

# Amitayurdhyana Sutra: The Buddha-Mindfulness Sutra of Amitayus, With Complementary Sutra of Transcendental Wisdom

Amitayus Buddha

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The Amitayurdhyana Sutra, is one of the three major sutras found within Pure Land Buddhism, a branch of Mahayana Buddhism. The text begins with a story where a prince named Ajatasatru was enticed by the villain Devadatta to murder his father, King Bimbisara, in order to ascend the throne. Ajatasatru kills his father, and nearly kills his mother, Queen Vaidehi, but after advice from his other ministers, he relented and threw his mother in prison. Lamenting her fate, Queen Vaidehi prays to the Gautama Buddha for help, and he is able to visit her. Vaidehi expresses her wish to be born in Amitabha's pure land. Shakyamuni smiles, emitting light from his mouth, and goes on to tell Vaidehi how to be reborn in the Pure Land. The Buddha tells her that although she is in prison, she could still obtain liberation through the practices of Amitabha. The Buddha goes on to describe Amitabha and how one could obtain rebirth in his land of Sukhavati. Shakyamuni explains the importance of performing certain meritorious acts in order to be reborn in the Pure Land. He then goes on to teach Vaidehi how to visualize the Pure Land, to further her efforts in attaining rebirth there. Shakyamuni describes thirteen "contemplations," or mental visualization exercises, that are to be followed in order. By deeply contemplating various aspects of the Pure Land and attempting to visualize them in detail, the aspirant draws closer to the Pure Land.



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