

## *Prayer for Birth in Sukhavati, Realm of Bliss*

With deeds exalted, you grant splendor unending;  
once remembered, you hurl far all fear of the lord of death;  
with constant love, you look on others as sons and daughters.  
Amitayus, teacher of gods and men, I bow before you.

I will write, swayed by compassion, as best I can  
a prayer for birth in Sukhavati, land of bliss,  
praised again and again by the mighty Buddha  
as the highest of realms.

All knowledge of right and wrong covered by layers of ignorance,  
all future life in higher realms murdered by the weapons of anger,  
lying trussed by the ropes of desire in the prison of samsara,  
I am carried helplessly to the oceans of existence by rivers of karma,  
tossed by endless waves of aging, sickness, and other suffering,  
thrown to the jaws of that savage monster the lord of death,  
to languish under the weight of unwanted suffering.

Without protector and with anguished cries I ask with devotion,  
as witnesses to the yearnings of my mind,  
Amitabha, guide and sole friend to the deprived,  
powerful Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, Vajrapani and entourage,  
to not forget the vows of the supreme bodhi mind  
made over countless eons for our sakes  
and like the mighty garuda hawk swooping through the skies,  
to come, with the power of miracles, in great compassion before me.

By the power of the immense twin accumulation of spiritual merit stored by others and myself in past, present, and future, I pray that when death draws near I see before me my guide Amitabha, his two main disciples, his entourage, and others. At that time may I have strong faith in this great conqueror and his entourage and be free from the pains of dying.

By recalling and holding in my mind objects of faith, I pray that as soon as my consciousness has left this body, the eight bodhisattvas arrive by miraculous power to show the way to Sukhavati, there to be born within a jeweled lotus, of intelligent mind and of Mahayana family.

Once born in Sukhavati may I gain immediately the powerful dharani memory, meditative concentration, the objectless bodhi mind, inexhaustible confidence, and countless other qualities. By pleasing the highest of teachers, Amitabha and all buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, may I take with propriety the Mahayana teachings.

When I have absorbed and understood the true meanings of these teachings, may I be able to travel in an instant and without hindrance to limitless Buddha realms by miraculous power, there to perfect every powerful practice of the bodhisattva.

Though born in pure Sukhavati, I pray that I be able to journey, with unhindering miraculous power motivated by fierce compassion, to impure realms, there to teach every living being the Dharma according to disposition and so bring them to that immaculate path hailed by the Buddha.

By quickly perfecting these exalted practices may I, for the benefit of countless living beings, easily attain the enlightened state of a buddha.

When the amalgamations of this life are spent,  
may I plainly behold in my path of vision  
Amitabha encircled by vast entourage,  
and may my mind be filled with faith and compassion.  
Once the bardo visions have appeared,  
may I be shown the path by the eight bodhisattvas  
and, born in Sukhavati, may I by manifestation  
become a spiritual guide for impure realms.

Should I not attain such exalted states, may I in every life incarnate solely in a form capable of engaging in authentic study, contemplation, and meditation upon scripture and practice of the Buddhadharma.

May that form be endowed always with the seven desirable features of higher realms.  
In every such existence may I gain the memory that recalls perfectly all my past lives.  
In every life may I see all existence as being without essence, be driven by a mind captivated by the virtues of nirvana, and be ordained into the monastic discipline so excellently taught by the Buddha.

Once ordained may I live as the monk Akshobhya who, unsullied by the slightest fault, perfected morality and gained great enlightenment.

Furthermore, in every life having fully comprehended the ways of deluded states of mind and the paths of purification and freedom, may I develop the powerful and accomplished dharani memory to maintain total recall over every word and meaning of every branch and division of the teachings. And in the same way that I retain these dharmas, may I gain a pure and unhindered confidence to teach them likewise to others.

Furthermore, in every life may I master and never be apart from the ways of meditative concentrations such as the warrior-like *shurangama samadhi*. May I acquire supernatural sight such as that unhindered by matter, as well as clairvoyance such as that which knows the ways of miraculous powers.

Furthermore, in every life may I develop that great wisdom that, self-reliantly and unaided, is able to separate right from wrong.

May I develop the clear wisdom that unerringly separates to the subtlest degree deluded states of mind from paths of purification and freedom.

May I develop the swift wisdom that holds the power to counter, as soon as they appear, all doubts, fallacious views, and incomprehension.

May I develop the deep wisdom that penetrates unopposed the meanings of scripture unfathomable to others.

In short, with wisdom stripped of all deluded insight may I rise to the wisdom skillful in unlocking the meanings of scripture in order to travel, as the noble Manjushri has done, to the perfection of every bodhisattva practice.

Having gained without difficulty great, clear, swift, and deep wisdom may I, in order to gather the fortunate, crush false orators, and to please the wise, perfect the arts of teaching, debating, and composition that focus upon the entire teachings of the Buddha.

Furthermore, in every life, having put an end to a way of thinking primarily concerned with self, to all laziness and weakness regarding the powerful practices of the bodhisattva, may I possess a bodhi mind wise in the accomplishment of supreme courage and the willingness to dedicate myself to others, and may I travel, as the noble Avalokiteshvara has done, to the consummation of every bodhisattva practice.

Furthermore, in every life, whenever I apply myself to the welfare of self and others, may I possess a skillful ability to demolish the hordes of Mara, defeat those of extreme views, thwart all enemies, and may I travel, as the noble Vajrapani has done, to the consummation of every bodhisattva practice.

To perfect the bodhisattva practice that dispels all laziness, may I in every life first create the bodhi mind, and by powerful endeavor undistracted for even an instant, may I reach great enlightenment as the unparalleled Shakyamuni has done.

To eradicate obstacles to practices of enlightenment such as illness to body or mind, may I in every life pacify, as the King of Physicians, the Medicine Buddha, has done, all pain of body, speech, and mind, merely by mentioning his name.

Furthermore, in every life may I have the power to live out my span of life as I would wish and, merely by mentioning his name, may I destroy all untimely death as the conqueror Amitayus has done.

Whenever life-threatening obstacles approach, may I behold in all clarity Amitayus in appropriate manifestation, who curbs the threat by way of the four kinds of Buddha activity, and with such a vision, may every hindrance to life be at once removed. Recognizing such an appropriate manifestation to be none other than Amitayus, may I develop firm, uncontrived faith by whose power I will forever be in the presence of Amitayus as my spiritual teacher.

Furthermore, in life after life may I, pleasing him in return, be forever fostered by an accomplished Mahayana spiritual master, the source of every virtue of this world and beyond.

In his care, may I acquire in him a firm unshakable faith, pleasing him by every means possible, doing nothing, even for an instant, to disappoint him.

May my spiritual master impart to me every instruction and every teaching in its entirety.

Having understood them faultlessly, may I practice them and be able to bring them to perfection.

May I never, even for a moment, fall under the sway of malevolent teachers and misleading friends.

Having developed, in every life, belief in cause and effect, renunciation, the bodhi mind, and the pure view, may I embark upon them continually with effortless experience.

In every life may every virtuous act gathered by way of body, speech, and mind be causes solely for the welfare of others and for the purest and highest enlightenment.

*Colophon:*

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