

# To Enlightenment-12

## Amitabha's 48 Great Vows

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#### How Shakyamuni Buddha Became a Buddha

When reciting Amitabha, we are not aware of such a great merit, yet have already coincided unknowingly with the exquisite Dao. This method is too phenomenal, too wondrous. We do not need to comprehend the meaning within; all we need to do is to recite conscientiously, we would then have obtained the merit of all Buddhas. This is the so-called

*Unknowingly coincides with the exquisite Dao  
and tactfully enters the realm of non-arising.*

Unknowingly indicates that you are not even aware of it, you just recite meticulously all the way, "Amitabha, Amitabha..." you have become a Buddha! You are still not aware when you become a Buddha by reciting!

What is the reason? Your heart is no longer moved and your mind no longer gives rise to thoughts. You unknowingly merge with all Buddhas in ten directions as one unity and tacitly enter the realm of non-arising.

This method is too wondrous, it does not require you to eradicate your defilements or to eliminate your karma. You don't need to take care of anything, by just reciting meticulously all the way, you will then enter anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti. Anutpattika-dharma-kṣānti is the acceptance that all phenomena are illusory and nonexistent. It is realized by the bodhisattvas in the seventh bhumi.

So, the merit of reciting Amitabha is unable to be explained utterly even by all Buddhas in ten directions. It is too wondrous! Shakyamuni became a Buddha, what did He rely on? How did He attain Buddhahood? Do you know?

He became a Buddha by reciting Buddha's name,  
He was in remembrance of Buddha.

How do we know that Shakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha by reciting Buddha's name? *The Amitabha Sutra* said it to us very clearly. Master Ou Yi, the Ninth Patriarch of Pure Land School, also revealed it to us in *The Essential Annotations of Amitabha Sutra*. Therefore, Master Yin Guang praised *The Essential Annotations of Amitabha Sutra* as the most wonderful, most phenomenal annotation ever.

He said, "Even if an ancient Buddha comes back to write another annotation for *The Amitabha Sutra*, it will not surpass Master Ou Yi's *Essential Annotations*." Why did he say so? Because it indeed thoroughly asserts Buddhas' innermost essence.

The implication of this "Infinite Life" is very profound and vast. Shakyamuni Buddha told us explicitly how He became a Buddha in *The Amitabha Sutra*,

*I, in the evil world of the five turbidity,  
practiced this difficult deed and attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi.  
And then I speak this Dharma that is extremely difficult to believe  
for all beings in all worlds.*

We all read this scripture a lot. Right?

Yet, not many people thoroughly comprehend its implication, we all blurt it out with a bewildered attitude. If you really understand its meaning, you will know that all Buddhas became a Buddha by reciting Amitabha. Take a look at what Shakyamuni Buddha said, "I practiced this difficult deed in this evil world of the five turbidity." This difficult deed mentioned in *The Amitabha Sutra* is the deed of "telling us to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth by reciting Amitabha."

Why did Shakyamuni Buddha come to this evil world of five turbidity? He came to demonstrate to us first: I recited Amitabha to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth, practiced this difficult deed, and attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi.

Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi means the Supremely Perfect Enlightenment, referring to "attaining Buddhahood." He recited Amitabha to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth and became a Buddha. And then? "I speak to all beings this Dharma that is difficult to be believed by all beings in all worlds." This means that He relied on this method to attain Buddhahood, and now He came back to this world to speak this method to all beings of this evil world of five turbidity.

This method is reciting Amitabha to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth. It is the Dharma that is difficult to believe. Why is it difficult? Because it is extremely difficult for us to

embrace. Why? Because it is impossible to be comprehended by mortals. “By simply reciting Amitabha, I would become a Buddha?”

Yes, it is 100% true; by just reciting Amitabha, one can become a Buddha! And it is not only becoming a Buddha in the fastest way but becoming a most perfect Buddha! Shakyamuni Buddha achieved Buddhahood in this way, He now teaches us to do the same to achieve Buddhahood. We thus affirm that Shakyamuni Buddha relied on this method to attain Buddhahood.

Master Shan Dao said it well, "The reason that a Tathagata comes to a world is exclusively to speak the Sea of Amitabha's Fundamental Vows." Tathagata refers to Buddha. Why did Shakyamuni Buddha come to our world to manifest attaining Buddhahood? *The Lotus Sutra* (\*Skt. Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka-Sūtra) states,

"For the cause and condition of a mighty event."

It is to tell us to attain Buddhahood. But how?

Even *The Lotus Sutra* does not express it clearly. It is in fact telling us to recite Amitabha and attain Sukhāvati rebirth to become a Buddha. This is the cause and condition of this mighty event that the Buddha came to our world. It is to “exclusively speak of the Sea of Great Fundamental Vows of Amitabha.” In other words, it is to convince us to seek Sukhāvati rebirth.

Thanks for watching, see you later!