



Every day I give a similar reminder and share with you that it is very important to take care of our hearts. If we do not, sometimes even the slightest misstep leads to a huge deviation. Doing good brings the most peace, while evil acts bring retribution. People reap what they sow. Our loved ones cannot suffer on our behalf.

So each of us should be mindful in every moment and always maintain good thoughts. Let us take a look at the following passage. The repentance text says, **“These things were not done long ago. I did them and I will receive the retribution. Even someone as dear as my father or son, cannot take on the suffering for me.”**

From this passage we can understand that after we die, everything we did in our life is still considered a recent event. Human life is limited, after all. After death



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one arrives at King Yama's hall. We did these things not long ago, so these bad deeds remain fresh and vivid.

Thus, "these things were not done long ago." The things we did are relatively recent. They were not done by others. We committed them, and no one else was involved. We did them of our own free will. Even if someone else asked us to do it, we were the ones who made the decision to carry it out. Even if we did it with others, we are still the main culprit. So we should admit to it and accept the retribution for what we have done.

At the Hall of King Yama, we cannot put the blame on someone else, not even "someone as dear as our father or son." When an unfilial person enters the Hall of Yama, even if his parents or loved ones want to forgive him, they cannot pardon him.

Here is a story that took place in Hualien. There was a son with bipolar mood disorder. Whenever his illness relapsed, he became violent toward his mother and family. Everyone would be terrified when this happened, so they notified the police. The police wanted to send him to treatment; but he did not want to go to a mental hospital. He did not want to go for treatment because he knew that he would lose his freedom. So he would kneel down and plead with his mother, saying, "I will change. I will not let it happen again." Seeing her son begging on his knees, she would beg the police to let him go.

This happened three times. The last time, it happened at midnight when the man suspected that his mother loved his nephew more and negative thoughts arose. He entered his mother's room and snatched the adorable six-month-old baby. He lifted him up and threw him to the floor. How could a small baby sustain such an impact? The infant's skull broke. He ended up in the hospital with a concussion.



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The baby fell into coma and suffered hydrocephalus. Luckily, he was treated in time and survived. However, whether he will have after-effects from such a head trauma is still unknown.

No matter how much love a mother has, if her son commits such an atrocity, he needs to be treated by experts, he committed assault. Since this happened, no matter how much she loved him, she could not help him. So even loved ones like your father and son cannot suffer karmic retributions on your behalf. If a deed is done, the retribution will manifest. No one can suffer the consequences for us. Therefore, we should be mindful in every moment, and make a habit of opening our hearts.

If our hearts are not open and forgiving, even unintentional offenses toward us will cause suppresses distress that may develop into depression or bipolar disorder. When someone has a mental disorder, he may not intend to do any harm, but it is very difficult for him to control his actions. So, the most important part of our spiritual practice is avoiding transgressions. We follow the precepts in order to avoid them. We should not allow grievance to accumulate. Then, naturally, afflictions will not arise to cause mental illness. When afflictions obscure the mind, negative actions will constantly manifest.

As Buddhist practitioners, we should always be mindful of our thoughts. Let your mind be open and your thoughts pure. Spiritual practice requires experiential understanding. After listening to the teachings, we must come to an understanding that there is nothing worth talking issue over or complaining about. Then we can simply let go of all grievances. Thus we “understand the Dharma we hear.” In this way, we can truly progress in our practice. So practice requires experiential understanding, this is very important for all Buddhists.



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Otherwise, in the Hall of King Yama, we will see that all evils are “clearly taken into account, especially since these deeds occurred recently.” When we are judged by the King of Hall, our past transgressions have “nothing to do with other people. They are our own.” We perpetrated these transgressions, so we should, accept the consequences willingly. Be prepared to bear consequences for past deeds. It is useless to try to pass it on to others. So when the day of judgment comes, “even someone as dear as my father, son or wife,” cannot take on the consequences of my evil deeds. “I can only receive the retributions myself.” This is a repeated warning to us. Even our dearest relatives cannot help us. People reap what they sow. We cannot ask others to drink for us when we are thirsty, or take medicine for us when we are sick. This is impossible. So one will “reap what one has sown.”

The next passage further explains, “Since we have obtained this human form and are free of illnesses, we must work diligently during our limited lifespan.”

We have obtained this precious human body and this body is “free of illnesses.” While we are healthy, “we must work diligently.” We must race against the time that we have left “during our limited lifespan.” I often say that we should “race against time.” This is similar to what this passage indicates. We should race against time, our limited lifespan, I often say, “No one has ownership over the physical body, only the right to use it.” There is an old saying, “The body is the vessel for spiritual cultivation.” We wish to engage in spiritual practice and to walk the Bodhisattva-path to benefit others. But without the body, we cannot practice the Six Paramitas.

What are the Six Paramitas? **Everyone should know them: Generosity, Precept, Patience, Diligence, Samadhi, and Wisdom.**

Our body is vessel for spiritual cultivation. Only when we make good use of it can



we walk the Bodhisattva-path to benefit others.

The Sutra further explains, **“When we face what we dread most, it is too late for regrets. So with sincerity, we repent deeply and ask for mercy.”** We should put our bodies to good use and practice diligently. Listen, contemplate and practice the teachings. We should listen, comprehend and practice diligently. We practice to gain experiential understanding. We must seize this moment when we are healthy and capable to carry out the Six Paramitas and to benefit others. Do not wait until you cannot do so anymore. Many people wait until they are sick then say, “Alright, I will do good deeds if I get well.” But do they always recover from the sickness?”

Some people who recover say, “Fine I’ll do good deeds when I can move freely.”

Will they always recover well enough to move freely again?

It is hard to say. When sickness or death strikes, “we face what we dread most.”

We fear sickness, and death is even more terrifying. These two are “the most dreaded.” They are terrifying.

When people become ill, they are filled with fear. When one is ill, “it may be too late for regrets.” One may lament, “When I was healthy, others asked me to do good, why didn’t I do it? There were many opportunities for me to help save people. I could have done good and created blessings. Why didn’t I? Now it is too late for regrets.”

So, “with sincerity, we repent and ask for mercy.” We should indeed repent at all times. We should know that before we leave this world, we are all ordinary people. Everyone has made mistakes. Do not think that you have not. We all have, with even the most subtle thoughts and actions.

It is impossible not to make any mistakes in life. Even if we have not erred in this



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life, we do not know what happened in our past life. We should take advantage of this life to learn and practice the Buddha-Dharma. We should also repent the transgressions that we have committed in all of our lifetimes. Regret what was done in the past, and vow not to commit such deeds in the future. Please always be vigilant and self-reflect. Indeed, people reap what they sow.

There is a passage in the Sutras describing a young man in the Buddha's time. He came to the Buddha and said, "I often beg from others." But he was not a monk asking for alms, he was a very poor beggar. He belief in Brahmanism. So one day, he came to the Buddha and explained, "I often beg from others. However, I use whatever I receive to support my parents. They are old. My family is very poor. I cannot leave them to do business or work. I must stay with my parents to care for them. I am very poor. So I have to beg. But when I am begging, I follow the poor way to beg. If people give, I am very thankful. If people do not, I am still grateful. I dare not complain I fellow the proper way to beg to support my parents. Am I doing anything wrong? Will I accumulate blessing."

Hearing his words, the Buddha was very touched. This man served his parent with everything he made from begging. The Buddha liked the young man very much, and praised him. The Buddha said, "Uttara, you have indeed created blessings because you beg for the sake of supporting your parents. It is not your intention to not work or generate an income. You want to serve your parents at their side. So you are creating blessings.

The Buddha praised the young man and said, "**You have respectfully supported your parents. You have done so according to the teachings. When you die, you will be reborn in Heaven.**

You treat your parents as you would a Buddha. You cherish your parents like the Buddha, and support them with reverence. You are following the proper way,



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practicing according to the teachings. You are following the Dharma properly. When you die, you will be born in Heaven. You'll reap the blessings that you've created." The man was not a monastic, nor did he practice all the teachings. His only practice was supporting his parents. In this way, he earned blessings. So, in the future, because he followed the Dharma, he would be born in Heaven. We can learn from this story. He was filial to his parents. He begged from others to provide for them. He showed great reverence and respect. So, in the future, the will receive the blessing he has created. But he will enter Heaven alone; he will not be able to take his parents along. That cannot be done. Again, people reap what they sow.

So, after the Buddha expounded this passage, everyone was very joyful. They understand what the Buddha said, "evil and blessings are distinct." Those who create wrongdoings will suffer. Those who create blessings will benefit. So we should always take good care of our minds. We should cherish time and make good use of our healthy bodies to do good when we can. We face the consequences for each wrongdoing and blessing we have created.

So everyone, please always be mindful.

(Source: Da Ai TV 靜思晨語 法譬如水)