

Exercised by Yuen Yin on 09/12/2025
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About The Conceit of Inferiority(Ūnamāna)

The seven types of conceit or arrogance (māna) are a detailed classification of the various ways the fundamental affliction of pride manifests in the mind. They are systematically explained in Bodhisattva Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa (Treasury of Abhidharma).

In fact, I am not familiar with Abhidharmakośa, but my interest is in Amitabha's Pure Land and about its practice. Travelling along to the Western Pure Land, I must try to reduce these seven conceits (sapta mānāḥ), although it is not strongly emphasized in the Pure Land School.

According to Bodhisattva Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa, here are the seven conceits:

1. Conceit (māna),
2. Excessive Conceit (Atimāna),
3. Conceit beyond Conceit (Mānātimāna),
4. Ego-conceit (Asmimāna),
5. Conceit of Superiority (Abhimāna),
6. Conceit of Inferiority (Ūnamāna), and
7. Wrong Conceit (Mithyāmāna).

For the Ego-Conceit (Asmimāna), its definition is: The fundamental underlying sense of "I am". This is the most basic and foundational pride that arises from clinging to the five Aggregates, namely, Form (Rūpa), Feeling/Sensation (Vedanā), Perception/Cognition (Saṃjñā), Mental Formations/Volitional Formations (Saṃskāra), and Consciousness (Vijñāna) as a self. It is the root of the other six.

And especially the Conceit of Inferiority (Ūnamāna) arises very easily during my practice. Its definition is: The arrogance embedded within a feeling of inferiority. It is the pride of still making a comparison when one acknowledges another's superiority but thinks, "I am only slightly inferior".

Repeating "Namo Amitābha", if I think I am okay, it's not because of thinking in that way, that I can reach the Pure Land, or if I think I am inferior, it's not because of thinking in that way I cannot reach the Pure Land. By the goodwill of Amitābha, using modern words, Amitābha says, "My child, come, just as you are". For the arising of the faith in the power of Amitābha's name, we only can completely dependent on Amitābha's vows without a bit of self-attachment. Except "Namo Amitābha", let everything else go. There are no any conceits or inferiority when one makes a vow to go to the Pure Land. Be, just as you are.

We are lucky to touch the dharma of Amitābha. We should believe that if without

Amitābha, we cannot jump out from the rebirth ocean within this life but that we must wait until after the three great asamkhyeya kalpas have passed. It all depends on the name-power of Amitābha.

Your faith arising in Amitābha's 48 vows and since that he thus acquired his name-power after practicing incalculably long eons and accomplished this ten kalpas in the past. Additionally, one must be willing to go to his Western Pure Land, and practice repeating the name of Amitābha. Based on these three conditions, you can be freed from saṃsāra, really liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Become familiar with sufferings, furthermore, find out how to be free from sufferings and share it with sentient beings, it's what Bodhicitta is. Then chant "Namo Amitābha" and be ready to go to the Pure Land anytime as all conditioned phenomena are impermanence (Anitya), others just let it go with the flow. Let nature take its course and take things as they come.

Finally, let's dedicate merits:

May all beings share merits of Amitābha's name equally,
Which Amitābha has thus accomplished.
May Bodhicitta arise in all beings as well as us,
May sufferings cease and happiness be attained;
May beings share this merit of Amitābha,
Travelling along to his Pure Land all together,
To achieve Buddhahood within this life.

Namo Amitābha!

Namo Amitābha!

Namo Amitābha!