



Buddhism's View on Deeds and Behaviors

By Venerable Master Hsing Yun



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Dear Venerable and Guardian Faithful,

Much thanks to the great compassion of Buddha. Much thanks to all you, venerable and guardian faithful, for braving the weather to attend today's talk on 'the Buddhism's view on deeds and behaviors'. Here, I would like to salute all of you, for your sincere support for Buddhism.

Deeds and behaviors decide a person's success. Why some people are rich while other's are poor? Some people said that it is faith and destiny. Actually, this is not totally truth. Deeds and behaviors determine our fortunes. Behaviors influence causes and effects. We reap what we sowed. The revelation from cause and effect is immovable. It has better precision than computers.

There are happy and fortunate people. There are distressed and miserable people. Some people indulgent in pleasure and lust. Some people blame heaven and others. Good or evil deeds are all within one reflection. One temptation plants a terrible cause. One awakening reaches the other shore.

Once, a doctor from Taipei was invited to attend a medical conference in London. He had made all the traveling arrangement including a transit flight through Hong Kong. Friends planning to see him off could not find him in the airport. He could not be reached by phone either. Why? It happened on his way to the airport. He ran into a car accident. A young girl was bleeding and in serious conditions. He was sympathetic. He left his trip to help the accident. He even personally operated on the victim.

This event naturally delayed his trip. He finally arrived at London. The conference was already half over. After the conference, he returned very discouragingly. Surprisingly, he was greeted in the airport by his son and the young victim. His son said, 'Thanks, Dad! For saving our marriage'.

It turns out the young lady was his son's girl friend. They have been dating for years, but the girl's family was against their marriage. It is because the girl's mother was died at the hand of medical malpractice. The family just hates doctors. Then, the young lady has an accident. Steps from fatality, she was saved by a doctor. Even more dramatic, he was her boy friend's father. Of course, the parents cannot argue against the marriage any longer. Hearing this story, the doctor signed with relieve, 'Heaven does care! I just want to save a young lady's life. It turns out I have saved my daughter in law'.

'Heaven cares', it is with the law of cause and effect. The young girl's mother's death by medical malpractice is the cause. It results in the girl's family hate for doctors and against the marriage. The doctor's compassion act has saved the girl. It effects the girl's family changing of attitudes and allows the marriage. When dark clouds gather, there will be rain. When plants have no water, they

will be wilted. Any behavior will produce the associated results. We should therefore act immorally instead of blame heaven or others.

India has a cast system that divides its citizens into four groups. The highest cast is Brahman. Some people asked them, 'By what right they have to be the highest cast'? They replied, 'We are born as Brahmans'.

Buddha promotes justice. He tried to correct this misconception. The value of a person is not by birth but by behavior. A person's deeds decide if he is to be enjoying in a world of comfort, or mire in a land of misery. This is the law of Karma. If you have committed a crime, you should be incarcerated. It is not up to you to deny. If you are a person of virtue, you would be respected and honored. It is not up to you to refuse either. Karma is a force that, 'Like it or not, you would have to live. Want it or not, you would have to die'. We come to this world because of Karma. We must leave the world when Karma is exhausted. It is totally beyond our control. The Karma generates as a result of our behaviors links the past, present and future. We are trapped in the non-ceasing and unending realm of time and space. Karma follows us around like our shadow. It follows our every footstep. This is karma as known in Buddhism. Here, I would explain how our behaviors effect karma that in turn affects our entire life.

Why Behaviors form Karma

Sometimes, people say, 'Oh! I have such deep Karmic Hindrance', or 'I have done a Bad Karma'. This is the relationship between karma and deeds. Like a seed, it will germinate with rain. It will wilt with fire. Behaviors create Karma. Behaviors cause life. Karmic reward has good or bad. It links our lives from past, to present and into the future through eternity. The body and flesh may live and die, form and decay. Karma, the powerful binding force is dynamic and unceasing from past, present, into the unending future.

Behaviors build karma in countless ways. Cause and effect are interlocked. It is very hard to look at them with great clarity. People rejoice at the sight of newborn and grieve at the dying, why? It is because they do not have a good understanding of karma. Actually, birth is the first step toward dyeing, and death is the renewal of life. Some people grieve at old people at their deathbed. I comfort them, 'Please, don't cry or grieve. He has reborn, why are you grieving? A house is old, we move into a new one. Cloth is old, we buy a new one. The body has aged and degenerated. We would need a new health body too'. Human in reality cannot die. Only the body is dead. Karma is the real root of life and existence. When people old and die, they discarded the body, and reborn as another being. They moved into another body. It is like a flower wilt. The root still exists. In next spring, new flowers and foliages will again blossom.

Behaviors control what karma is being built. Do not feel that words vanished after spoken. Speech builds karma. There will be responsibility and rewards. Nowadays, many young people are ferocious. Sometimes, you are not careful and took too long a look. They will get upset. They take out a knife and give you a stick. An uncared glance produces result and builds karma. It is not just our speeches, our actions, our thoughts and even our desires, our view points, relation to people and affairs, even to our taste and knowledge, they all can form karma.

I will illustrate this point with some simple examples as the following.

Behavior is like a mirror--When you smile in front of a mirror, the reflections smile back. When you cry in front of a mirror, the person in the mirror also cries. Behavior generates karma like a mirror. It sincerely reflects all our deeds and acts.

Behavior is like seeds--Trees produce fruits that are sweet, sour, bitter and hot. Human can be poor, rich, privileged, or deprived. Our behaviors are seeds that grow from the soil. People's health, wealth, happiness and situations are all different. They are reflections of karma accumulated as results of our behaviors.

Behavior is like habit--Behavior can be habituated. People with curling lips get upset all the time. People with broad lips always smile. Our habits affect our

behaviors, which will in turn produce like kind of karma. For example, we visit a zoo. A merchant will reflect on the cost. What is the cost of feeding and getting the animals? A police will reflect on the security. Are the cages strong enough to safe guard the security of the visitors? A dentist will reflect on dental hygienics. The animal's teeth can be compared with human, may be it need cleaning? A fashion designer will reflected on design. This animal's skin would make a very fashionable fur clothes. Habit influents our behaviors and behaviors produce karma.

When a behavior produces karma, it is like our shadow. There is no place to escape. The smallest karma can be built into something very large and serious. Water drops are small, but it can penetrate stone tablets. Offering a flower may be an insignificant event. Yet, it makes you feel delighted. It sanctifies your mind, body and speech. This fragrance and purity can be spread by you to be shared by every person you met. Then, the merits are beyond the offering of a flower. The merits spread and increase with your every encounter. You slap or hit someone. It may not be a serious crime. Then, you recall what happened. Oh! I make a good left today. One strike lands right on the temple and knock him cold. Oh! It is so fun and so great'. Soon, you will cultivate an attitude of hitting others for pleasure. This would lead to serious consequences. Another example, you invite some friends over for a banquet. You need to slaughter chicken and fish. You feel sorry for them and just cannot slash them up. Your friend teases you, 'You cannot do it. I will show you how'. He forces you to kill. He coaches you to kill. He destroys your compassion. Then, this would be a serious crime. There is a saying, 'Doing good but merits are unnoticed. It is like grass in winter. It still grows. Doing evil without immediate punishment. It is like the spring snow. It will eventually melt'. There will be rewards even it may not be immediately noticeable.

Once, there is a person who has achieved the celestial vision. He can perceive what normally is unseen. He saw an evil ghost cursing and wiping a death body. The person was very curious and asked, 'Hey! The man has dead. Why are you still whipping him'? The evil ghost replied, 'He is me. I have committed so much crime. Now, I have to suffer and fall into hell. Of course, I should whip him good'.

Then, the person came across another corpse. A spirit was homage the corpse and adorning it with blossoms. The person was very curious. He asked the ghost, 'Hey! The guy is dead. What is the use of adorning it'? The ghost replied, 'This is my corpse. I have done much good and merit. I will be reborn in the Travastrimasas heaven. I really should be much obliged to him'.

Good and evil doings will follow beyond death. Behaviors build karma as a reflecting mirror. Once, lady named Srimala, a famous lay disciple, asked Buddha, 'Buddha, why is a woman poor but beautiful'? Buddha replied, 'Beauty is only skin deep, the heart is ugly and greedy. Fortune is like flower. It does not grow in bad soil'.

Lady Srimala asked again, 'Why are some people ugly, but very wealthy?'

Buddha replied, 'The ugly person has good character. He is patient and diligent. Wealth naturally comes to him'.

Lady Srimala asked once again, 'Why are then some people both ugly and poor?'

Buddha replied, 'One is arrogant and lazy just as the face'.

'Oh! Buddha, Why are some people both wealthy and adorable?'

Buddha smile, 'A seeding fall on good soil. It will grow into a giant tree. Cause and effect follow the same logic.

There is a famous 'Ten Origin Rhymes' that explains this point very clearly. It is as the following.

'Beauty originates from tolerance. Poverty originates from greed. Eminence originates from humility. Contemptible originates from arrogance. Hoarseness originates from slandering. Blind and deaf originate from unbelieving. Longevity originates from compassion. Short-life originates from killing. Handicapped originates from breaking precepts. Full six senses originate from upholding precepts'.

Behavior is the cause. Karma is the result. Like wind causes rippling on water, behavior and result are associated. When the behavior enters into space. Karma will change the composition. It will produce a latent force. Like pollutants from combustion, it may be invisible, but it does exist.

Behavior, the Good and the Bad

Karma can be good or bad. It can be indeterminate or neutral. Karma can be generated from the body, speech and mind. Body karma includes killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. Speech karma includes lies, slander, double talks and trickery. Mind karma includes greed, hatred and erroneous view. Karma is originated from the beginning-less-ness. The karma of greed is the unending wants. The karma of hatred is confusion and anger. The karma of ignorance is the desire and misguided thoughts. Some karma is white. It is the ten virtuous deeds. It can be done in the open under the sun. These are good deeds that cause no shame. They are, of course, righteous. Some karma is black. It is the ten evil deeds. It must be done under the cover of darkness. They are tricks and crimes. They need to hide.

There is also the Tractor karma and Completed karma. Tractor karma is the main effect. It has the strongest karmic influence. It is the determining force of rebirth. It traps us in the cycle of rebirth and in the form as human. It

transverses all space. It is powerful and yet invisible like air. Completed karma is the side effect. We are all human. Yet, each person has different background and situation. One can be rich and famous, poor and impoverish, smart or dumb, impaired or healthy, pretty or ugly. Everybody is different.

There is also the Determined or Undetermined karma. For example, we are wounded. A cutting wound causes bleeding. A battered wound first causes inflammation. Pain comes only after some delays. There is also internal injury, ulcer and psychological problem. One may look healthy on the surface. Yet, disease could be developing underneath. When the disease is full-blown, it may even be lethal. Determined and undetermined karma are under similar situation. Determine karma means the deed has effected a fix result in both in term of nature and time. The time has arrived. It cannot be altered. It is like the saying, 'The Yama King has asked you to go at three, you cannot remain until five'. Undetermined Karma means the effect of the deed is still open. The time and condition have not arrived yet. It does not matter how many good or bad deeds. It is latent and undetectable. It is like the saying, 'Leaving merits as inheritance for off-springs. The family will be prosperous. Leaving evilness damages the family. Disasters are just ahead'.

Shared and unshared karma means to have the same or different situation. For example, recently a Korean Airline passenger plane was shot down by Russian. Why did over two hundreds people share the same fate? They came from such a variety of country, town, locality and profession. It was their shared karma to be on the same flight. One of the victim was an U.S. congressman. He was supposed to be on another flight. He left earlier because of busy schedule. Strangely, he met his fatal end. He had nothing to share with the other passengers. Tractor karma has made them met the same faith.

With in shared karma, there can be share-shared karma or share-unshared karma. The heaven and earth, sun and moon, rain and storms are shared by all human beings. They are share-shared karma. House and property, gold and jewelry are common possession. Yet, everyone has different amounts. They are share-unshared karma. For example, people ran into an accident. Some victims may be fatal. Others may be unscratched.

Unshared karma has two types. They are unshared-shared and unshared-unshared karma. For example, we have toothache and ulcer. Teeth and stomach are different from other body organs. Yet, tooth and stomach ailments cause headache. The entire body is discomforted. For example, you are unhappy or miserable. You and I are different person. Yet, if we are family or friends, we will shared joy and grieve together. This is the unshared, but, share karma. Unshared-unshared karma is like we are by-stander. Your joy and grief have nothing to do with me. It is like we watch a parade or funeral. Other's emotion has not impact at all. This is the unshared-unshared karma.

For all the good and the bad, karma and rewards, they may not always be obvious to most people. Sometimes, they think that cause and effect do not

exist. They slander against karma and reward. Once, a faithful said this to me, 'Master, I am not praying to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva any longer'. I asked, 'Why? You have been praying to Avalokitesvara for decades. Why lost faith now?'

He replied, 'I spend a lot of money on charity. I pray to Avalokitesvara for fortune. Yet, nobody praise me for my generosity. My son is not appointed as commissioner. I am not getting promotion. Why should I pray any longer?'

This faithful prays to Avalokitesvara not for liberation from rebirth, nor for universal emancipation. It is only for fame and fortune. Who do he consider the most kind and compassionate Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva as?

There was another faithful. She places couple plastic apples and banana in front of the Buddha. Everyday, she repeats a same prayer, 'Buddha, please bless my son to become a manager, my daughter to marry a millionaire, my husband make a lot of money. My jewelry keeps accumulating. My body forever be healthy'. You offer couples phony apples and banana. You ask for such a great blessing. Who do you think Buddha is then?

We should know economic has its associated cause and effect. Morality has its associated cause and effect. Health has its associated cause and effect. One cannot get confuse and mix up.

One's behavior is good or evil. It generates karma which is either white and black. A true Buddhist should uplifted our character and faith. We should firmly hold that karma follow behavior like shallows. We should diligently work to realize the words of Ch'an master KOO-LIN-SHIN-KAN, 'Heart was uncorrupted. It was totally self-sufficient. Stay away from false attachment. You are a complete Buddha'. We should be aware all existence is empty. There is neither becoming nor annihilation. We should work on our behaviors. We should apply Buddhism in living. We should empty Ch'an teachings to our thoughts. Then, we can break off from rebirth and see the illumination of existence.

Behavior, in Time and Space

A person's behavior, whether good or evil, has prolong effect. In the eternal dimension of time and space, karmic forces never vanish.

Seed can be planted now and harvest this year. If it is stored, and planted ten or twenty years later, it will still germinate. The effects of behaviors work like seeds. Some effects will be immediate. Other effects are latent, awaiting a appropriate conditions.

Behavior also has prolong effect in the dimension of space. According to modern medical research, our body is totally replaced in every seven years. Metabolism causes cells and organs to change. In seven or eight year,

everything is renewed from head to toe. A three-year old growing up to eighty will undergo about ten replacements. It is not the same body anymore. Yet, can we say the three-year old and the one in eighty are not related. No matter what the alternation, the genetic make up stays the same. Behavioral karmic energy is like genetic codes. It remains constant despite of external changes.

It is because karma is beyond the effect of time and space. There are current effects, next life effects and later life effects. Yet, what decide which karma to dominate, I will further clarify this point as the following.

According to seriousness--Karma sometimes is dominated by its seriousness. For example, the most virtuous or most evil person, if a very evil person lost power, there will be attack coming from all around. It is like everyone shouting, 'Rats!' There is no place to hide. On the other hand, a very good person lost his fortune. People all around will chip in to help.

According to habit--Karma can be dominated by habit. The example is the Pure Land practice. Actually, ten continuous chants of 'Amitabha Buddha' at death will be adequate. Why do we chant for days, for years and all the time? It is to form a habit. The mind would be one chant after another. If you do not has such habit. When disaster comes, you probably would yell, 'Help!' Half a day goes by before you remember to chant. If the mind is disrupted, it is very hard to concentrate. The moment of death is critical, one must be calm and diligent to the end.

According to thought--Thoughts can endure many lives and still exact its influences. Some people signed, 'Look at him! He is so kind and compassionate. Yet, he is always poor and sick'; or, 'Look! This person is rotten. Yet! He is strong and healthy. He is making a lot of money. Heaven gets no eyes. There is no reward'. We should know this actually shows cause and effect. You may be kind and charitable now. Your previous life may have sinful karma. Now is the paid back times. It should not be that you are kind and pious. Thus, you did not need to settle old debts. An evil person has great fortune. It is because the good deed of his past has not been totally dissipated. It is like he had a fat bank account. You cannot close his account just because he is immoral. Yet, when he used up all his money, he will be suffering from poverty. Karmic reward depends on a person's mind. It is like the saying, 'Good or evilness will have its revelation, it is just a matter of time'. Good or evil behavior does not vanish with a person's physical death. It only adds in the entangled net of karma and extend its influence in the rebirth of past, present and future. Therefore, there is an ancient wise saying, 'You want to know past cause, look at the situation now. You want to know the future reward, look at the behavior now.'

Once, a person stealing coconut with an extension knife was caught by the owner. The owner scolded, 'Hey! How dare you steal my coconut'?

The thief replied with a question, 'Who said the coconut is yours'?

The owner replied, 'I planted the coconut tree. The coconuts are of course mine'.

The thief replied, 'Yes, as long as the coconut is on the tree. But, those are on the ground now'.

Let's us reflect, is there no relationship between the coconut on the tree and on the ground?

Previous existence and next life has the same association. There is cause with in effect and effect with in cause. They are chained into a circle influencing each other. Behavioral karma does not vanish in the realm of time and space. It eternally exists. As the saying goes, 'For whatever your deed, even after millennium, when the condition exists, you would take your own reward'.

Behavior, the Determining Effect

Lastly, I am going to talk about the determining effect of behaviors. There is endless supernatural power in Buddhism. Yet, even the most powerful force cannot defeat karmic energy. Behavioral effects are fix and undestroyed.

In the past, there was a famous minister sentenced to death. Before the execution, the jailer asked him for any last words. He reflected deeply and left five words. They are 'trick, reason, law, power and heaven'. The jailer was very curious and asked him, 'what does it means? The minister repeated dejectedly, 'Half my life, I have been survived on tricks. In the end, I lost to the power of reason. Sometimes, I feel I am right. Yet, I cannot win the law. Illegality cannot stand. Yet, law does work for the powerful. Politician can play with the law and system. Power may work for a while but not forever. In the end, the heaven wins. In the end, I have to face my judgment. There is no escape or avoidance. I am facing death now. Are they not the reward and effect for all my past crimes'?

These rewards are the effect of behavior. We should never count on our youth, our money and power, to do as we please. We should be careful with our behavior. We should avoid building bad karma. When the reward due, it would be too late to regret. We should know, there is no eternal body or unchanging environment. They said, 'Mountains stay green, and river flow forever'. When it is polluted and ecology lose it's balance, mountain and river changes color over night. It will take centuries for improvement. Look at the river and seashores in our country. We would have to spend millions and decades to have environment restore.

Human being is the same. We are constantly ignorant and short-sighted. Even when karmic reward is due now, we are still too dumb to regret. It is like master CHUNG-FONE-MING-BEN once said, 'Swept clean all the trash, the floor is still dusty'.

As for the determining factor of karma, I would talk about several principles to clear up some confusions.

Self effort not divine power--The sky has no clouds then it would not rain. Wood without fire cannot burn. Behavior causes karma that eventually must be paid. Supernatural power cannot defeat karma. Maudgalyayana, a Buddha's disciple famous for his magical power, had celestial vision. He knew the cause and reward of ghost and spirit. One day, he was thinking of his deceased mother. He used his power and realized his mother was suffering as hungry ghost. She had a throat narrowed than needle. She became a skin covered skeleton. Maudgalyayana was shocked and saddened. He used his power to transport some food in a bowl to his mother. Before his mother could swallow the food, it turned into flames. Maudgalyayana was grieved beyond control. He did not know why this could happen. In great sorrow, he appeared before Buddha and asked, 'Buddha! I have use my celestial vision and realized my mother is suffering as hungry ghost. Everything turns into flames. She cannot eat any food. Can Buddha please be compassionate and tell me the effecting cause'?

Buddha replied, 'Maudgalyayana, your mother slandered Sangha when alive. She did not believe in cause and effect. She was greedy and evil. She tricked all beings. She should deserve such painful punishments. Your power was tainted by passion. Therefore, you cannot realize the associated cause and effect'.

Maudgalyayana was dumbfounded as if strike by lightening. He was painful for the misery of his mother. He also was horrified by the power of karma. It could not be altered with the most powerful magic. Eventually, Buddha taught him the Ullambana service by making offerings to Buddha and Sangha, to relieve his mother from suffering of hungry ghost. In the end, this shows self-power defeats other power, karma dominates magic.

Equal opportunity, no special treatment--good or bad situation is usually self created. It is not by divine arrangement or favoritism. Everyone faces equal opportunity. For the good and bad, it depends if we can make use of the chance. Once, there was a farmer. He worked from dawn until dusk. He could barely survive, but life was pleasant. One day he was resting on the field. Lightening strike a tree close by. A pot of gold was exposed under the tree. It was a treasure buried by his ancestors. The farmer was jubilated. He farmed no more. All days long, he kept digging up all the surrounding trees to look for gold. Couple months when by, all trees were uprooted and no gold were found. He missed the planting season. He ended up spending all the gold to buy food for the winter. What were even worst, the trees that protect the soil were all uprooted. Severe soil erosion destroyed his fertile land. He regretted, but it was already too late. His greed had sown the seed of poverty for himself.

There is a similar folk tale. A millionaire has couple sons who are very lazy. At his dead bed, the millionaire told his sons, 'Sons, I have buried many pots of gold in the field. After I die, you can dig them up. You would have enough money to last for the rest of your life'.

Right after the millionaire passed away. His sons all rush out to dig up the fields. From morning to night, they kept digging and turned up the hundred acres of fields. No body discovered any gold. They still would not give up. They redigged the soil for couple times. Eventually, everyone was exhausted and gave up while cursing their father's bad joke. Anyhow, it was already the planting season. They sowed the seeds anyway. Surprisingly, the harvest on field turned out to be very bountiful and the sons all made a good fortune. They finally realized their field was very fertile. If you worked the soil, it would produce bounty of harvest. They realized their father was not joking. The land was full of gold. They must work hard to cultivate. From then all, the family worked diligently on the land. This is the saying, 'When sweats irrigate the soil, meal appears on the table. Our behaviors effect karma and reward. This is the eternal law of cause and effect.

The future is bright and hopeful--Karma has the limiting property. It is like our genes. It is affected by parents, grandparents and ancestors of many generations. We were born with this karma. Yet, karma also has a changeable property. A person's fortune is not destined. It is not totally rigid and unalterable. Success or failure still depends on our daily behavior. The destiny is running on the track of cause and effect. Good be gotten good. Evil be gotten evil. We create this karma. In conclusion, 'Sin and karma is empty, it is a creation of the heart'. If we can 'live with the condition to dissipate old karma and do not create any new errors'. Our future is bright and full of hopes. It is like butterfly emerging from a cocoon or flowers blossoming of a bud. The evil of the past is shaded, the good of today has begun. It is like a Buddhism repentance liturgy, 'The sin that I have accumulated. They originate from the timeless greed, hatred and ignorance. They create from the action, speech and thoughts. I will now sincerely repent them all'.

Good or evil, rewards are certain--If we are jailed, it is okay, one day the sentences will be over. If we have misfortunes, it is all right too, one day the karma will be dissipated. Behavior and karma, be good or evil, the effect is certain to come.

Some parents labor very hard. They are busy making money. They die of overwork and leave all their wealth as inherent. They cannot even enjoy the smallest portion of wealth. Are they not coming here to repay their children's debt? Some parents are impoverished. They cannot support the children. They have to support by the sons and daughters. Is this not the case of children coming to pay off their debts? The karma of good and evil are somehow all planed. It is mysterious but certain. There was once a couple in Taipei. Everyday, they will pray in front of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva for a child. Couple years later, they indeed bore a healthy child. They were very gratified.

They sincerely make offers to Avalokitesvara everyday. Then, one day, their child contracted a disease and die. The couple was overcoming with grieves and turn into rage. They cursed the Bodhisattva, 'Bodhisattva, we have so sincere praying and making offers to you everyday. Yet, you do not protect us and allow death snatch away our son. Tomorrow, I will go over to the temple and tear down the temple'.

At night, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva appeared in their dream and discoursed, 'Faithful, I have heard your plead. It is your faith that you should be childless. It is because of your sincerity and support for Buddhism. Your faith has changed. Yet, this son is coming to collect his debt. He is going to spend all your wealth and take your lives. I have pity on your sincerity. I talked to your debtor to leave earlier so that you can enjoy good reward this life. You do not know the relationship from past and future. Not only you did not thank me, you want to destroy the temple. This is not an act of a true faithful. You should know that cause and effect are mysterious, karma and reward form and dissipated. Yet, it never breaks in term of time and space'.

The couple awakened from the dream. They had realized the effect and profoundness of karma. They were self-pity no more. They strengthened their faith in Avalokitesvara.

In FoKuangShan, there is this poem, 'Forever mindful of your parents, we are together now so let's help each other. There was no real hell, what the heart creates can be dissipated by heart'. Sinful or meritorious karma is created by the heart. The heart behaves then even for a thousand millennia, we are still free and comfortable. If the heart misbehaves, even the deepest fortune, will one day be used up.

The story of renunciation of Ch'an master YOUN-SHAN-HUI-JYE of TONG dynasty is quite legendary. He was taken to a temple to renounce at nine. At fourteen, his parents came again to ask him to return to home life and got marry. The Ch'an master has some realization in Buddhism. He did not want to return to a home life. His father said to him, 'We gave you up to renounce. It is because a fortune teller has read your destiny. You must become a monk to survive a dangerous period of your life. The period has now pasted. You can return to a home life. We have arranged a good wife for you. Why do you want to suffer in poverty in the temple'?

Master HUI-JYE has a very mixed emotion. On one hand, he was moved by their love and sincerity. On the other hand, he was sad that they use Buddhism as a safe heaven. When the need is over, they abandon the Sangha. This selfish and pretentious attitude will have horrible rewards. He determined he would not return to a home life. Yet, he also knew that it was in vain to argue. When they were not looking, he took a knife and chopped off two of his fingers and pleaded to his parent, 'Your dishonored son has entered Buddhism. I have vowed to achieve the supreme enlightenment. I will pray to repay your debt.

Yet, I will never return to a home life. This finger is to prove my determination. Please, let me go after my dream'.

His parents were speechless and moved by his determination. They realized they could not force him anymore. They sadly accepted his decision. Later, venerable HUI-JYE became a top disciple under the YOUNG-SHAN-LING-YU. He formed the YOUNG-YOUN school of Ch'an Buddhism. He is honored with the name 'Sayka Junior'. Let's just reflected, if the master does not cut his fingers to prove determination, could he make this endless relationship with the Ch'an school.

Therefore, behavior and karma, cause and effect are all related and interweaved. Misfortune may be the starting of a great pledge. Fortune could be the seedlings of disasters. Fortune or misfortune is all determine by good or evil behaviors. It is clear and open under the sky. There is no place to hide or for special favoritism.

This is the fundamental view of Buddhism on deeds and behaviors. Today, we have specially arranged a repentance service. May we beg of the power of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, to sanctify all our new and past sins. May the merits of the repentance and vows to be redistributed to beings in all space. Let's us all hold palms together and prayed, 'All the past sins that I have committed. They originate from timeless greed, hatred and ignorance. They are created by our actions, speeches and thoughts. I will now sincerely repent them all'.

I bless all of you so that you will continue to build the karma of fortune and happiness. May our lives be full of brightness and submerge in the delight of Dharma. Thanks to all of you.



The Dharma Protector Bodhisattva



Transference of Merit

*May the Merits and Virtues accrued from
this work,
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,
Repaying the Four Kinds of Kindness
above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths
below.*

*May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the resolve of Bodhi,
And when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in Ultimate Bliss.*

