

**THE SUTRA ON AMITĀYUS BUDDHA
DELIVERED BY ŚĀKYAMUNI BUDDHA**

Translated into Chinese during the Yao-Qin Dynasty
by Tripiṭaka Master Kumārajīva of Kucha

1 Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the Jeta Grove monastery of Anāthapiṇḍada’s Garden at Śrāvastī, together with a large assembly of twelve hundred and fifty monks who were all great arhats well known to the people. Among them were great disciples such as the elders Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Mahākātyāyana, Mahākauṣṭhila, Revata, Śuddhipanthaka, Nanda, Ānanda, Rāhula, Gavāmpati, Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja, Kālodayin, Mahākapphiṇa, Vakkula, and Aniruddha. He was also accompanied by many bodhisattva *mahāsattvas*, such as Dharma Prince Mañjuśrī, Ajita Bodhisattva, Sweet-smelling Elephant Bodhisattva, and Constant Endeavor Bodhisattva, and by innumerable *devas*, including Śakra, lord of the gods, and many others. 346c

2 The Buddha then said to Elder Śāriputra: “If you travel westward from here, passing a hundred thousand *koṭis* of buddha lands, you will come to the land called Utmost Bliss, where there is a buddha named Amitāyus.³⁸ He is living there now, teaching the Dharma.

3 “Śāriputra, why is that land called Utmost Bliss? The beings in that land suffer no pain but only enjoy pleasures of various kinds. For this reason, that land is called Utmost Bliss. Again, Śāriputra, in the Land of Utmost Bliss there are seven rows of balustrades, seven rows of decorative nets, and seven rows of trees. They are all made of four kinds of jewels and extend over the whole land, encompassing everything. For this reason, that land is called Utmost Bliss. Again, Śāriputra, in the Land of Utmost Bliss there are seven-jeweled ponds filled with water possessing the eight excellent qualities. The beds of the ponds are covered solely with gold sand, and from the four sides of each bed rise stairs of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal. Above these stand pavilions adorned with gold, silver, beryl, crystal, sapphire, rosy pearls, and cornelian. In the ponds are lotuses as large as chariot wheels—the blue ones radiating a blue light, the yellow a yellow light, the red a red light, and the white a white light. They are marvelous and beautiful, fragrant and pure. Śāriputra, the Land of Utmost Bliss is filled with such splendid adornments. 347a

“Again, Śāriputra, in that buddha land heavenly music is played continually. The ground is made of gold. Six times during the day and night *māndārava* flowers rain down from the sky. Every day, in the serenity of

early morning, the people of that land fill the hems of their robes with exquisite flowers and go to make offerings to a hundred thousand *koṭis* of buddhas dwelling in the worlds of all the other directions. Then they return to the Pure Land for their morning meal. After the meal they enjoy a stroll. Śāriputra, the Land of Utmost Bliss is filled with such splendid adornments.

“Again, Śāriputra, in that land there are always many kinds of rare and beautiful birds of various colors, such as white geese, peacocks, parrots, *śāris*, *kalaviṅkas*, and *jīvaṃjīvakas*. Six times during the day and night birds sing with melodious and delicate sounds, which proclaim such teachings as the five roots of good, the five powers, the seven practices leading to enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path. On hearing them, all the people of that land become mindful of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. But, Śāriputra, you should not assume that these birds are born as retribution for evil karma. The reason is that none of the three evil realms exists in that buddha land. Śāriputra, even the names of the three evil realms do not exist there; how much less the realms themselves! These birds are manifested by Amitāyus so that their singing can proclaim and spread the Dharma.

“In that buddha land, Śāriputra, when soft breezes waft through the rows of jeweled trees and jeweled nets they produce subtle, wonderful sounds. It is as if a hundred thousand musical instruments were playing together. Everyone who hears the sounds spontaneously becomes mindful of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Śāriputra, that buddha land is filled with such splendid adornments.

4 “For what reason, Śāriputra, do you think that buddha is called Amitābha? Śāriputra, the Buddha’s light shines boundlessly and without hindrance over all the worlds of the ten directions. It is for this reason that he is called Amitābha. Again, Śāriputra, the lives of the Buddha and the people of his land last for innumerable, unlimited, and incalculable *kalpas*. It is for this reason that the buddha is called Amitāyus. Śāriputra, ten *kalpas* have passed since Amitāyus attained enlightenment. Moreover, Śāriputra, he has an immeasurable and unlimited number of *śrāvaka* disciples, all of them arhats, whose number cannot be reckoned by any means. His assembly of bodhisattvas is similarly vast. Śāriputra, that buddha land is filled with such splendid adornments.

347b

5 “Again, Śāriputra, all sentient beings born in the Land of Utmost Bliss dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. Many of them are in the stage of becoming a buddha after one more life. Their number is so great that it is beyond reckoning; it can only be described as innumerable, unlimited, and incalculable.

“Śāriputra, those sentient beings who hear of that land should aspire to be born there. Why? Because they will be able to meet such sages of supreme virtue. Śāriputra, one cannot attain birth in that land with few roots of good or a small store of merit. Śāriputra, if a good man or woman who hears of Amitāyus holds fast to his Name even for one day, two days, three, four, five, six, or seven days with a concentrated and undistracted mind, then, at the hour of death, Amitāyus will appear with a host of holy ones. Consequently, when their life comes to an end, the aspirants’ minds will not fall into confusion and so they will be born immediately in the Land of Utmost Bliss of Amitāyus. Śāriputra, perceiving these benefits, I say: All sentient beings who hear this teaching should aspire to birth in that land.

6 “Śāriputra, just as I praise the inconceivable virtue of Amitāyus, so do the buddhas in the eastern direction as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, such as Akṣobhya Buddha,³⁹ Merudhvaja Buddha, Mahāmeru Buddha, Meruprabhāsa Buddha, and Mañjusvara Buddha. While dwelling in their own lands, they extend their long, broad tongues and, encompassing with them the universe of a thousand million worlds, pronounce these words of truth: Sentient beings should accept this sutra entitled ‘Praise of the Inconceivable Virtue and Protection by All Buddhas.’

7 “Śāriputra, there are in the southern direction buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, such as Candrasūryapradīpa Buddha, Yaśasprabha Buddha, Mahārciskandha Buddha, Merupradīpa Buddha, and Anantavīrya Buddha. While dwelling in their own lands, they extend their long, broad tongues and, encompassing with them the universe of a thousand million worlds, pronounce these words of truth: Sentient beings should accept this sutra entitled ‘Praise of the Inconceivable Virtue and Protection by All Buddhas.’

8 “Śāriputra, there are in the western direction buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, such as Amitāyus Buddha, Amitaketu Buddha,

Amitadhvaja Buddha, Mahāprabha Buddha, Mahāprabhāsa Buddha, Ratnaketu Buddha, and Śuddharaśmiprabha Buddha. While dwelling in their own lands, they extend their long, broad tongues and, encompassing with them the universe of a thousand million worlds, pronounce these words of truth: Sentient beings should accept this sutra entitled ‘Praise of the Inconceivable Virtue and Protection by All Buddhas.’

9 “Śāriputra, there are in the northern direction buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, such as Arciskandha Buddha, Vaiśvānaraniṛghoṣa Buddha, Duṣpradharṣa Buddha, Ādityasaṃbhava Buddha, and Jālinīprabha Buddha. While dwelling in their own lands, they extend their long, broad tongues and, encompassing with them the universe of a thousand million worlds, pronounce these words of truth: Sentient beings should accept this sutra entitled ‘Praise of the Inconceivable Virtue and Protection by All Buddhas.’

10 “Śāriputra, there are in the nadir buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, such as Siṃha Buddha, Yaśas Buddha, Yaśasprabhāsa Buddha, Dharma Buddha, Dharmadhvaja Buddha, and Dharmadhara Buddha. While dwelling in their own lands, they extend their long, broad tongues and, encompassing with them the universe of a thousand million worlds, pronounce these words of truth: Sentient beings should accept this sutra entitled ‘Praise of the Inconceivable Virtue and Protection by All Buddhas.’

348a 11 “Śāriputra, there are in the zenith buddhas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, such as Brahmaghoṣa Buddha, Nakṣatrarāja Buddha, Gandhottama Buddha, Gandhaprabhāsa Buddha, Mahārciskandha Buddha, Ratnakusumasamṣpuspitagātra Buddha, Śāleṇdrarāja Buddha, Ratnotpalaśrī Buddha, Sarvārthadarśa Buddha, and Sumerukaḷpa Buddha. While dwelling in their own lands they extend their long, broad tongues and, encompassing with them the universe of a thousand million worlds, pronounce these words of truth: Sentient beings should accept this sutra entitled ‘Praise of the Inconceivable Virtue and Protection by All Buddhas.’

12 “Śāriputra, why do you think this teaching is called the ‘Sutra of Protection by All Buddhas’? Śāriputra, all good men and women who hear this sutra and hold fast to it, and also those who hear the names of those buddhas,⁴⁰ are protected by all the buddhas and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression

for realizing highest, perfect enlightenment. This is why, Śāriputra, you should accept my words in faith and the teachings of all the buddhas.

“Śāriputra, those who have already aspired, now aspire, or in the future will aspire to be born in the land of Amitāyus Buddha all dwell in the stage of non-retrogression for realizing highest, perfect enlightenment. They have already been born, are now being born, or will be born in that land. Hence, Śāriputra, good men and women of faith should aspire to birth there.

13 “Śāriputra, just as I now praise the inconceivable virtue of other buddhas, they also praise my inconceivable virtue, saying, ‘Śākyamuni Buddha, you have accomplished an extremely difficult and unprecedented task. In this Sahā world, during the evil period of the five defilements—those of time, views, passions, sentient beings, and lifespan—you have attained highest, perfect enlightenment and, for the sake of sentient beings, have delivered this teaching which is the most difficult in the world to accept in faith.’

“Śāriputra, you must realize that I have accomplished this difficult task during the period of the five defilements. That is to say, having attained highest, perfect enlightenment, I have for the sake of the world delivered this teaching, which is so hard for [people] to accept in faith. This is indeed an extremely difficult task.”

14 When the Buddha had delivered this sutra, Śāriputra and all the monks, together with beings of the whole world, including *devas*, humans, and *asuras*, rejoiced at what they had heard and reverently accepted it. Having worshiped him, they departed.

End of *The Sutra on Amitāyus Buddha*
Delivered by Śākyamuni Buddha