

无量寿经优波提舍愿生偈

**Upadeśa on the Sūtra of Amitāyus Buddha  
The Stanzas of Vowing for Rebirth  
Composed by the Indian Master Vasubandhu**

Translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the Northern Wei Dynasty by  
the Tripiṭaka Master Bodhiruci from India

World-Honored One,  
I single-mindedly take refuge in  
The Tathāgata [Amitāyus], whose hindrance-free light shines in the ten  
directions,  
Vowing to be reborn in His Land of Peace and Bliss.  
I rely on the sūtras,  
The phenomena of true merit,  
I speak these all-encompassing stanzas of vowing,  
In accordance with the teachings of the Buddha [Śākyamuni].

I observe the appearance of that land,  
Surpassing the paths of the Triple Realms.  
It is ultimate, like the empty space,  
Vast and boundless.  
It is born from the great compassion on the right path  
and supra-worldly good roots,  
Complete with bright pure radiance,  
Like a mirror, the wheel of the sun and the moon.

It is filled with all kinds of treasures  
Abound with wonderful adornments.  
The immaculate light glows,  
Shining and purifying all lands.  
The grasses of merit, made of treasures, are soft,  
Twirling left and right.  
They bring superb joy to those who touch them,  
More than the kācalindi birds.  
Tens of millions of various jeweled flowers  
Cover the ponds and streams.  
As breezes stir the flower petals,  
Interweaving beams of light freely whirl.  
Palaces and pavilions,  
Can view [the worlds] in ten directions without obstacles.  
Diverse trees emit colorful beams of light,  
surrounded by jeweled railings.  
Nets of innumerable interlaced jewels  
hover all over the empty space.  
All kinds of bells  
Chime wondrous Dharma sounds.  
As adornments, flowers and garments fall like rain;  
Innumerable fragrances waft everywhere.  
Buddha's wisdom is bright and pure like the sun,

And it dispels the darkness of the ignorance of the world.  
Brahma sounds reach far and wide, can make beings become enlightened,  
Subtle and wonderful, being heard by all in the ten directions.  
The Truly Awakened Amitāyus,  
The Dharma King who is skilful at presiding.  
The pure multitudes who accompany that Tathāgata are  
Miraculously reborn there from flowers of true enlightenment.  
They delight in the flavors of the Buddha Dharma,  
Taking dhyāna and samādhi as food.  
Having forever left the afflictions of body and mind,  
They experience uninterrupted bliss.

The roots of goodness in the Mahāyāna domain  
Are equal, with no scornful names,  
No one is reborn there in female form or with incomplete faculties,  
Or as the type of the Two Vehicles.  
All wishes and happiness of the sentient beings there are fulfilled.  
Therefore, I wish to be reborn  
In the land of Amitāyus Buddha.  
Innumerable superb treasures  
Adorn the wonderful, pure flower-platform.  
The radiance of His excellent appearance reaches one yojana.  
His form surpasses those of all sentient beings.  
The Tathāgata's wondrous sounds are like Brahma sounds,  
Heard by all in the ten directions.  
Like earth, water, fire, wind, and space, there are no separation.

Heavenly beings and those who cannot be diverted [from the right path]  
Are reborn from the ocean of pure wisdom.  
Like Sumeru, king of mountains,  
Their magnificence is unsurpassed.  
Multitudes of heavenly beings and great beings,  
Reverently surround Him and revere Him.  
If one observes the Buddha's fundamental vows,  
One's encounter with Him will never be fruitless.  
One will be able to complete  
The great treasure ocean of merit.

The Land of Peace and Bliss is pure,  
Where the spotless Dharma wheel always turns.  
Manifesting Buddhas and Bodhisattvas  
Abide there like the sun, firm as Mount Sumeru.

Their immaculate majestic radiance,  
In one thought and one instant,  
Universally illuminates all assemblies of Buddhas  
And benefits all sentient beings.

Rains of celestial music, flowers, garments and wonderful incense are as

offerings,  
Praising all Buddhas' merit without  
the mind of separation.  
In any land without  
The Buddha Dharma, the jewel of merit,  
I vow to be reborn,  
To show the Buddha Dharma like the Buddhas.

I compose this treatise with stanzas,  
Vowing to see Amitāyus Buddha and  
To be reborn in the Land of Peace and Bliss with all sentient beings universally.  
Thus, I have summarized in stanzas the words in the Sūtra of Amitāyus Buddha.

The Treatise says:

What is the meaning of these stanzas of vowing? It indicates how to observe the Land of Peace and Bliss, to see Tathagata Amitayus, and vow to be reborn in that land.

How to praise? Use the mouth karma to praise. To recite the name of that Tathagata, the meaning of his name is like the appearance of that Tathagata's bright wisdom. If one wants to cultivate in accordance with the true reality, one should cultivate as such.

How to make a vow? One's heart should constantly vow. By reciting single-heartedly, one can definitely attain rebirth to the Land of Peace and Bliss. If one wants to cultivate śamatha in accordance with the true reality, one should cultivate as such.

How to observe? Observe with wisdom. Use right mindfulness to observe, if one wants to cultivate vipaśyanā in accordance with true reality. That observation has three kinds. What are the three? First is to observe the solemn merits and virtues of that Buddha Land. Second is to observe the solemn merits and virtues of Amitabha Buddha. Third is to observe the solemn merits and virtues of those Bodhisattvas.

How to transfer? To not give up on afflicted sentient beings, as the foremost priority, one's heart always makes a vow to transfer - then one can achieve a great compassionate heart.

### **Seventeen adorned meritorious achievements**

How to observe the merits and virtues of that Buddha Land and its adornments? The beings who adorn that Buddha Land with merits and virtues have achieved inconceivable power. Like the nature of the cintāmaṇi jewel (wish-fulfilling jewel), it is similar but also different.

One should observe the achievements of merits and virtues of that Buddha Land and its adornments. One should know that there are seventeen kinds. What are the seventeen?

First is the achievement of adornment of pure merits and virtues; second is the achievement of adorned quantitative merits and virtues; the third is the achievement of adorned nature of merits and virtues; the fourth is the achievement of adorned appearance merits and virtues; the fifth is the achievement of adornment of all the things merits and virtues; the sixth is the achievement of adorned wonderful merits and virtues; the seventh is the achievement of adorned touch merits and virtues; the eighth is the achievement of adornment of three kinds of merits and virtues; the ninth is the achievement of adorned rain merits and virtues; and the tenth is the achievement of adorned bright light merits and virtues; the eleventh is the achievement of adorned wonderful sound merits and virtues; the twelfth is the achievement of adorned lord merits and virtues; the thirteenth is the achievement of the adorned dependents merits and virtues; Fourteenth is the achievement of adorned enjoyment of merits and virtues; the fifteenth is the achievement of adornment of no suffering merits and virtues; the sixteenth is the achievement of adorned door of great meaning merits and virtues; and the seventeenth is the achievement of adorned fulfilment of all their requirements merits and virtues.

1. The achievement of adornment of pure merits and virtues is described by this stanza: "I observe the appearance of that land, surpassing the paths of the Triple Realms."
2. The achievement of adorned quantitative merits and virtues is described by the stanza: "It is ultimate, like the empty space, vast and boundless."
3. The achievement of adorned nature of merits and virtues is described by the stanza: "It is born from the great compassion on the right path and supra-worldly good roots"
4. The achievement of adorned appearance merits and virtues is described by this stanza: "Complete with bright pure radiance, like a mirror, the wheel of the sun and the moon."
5. The achievement of adornment of all the things merits and virtues is described by this stanza: "It is filled with all kinds of treasures, abound with wonderful adornments."
6. The achievement of adorned wonderful merits and virtues is described by this stanza: "The immaculate light glows brightly, shining and purifying all lands."
7. The achievement of adorned touch merits and virtues is described by this stanza: "The grasses of merit, made of treasures, are soft, twirling left and right. They bring superb joy to those who touch them, more than the kācalindi birds."
8. The achievement of adornment of three kinds of merits and virtues. One should know there are three things, what are the three? First is the water, second is the earth, third is the empty space. The achievement of adorned water merits and virtues is described by the stanza: "Tens of millions of various jeweled flowers cover the ponds and streams. As a breeze stirs the flower petals, interlaced beams of light freely whirl."The achievement of

adorned earth merits and virtues is described by the stanza: “Palaces and pavilions, can view [the worlds] in ten directions without obstacles. Diverse trees emit colorful beams of light, surrounded by jeweled railings.” The achievement of adorned empty space merits and virtues is described by the stanza: “Nets of innumerable interlaced jewels hover all over the empty space. All kinds of bells chime wondrous Dharma sounds.”

9. The achievement of adorned rain merits and virtues is described by the stanza: “As adornments, flowers and garments fall like rain; Innumerable fragrances waft everywhere.”
10. The achievement of adorned bright light merits and virtues is described by the stanza: “Buddha’s wisdom is bright and pure like the sun and it dispels the darkness of ignorance in the world.”
11. The achievement of adorned wonderful sound merits and virtues is described by this stanza: “Brahma sounds reach far and wide, can make beings become enlightened, subtle and wonderful, being heard by all in the ten directions.”
12. The achievement of adorned lord merits and virtues is described by this stanza: “The Truly Awakened Amitāyus, the Dharma King who is skillful at presiding.”
13. The achievement of the adorned dependents merits and virtues is described by this stanza: “The multitude of pure people who accompany that Tathāgata are miraculously reborn there from flowers of true enlightenment.”
14. The achievement of adorned enjoyment of merits and virtues is described by this stanza: “They delight in the flavors of the Buddha Dharma, taking dhyāna and samādhi as food.”
15. The achievement of adornment of no suffering merits and virtues is described by the stanza: “Having forever left the afflictions of body and mind, they experience uninterrupted bliss.”
16. The achievement of adorned door of great meaning merits and virtues is described by this stanza: “The roots of goodness in the Mahāyāna domain are equal, with no scornful names. No one is reborn there in female form nor with incomplete faculties, or as the type of the Two Vehicles.”

One should know that the fruit of the Pure Land is away from two kinds of ridicule. First is appearance, second is name. Appearance has three kinds: first is the person of Two Vehicles, second is women, third are people with incomplete faculties. Being free from these three faults is called being free from scornful appearances. Not only there are no three appearances, but one also cannot even hear the names of the Two Vehicle, women, incomplete faculties. This is called being free from scornful names. “Equal” means all phenomena are equal.

17. The achievement of adorned fulfillment of all their requirements merits and virtues is described by the stanza: “All wishes and happiness of the sentient beings there are fulfilled.”

These are the brief explanations of the adorned merits and virtues of the seventeen achievements adorning Amitāyus Buddha’s Land. These merits and virtues indicate the Tathāgata’s achievements of self-benefit of great merits and virtues, and also the achievement of merits and virtues in benefiting others.

The adornments of Amitayus Buddha's land are the appearances of the wondrous state of the highest truth. One should know that the sixteenth sentences [of particulars] and the last sentence [of conclusion] have been spoken of in order.

### **Visualizing the Virtues of That Buddha**

How does one visualize the virtues of that Buddha's achievements as His adornments? That Buddha has eight kinds of adornments. What are these eight? First, the adornments of His seat; second, the adornments of His body; third, the adornments of His voice; fourth, the adornments of His mind; fifth, the adornments of His people; sixth, the adornments of the leaders of His retinue; seventh, the adornments of His status as the master; eighth, the adornments of His authority as the presiding teacher.

1. What are the adornments of His seat? This stanza explains, "Innumerable superb treasures / Adorn [His seat] the wonderful, pure flower- platform."

2. What are the adornments of His body? This stanza explains, "The radiance of His excellent appearance reaches a distance of one yojana. / His form surpasses those of all sentient beings."

3. What are the adornments of His voice? This stanza explains, "That Tathāgata's wondrous sounds are Brahma tones, / Heard by all [in worlds] in the ten directions."

4. What are the adornments of His mind? This stanza explains, "As earth, water, fire, wind, and space make no differentiations, / So does He not make them." Making no differentiation means that He does not have the discriminatory mind.

5. What are the adornments of His people? This stanza explains, "There, gods and those who cannot be diverted [from the right path] / Are reborn from the ocean of pure wisdom."

6. What are the adornments of the leaders of His retinue? This stanza explains, "Like Sumeru, king of mountains, / Their magnificence is unsurpassed."

7. What are the adornments of His status as the master? This stanza explains, "Multitudes in male form, including gods, / Reverently surround Him and gaze at Him."

8. What are the adornments of His authority as the presiding teacher? This stanza explains, "By virtue of the power of that Buddha's original vows, / One's encounter with Him will never be fruitless. / One will be enabled to encompass / The great treasure ocean of virtues." Bodhisattvas who have not realized the pure mind, but have seen that Buddha, will eventually realize the dharma body,

which is equal in all, just as Bodhisattvas with the pure mind[2] and Bodhisattvas on higher Grounds will eventually attain nirvāṇa and realize that it is equal in all.

This is a brief explanation of the eight phrases which successively indicate how that Tathāgata is adorned by the virtues of His achievements in benefiting Himself and others.

### **Visualizing the Virtues of the Bodhisattvas There**

How does one visualize, as their adornments, the virtues of the Bodhisattvas' achievements? Bodhisattvas there have the virtues of four achievements in their right training. What are these four?

1. With their bodies staying put in one Buddha Land, they responsively manifest their bodies everywhere [in worlds] in the ten directions. Training themselves in accord with true reality, they always do Buddha work. They open sentient beings' minds like flowers rising above mud, as described by this stanza: "The Land of Peace and Bliss is pure, / Where the stainless Dharma wheel always turns. / Firm as Mount Sumeru, magically manifested Buddhas and Bodhisattvas / Abide there like the sun."

2. Their manifested response bodies, with one mind and one thought, emit great radiance, simultaneously reaching everywhere in worlds in the ten directions, teaching and transforming sentient beings. By various skillful means, they train through their work to end the suffering of all sentient beings, as described by this stanza: "Their immaculate majestic radiance, / With one thought, / Simultaneously illuminates all Buddha assemblies and / Benefits all sentient beings."

3. They illuminate the multitudes in Buddha assemblies in all lands without exception, make innumerable expansive offerings, and revere and praise Buddha-Tathāgatas, as described by this stanza: "As an offering, they rain down / Celestial music, flowers, garments, and wonderful incense. / Without the discriminatory mind, / They praise Buddhas' virtues."

4. In all worlds in the ten directions, where the Three Jewels are unavailable, they preside over the great ocean of virtues of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha, enabling all to understand [the Buddha Dharma] and to train in accord with true reality, as described by this stanza: "In any land without / The Buddha Dharma, the jewel of virtues, / They wish to be reborn, / To impart the Buddha Dharma as do Buddhas."

### **Integrating All Virtues into One Word**

As stated above, one should visualize, as adornments, the virtues of that Buddha Land's achievements, the virtues of Amitāyus Buddha's achievements, and the virtues of His Bodhisattvas' achievements.

Visualization of these three groups of virtues adorns one's mind that wishes for rebirth [in that land]. Now I integrate all virtues into one Dharma word. This one Dharma word is purity. The word purity pertains to true wisdom, the dharma body, which is asaṃskṛta. This purity has two meanings. What are these two? One is the purity of the vessel world; the other is the purity of the sentient beings' world. The virtues of the seventeen achievements of that Buddha Land, as its adornments, are called the purity of the vessel world. The virtues of the eight achievements of that Buddha, as His adornments, and the virtues of the four achievements of Bodhisattvas, as their adornments, are called the purity of the sentient beings' world. Thus, the Dharma word purity encompasses these two meanings.

### **The Fifth Training Door**

Bodhisattvas who broadly or simply train in śamatha and vipaśyanā [through the third and fourth doors] will achieve the gentle mind and will truly know dharmas in their broad or simple aspects. Thus, they will achieve skillful transference of their merits.

How does a Bodhisattva skillfully transfer his merits? He transfers all roots of virtue gathered from the five trainings[3] [mentioned above], including making obeisance. Not seeking his own lasting happiness, but for the sake of uprooting the suffering of all sentient beings, he makes a wish to draw in all sentient beings for them to be reborn in that Buddha Land of Peace and Bliss. This is called a Bodhisattva's achievement of skillful transference of his merits.

Bodhisattvas who excel in such skillful transference of their merits will stay far away from dharmas that go against three bodhi doors. What are these three? First, relying on the door of wisdom, one does not seek one's own happiness because one stays far away from the mind captivated by one's own body. Second, relying on the door of lovingkindness and compassion, one uproots the suffering of all sentient beings because one stays far away from the mind indifferent to helping sentient beings. Third, relying on the door of skillful means, one pities all sentient beings because one stays far away from the mind that pampers and worships one's own body. This is called staying far away from dharmas that go against three bodhi doors.

Bodhisattvas who stay far away from dharmas that go against these three bodhi doors will acquire three fulfillments that accord with the Dharma of

these doors. What are these three fulfillments? First, the untainted pure mind, because one does not seek one's own happiness. Second, the peaceful pure mind, because one uproots the suffering of all sentient beings. Third, the joyful pure mind, because one draws in all sentient beings for them to be reborn in that Buddha Land, enabling them to attain the great bodhi. These are the three fulfillments that accord with the Dharma of these three bodhi doors.



## **Achieving Rebirth through the Five Training Doors**

The three bodhi doors mentioned above—wisdom, lovingkindness and compassion, and skillful means—lead to prajñā, and prajñā reveals skillful means. The three dharmas mentioned above—staying far away from the mind captivated by one's own body, staying far away from the mind indifferent to helping sentient beings, and staying far away from the mind that pampers and worships one's own body—enable one to stay far way from hindrances to realizing the bodhi mind. The three minds mentioned above—the untainted pure mind, the peaceful pure mind, and the joyful pure mind—merge into one, the wondrous, joyful, superb true mind.

Thus, with the wisdom mind, the skillful-means mind, the hindrance-free mind, and the superb true

mind, Bodhisattvas can be reborn in a pure Buddha Land. This is the achievement of Bodhisattvas who go through the five Dharma Doors [making obeisance, praising, wishing, visualizing, and transferring merit] mentioned above. By training through these Dharma Doors, a Bodhisattva's body karmas, voice karmas, mind karmas, visualization- with-wisdom karmas, and skillful merit- transference-with-wisdom karmas are easily accomplished.

## **The Five Achievement Doors**

There are another five doors, though which one can successively achieve five virtues. What are these five [achievement] doors? First, the near door; second, the door to the great assembly; third, the door to the residence; fourth, the door to the house; and fifth, the door to the playground in the garden. Through the first four of these five doors, one achieves the virtue of entrance; through the fifth door, one achieves the virtue of exit.

One enters the first door by making obeisance to Amitayus Buddha in order to be reborn in His land. One's rebirth in the Land of Peace of Bliss is called entering the near door. One enters the second door by praising Amitāyus Buddha, saying that Tathāgata's name in accordance with the meaning of His name. Through training in thinking of that Tathāgata's radiance, one can join the multitudes in the great assembly. This is called entering the door

to the great assembly. One enters the third door by single-mindedly wishing to be reborn there. Through training in samatha and silent samadhi, one can enter the World of the Lotus Flower Store. This is called entering the door to the residence. One enters the fourth door by intently visualizing the wonderful adornments [of that land, that Buddha, and the Bodhisattvas there]. Through training in vipaśyanā, one arrives there and enjoys the bliss of various Dharma flavors. This is called entering the door to the house.

One exits the fifth door with great lovingkindness and compassion by visualizing all suffering sentient beings, by responsively manifesting one's

bodies, by returning to the forest of afflictions in the garden of saṃsāra, and by playfully demonstrating transcendental powers. One's arrival on the teaching ground, because one has transferred one's merits with the power of one's original vows, is called exiting the door to the playground in the garden.

A Bodhisattva's entrance through the first four doors is an achievement for self-benefit. A Bodhisattva's exit through the fifth door to benefit others is an achievement of transferring his merits. Bodhisattvas who train through these five [achievement] doors to benefit themselves and others will quickly attain anuttara-samyak- sambodhi.

Thus ends, in this Upadeśa on the Sutra of Amitayus Buddha, the explanation of the stanzas of wishing for rebirth.