



## Reap the Fruit of Every Action Part 1 (分分已獲一)

We talk about the mind every day. Have you all taken good care of your minds? If we do not take care of them, our minds easily go astray, causing us to get caught in negativity. We may even end up with emotional problems.

As stated in the Sutras, the arising of every thought and emotion creates karma. Every word spoken and muscle moved also creates karma. We cannot assume others do not know. The truth about the mind always reveals itself, so we must always take good care of our minds.

**Every arising thought creates karma. Do not think no one knows your actions or speech. The truth of the mind is the unchanging truth.**

We must understand this clearly. So the repentance text states, **“At the time of judgment, all those with grievances will bear witness testifying how we have transgressed against others.”**

We have already mentioned that as we near the moment of our passing, ox-head prison guards are already waiting. The struggle as life ends is extremely miserable, as we are dragged off by the guards. Where will they drag us? To the Hall of King Yama. Once there, everything we did in our lifetime, what we did and what we said, will be reviewed in detail. Perhaps we said something mean to hurt others or create misunderstandings. Perhaps we did something negative. Everything has been recorded and placed on the desk of King Yama. Once there, those who held grudges against us will come to testify. This is “the time of judgment.” At that time and place, we defend ourselves. It is like the living world. When you commit a wrong, someone will sue you. At the courthouse, the witnesses will be called, and their stories checked against each other.



The human world and the netherworld are alike. So, when we get there, our foes will be present to testify against us. When the time arrives, whatever we have done, whether we did favors for others, or whether we harmed them, good and evil will all be revealed. When grudges and resentment surface, everyone “will bear witness.” It is not only those we have harmed; sometimes even third parties come to testify. “Yes! You told me to say that. You told me to do it.” Not only did those who gave the orders transgress, those who followed them also need to explain.

As we discussed previously, neither, the instigator nor the doer can hide from their responsibilities. They will be there to claim that “you were the one who harmed and cut me first. It was you who did me wrong first. You hurt me first, that’s why I hurt you back.” They mutually harmed or killed each other. In King Yama’s Hall, the effects are inescapable. No matter how we prepare to argue our case, right is right, wrong is wrong. When everyone who has a grievance comes forward, everyone involved is out for blood. What causes all this? “Spoken words” and “actions.”

Our Five Roots, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, as well as our Mind-root cause all of this. How many wrongs can we do with a mere few inches of the tongue? It is not that long; but we use it to berate others, and frequently distort the truth. With it, we create many transgressions. If we have negative intentions, then nothing coming out of our mouths is good. This is also the case with the other Roots.

For example, when one hears good words, one misinterprets them as bad. Some people teach us with kindness, but we think they are laughing at us for being dull. These misinterpretations affect our minds. That is misrepresenting what we hear.



Smell can affect our minds, too. We are attached to the smells from certain food. We eat all types of living beings because of a desire born of taste. When we crave meat, we slaughter animals. Our Six Roots are behind many crimes. Of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, the body's actions are especially obvious. Whatever the ears hear or the nose smells, it is the body which reacts. Everything is because of the body. So the body creates karma by killing.

Do we know how many have been killed? Maybe in our past life we were killed as a human or another type of being.

Why were we killed? "To be roasted, cooked, steamed, toasted, skinned." You know that people eat all kinds of things. I have seen crabs on a stick, with the legs still moving. The cook threw them live into boiling water. They turned from green to red. Think about it, all that pain and struggling, just because people want to eat them. People end other lives like this. There is nothing they will not do. This arises from the heart. Negative intentions are a disease. Sometime the retributions occur even in the same lifetime.

Before I was a nun, a friend's relative was a butcher by trade, one hired to kill living beings. When the butcher was dying, he was bedridden for months, just like in the Iron Bed Hell. He rolled around and fell from the bed. He sounded like a pig grunting or a cow mooing. For a few months, this reminded people of what the butcher had done before. People discerned the cycle of cause and effect. This is karmic retribution. Some get the retribution this life, some get it in the next, some get it a few lifetimes later. It depends on how much positive karma was created. Although one may transgress and create evil karma, one's good karma may still be very strong and abundant. In this life, one may do many evil things. People may say he is an evil person, and yet he still enjoys life. This is because his retribution is not yet ripe. In a past life, he did many good things and has not used up his



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good karma. It is like having money saved in the bank. One can withdraw the money at any time if one has not used up one's blessings. It is not because there is no karmic retribution.

Some people do good their whole life. But why is their life so difficult? Although they did good in the past, they have not yet received rewards because they had strong bad karma from the past, too. So when they were born into this world, they were paying for their bad karma from the past. They have to pay for it in this life. We have to believe that all good and evil is done in the human world. In Heaven, you use up all the blessings you create in the Human Realm. If you continue to create blessings, you will eventually go to Heaven again. If you used up our blessings in the human world and have not yet received retribution, you will have to go to Hell.

After receiving punishment in Hell, are we finished? Not yet. We still must receive punishment in the next life. Earth Treasury Bodhisattva teaches beings in Hell, "Your past life was such and such, that's the reason you're in Hell." "Remember, if you can return to the human world, you will have to change." This is what the Earth Treasury Bodhisattva wants to teach those in Hell. Although they receive punishment, he still teaches them. Those with high capacities can learn. Those suffering from residual negative karma may run into good people who can help and influence them positively. One may suffer tremendously, as in Hell. If one repents and is receptive to teachings, even if one has not run into good advisors, despite all the challenges in life, one can face retribution with acceptance. With a willingness to accept, consequently, the bad karmic retribution is exhausted and bad karma will naturally be eliminated.

Good karma is clearly different from bad karma. Have you heard about the mirror in Hell that clearly reflects the things we have done? This Mirror of Karma, no



matter how you try to defend yourself, will show everything that you have done. It is just seeing ourselves in a video. It has recorded clearly the places we have gone and the things that we have done. You will have to watch it yourself, on top of having someone else testify to it. We must not do any evil, for we will face all the retributions ourselves. When we do good, we talk of dedicating the merits. Actually, we are the ones who get the most benefit. So we need to be clear about good and evil.

We should know that our conscience is always there. We all may be equal to the Buddha, but we have made mistakes in past lives. When we return to this human world, our mind is filled with anxiety and fear. Many things we encounter are actually retributions from previous lives. So, some people not only kill for the sake of eating, they also “rob and steal.” This is very common; though some people do not kill, they try every way to steal from others. They may “break up families.” They steal others’ wives and assets, or cause them to be separated from their spouses and children. This happens all the time. So in this world there are all kinds of transgressions. These kinds of maliciousness are truly terrible.

The Repentance Text continues, **“Today I am here in front of you, with all the evidence present. You dare not deny it. You can only willingly accept the punishment.”**

Everyone, when we read this passage, we should understand. I could not do anything to you in the past, but now that we are in the Hall of king Yama, I demand justice for the wrongs you’re done. Bad retribution will follow you. In life, your good karma was long-lasting. I could not do anything to you before. In Hell, I can finally seek justice. The evidence is clear. You cannot lie anymore. You have no choice but to accept Yama’s judgment. You will have to accept it.”



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I have always said, instead of “Act happily, accept willingly,” strive to “Act willing, accept happily.” When I am willing to do it, I will do it no matter how hard it is. After doing good, we feel happy and free. If we say, “I like to do whatever makes me happy and I am willing to accept whatever later,” there is a big difference. When you are at the Hall of King Yama, “you can only willingly accept punishment according to the transgressions.” Facing retribution in Hell, some people will want to spread the blame. “You told me to do it, I didn’t want to do it.” Regardless of who asked whom, everyone was involved.

So do not think, “I am fine because he told me to do it.” You are still at fault. In conclusion, no matter what you do, you have to bear the consequences. You cannot hide at all. So, we all have to be mindful always.

If we have negative intentions, people despise us not only when we are alive; even when we go to the netherworld, we still cannot escape our karma. We should always keep our conscience clean and take care of our minds. In this way we will not do wrong. Please always be mindful.

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