possesses **the World of Vairocana** as well. It completely possesses all.

As for what will be manifested, it depends on the condition you create. The condition refers to your current thoughts. The thought we have now is contaminated, a deluded mind; it thus manifests the polluted, turbid Saha World. Now if we transform the condition to keeping Amitabha in remembrance by reciting Amitabha unceasingly, our self-nature will then manifest Sukhāvātī in accordance with the condition of these continuous pure thoughts.

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namó Amitabha!