

Who Cannot Be Saved by Amitabha?

The text of this 18th Vow tells us that the exceptions are those who have created five heinous sins, ten evil deeds, and slandered the true Dharma, they will absolutely fall into Avīci Hell in the future. This kind of person cannot be saved. Amitabha would not be able to escort them. Why? Because this kind of person would not be able to “believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity.” They would also not bring forth aspiration to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth due to very heavy karma impeding them to bring forth faith and aspiration. For this reason, the Buddha urges us to eradicate evilness and practice goodness, it is to help us minimize the hindrance from our karma as much as possible.

If our karma is very heavy and our faith and aspiration are really impeded, what can we do? That is troublesome! Even Buddhas cannot help us, because a Buddha’s heart is unmoved and He does not give rise to thoughts. Amitabha’s Fundamental Vows equally bless all beings, whoever believes and rejoices with utmost sincerity, He will come to escort them. But if you do not believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity, He will wait. Whenever you are ready, He will then come to escort you. Thus, we should expel those sins and karmas that impede our faith and aspiration. We must “eradicate all evilness and practice all goodness.” We must absolutely not commit the five heinous sins and ten evil deeds.

Ten evil deeds include the karmas made by body (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct), the karmas made by mouth (lying, double-tongue, evil language, fawning words), and the karmas made by mind (greed, resentment, ignorance). These are called the ten evil deeds. They are the hindrances to our bodhi practice. The five heinous sins ([Skt. pañcānantarya](#)) are much more serious. According to the sutras, it includes killing one’s father, harming one’s mother, killing an arhat, making a Buddha bleed, and destroying a harmonious Sangha.

Arhats are saints. The karma is very heavy if you kill one. Why? Because it results in all beings in one area not being able to obtain sage teachings. The sin that you have created offends all beings. You impede and interrupt the dharmakaya and wisdom-life of all beings. This karma is extremely heavy.

A Drill Offered by the Buddha

Now we cannot find arhats, but there is an equivalent

THE HOUSE IS SHAKING, EARTHQUAKE. . . .

Amitabha..... Don't panic, everyone.

Let's practice “believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity,” let's recite Amitabha.... Amitabha, Amitabha, Amitabha.....

Good, thank you! Appreciation to everyone! You were all very calm, it is all conforming to Dharma and very rare to come by! When we encounter catastrophes, just act like this. This is a drill offered by Buddha. We were just talking about “believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity,” and you all have demonstrated the way of believing and rejoicing with utmost sincerity, and thus renouncing everything. Look, the earthquake stopped once we recited Amitabha. At the critical time, we recite Amitabha, Amitabha will definitely appear. Amitabha did not appear, it indicates that the earthquake has vanished. It is not the time for us to go yet. So, as what we just did, no matter how big a catastrophe we encounter, it won't go wrong if we use this kind of mentality.

Amitabha comes, you just go with Him. Nothing is more joyous than this. If Amitabha does not come, the earthquake will end should you keep reciting. Even if there is a really big catastrophe like the large earthquake 311, [which happened off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku in 2011—a magnitude 9 earthquake shook northeastern Japan, unleashing a savage tsunami](#). If you survive, it suggests that you must have an obligation, a mission to help suffering beings. Yet the Amitabha recitation in your heart is still uninterrupted.

The Equivalent Sin of Killing an Arhat and Making a Buddha Bleed

The paragraph mentions here, “believe and rejoice with utmost sincerity, even within ten recitations of my name, if they are not reborn into my land, I will not procure Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, except for those who have committed the five heinous sins and have slandered the true Dharma.”

Killing an arhat has an “equivalent sin,” which is killing a teacher, especially referring to killing a teacher who imparts sage teachings. Because this type of teacher edifies all beings in one area; he can help all beings in this area eradicate evilness, cultivate goodness, and thus bring harmony to society. If you kill him, it terminates the roots of sage teachings in this society. This karma is very heavy.

“Fourth, to make the body of a Buddha bleed.” When Shakyamuni Buddha was in our world, only Devadatta committed this sin. He made Buddha's body bleed and fell into hell. Now, we cannot find a Buddha, it seems that we have no opportunity to make the body of a Buddha bleed. But, there is an equivalent sin, using a wicked intention to destroy the image of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas as well as damage sutras; these all belong to the sin of “making Buddha's body bleed.” If you do not do it with wicked intention but unintentionally, it is okay; it is your carelessness. You have a fault, but it does not belong to the five heinous sins. However, if you destroy it with a wicked intention, that is “to make Buddha's body bleed.”

Last year, after being ordained, I went to Da Xiang Guo Temple in Henan to receive precepts. There is a description in the temple, stating that General Feng Yuxiang ([*1882-1948, a warlord and leader in The Republic of China](#)) whose military used force to occupy Da Xiang Guo Temple. Feng Yuxiang was a hero in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and

had his contribution and merits, but he did not believe in Buddhism, so he destroyed the monastery, broke Buddha statues, and expelled all monks. These sins are very heavy.

In consequence, how did he die? He was assassinated in Russia. How was he assassinated? He was burned to death in a boat. Look! This was the karmic retribution in the current lifetime. He was burned to death within that lifetime, he must have also been burned in his next life; that was the fire of hell. So, one must never create the five heinous sins.

The Sin of Destroying a Harmonious Sangha Is Huge

Fifth is “destroy a harmonious sangha.” A sangha is a group of four or more people who cultivate together to safeguard the true Dharma for benefiting all beings. If we disharmonize them deliberately, such as double-tongue: gossiping, provoking discord, or playing one against another in a group, causing both parties to lose the confidence in each other. These are the sins of destroying a harmonious sangha. It is the same as any of the five heinous sins, and it will lead you to Avīci Hell.

A harmonious sangha does not mean only monastic members. This sangha can refer to monastic monks, nuns, as well as laities of male or female. As long as a group of four or more people get together to cultivate with the same aspiration, they are called a “sangha.” If we harm or dismantle a sangha, its karma is one of the five heinous sins. So, we must never criticize or provoke discord within a sangha deliberately, for this karma is too huge. Not only does it have no benefit to you at all, but you will damage yourself tremendously. This is estimated to be the easiest sin to make; the first four of the five-heinous-sins are not so easy to commit, yet the sin of destroying a harmonious sangha is easier to make in comparison. We must be extremely careful to guard against it.

So, “except those who have committed the five heinous sins and slandered the true Dharma” refers to these two added together. Having created the five heinous sins, plus slandering the true Dharma, this kind of person would no doubt fall into Avīci Hell. They do not believe even if Amitabha came to tell him. It is hopeless!

If one commits these karmas of the five heinous sins and ten evil deeds, but he has not slandered the true Dharma; he still believes in Amitabha, believes in Skhāvātī rebirth, and wishes to go. If he can repent at the moment his death approaches, can he be reborn? Yes, he can. This is because Amitabha’s compassion reaches to the extreme. As long as there are still opportunities to rescue, Amitabha will never give up on us. We should not have any doubt. This is the Vow of “one will definitely be reborn within ten recitations.”

Thank you everyone for learning with us. Namo Amitabha!