

# **The Law of Causality**

## **Master Chin Kung**

### **Third Law: Small Cause Resulting In A Big Effect**

A tiny cause can turn into a huge effect. It is like a small watermelon seed buried in the dirt growing into a big watermelon, and in this big watermelon there are many more watermelon seeds. As the adage goes, "Give one, and beget ten thousand in return" is true.

#### **A Small Offering Begets the Effect of Fifteen Kalpas in Heaven**

Regarding this point, there is a story illustrated in the Buddhist sutras. When Buddha was on Earth, there was an old servant of a Brahmin elder who took some spoiled food out of the house and was preparing to dump it out. The moment she went outside and saw the solemn image of the Buddha, deep and profound respect arose from her heart. She wanted to make an offering to Buddha, but all she had was the spoiled food in hand. How could she offer it to the noble Buddha?

Just as she hesitated, the Buddha smiled, emitted light, and happily used His bowl to scoop up the spoiled food from the old woman's hand. The Buddha told Ananda, "This old woman is wholeheartedly devout. The merit of her sincere offering to Buddha will lead her to enjoy happiness for fifteen kalpas, and then she would descend into the human realm having the karmic condition of being a monk."

At this time, the old woman's master, the Brahmin elder, happened to walk out of the house. Upon hearing what the Buddha said, he thought it was incredible! The Buddha asked the Brahmin elder, "Have you ever seen other incredible things?" The elder replied, "Yes, one time we had five hundred horse-drawn carriages traveling together. We rested under a big tree because of the hot weather. This big tree could cover all five hundred carriages and still have extra shade. The size of the tree was truly incredible!" The Buddha asked, "How big is the seed of this great tree?" The elder replied, "As small as a mustard seed."

This is the theory of a small cause creating a large effect. The principle is based on the speed of mind, which is way too fast. According to Maitreya Bodhisattva, in one finger snap there are 3.2 billion hundred thousand thoughts; each one of them shapes a form, and in every form exists consciousness. Suppose we can snap fingers several

times in one second, the thoughts in one second will then be trillions. The frequency of this kind of subtle thoughts is so fast that within a very short period of time, myriad seeds are planted which makes the duration of their effects very long.

### **Why Maudgalyayana Was Beaten Until His Bones pulverized into Pieces**

In the past, Maudgalyāyana had one life trying to kill his parents who were both blind. His wife was reluctant to take care of her blind in-laws and tried various ways to make her husband become resentful of his parents. She spoke a lot of bad things to estrange them and finally instigated her husband to kill his parents. The husband was abetted by her, eventually giving rise to an evil intention of killing his own parents.

Following the plan, he took his parents out one day and brought them to a forest where he made them believe that robbers came. With a wooden stick he had prepared, he viciously hit his parents, trying to beat them to death. As he was savagely beating them, his parents did not call on him to save them but shouted for their son to quickly run for his life lest he be harmed by robbers. He was so moved by his parents' unconditional love that his conscience came into play. He knelt down and repented for his wrongdoing.

Because of this evil karma, his life was shortened. He fell into the hell realm and suffered a long period of torture. After leaving hell, he still had to endure the bitter retribution of the hungry ghost and animal realms. When he finally reincarnated as a human, for 500 lives, he died brutally beaten until his bones were pulverized into pieces in each life. There was no exception even in his life as Maudgalyāyana who attained arhathood and became Buddha's number one disciple in supernal power. He became unable to enter Samadhi and his supernal power was unable to function due to his severe karma remaining so strong. This is where the saying “Even supernal power cannot overcome karma” comes from. He entered nirvana while he was brutally beaten by a group of heretics until every bone in his body was broken into pieces.

### **How a Severe Karma Lead to Flower, Fruit, and Remainder Retribution**

This story clearly illustrates the principle of a small cause resulting in a big effect. He tried to murder his parents only once in that life. Why did it cause such a mighty retribution in so many lifetimes? The reason is because the speed of the thoughts in our mind is too fast. So even if it is only one evil karma, it results in myriad karmic seeds.

For example, if in that past life he hit his parents for half an hour—according to Maitreya Bodhisattva, there are 3.2 billion hundred thousand thoughts in one finger snap. We multiply 1,800 times for half an hour on the basis of snapping fingers several times in one second, the evil karmic seeds planted will be thousands of trillions—the huge number of evil karmic seeds planted is astonishing.

This extremely evil karma resulted in  
"flower-retribution"—his short lifespan,  
"fruit-retribution"—fell into hell in the following life, as well as the  
"remainder-retribution"—reincarnated into the realms of animal, hungry ghost,  
plus the human realm where his bones were beaten into pieces.

This is truly like one aftermath following another with no end in sight. Seeing how fierce this karmic retribution can be, do we still dare to be rebellious and hurt our parents? Do we still dare to commit other bad karmas? *I Ching (The Book Of Changes), Xi Ci Chapter*, states: "The family that accumulates goodness is sure to have remainder-auspiciousness, and the family that accumulates evil is sure to have remainder-misery." The remainder-auspiciousness and remainder-misery refers to extra prosperity or sins left for our own future lives and our future generations. This story is an evident testimony of a small cause resulting in a big effect.

### **Bodhisattvas Fear the Cause, Mortals Fear Only the Effect**

Buddhism has a saying, "Bodhisattvas fear the cause, while mortals are afraid only of the effect". "Bodhisattvas" refer to the awakened ones who understand the truth of a small cause resulting in a big effect. They know after committing sins, the future retribution will be extremely horrific, so they remain extremely vigilant and do not dare to commit bad karmic causes.

In regards to current bad retribution, Bodhisattvas know that it is brought upon from the bad karmic seeds of their past lives' wrongdoings, and that after taking the retribution it will be paid off. So, they can calmly accept the retribution and will not give rise to affliction. They accept retribution in accordance with the condition and never create new evil karmas.

Mortals are deluded and bewildered, they do not know that the only way to avoid retribution is to stop creating bad karma. They only see bad retribution as scary and

spare no effort to escape retribution. When they suffer the retribution, they would not hesitate to sacrifice others to benefit themselves, thus committing all sorts of evil karmas. The most scary thing is that, when he sees no imminent consequences after creating new evil karmas, he would not be afraid to keep going. If he continues to create bad karma, the causal effects will become unbearably heavy, this is why Buddhas call us mortals as “the pitiful ones”.

We must also understand that not only is the effect much bigger than the cause, but the longer for the retribution to take effect, the more grievous the retribution becomes. This is like a debt, the longer it takes to pay back, the more interest there is. Therefore, after realizing that we have committed a sin, we must quickly repent and start to do good deeds to lessen the bad karma. Or even better, take the consequences as early as possible to lighten our retribution for a grave sin and avoid severe suffering in the future.

Thanks for watching, see you soon on the next fourth law of causality.