

## Amitabha also Blesses Bodhisattvas of Other Worlds

"When I become a Buddha, all the assemblies of the bodhisattvas in all Buddha lands in ten directions, upon hearing my name, will instantly attain the Samadhi of Purity, Emancipation, and Universal Equality. They will uphold all profound dharanis\* (*\*the power of total retention*), dwell in samadhi, until they attain Buddhahood. In their samadhi, they will constantly make offerings to innumerable, boundless Buddhas without losing their power of samadhi. If it is not like this, I will not procure Annutara-Samyak-Sambodhi."

44th Vow: All will obtain the Samadhi of Universal Equality

45th Vow: All will be able to make offerings to all Buddhas in their samadhi.

There also are bodhisattvas in all other Buddha lands besides Sukhāvātī. All the previous Vows regard all beings in other worlds being blessed by Amitabha. But these two Vows aim at the bodhisattvas of other worlds also being blessed by Amitabha. Despite the realm of bodhisattvas being much higher than all beings, Amitabha still needs to take care of them as long as they have not become Buddhas. In other words, Amitabha's Forty Eight Great Vows can help not only all beings but also bodhisattvas. Even the Virtually Enlightened Bodhisattvas obtain Amitabha's blessing as well.

## Why Bodhisattvas Need Buddha's Blessing

Bodhisattvas have brought forth bodhicitta and The Four Universal Vows, they are neither mortals nor the people of Hinayana. Not only do they aspire to liberate themselves but also think of helping others wholeheartedly. Nevertheless, at the time of helping all beings, bodhisattvas will encounter tests. They will regress or even deprave in case they do not pass the tests due to their wisdom being not yet consummate. Particularly in our evil world of five turbidity, it is really not easy at all.

When Shakyamuni Buddha, for the sake of all beings, manifested to attain Buddhahood in our evil world of five turbidity (*\*Skt. pañcasu kaṣāyeṣu vartamāneṣu*) and to speak the Pure Land Method that is extremely difficult to be believed, all Buddhas in ten directions praised His courage and fearlessness due to it being an extremely difficult task.

Before Shakyamuni Buddha attained Buddhahood, Māra, the king of demons, came to test Him and tried to prevent Him from becoming a Buddha, even from attaining samadhi. In the beginning, a flood and vicious beasts were sent, then the million-mara-army was dispatched. They tried to scare Shakyamuni Buddha, using swords to chop Him and shooting arrows at Him. But Shakyamuni Buddha dwelled in the great samadhi at all times, **unmoved as thusness**.

Those fire arrows, when being shot towards Him, seemed to be blocked by an invisible aura. Before reaching Him, the arrows all fell to the ground and became lotus flowers. Mara saw

this, feeling **helpless**. At last, he came up with the most powerful strategy, sending out three beauties—his three daughters.

The Mara Pāpīyān is the dominator of Paranirmita-Aśavartin Heaven where one can partake in the pleasures created by other celestial beings. The beauty of its **goddesses** is incredible. We often describe a very beautiful girl as pretty as a fairy. These three **goddesses** are actual **celestial fairies**, can you imagine their beauty? When these three **goddesses** tried to seduce Shakyamuni Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha used His samadhi power to let them see the filthiness of their own bodies. Instantly, they were all frightened and ran away. Finally, Shakyamuni Buddha attained Buddhahood.

To attain Buddhahood, one needs to **subjugate** deva-mara in His samadhi. When we are about to attain Buddhahood, the deva-māra will definitely appear. When we haven't reached that level, he won't be bothered because he thinks that you are still not qualified to let him deal, just sending some small demons will be fine. What does deva-māra refer to? It refers to the external temptations. Can you resist external temptation? Temptations like wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep, as well as interference from your karmic creditors... When you can withstand them, your realm will be greatly improved.

In a couplet Shifu states, "**In prosperity and good conditions, if you do not give rise to greed and ignorance, your wisdom will be revealed in an instant. In adversity and evil conditions, if you do not give rise to resentment, your karma will all be eliminated.**" Your skill will be greatly improved when you can do so. What if you fail the tests? You will regress. Once you regress, you may hit rock bottom. So, it is really not easy for bodhisattvas to liberate all beings in the world. They must obtain Buddha's blessing when facing tests from demons!

## **How Do Bodhisattvas of Other Worlds Attain Amitabha's Blessing?**

The text states that all bodhisattvas "upon hearing my name..." Look! Even bodhisattvas rely on the merit of "hearing the name" again. Specifically speaking, it is to listen to the sutra and Dharma teachings. All bodhisattvas love to learn, their learning of Dharma has never been discontinued. If there is a Dharma-teacher preaching, and a bodhisattva does not go, it is a violation of the bodhisattva-precepts. So, bodhisattvas will definitely listen to sutra and Dharma teachings.

What merit does listening to sutra and Dharma teachings have? It states here, "All will obtain the Samadhi of Purity, Emancipation, and Universal Equality. They will uphold all profound Dharanis, dwell in samadhi, until they attain Buddhahood." Of course this Dharma specifically refers to the Pure Land Method. This "upon hearing my name" is "hearing Amitabha's name." We have repeatedly emphasized that "upon hearing the name" is not only hearing through your ears; that is only **listening without comprehending**. The real "upon hearing

the name” for bodhisattvas is that they have explicitly understood and comprehended it. They are able to enter the realm!

As for the standard of mortals, what is “understood”? You can believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity. You genuinely believe in it, truly aspire to seek Sukhāvatī rebirth, and renounce all worldly matters. This is “believing and rejoicing with utmost sincerity”! This is the standard of mortals’ understanding. The standard for bodhisattvas mentioned above is higher. Upon hearing Amitabha’s name, “All will instantly attain the Samadhi of Purity, Emancipation, and Universal Equality.” In other words, they have obtained a pure mind.

### **The Samadhi of Purity, Emancipation, and Universal Equality**

What is the Samadhi of Purity? Samadhi is the **true dhyana**. Their heart is unmoved, fixing in the state of purity. What is purity? No doubt, no defilement, no contamination. This is purity. If bodhisattvas do not obtain it, they have not yet “heard the name.” When they truly attain the Samadhi of Purity, as stated in the sutra, they will be able to bring forth a pure mind and a pure faith. Pure mind and pure faith are the Samadhi of Purity.

If we still have doubt after listening to the sutra and think, “Is Shakyamuni Buddha’s speech an expedient talk?” With this doubt, your mind is not pure, you will not attain the Samadhi of Purity. Only when you do not have even the slightest doubt, can it be the Samadhi of Purity. It is a state of uninterrupted pure mind with no contamination mixed in.

Next is the Samadhi of Emancipation. Bodhisattvas are in a state of mind with great ease and freedom, they are free from all bondage. If bodhisattvas feel pressure or seemingly being bound, they are restrained with no freedom; that is a mental bondage in their hearts. How can they get liberated? Untie the bondage in their hearts, they will then be liberated.

So, we must liberate ourselves from bondage. Who can we rely on to help us liberate ourselves? We must rely on virtuous mentors. Because it is very difficult to cultivate and get enlightened by ourselves, we must rely on the revelation and guidance of virtuous mentors. What do virtuous mentors do? They help others liberate themselves from attachment and bondage. Wherever one’s attachment is, they can help him liberate it. Wherever your bondage is tied, they help you untie it. So, when we have confusion, once consulting with a virtuous mentor, **our dullness of perception will be suddenly removed**. This is liberation.

Now we “hear Amitabha’s name” by listening to the sutra and Dharma teachings, we can liberate ourselves from confusion and doubt. And we can further have resolute faith for our Sukhāvatī rebirth. When we bring forth **an unwavering aspiration**, we will never regress; this is obtaining the Samadhi of Emancipation.

The third is the Samadhi of Universal Equality. This realm is very lofty—universally equal. What is the meaning of universal equality? It means to enter the dharma-gate of non-duality. This is the realm of all Buddhas. All beings are equal, and are non-dual. With duality there is no equality. In other words, good and evil are non-dual. Beauty-ugliness, right-wrong are also non-dual. Even Buddhas and demons are non-dual! This is the dharma method of non-duality.

When we have the notion of duality, we have not yet had universal equality. How lofty this realm is! All Buddhas are like this. A Buddha regards all beings as buddhas; this is non-duality. If we see that there are Buddha and beings, this is dualistic. Duality is not Buddha-Dharma. Buddha-Dharma is the teaching of non-dualism. Where can we start to learn? We can practice in our daily life, letting go of our discrimination and attachments. When we see good and evil, beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, even Buddha and demon, we do not **let them stay in our mind**, just continuing to recite Amitabha.

Thanks everyone for learning with us. Namó Amitabha!