

Postgraduate/Distance Learning

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The Interpretation on the Chapter of *Definite Attainment of Utmost Buddhahood*

The 22nd chapter in *The Infinite Life Sutra* describes the adornment and purity of the Western Pure Land of Ultimate of Bliss, as well as all sentient beings without discriminations and attachments in the Western Pure Land. They will eventually attain Buddhahood. As the sentient beings all have pure and impartial minds, their living environment is accordingly pure and equal. Those splendour and meritorious virtues in Western Pure Land comes from Amitabha's Forty-Eight Great Vows, especially the two vows: All beings in the Western Pure Land will achieve Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment(定成正覺願), and they abide in the absolute determination to achieve Buddhahood(住正定聚願).

In this presentation, I will combine the two vows of Amitabha with the chapter of Definite Attainment of Utmost Buddhahood to further my understanding on the causes and effects of establishing the Western Pure Land and Amitabha's sincere aim of helping all beings become Buddhas quickly.

I .The explaining on 'All beings in the Western Pure Land will achieve Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment'.

When I become a Buddha, all those who are born in the Western Pure Land will have a pure and awakened mind without discrimination or inequality. The senses of their roots (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) are totally peaceful, serene and tranquil. If those who are born in the Pure Land cannot attain the Unsurpassed Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment (無上正等正覺) and eventually reach the Nirvana(大涅槃), I will not become a Buddha.

我作佛時，所有眾生，生我國者，遠離分別，諸根寂靜。若不決定成等正

覺，證大涅槃者，不取正覺。

The vow is very important which shows the deepest intents of Amitabha. Although all beings have innate Buddha-nature, it is covered by their wandering thoughts, discriminations and attachments. Amitabha vows to let all beings who are born in his pure land will leave far away from discrimination and have all senses in equanimity. It is very kind of Amitabha to make this vow to help all become Buddhas quickly in one life.

II . The explanation on ‘All beings in the Western Pure Land will abide in the absolute determination to achieve Buddhahood’.

All sentient beings born in my Land will eventually attain Buddhahood, as everyone will practise unanimously towards the same goal of “Unsurpassed Supreme Perfect Enlightenment”.

所有眾生，生我國者，皆同一心，住於定聚。

All beings in the world can be divided into three types, according to their practising methods. There are ‘Zheng Ding Ju’, ‘Xie Ding Ju’ and ‘Bu Ding Ju’.

- 1) “Zheng Ding Ju”(正定聚) means practising according to the proper teachings; methods and theory coincide with each other, therefore will attain Buddhahood in the end.

正定聚——修學如理如法，方法與理論相應，必定證果。

- 2) “Xie Ding Ju”(邪定聚) means meditation is obtainable, but there are still wandering thoughts and attachments, therefore practising will definitely become the failure.

邪定聚——修行雖有定，但還有妄想、執著，決定不能成就。

- 3) “Bu Ding Ju”(不定聚) means uncertainty; it all depends on the person’s luck. If

he happens to meet the proper teachings, then he will follow the right path. But if he meets with the heresies, he will tread on the wrong path.

不定聚——就是不定，要看他遇緣，要是遇到正定的緣，他就學正定；遇到邪定的緣，就學邪定。

According to *the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, the ordinary people who have not achieve the first ten levels of Bodhisattva practices abide in Xie Ding Ju. It means that they will not achieve enlightenment in one life and they will be born as cyclic existence.

However, Amitabha eagers to help all beings to become Buddhas in one life, so he vows to establish the Western Pure Land and aid all beings born in his land to abide in the absolute determination to achieve Buddhahood. It is worthy to notice that this vow benefits not only the beings who are born in the Western Pure Land but also the practitioners who will be born in there. The sincere practitioners who would like to be born in Amitabha's land and continuedly chant Amitabha's name are abiding in the absolute determination to achieve Buddhahood. That is means, those practitioners who will be born in Western Pure Land are non-retreat 'flesh-body' Bodhisattvas.

III . The interpretation on chapter 22: Definite attainment of utmost Buddhahood.

Ananda, moreover, in that Buddha-land, there exist no phenomena of blinding darkness, firelight, sun and moon, the luminosity of stars or of the cycle of day and night, nor does it exist the names of time, such as year and kalpa. There's no perception of predial property belonging to oneself. Everywhere is free of address signs and names, as well as discrimination and the state of grasping or letting go, but only the utmost bliss is enjoyed.

復次阿難：彼佛國土，無有昏暗火光，日月星曜，晝夜之象，亦無歲月劫

數之名，復無住著家室，於一切處，既無標式名號。亦無取舍分別。惟受清淨最上快樂。

This paragraph indicates the three sorts of equality in the Western Pure Land: equal environment, equal and pure mind, and equal enjoyment of utmost bliss.

The good men and good women who have been born or are being born in the Western Pure Land, all shall dwell in the absolute determination to achieve Buddhahood, and undoubtedly they will attain the Annutara-samyak-sambodhi.

若有善男子，善女人，若已生，若當生，皆悉住於正定之聚，決定證於阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。

Annutara-samyak-sambodhi is the Unsurpassed Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment. Good men or good women are those who cultivate The Three Conditions(淨業三福). First, be filial and respectful to our parents; be respectful to our teachers and elders; be compassionate and do not kill any sentient being and abide by The Wholesome Ways. Secondly, take the Three Refuges, abide by laws and precepts, and conduct oneself in a proper and dignified manner. Thirdly, generate the Bodhi Mind, deeply believe in the Law of Cause and Effect, recite and uphold Mahayana Sutras and teachings, and encourage others to advance on the path to Enlightenment. If they cultivate the three conditions, make a vow to be born in the Western Pure Land, and continuedly chant Amitabha's name. They will be born in the land and now abide in the absolute determination to achieve Buddhahood in one life. They will never retreat their vows. These benefits come from Amitabha Buddha's assistance.

Why is that so? Those who are decided for heresy or evil and those undecided cannot comprehend the cause and effect of the establishment of that land.

何以故，若邪定聚，及不定聚，不能了知建立彼因故。

Those sentient beings who abide in the wrong insights, theory and methods of practice or who are not decided to practice the right path of practice will not succeed in attaining enlightenment in one life. Because they do not understand the real causes and effects of establishing the Western Pure Land. The causes are one can attain rebirth in the Western Pure Land while bringing along one's residual karma; if one chant Buddha's name, then one's mind becomes Buddha.

The Infinite Life Sutra represents the Buddha's highest wisdom and compassionate. From the two vows of Buddha Amitabha and the causes and effects of his Buddha-land, we understand Amitabha's aspiration of helping all beings become Buddha in one life. It also helps us improve confidence and willingness in practising the Pure Land School and abide in the determination of achieving the Unsurpassed Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment.