

The Law of Causality Master Chin Kung

Master Chin Kung, the contemporary Pure Land mentor, said sentimentally, “How can we save people who are creating evil karma? How can we save this turbulent society? There is nothing more effective than to promote the education of causality. To promote the education of causality, we must understand its basic rules.”

First Law: Cause and Its Effect Happen at Different Times.

From cause to effect needs a certain period of time, which can be observed in the practice of farming. A melon seedling planted yesterday takes several months before reaching ripeness. There is no way they can be harvested in a few days. Likewise, our good deeds might not immediately receive good rewards. It takes time for the good effect to materialize.

If we do a good deed now and immediately receive a good reward, it is not the result of this good deed, but of a good karma we had created in the past, which, helped by our current good karma, matures into a good effect. The good karma we created in the past is the cause, the good karma we commit in the present is the assisting condition, and the current reward is the effect of our past good karma. Conversely, if we presently do good deeds, and not only we don't receive good rewards but get bad retribution instead; it does not mean that our good deeds will not have good results, but that our past bad karma has now matured and appeared first.

The good deeds that we do in the present act as a barrier-condition for the bad karma we committed in the past. Despite the power being not enough to completely prevent the retribution from fruiting, it can definitely weaken the bad retribution, so that our bad effect is alleviated. If it wasn't for the good deeds that we are doing, the bad retribution would have become worse. This is the intricate relationship between cause, condition, and effect.

An Astonishing Modern Case Reflecting the First Law

Let's share a most recent story to reflect this first law. This case happened in 2022, August 21 in California, the United States. On an ordinary weekend, in Oakland near Little Saigon in the California Bay Area, a life came to an abrupt end in just six seconds. A Chinese female dentist, Lili Xu, was killed. At the time of the incident, her boyfriend Nelson Xie was with her. They were going to a spa in Little Saigon.

Later in an interview, Mr. Xie broke down in tears while describing the tragedy, saying that a few minutes before two o'clock in the afternoon they drove to the cross street parking space for the spa. Lili reminded him to put a few packages in the trunk. The next instant, he heard two or three gunshots and saw the shadow of a man running behind him, and then a car zoomed by to pick him up. He ran around the car and saw Lili lying next to her door almost motionless. He pressed her wound while holding her head in his arms. He said that she was still breathing and in a state of semi-conscious, he cried and asked her to hold on. After a large number of police arrived, an ambulance came later. She was taken to the hospital where she died due to the critical injuries.

Nelson Xie was devastated and presented a song at the funeral to express how deep his love was. He sang affectionately, "When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high, and don't be afraid of the dark. At the end of the storm, there is a golden sky and the sweet silver song of a lark. Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain, tho' your dreams be tossed and blown. Walk on, walk on! With hope in your heart, and you'll never walk alone. You'll never walk alone!" Such an affectionate song, he cried while singing.

Originally, the public believed that this was a homicide caused by robbery, or may involve racial discrimination and hatred. But the detective thought that this was not a robbery case, there was something hidden behind it. He found many suspicious points through the video and collective information. First, the gunman's car had been parked nearby for about 30 minutes before Xu's car arrived. Obviously, the gunman knew Xu's schedule, so it was a premeditated crime, not a random robbery. Second, the owner of the spa said that Xu's boyfriend made an appointment two months ago. Third, the gunman did not speak but directly shot Xu to death, there was no intention of extorting money. Four, Nelson Xie, who was in the same car, was not harmed at all.

An Eternal Mystery Can Only Be Explained in Buddhism

After two months' investigation, an astounding twist and turn shocked everyone. The Oakland police held a press conference, announcing that two people had been

arrested. One was Nelson Xie's tennis coach, the other was jaw-dropping to everyone: Nelson Xie—the boyfriend who had been in a relationship with Xu for fifteen years. This was actually a case of contract killing. After the truth surfaced, everyone was stunned by how affectionate Nelson sang at Lili's funeral—what great acting skills he had!

Just hours after the Oakland police press conference, there was even more shocking news. Nelson Xie hanged himself in his cell.

Everything happened so suddenly, everyone was guessing, "Why did Nelson Xie want to kill Xu? Was it for money? Or was it a love issue?" In the end, both possibilities are denied because Nelson Xie himself owned tens of millions of dollars, and it was unlikely to be a love issue either. Nonetheless, the answer has become an eternal mystery due to his suicide.

Now we have learned Buddhism, we know that everything has cause and effect, and that cause and its effect happens in different times. In this case, the cause was likely planted in a past lifetime and the conditions were in place today. It also explicitly demonstrated to us that there is no way for us to see from the superficial phenomena that our creditors are taking revenge on us; they can lurk by our side for years or even decades. If they don't have an opportunity in this lifetime, they will still take action in a later lifetime. This bewildering case really offers us a great lesson, that is to say, karmic creditors do exist—it was by no means fortuitous that Nelson hanged himself but highly likely caused by the revenge from his creditor.

The reason many people do not believe in causality is because they do not understand this universal law, especially when they see evildoers remain at large and still enjoy his fortune and being a bully, while people who have done good deeds do not receive good rewards but still live in poverty and suffer bitter retribution and indignity. As a result, they deny the law of causality, thinking that there is no retribution for evil deeds, and no karmic reward for good deeds. As such, who would be so foolish as to do good deeds? It seems true that in today's society, most people view those who do good deeds as fools and think it natural to be selfish and egoistic. This is because we are too short-sighted to understand the principle that punishment may come late, but it will eventually come.

People who created big fortunes in their past lives, even though they have committed many sins in this life, can still be enjoying the fortunes that they had accumulated in the past; they have not used up all their fortunes, so they can continue enjoying them. After a decade or two, when the fortunes are used up, the bad retribution will then appear. So, the law of causality will never go wrong.

When we perceive that life is unpredictable and short, and that we do have infinite creditors due to having created boundless karma in the past lifetimes, it can help us realize the reason why we should learn Buddhism and recite Amitabha now. We should pray for all the sentient beings who have been eaten, killed, and hurt by us, hoping that they would let go of their hatred. Because you kill me and I kill you, I eat you half pound now and would have to return eight ounces next life; this cycle would be endless. As Buddhist patriarchs exhort us, "We should eliminate our past karmic sins in accordance with conditions and never create new enmity again."

Please stay tuned for the Second Law of Causality. See you soon!