

佛學問答 Questions on Buddhism

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Q. There stated in the Sutra, "The power of the Karma (action) is very great, but the power of the mind is even much greater". If one made evil Karma unpurposefully and repented afterwards, one did not fall into the evil incarnations on account of one's good thinkings on one's death bed. Was this due to that the power of mind overwhelmed the power of Karma? Also if one repented one's evil Karma and made good thinkings, one did fall into evil incarnations. Was this due to that the power of Karma overwhelmed the power of mind?

A. Yes, your idea is right.

Q. Once the Exalted One told Ananda, "There are good man who falls into the hell after his death. There are bad man who rises into the haven after this death". "What is the reason?" asked Ananda. The Buddha said, "The first Case is that the good Karma of the present life is not ripe and the evil Karma of the past life is ripe firstly. In the second case, the evil Karma of the present life is not ripe and the good karma of the past life is ripe firstly. The firstly ripe Karma causes the fruit. It is like that one must pay one's most important debt firstly." In the above statement, is the power of the mind not effective and the power of the Karma determines everything?

A. The above statement was the answer of Buddha upon the question of Ananda. You cannot say that the power of the mind is useless when it was not mentioned here. You should read all the statements about this problem. In fact, the Karma is performed by the mind and changed by the mind. The result depends on which power is the stronger. To illustrate, cold wind blows the water and turns it into ice; warm wind blows the ice and turns it into water. If you blow a breathful of warm air on a large piece of ice, surely the ice will not melt. Because the power of the warm air is too small. When the warm wind of spring come, it is sure that the ice will melt by the bigger power.

Q. What is the difference between compassion and love?

A. Compassion comes from reasoning. It is applied to everyone equally. Love comes from passion. It is applied with differentiation.

Q. To where does Bodhisatva Ksitigarbha (Titsang) save the people? To the west Pure Land?

A. It depends upon the will of the people and is not limited to the west only.

Q. Is the rebirth to the west a real thing

or an illusion?

A. If you take the view point from the reality, there is no beginning and no end, no increase and no decrease. There is no birth and death when one leave this world and go to the other world. Why can you think it to be an illusion? If you take the view point from the worldliness, and if you take that world to be an illusion, you can examine the body of beings in this world, it is composed of the four elements and five aggregates, and has no real, permanent entity. Do you think it to be true?

Q. There are countries and Darma-realms inside our world. How about the Pure Land?

A. Inside the Pure Land, there are only equality, freedom and similarity. There is only Buddha Amitaba to teach the people and no country and states. There are only the Saint Darma-realms and no ordinary Darma-realms. There are the names of Deva (heavenly being) or man but in reality they are saints.

Q. When one accepts the commandments of Bodhisattva, one must obey the rule of abstaining from all unchastity. Would human race be cut off if all accept the commandments.

A. The clerics abstain from all unchastity. But the lays abstain only from fornication and adultery. There will be no fear for cutting off the human race. Even so, what is the defeat if all people become Buddha? Should the officer of the prison sorrow for the emptiness if all the prisoners become free people and no one commits crimes afterwards?

Q. Inside what part of the body hides the Alaya Vinana (the store conscience)?

A. This Vinana is the biggest outside of every thing and the smallest inside everything. It hides inside no one place.

Q. Upon the relation of wife and husband or of mother and son some one told me that it is caused by friendship of the former life; and some one told me that it is caused by hatred of the former life. Which is the proper explanation?

A. The cause has two aspects, the good and the bad. Friendship is the good cause and hatred is the bad cause. But the cause is made by one's mind and it can be changed by on once's mind. Therefore there are good relatives and also bad relatives.

Q. Some one told me that if we all be reborn to the Pure Land of Amitaba, our world would be empty. Isn't it?

A. The Vijnanas (subconscious mind, something like soul. Buddhists deny a permanent soul.) of the living beings in countless worlds, headed by the Karma (deeds, or influence of deeds) rebear about the worlds to and fro. There is no reason why it will have no one to have his rebirth in this world. It is not disappointing, should the world be empty. For instance, if all the prisoners are set free, why the prisoners should be sorry for the emptiness of the jail?