

Perfectly Attained the Three Levels of Non-Retrogression

As stated in *The Chapter of Avalokiteśvara's Universal Dharma, The Lotus Sutra*, "Whatever form a sentient being needs for liberation, the bodhisattva can manifest that form to speak Dharma to him." Therefore, when a sentient being shall be liberated with a Buddha form, the bodhisattva can also manifest a Buddha form to speak Dharma to him.

To manifest as a Buddha, we do not need to wait until we reach the stage of Wondrous Enlightenment. In fact, the bodhisattvas of the first-abode of Perfect Teaching already have the ability to manifest as a Buddha. They can exhibit the "thirty two major features of a great personage" (Skt. [maha-purusa-laksanana](#)) and "eighty subsidiary traits" (*Skt. [aṣṭī-anuvyañjana](#)). When we become an avaivartika bodhisattva, we would perfectly attain the **Three Levels of Non-Retrogression**, which means that we also possess the ability to manifest as a Buddha in all worlds of ten directions to help all beings.

This statement affirms to us that the merit of avaivartika bodhisattva is truly inconceivable! There is no exception for all beings in ten directions. This "all beings" include sentient beings who have committed the five heinous sins* ([*killing father, harming mother, causing a Buddha to bleed, killing an arhat, and dismantling a harmonious Sangha](#)) and the ten evil deeds* ([*killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, ornate talk, ill-mannered talk, two-tongues, avarice, resentment, and ignorance](#)). However, if someone has committed the five heinous sins plus has slandered the true Dharma—both conditions are met—this person cannot be reborn. If he only committed the five heinous sins but did not slander the true-Dharma, at the end of his life, Amitabha will still come to escort him as long as he has genuine faith and an imperative aspiration to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth.

Saving One Who is Falling into Avici Hell with the Zenith of Heart-Nature

Some people may ask, "What if I committed the five heinous sins and also slandered the true Dharma? Can I still be reborn?" Can he be reborn? This method is really vast and phenomenal, it reveals Amitabha's infinite compassion. If you had committed the five heinous sins and ten evil deeds plus had slandered the true Dharma, but if you repent, turn back, and now seek rebirth with genuine faith and imperative aspiration, Amitabha will still escort you at the end of your life.

The five heinous sins and ten evil deeds mentioned in the 18th Vow implies that if you are still doing it, then nothing can be done. If you are no longer doing it, you can carry along the karma you created in the past to be reborn. This exhibits Amitabha's extreme compassion. Indeed, except for the Pure Land Method, there is no other method with this special amnesty. This is the reason why all Buddhas in ten directions praise this method and praise Amitabha.

According to *The Thrice Yearning Ceremony*, “Amitabha, with immeasurable compassion, bliss, and giving, is truly ‘the king of Great Vows.’” This is true, and it is not overstated at all. Master Ou Yi said in *The Essential Annotations of Amitabha Sutra*, “If this name of Amitabha is not the pinnacle of the heart-nature, how can **Amitabha recitation** and His Forty Eight Great Vows achieve this wondrous merit?”

More specifically put, if the name of Amitabha is not the perfection of the heart-nature, how can those, who are on the verge of hell due to having committed the five heinous sins and ten evil deeds, still be reborn into Sukhavati and become a Buddha as long as they turn back with even one thought of repentance and seeking Sukhāvātī rebirth? This attests that the merit of upholding Amitabha recitation is truly inconceivable **due to the fact that** Amitabha’s Forty Eight Vows are genuinely consummate and phenomenal. They are the zenith of the heart-nature!

Someone once asked, “Buddha’s supernal power is mighty; He is omniscient and omnipotent. Please allow me to ask, if a person is falling to Avici Hell, his sin is so heavy that he is falling to Avici Hell for immeasurable kalpas, can Buddha save him from falling to hell right away and help him to become a Buddha? Is there such a Dharma-method? If there is, He can then be called all-powerful.”

In the past, this question was not able to be answered. Now our Shifu has delved deeply into the Pure Land Method, he told us, “What can this person really rely on? He can rely on seeking rebirth by reciting Amitabha.”

Even if you are about to fall into hell at the end of life, **with one thought of rectifying**, you can still be saved if you are aware of your wrongdoings and repent. Amitabha can escort you to Sukhāvātī! This is due to Amitabha's infinite compassion, virtues, and capability. So, this method truly ascends to the peak of perfection, reaching the zenith of splendor. Thus, *The Amitabha Sutra* states, “All Buddhas in ten directions all praise this inconceivable sutra and method.” We must not have doubts.

This is the 20th Vow, “Amitabha will come to escort him at the end of his life.” We have finished our elaboration here. Thanks for learning with us. Namó Amitabha!