



“Refrain from all evil; practice all that is good.” That is the teaching of all Buddhas. Have faith in the teachings and carry them out. Do not commit small evils thinking them trivial; do not avoid small good deeds thinking them slight.

The Dharma is as water. Every word is like a stream of spring water that washes away our mental defilements. Its cleansing action is universal and works for everyone. If your heart is open to the teachings, and you put them into practice, the pure spring that naturally exists in everyone will always flow.

So we must apply the teachings to our mind. In the repentance text, there is a verse, **“As stated in the Sutras, no one in Hell has been mistakenly judged. There are those who have committed wrongdoings, yet cannot remember what they have done.”**

Some people unknowingly commit bad deeds, or commit them and afterwards say, “I do not remember.” People do that all the time. Some people believe that we must fight for things in life; that this is a brutal world and that such behavior is acceptable. The same holds true in the



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business world, in which cutthroat competition is the norm. Here, everyone claims to have the best, while they bad-mouth the competition. Whatever it is that the other person is doing, they want to always be better. We go to extremes to keep up with the competition. If we are not as good, we may sabotage the competition in order to look better. We think this is all normal; we think this is the way to do business.

In the construction industry, someone may outbid everyone with a low figure, but once he gets the contract he cuts costs with inferior materials to boost his profit. In the world of business, these practices are commonplace. One may do things against his conscience, but may not think that it is really that bad. So he “does not remember doing any wrong.” Some may have committed many unwholesome deeds, but never realized they did anything wrong. Some may have been clearly aware wrongdoings, such as using tricks to attack the competition, but later they dismiss the whole thing and simply claim not to remember. One may slander others but after speaking will claim not to recall. There are many instances like these. When a person dies and enters the gate of Hell, where “no one has been mistakenly judged”, justice will be served. This is unlike the Human Realm where evildoers will not face retribution because they have connections and know the right people, or have the money to pay the bail. Those who can afford the bail get to stay out of jail and evade the law. They are quite free to do as they wish. We see many cases like that in our world. But it is different in Hell. “No one in Hell has been mistakenly judged. There are those who have done wrong yet do not remember committing the deeds.”

But, “The King of Hell knows everything and is never mistaken in his judgment.” He does not make mistakes in his judgment and does not wrongfully accuse anyone, because everything anyone has ever done is meticulously recorded. If someone were to deny any wrongdoing, the Mirror of Karma will reveal it, much like how we watch TV programs or video tapes. Everything will be revealed clearly.

In this way, the Hell Realm is actually more technologically advanced than the Human Real. We sometimes see. Taoist priests hold “release services” for people trapped in the 18 levels of Hell due to transgressions committed in the Human Realm. Their pain and suffering are excruciating. Yet some will still deny the evil they have done. They will not admit their guilt, saying “I don’t remember!” It does not matter, because they will be forced to watch everything that they have done. The King of Hell never wrongfully accuses anyone.



While we are still alive, “at the time of our death, all the evil deeds we committed will appear in front of us.” This passage once again reminds us that as we are dying, even before we are dead, all the evil deeds that we have committed will appear right in front our eyes. Even before our last breath, all of our past transgressions will manifest in the Hell of King Yama. Ox-head guards come and take the dying away. We really have to be careful. With all the evil deeds that we have committed, we will arrive there to face reckoning. Even a person we hurt only once will be there to seek justice. We will face accusations from all the people we have wronged, each saying, “In the past, you have done such transgressions.”

“You have done such things in the past, I was there to witness it. How can you deny it? No matter how you lie, you will not be absolved. Those who do wrong have no place to hide.” No matter where they run, from every direction there will be allegations against them, and enraged eyes staring at them. When we arrive in Hell, there is no place to hide. By that time, we should accept it willingly. Everything we do creates karma for ourselves. No one else can shoulder this for us. Even if it is only a slight transgression, we still have to face it ourselves.

So we often repeat this, “Refrain from all evil; practice all that is good.” Do not commit small evils thinking them trivial; do not avoid small good deeds thinking them slight. Actually, even small good deeds will accumulate great blessings. Small evils, similarly, will create much negative karma and we will receive retribution from them. This is clearly stated in the Earth Treasury Sutra. It is also analyzed in Emperor Liang’s Repentance and the Water Repentance. So we should always be alert.

On the day of our death, all the evil deeds we have committed will appear in front of us. The people we have harmed will say, “In the past, you have done such transgressions. How can you deny it?” Those who have committed wrongdoings cannot hide. So, “The King of Hell, Yama, will fiercely chastise the person and consign him to Hell for countless eons with no way out.”

We know that those who do evil are hated by others. We often see in the news or on TV that those who have done much evil, after being caught, are brought to the execution site. We see many people surround them, yelling for the person to be beaten. In this world, those who commit great evils are despised and detested by others. If one arrives in Hell, unwilling to admit



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his transgressions, King Yama will be seething with anger, and fiercely reprimand him.

While living in the human world, this person committed much evil and became very despicable. Think about it. When he arrives at Yama's hall and refuses to admit to his wrongdoings, surely the King of Hell will rebuke him angrily. The retribution will be worse. So for countless eons, there is no hope in sight, no way to escape from the punishment. Those who will not confess their offenses, and still try to argue their way out, will receive even more retributions. The King of Hell is very severe with this kind of person. Those who commit crimes or evils are deplored and despised by everyone, and much more so by the King of Hell.

This reminds me of an incident from when we were first building the hospital. I came to Taipei every month to teach the Sutras. One day, a group of entrepreneurs, who often socialized with politicians, shared a story. One time, there was a famous politician who came out to eat with them. The politician said, "From now on, I have to change completely."

"What do you need to change?" They asked.

He said, "I need to stop drinking so that will not make mistakes. I need to change this in order to prevent myself from doing bad things, so that I can really benefit other people."

"What happened?" they asked again.

He said, "Once I was sick I thought that I had the flu and a fever. I was hospitalized. While at the hospital, I had a dream."

What was the dream?

He said that in the dream, a group of people seized him, pulling and dragging him to a fiercely cold place. It was extremely cold. There were many ferocious-looking people there with ox heads or horse faces. He was surrounded many strange figures. It was so noisy that although he could hear people yelling, he could not figure out what they were saying. He said that there was a big desk there. On top of the desk were many things which looked like files.

Then someone with a stern and strong voice called out, "You are here already." The stern voice then asked someone nearby, "Is this person's time up now?" The person next to him flipped through the files and said, "His time is not up yet, but..." and continued speaking so softly that the man did not hear it.

The one with the loud voice then said, "You may be released. If you can post bail."

The politician replied, "I will post bail. How much money do I need?"

The man with the stern voice said, "One solar."



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“One dolar is easy!” The man looked for his money and found that he did even one dollar on him. All of a sudden, he was dragged away. “I did not bring any money!” The person with the loud voice then said, “You may have much wealth while alive, but when you come here, you do not have even a penny. Absolutely nothing. There is only one way out of there. That is through accumulating goodness. The more goodness you accumulate in your world, the more good you can bring to this one. If you do more good and less evil, or if you do only good, you will not end up here.”

Again he heard many loud voices, particularly the loud and stern one. In great fear, he awoke. His entire body was soaked in sweat. It seemed that many people were there to try and resuscitate him.

Everyone said, “Good, he came back!”

His temperature become normal. Slowly, he regained his health. He felt that the dream was telling him something. He was wearing a hospital gown, so there truly was not a single dollar on him. But that voice had said, “You may have a lot of money, but when you die, you cannot take even a penny. There is no way you carry it with you.”

The story that the entrepreneurs shared about the politician impressed me. They talked about the story and felt that it is important to do good deeds. They said, if we do more good things, we will not have to go there. So do more good deeds.

Everyone, do good, even if it is a small deed. Avoid all evil, even if it is minor. We have to do more good in the world. Therefore, say more kind words, do more benevolent deeds, and hold more wholesome thoughts.

Everyone, we should remain steadfast in keeping our body, speech and mind pure. When we arrive at the Hall of Yama no amount of argument will do us any good. In summary, whatever we do, we reap the effect, whether good or bad. So everyone, please always be mindful.

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