



The Nine Grades of Rebirth Amita Samādhi Dhāraṇī Sūtra

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Chinese translation note: Imperially Commissioned Translation Presented by the Trepitaka Śramaṇa Amoghavajra the Greatly Wise, the Specially Appointed Minister of Loud Announcements of Daikōzenji.

At the time Vairocana Tathāgata was in the great abode of the of the gate of great samādhi, together with a great saṅgha of eighty-nine thousand bhikṣus, all great arhats, fully accomplished in wisdom, having done what had to be done. Their names were: Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva with the supernormal power of wise discernment, Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva, Īśvararāja Bodhisattva with supernormal powers, Vimaladhāraṇī Bodhisattva with stainless light, Niścara Bodhisattva with great power, Mahāvīyūhabala Bodhisattva, Amitaprabha Bodhisattva, and the wise Sumatisamantaprabharāja Bodhisattva. Such great bodhisattvas and a great assembly of śrāvakas approached the Buddha. The Bhagavān addressed them, saying:

In the land of Amitāyus, there are samādhis of the pure consciousnesses of the nine grades; they are the abode of the tathāgatas in all buddha-lands, and depending on them, buddhas of the three times reached awakening and became fully endowed with the three knowledges and enlarged their merit and wisdom.

These are the nine grades in that land: (1) The highest level of the highest grade is the stage of true form; (2) the middle level of the highest grade is the stage of non-defilement; (3) the lowest level of the highest grade is the stage of separation from defilement; (4) the highest level of the middle grade is the stage of good awakening; (5) the middle level of the middle grade is the stage of the power of illumination; (6) the lowest level of the middle grade is the stage of no taints; (7) the highest level of the lowest grade is the stage of knowledge of



TWELVE GRADES OF THE REALM OF SUCHNESS.

Therein, the jewelled image of great mirror-like cognition abides in twelve great maṇḍalas, his names are: (1) Amitābha Buddha, and he has attained all three penetrations; (2) Aparimitābha Buddha, and he has the omniscience of the three illuminations; (3) Apratihātābha Buddha, and he has the knowledge of the path of the three illuminations; (4) Apratisamābha Buddha, and he has the six true knowledges of the three illuminations; (5) Marīcīrājābha Buddha, and he has the true form of the three illuminations; (6) Parīśuddhābha Buddha, and he has singular awakening of the three illuminations; (7) Pramuditābha Buddha, and he has the universal gate of the three illuminations; (8) Jñānaprabhāsa Buddha, and he is awakened to the three illuminations; (9) Nityasṛṣṭaprabha Buddha, who has the splendour of the three illuminations; (10) Acintyaprabha Buddha, who has penetrating illumination into the three illuminations; (11) Atulyaprabha Buddha, who has the five merits of the three illuminations; and (12) Candrasūryaprabhātikrānta Buddha, who has the power of knowledge of the three illuminations. All buddha tathāgatas are truly endowed with this form, which is the foundation of the compassionate marks of all Tathāgatas in the three times.

If there are sentient beings who wish for rebirth in the nine grades of the pure land, they should reverently examine these twelve perfect marvels, and day and night, three times a day, they should praise these names of the twelve grades of the pure land and extol the epithets of the Buddha of twelve lights. Then, they will eternally depart from the burning house of the three realms and will decidedly arise in true suchness, freed from the taints, they will eternally enter the taintless state. If a person wishes to enter this realm of samādhi, being endowed with the Buddha's wisdom, pure mind, and clean body, they should recollect the great mantra of the samaya of reality. The dhāraṇī is:

OM̐ AMṚTA TEJHARA HŪM̐

O sons of good family! This mantra is the sacred dhāraṇī, in which abides the ultimate principle of the wisdom of all buddha tathāgatas in all ten directions and three times, and it is the foundation of contemplation of the twelve kinds of emptiness. If my disciples wish to benefit and gladden the three realms, and confer benefit on humans and devas, they will copy this sūtra, uphold, bear, read, and recite it. That will increase their merit and happiness, grow their wisdom and discernment, prolong their lifespan, improve their appearance and strength, eradicate karmic obstructions, extinguish ten thousand illnesses, and increase their compassion and love. They will not be without good of such a form, how much more so those who single-mindedly copy, read, and recite it? Transcending beyond the three times and not being born again in the burning house of the three realms, having recited it, they will be born in the Land of Bliss among the nine grades of the pure land.

Thereupon, the great assembly heard what the Buddha had said, and all greatly rejoiced, faithfully upheld, and practiced it.

The Nine Grades of Rebirth Amita Sūtra

On the eighth day of the fourth month of the fourth year of the Kenkyū Era (1194), on Mt. Tōgao, at the acarya's quarters of Jison-in at Kanshūji, the root text was copied and edited by Kanchō no Ben. In autumn, in the eighth month of the first year of the Kyōwa Era (1801), at the request of the rector Jijun of Chisan, the root text was copied and compared with the printing plate. Master Yu writes in the *Great Heart Extract of Amida*, “This great mind dhāraṇī is derived from the *Vidhi on Immeasurable Life* and the *Nine Grades of Rebirth Sūtra*.” It also says, “The *Vidhi* explains that this great mind dhāraṇī is superior and effective and expresses the same thing as the *Nine Grades of Rebirth Sūtra*.” The *Treatise on the Abiding Mind* by Gusō says, “The *Nine Grades of Rebirth Amida Sūtra* expresses this fundamental great dhāraṇī mantra of Amita Tathāgata; one who recites it just once will completely and utterly eliminate and extinguish all karmic obstructions from the ten kinds of bodily evil and the five heinous crimes.” While this text only contains this short dhāraṇī, and does not teach a large dhāraṇī, it should be decidedly known that it is the pith of a great dhāraṇī text. There is nothing that is hidden from this text; the reader should know that this is the entire text.

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