

Everlasting Happiness,
as Buddha Attains 3

Presented by Venerable Da Shi

**Translated by
The Dharma Committee
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Preface

Buddha came into this world to lead all sentient beings away from suffering and towards enlightenment. He forsook his throne and worldly possessions for the pursuit of enlightenment. It was his wish to guide all sentient beings in their understanding of the karmic cycle and the path to Nirvana. After his passing into Parinirvana, his teachings were collected and compiled by his followers.

It is Venerable Da Shi's wish to continue the Buddha's teachings, spread the seeds of compassion, and carry on his wish for all sentient beings to attain Nirvana. Since his ordination, Venerable Da Shi has been actively involved in the teaching of the Dharma in many places, including Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore. In 2004/2005, Venerable Da Shi was invited by the Life Television Station in Taiwan to present talks on various Dharma topics. This book was written based on the consolidated content of Venerable Da Shi's televised talks, in hope that his compassionate wish would be furthered through the spreading of the Dharma.

Foreword

EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS

Editorial Notes

The Buddha was born into this world out of great compassion with the aim to help all mortal beings avoid sufferings and attain endless bliss.

The world of mortal beings is full of suffering. It is a surreal world of endless desires and yet fulfillment of all desires is impossible. We have to work hard to find fulfillment but it is all transient. It is like a trap where we relentlessly pursue wealth, appearance, fame, gastronomic satisfaction, and excessive sleep without ever pondering what all these could lead to. We repeatedly go through birth, aging, sickness, and death and in this continuous cyclic existence, we suffer immeasurably.

The Buddha is like an expert doctor with the ability to diagnose and treat all kinds of ailments. Indeed, he dispenses

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eighty four thousands procedures for as much trouble that mortal beings could possibly face in this world. All these are found in the Buddha's teachings. If we practice his teachings with complete faith and realization, besides saving ourselves from suffering in this life, we can also find liberation in time to come.

There are very few fortunate beings that have the chance to hear the Buddha's teachings. The number of people who are able to hear and learn the Buddha's Dharma teachings is said to be like the amount of soil caught in one's nail if one were to use hands to dig into the ground.

Everlasting Happiness, as Buddha Attains is translated from a Chinese compilation of Venerable Da Shi's Dharma teachings on television in Taiwan, R.O.C. He has used the Agama Sutra as the central focus of these teachings, supplemented by relevant Dharma from Mahayana Sutras, including the Prajna Sutras, the Middle Way, the Maha-prajna-paramita-Sastra, the Dasabhumika-Vibhasa-Sastra, the Saddharma-Pundarika, etc. for better understanding. Through his skillful narration and explanation, Venerable Da Shi has made the Buddha's Dharma very easy to understand and at the same time, interesting. There are also many citations of examples where one can apply in one's life and practice.

It is the wish of Venerable Da Shi that these teachings should reach out to more people, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. For Buddhists who have sought refuge in the Triple Gem, these teachings serve to strengthen their understanding of the Dharma and improve practices. For non-Buddhists, may it serve as a guide to attain true bliss.

There are a total of six chapters in this book, dwelling on three main themes. Buddhist Philosophy of Life explains where we would head to after death and how rebirth would take place. Buddhist Cosmology explains the universe perceived and the cosmic space and time dimension associated with it. The Unequivocal Understanding about Life and Death explains the importance for us to know the karmic deeds and forces, and how they affect our rebirth. This is the third installment of a translated series and it will also be made available on our website at www.mypty.sg. Other topics in the series will be published progressively in subsequent books.

The Dharma introduced in this series is in the Chinese Mahayana tradition, the text of which are translated from Sanskrit scriptures. Hence, Sanskrit has been used for the names and specific Buddhist terminologies in the text. Readers can find help from the footnote on the relevant page and the Glossary at the end of the book for explanation of

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common Buddhist terms (first appearance in italics in the text) and concepts.

The Dharma Editorial Committee at Miao You Pu Ti Yuan in Singapore wishes all readers blissful fulfillments in reading.

@@@ This work is an effort to uphold and support Venerable Da Shi's great vow of spreading the Dharma in gratitude of the Buddha's compassion. Please help to spread the wisdom and cheers of the Dharma by passing this book on to someone else should you feel that you do not need it anymore. As the Buddha taught, the gift of the Dharma excels all gifts! May all have the chance to know the Buddha's Dharma! @@@

The Dharma Editorial Team

Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)

Unequivocal understanding about life and death (2)

In the subject on "Unequivocal understanding on life and death", if we are able to understand the circumstances of life and death in the intermediate existence, then we would have the Buddha's knowledge of "life and death, and vice versa."

So that while we are "alive", we know what should be done to ensure that we may take rebirth in the good existences.

Is it true that "good begets good, evil begets evil"?

We frequently bear such doubts: Why is it that some people who perform good deeds have to undergo much suffering and do not receive any good retribution?

And why is it that some people who commit tenfold unmeritorious cause of action without remission do not seem to be suffering? Does this mean that good does not beget good, and evil does not beget evil?

~ *UNEQUIVOCAL UNDERSTANDING ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH (2)* ~

This question does not only exist in present time. During the Buddha's time, more than two thousand years ago, others had already asked such questions.

In the past, people who had the supernatural power of the divine eye noticed a phenomenon: Some people had committed evil deeds during his lifetime but took rebirth in the heavenly realm upon his death. Why was this so?

There were others who had been doing good deeds during his lifetime but upon death, descended to the hell realm or the three bad existences. Why was this so? The people had questioned about this.

When the Buddha was around, he expounded the Dharma to his disciples about the reasons for these phenomena. Our doubts will be addressed when we understand this.

Once we have established a very clear understanding about birth and death, we will have the right knowledge, understanding and views of the Dharma.

The Buddha had, through The Agama Sutra – Madhyamagama, told us some of the circumstances:

Some people practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action during his lifetime and took rebirth in the heavenly realm.

If someone said this, the Buddha would reply: "I agree with this. I affirm and confirm that the relationship between the cause of practicing the tenfold meritorious cause of action and effect of taking rebirth in the heavenly realm is correct."

Then, another person might say: "A person who has practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action will definitely take rebirth in the heavenly realm upon his death."

The Buddha said: "This may not be so as nothing is definite. It is not a definite case."

"Why is this so? Didn't the Buddha say that when a person practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action during his lifetime, he will take rebirth in the heavenly realm?"

The Buddha replied: "Yes! This is the principle. But a person who has practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action during his lifetime may not necessarily take rebirth in the heavenly realm upon his death."

“Why is this so?”

The Buddha said: “There are three causes and conditions for a person who practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action during his lifetime to take rebirth in the heavenly realm in his next life.

“And there are four causes and conditions for a person who practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action during his lifetime to take rebirth in the hell realm in his next life.

“There are three causes and conditions for a person who had committed the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action during his lifetime to take rebirth in the hell realm upon his death.

“And there are four causes and conditions for a person who practiced the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action during his lifetime to take rebirth in the heavenly realm upon his death.”

If we are able to understand these different causes and conditions, we will not be muddle-headed. We must believe the Dharma expounded by the Buddha.

Would we not enhance our wisdom by listening to and learning the Dharma in such manner? Thus, we must listen to

and learn the Dharma frequently so as to enhance our wisdom.

The three causes and conditions of taking rebirth in the heavenly realm upon practicing the tenfold meritorious cause of action

(a) To take rebirth in the heavenly realm for the wholesome deeds generated in this life

Example:

During the Buddha's time, there was a wealthy man named Pi Luo Xian. The wealthy man was very stingy during his lifetime, miserly and did not practice generosity. As such, he did not cultivate any merits and virtues.

When he was using up his past meritorious karmic results, the Buddha told Maha Ananda: "He will die seven days later and will take rebirth in the hell realm after his death. The Hell of Screaming is waiting for him."

Maha Ananda asked: "Is there any way for him not to go to the hell realm?"

The Buddha said: “Yes! By joining the monastic order.” In the end, this Elder Pi Luo Xian joined the monastic order on the seventh day and practiced the *Ten Kinds of Mindfulness*.

As a result of the meritorious deed created by his joining the monastic order for that one day and night, upholding the precepts, and practicing the Ten Kinds of Mindfulness, he took rebirth in the heavenly realm. Besides, he would – in the future – take rebirth either in the heavenly realm or in the human realm. He would not be reborn in the hell realm. The meritorious result is so great that he could even be liberated eventually.

This is the evidence of one taking rebirth in the heavenly realm because of the cultivation of meritorious deeds in the present life.

(b) To take rebirth in the heavenly realm not for the wholesome deeds created in this life but for those created in past lives.

(c) To take rebirth in the heavenly realm due to the wholesome thoughts generated by having Right Understanding and Right View at the moment of death.

Example

A person may have practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action in this life, but at the moment of death, what might he do?

Once, a bird was listening to the Buddha expounding the Dharma and felt very happy. Just as it was listening, a hunter saw the bird and shot it down.

When the bird fell, it was still paying attention to the Buddha expounding the Dharma. Although its body was dead, its mind was unmoved, and was thinking of the Buddha and the Dharma.

Because the last thought at the moment of death was Right Understanding and Right View of the Dharma, and because its mind was on the Triple Gem, the bird took rebirth in the heavenly realm. Once it was in the heavenly realm, it did three things.

Its first thought: “Where is this place? This is the Tusita Heaven.”

Its second thought: “Where was I before? In the human world. I was a bird then.”

Its third thought: “What was the cause and condition for my rebirth in the heavenly realm? It was because I was listening to the Buddha expounding the Dharma.”

So it came back to pay homage and show its gratitude to the Buddha. The Buddha expounded the Dharma to it and it attained the Pure Dharma Eye.

The Right Understanding and Right View of the Dharma at the moment of death united the mind with the Right View, thus creating a wholesome thought at the moment of death that led to the rebirth in the heavenly realm.

These are the three causes and conditions that will result in the rebirth in the heavenly realm in the next life through the practice of the tenfold meritorious cause of action in this life.

What is the cause for one who practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action in his lifetime to take rebirth in the hell realm?

There are four situations where a person who practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action in his lifetime takes rebirth in the hell realm:

(a) The rewards from the good karma created in this lifetime has been fully utilized in this lifetime.

Why is it that someone who has created great meritorious deeds would still take rebirth in the three lower realms or the hell realm?

This is because he has fully utilized the meritorious results in the human realm. Only the Buddha is able to see this minute point.

(b) Though one may have been a kind person practicing the tenfold meritorious cause of action throughout this life, at the point of death, a Wrong View arose in his mind.

Example 1

There was a Bhikshu who practiced the fourth Dhyana meditation and had supernatural powers. He was proud of his spiritual superiority, thinking that he had attained a higher level of practice when in fact he had not.

He mistakenly thought himself to be an Arahant. At the moment of his death, he saw the bardo appeared, but Arahants do not have bardos when they die.

If at that moment, he understood that he had only attained the Fourth Dhyana meditation, he would have taken rebirth in the Fourth Dhyana Heaven.

But when he saw the bardo, a thought arose: "I am an Arahat, why do I still have the bardo? The Buddha lied to me!" This thought is a Wrong View. In actuality, he had not attained Arahatship.

He just thought and formed the Wrong View that the Buddha lied to him. He generated a doubtful mind towards the Buddha. At that moment, his bardo immediately transformed into a hell being and the hell fire started to burn and he descended to the hell realm.

Although he had cultivated the tenfold meritorious cause of action and practiced meditation in his lifetime, he nonetheless took rebirth in the hell realm due to the Wrong View generated at the moment of death.

Why do we continuously emphasize that we must listen to and learn the Dharma? Before we achieve any meditative concentration or are liberated, we must always listen to and learn the Dharma. When we have practiced habitually, we would not be deluded. At the moment of death, we will be

able to remain vigilant and not be like this Bhikshu who had attained the Fourth Dhyana meditation but still doubted the Buddha at his moment of death.

Example 2

We may have been practicing very well but fall seriously ill or contract cancer. And to cure us, our relatives will procure medication for us.

But the medicine such as stewed fish, stewed duck, stewed tortoise contain the meat of sentient beings. This Wrong View of killing generated at the moment of death will lead to the three bad existences.

We must be vigilant of this. Otherwise, a Wrong View generated at the moment of death will lead us to descend to the bad existences although we have created so many meritorious deeds in our lifetime. At that moment, we should not blame the Buddha for not clarifying this to us.

As such, by persisting until the end and knowing that our bodies will eventually deteriorate, we will not be deluded at the moment of death.

(c) The good deeds created in this life will be rewarded in the future life.

Although one has created the tenfold meritorious cause of action in this lifetime, why does one still take rebirth in the hell realm? This is due to the past evil deeds causing one to take rebirth in the hell realm.

The fruits of the good deeds that one has created in this lifetime will be reaped in the next life. This is also related to the combination of the different causes and conditions.

Example

King Prasenajit had a wife who had strong faith in and supported and protected the Buddha during her lifetime. But there was once she told a lie.

The wife had a pet. We are referring to this case with the hope that everybody will not keep pets indiscriminately.

There was once the wife brought the pet along to the bathroom for a bath. She committed some unpleasant acts with the pet and King Prasenajit saw the unpleasant acts from outside the bathroom.

When the wife came out of the bathroom, the king chided her: “How could you commit such unpleasant acts?”

The wife claimed: “I did not!” She told a lie.

King Prasenajit was deceived by the wife because he thought that she, being a Buddhist, would not lie.

Then to prove that she did not lie, she invited the king to go have a bath too, she shouted from outside: “You are doing the same act.”

As she had been doing many good deeds regularly, King Prasenajit believed what she said.

But the wife did not confess or repent for the lie that she told and this misdeed stayed on her mind all the time.

When the wife was dying, the bardo appeared showing the criminal karma caused by this lie. As such, she took rebirth in the hell realm for seven days when she passed away, and took rebirth in the heavenly realm on the eighth day.

King Prasenajit loved his wife very dearly. The following day after her death, the king asked the Buddha: “Where did my

wife take rebirth?" The king was concerned about his family members, so he went to see the Buddha.

The Buddha knew the purpose of the king's visit and was afraid that he would lose faith in the Triple Gem, so the Buddha expounded other Dharma to the king.

As the Buddha was irrefutable in expounding the Dharma, the king forgot to ask the Buddha about the rebirth of his wife. Upon his return to the palace then he remembered.

The next day he went to see the Buddha again and when he was about to ask the question again, the Buddha again expounded other Dharma to the king. The king again forgot to ask and returned.

The third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh days passed, the Buddha kept expounding other Dharma to the king so that he was unable to ask the question.

On the eighth day, King Prasenajit again went to see the Buddha, the Buddha said: "She has taken rebirth in the heavenly realm."

Only the Buddha knew about this. The Buddha also knew that she had been practicing the tenfold meritorious cause of action in her lifetime, except for the evil deed of that lie.

The retribution for the evil deed of lying to King Prasenajit appeared first. After enduring these seven days of the bad karmic retribution, she received the good karmic retribution for the next life.

As such, the good karmic rewards for the good deeds that we have created in this lifetime may not be reaped in the next life but in the future lives.

(d) It seems that one who practices the tenfold meritorious cause of action still ends up in the hell realm or the three bad existences to suffer. As the cause and effect of such situation is very complicated, only the Buddha is able to fully understand such matters.

The three causes and conditions to descend to the hell realm when one is practicing the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action:

(a) To go to the hell realm due to the evil deeds committed in this life.

(b) To go to the hell realm due to the evil deeds committed in the past life.

(c) An unwholesome thought arose at the moment of death, resulting in the rebirth in the hell realm.

Example

A wealthy man had a very beautiful and dignified daughter. One day she saw the magnificent looking Buddha and heard the Buddha say: “In the mundane world, there is none born that will not die; all accumulations will eventually dissipate; loftiness will definitely lead to degeneration; all gatherings are bound to part.”

“Since the mundane world is so impermanent, I will not be able to maintain my looks.” As such, she decided to renounce.

After renouncing, the father naturally protected and supported her and built a very big and stately accommodation for her to use as an abode.

This *Bhikshuni* had such a big abode to stay, so she invited many Bhikshunis to stay with her.

One day, this Bhikshuni broke a precept and the other Bhikshunis chased her out of the abode based on the Buddha's precepts.

This Bhikshuni scolded: “You ingrates, this abode was built by my father, I invited you to stay and now you are chasing me out.”

In fact, nobody chased her out, it was because she did not uphold the precepts and was chased out by the precept that she broke. She was chased out by her own bad karmic action. Yet she did not reflect on this point but blamed the other Bhikshunis. She added: “I don't want to see you in the future.”

When she died, she descended to the hell realm and became blind. She did not want to see the monastics. As such, she had no sight forever.

Whether she was in the hell realm, the ghosts realm, the animal realm, or even the human realm, she still could not see. She was born without sight, this is known as "birth without sight".

Such a severe karmic retribution was the result of only a karmic action by speech. As such we must guard the mouth as the mouth can create karmic action easily. Thus the Buddha described: “There is an axe in the mouth. It can cut this body any time, creating endless suffering.” We must be mindful of this.

So when we create bad karmic action in this life, we will suffer in the next life. Such a situation can be seen through the Divine Eye.

In some cases, the bad karmic action created in this life will lead the person to the three bad existences or the hell realm.

Some people might have committed the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action, and at the moment of death generated an unwholesome thought, such people take rebirth in the hell realm.

Why would a person who had committed the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action take rebirth in the heavenly realm?

It is a very special situation for a person who has committed the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action to take rebirth in the heavenly realm. There are four such scenarios:

(a) Having committed the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action in this life and exhausted all the sufferings in this life: As Buddhists, we know that when we confess and repent, we should do so immediately for all the bad karmic action

created in this life and endure the retribution so that all can be concluded in this life.

(b) The fruit of bad karmic actions committed in this life will surface in a future life: As such the being will not go to hell in the next life but will go to the heavenly realm first.

(c) Taking rebirth in the heavenly realm due to the past good karmic action: A person takes rebirth in the heavenly realm not due to the bad karmic action in this life, but owing to the good karmic action committed in the past life.

Example

There is a story in the Agama Sutra about a person who slaughtered goats for a living. He told King Prasenajit: "I want to apply for a job to slaughter goats."

The king has the correct view and knowledge of the Dharma. "Slaughtering goats is killing and is a bad karmic action. Why do you want to do such a job?"

This person told the king: "I saw that in my previous six lives, I descended from the heavenly realm to the human realm to slaughter goats. Upon the end of my life, I took rebirth in the heavenly realm again. For a total of six times I slaughtered

goats in the human realm and took rebirth in the heavenly realm six times. As such, I saw that slaughtering goats could lead to the heavenly realm.”

This is known as no cause and no effect, good does not beget good and evil does not beget evil.

Is he not like us, where we only notice how the people commit bad deeds but do not get bad karmic retributions?

Not only this, he even had the Divine Eye and could see the happenings of six life times. King Prasenajit believed in the Dharma but to get confirmation, he went to consult the Buddha: “Why did this person say that he slaughtered goats for six life times but yet took rebirth in the heavenly realm for six times? Upon descending from the heavenly realm, he wanted to slaughter goats. He applied to work as a goat slaughterer this time, should I grant him?”

The Buddha said: “He could see his past six lives but he did not have the supernormal cognition to know about the past lives. To have supernormal cognition of the past lives means you will be able to understand the relationship between cause and effect in life and death. Because of this, he mistook what he saw as correct. What is correct?”

In his past seventh life, this person had supported and sustained a Pratyeka Buddha.

As such he had the good karmic retribution of taking rebirth in the heavenly realm for six times. But there would not be a seventh time as his karmic rewards do not warrant a rebirth in the heavenly realm for the seventh time. But due to the bad karmic action of slaughtering goats in this life and the past lives, he will go to the hell realm upon the end of this life.”

In the mundane world, we also notice some people committing bad karmic action but do not seem to be suffering any bad karmic retribution. Does that mean that evil does not beget evil? No, because it is not time yet.

Due to the cause and condition of the past life, the person can enjoy a good rebirth in this life. As such, we should not be surprised about it.

When we understand this, do we not see that our wisdom grows by listening to and learning the Dharma? As such, we must always listen to and learn the Dharma.

(d) Though the person has committed the tenfold unmeritorious cause of action in this life, he generates a

wholesome thought at the moment of death. Thus he takes rebirth in the heavenly realm.

What is the difference between the karmic action and the karmic retribution?

With the Right Understanding and Right View, let us now consider how we could gain an unequivocal understanding about life and death, and how we should conduct ourselves while still alive.

We know that once we have committed a karmic action, we will have to bear the corresponding karmic retribution. But the time lapse between the karmic act and the karmic retribution also has its own cause and condition and there is a time difference. Where is the difference?

The difference, according to the commentaries written by the ancient sages, lies in the principle that trivial causes can reap significant results.

Example 1

Let us use rice as an example. A small rice seed can grow hundreds of rice grains. But this is only an insignificant result.

Let us consider a tree. We plant six Phoenix trees, and after five or ten years, the trees grow to be big and wide, capable of providing shelter for more than ten people.

From a small seedling, it grows into such a big tree. Even though the Phoenix tree is big but there are other trees that are indescribably larger.

Looking at this, you will realize that the cause is trivial but the result is significant and over a longer period, the result will be more significant.

Example 2

In his past life, Maha Aniruddha supported and sustained a Pratyeka Buddha and enjoyed the karmic reward in that life.

He saw a rabbit which jumped onto his body and became a golden person. Using this golden person, he could support his family and enjoyed a happy and wealthy life. His past life was such.

In the future 91 kalpas, he took rebirth in the heavenly and human realms, enjoying good karmic rewards without any karmic suffering. There was no bad retribution because he had supported and sustained a Pratyeka Buddha.

Subsequently during the period when Sakyamuni Buddha was born and attained Buddhahood, he had renounced as a prince to become a monk; it is such joy.

The whole process of Maha Aniruddha's good karmic retribution was clear – he had supported and sustained a Pratyeka Buddha in the past and had continued to enjoy the good karmic retribution from that life onwards until he attained liberation as an Arahant. The karmic rewards lasted for a long period of 91 kalpas.

Once we understand that a trivial cause may produce significant result, we must seize the opportunity when it arises.

Example 3

Devadatta had a disciple named Gokali. Because Gokali associated with non-virtuous companions, he always looked for trouble with the two Arahants, Sariputra and Maudgalyayana.

He defamed that the two Venerables were having sexual misconduct with a female follower. Such act is known as defamation by harsh speech and false speech.

In that life, his body was covered with boils and upon his death, he descended to the Padma Hell with one hundred buffaloes ploughing his tongue.

Out of compassion, Maha Maudgalyayana went to the hell realm to advise and save him but he used harsh speech to scold the Venerable. As such, the number of buffaloes ploughing his tongue increased to one thousand. It was extremely painful and he had to endure one kalpa of such hell suffering.

After he left the hell realm, he would go on to the animal realm and the hungry ghost realm to suffer. When he takes rebirth as a human, he would have to endure even greater suffering. As such, it is a very serious criminal karma to defame a Venerable One.

Gokālī only committed the act of criticizing and defaming yet he had to endure such suffering.

He did not even kill, steal, and commit sexual misconduct. Merely by the karmic action of speech, he created such a severe criminal karma and had to suffer for such a long period of one kalpa. If he had created the other three bad karmic actions, the criminal karma would have been worse.

As such, in between living and dying, we know that what we have done while alive will result in the corresponding situation upon death. Thus, when we are alive, we must speak only of good things, we must always commit good acts and uphold our precepts.

What is general karma and specific karma?

General karma: In the nine characteristics of the bardo, we know that "general-like" karma is akin to a puppet show where a character appears suddenly and another character appears later. As such it is called "general karma" or "directive karma", the karma that will lead us to the six realms of existences.

The physical form we take as sentient beings is a result of the karma created in past lives; hence, to be able to take rebirth as a human in this life, shows that we had certainly created good karma in the past. Having taken the human form means that we are in the human realm which is said to be a good existence; this is also known as direct retribution.

There is another type called circumstantial retribution, which is dependent on our direct retribution.

Under direct retribution, we are humans; for heavenly beings, their direct retribution is as heavenly beings; Being an Asura is also a direct retribution. Being a dog, for example, is a direct retribution in the animal realm.

The beings in the ghost realm are also known as direct retribution. So too is existence as a being in the hell realm. These are the direct retribution of the six realms.

Specific karma (or completed karma): This refers to the karma which leads to the completion of specific differences between each individual being within the same realm.

Example 1

Some people are better looking whilst others are uglier. This is due to the different karma created in their previous lives.

Some upheld their precepts more diligently whilst others are more lax in upholding their precepts. Although they did not break any precepts, there is still a difference.

Some of them also practice generosity whilst upholding the precepts, as such they have better rewards in this life. Some people may have upheld the precepts but seldom practice generosity, so their rewards would be poorer.



Although reborn as humans, some people are healthier, some are more prone to illnesses; some have longer life span whilst some have shorter life span, all these are due to their specific karma.

Example 2

Not only humans, if we take the example of dogs: Some dogs are well fed, some are sickly, some are strays, whilst others are reared as pets. Some dogs go to beauty parlors while some lead hard lives in the wild. When pet owners go overseas, some pet owners send their pets to the animal hotels to be taken care of while some pets are left to starve for a few days.

From this, we can see that even in the animal realm, there are different specific karma and the differences are vast. This is the difference of the specific karma in the direct retribution.

Example 3

There are also different circumstantial retributions. For human beings, it is not too bad to be born in Taiwan as one has the freedom to do what one wants. The karmic rewards are very good too. Some people have better karmic rewards, some have poorer.

We saw the people of Afghanistan destroying the Buddha statues with big cannons. After they destroyed the Buddha statues, it became their turn to be attacked by other countries. They also experience natural disasters. Destruction of Buddha statues is a very severe criminal karma.

Most people who are born there cannot escape because this is one of their circumstantial retributions.

For people born in the Middle East, they may encounter separation from loved ones in life and death, or being destitute and homeless because of their country's oil which many people covet. How can one lead a good life in such places? Such is their circumstantial retribution.

For those who are born in certain parts of Europe, they tend to have better and happier lives.

We can understand that the kind of karmic retribution we experience is due to the general karma that leads us to take rebirth within the six realms; whichever realm we go to is dependent on whether we uphold the precepts diligently or not.

This is because rebirth in the different realms of the six realms is due to different karma created. As such, apart from understanding the principle of trivial cause leading to significant result, we must also understand that there is the concept of different periods in the creation of karma.

The relationship between the different periods in the creation of karma and the degree of retribution.

Periods in the creation of karma – There are three periods involved when we create good or bad karma.

(a) The Preparation Period: Before we do something, we will prepare and plan.

Example:

Liberation of lives. Before liberating lives, there are many preparatory works to be done. We need to contact people, the place for releasing the lives, and how much to be prepared. How much donation do we resolve to give? How many people are going? While we are making such preparations, we feel joy, don't we?

Let us consider a fish and the joy of living it would experience upon being released instead of the suffering it would have to endure if thrown into the wok to be fried and cooked. When we think of such comparison, although we have not actually carried out the act of release, we would have already generated a wholesome thought and not an unwholesome thought. This is known as "the preparation period".

All the time taken to do the preparation, even when we deliver the items needed to the appointed place is also considered as convenient time. In summary, the period between doing all the preparatory work until the actual act of liberation is carried out is known as "the preparation period".

(b) Period of Accomplishment: There are people who are very motivated to perform such a wholesome deed as the liberation of lives, and participated earnestly and joyfully in the planning of the project. If the liberation is to be carried out on a Sunday, the day before (on Saturday), they will feel much joy. In terms of the wholesome deed, the intention is very strong during the preparation period. When they are carrying out the actual act of liberating lives, the period during which the actual act is performed is called the "period of accomplishment".

(c) Period of Completion: When carrying out this good karmic action, the mind is filled with joy, and they would carry it through to completion. The period after completing the action is known as "period of completion". They feel happy on the way home after completing the act. They are still happy upon their return and would share the joy with everyone they meet.

“If I am that fish, the sentient being that has been liberated, having regained this life is so joyful, so good. Hence, I wish to continue liberating lives in the future, to let the fish have happiness.”

When having such thoughts and sharing the joy with others, is known as "period of completion".

There is a difference in the strength of the thought during the "period of completion", some people would say: “I'm not going to liberate life again, it's so hot and so tiring at the end of the day.” Initially he was very happy during the "preparation period" and "period of accomplishment". But during the "period of completion", he was physically drained, and coupled with the hot weather, he started to regret and the strength of his intention started to weaken.

The two earlier thoughts were strong whilst the latter thought was weaker. If the three thoughts are incomplete, with one or two stronger thoughts and the other being weaker, this will affect the kinds of rewards one receives as a result of such cause and conditions.

The preceding cause and conditions impact on the resultant rewards, and hence the difference in the magnitude of rewards received will also be vast.

If we realize how to generate greater good deeds whilst reducing bad deeds, we will know how to create good deeds and eliminate bad deeds in our present and future lives. Even if we have committed bad deeds, we will know how to correct the situation.

There are different degrees of the thought during "the preparation period": very strong; strong; mediocre; weak; weaker, etc.

The same also applies to the thought during the "period of accomplishment": very strong; strong; mediocre; weak; weaker, etc.

Upon the completion of the act during the "period of completion", the mind might feel rejoiced and happy, average, not pleased at all, and even feel annoyed for the completed deed.

Depending on the strength of our mind when carrying out the deeds during the three periods, six different circumstances may arise. Once we are able to grasp these six circumstances, we will be able to tell the magnitude of the resulting retribution.

Example 1

When Maha Aniruddha was making offerings to the Pratyeka Buddha, he generated a respectful and compassionate mind to offer food to the Pratyeka Buddha.

Then he asked: "May I provide and sustain you?"

The Pratyeka Buddha said: "Yes." This is the "preparation period";

When he actually offered the food to the Pratyeka Buddha, it is the "period of accomplishment";

He was happy when making the offering. When the Pratyeka Buddha displayed his supernatural powers, Maha Aniruddha was more magnanimous and joyful. At that moment, his thought during the "period of completion" was very strong because he made offering to a Venerable One. His mind was strong and joyous.

As his intentions throughout the three periods were very strong, he immediately enjoyed good reward in that life and took rebirth in the heavenly realm in his next life. The good retribution continued till the time the Buddha appeared when he was a prince and could renounce and be liberated. Such is the retribution one will receive as a result of such cause and conditions.

Example 2

What about Gokali? During the "preparation period", he was always finding ways to harm Maha Sariputra and Maha Maudgalyayana, and this thought was very strong. Then, the thought at the "period of accomplishment" to criticize and defame was also very strong.

And during the "period of completion", the Buddha advised him not to defame others, and the situation could have been corrected if he had confessed and repented in time.

But Gokali said: "I will not confess and repent, I will continue to criticize them."

At that moment, he descended to the hell realm. Maha Maudgalyayana went to the hell realm to advise him but he refused to amend. Instead, he continued to criticize the Venerable One. He committed the bad deed of harsh speech at the three times with strong intentions and vehemence, as such his bad karmic retribution was countless and limitless.

How to use the "three periods" to help us have a clear understanding of life and death?

Now that we understand the principle, how do we apply it? When we carry out good deeds, we must be prepared to do so diligently with strong faith. After completing the deed, we must feel rejoiced and happy and be willing to encourage ourselves and others.

What about the evil deeds? Do not plan to do evil deeds. If we inadvertently scold someone, we must quickly confess and repent. After committing the evil deed, we must quickly generate a repentant mind.

We may have committed the act inadvertently. At that moment, it was only during the period of accomplishment that you have committed the act of scolding someone. We must confess and repent immediately after committing such act, and the bad karmic retribution will be diluted. Even though we will have to suffer for committing the act, the resulting bad karmic retribution will be less severe.

Once we understand the principle that the law of cause and effect will not fail, and having significant result with trivial cause, we will know how to generate great good karmic rewards with trivial cause. We will also know how to minimize the bad karmic retribution. In this way, we will be able to generate more happy results whilst minimizing the suffering for our future lives.

Example

In light of the saying, “You reap what you sow; good begets good and evil begets evil”, if we do not get any retribution, it is simply because the time for the retribution has not ripened yet.

There was a physician who heard that the king was sick and that none of the physicians, even the imperial physician, in the country was able to cure him.

So he went to attend to the king's illness and the king started to recover slowly.

The king secretly rewarded this physician's family with some wealth. Whenever the king's health improved, he would give some wealth to the physician's family. In the end, the king's health was fully restored.

When the physician was leaving, the king only gave him a small reward.

Along the way, the physician thought: "Why is it that though I was able to cure the king's serious illness, he only gave me such a meager reward?"

He was still grumbling but when he reached his home town, he saw his beautiful wife, house, and land, then he realized that the king had rewarded him handsomely.

The physician regretted then. He regretted for not being more attentive and diligent when attending to the king's illness. If

he had been more diligent and improve the king's health, wouldn't the reward be much greater?

This is having a strong thought at the three periods. If the thought at the three times of doing good deeds is strong, the retribution will be very great.

Knowing this cause and conditions, and that good begets good and evil begets evil, maybe at the beginning, the resulting reward is insignificant. In future, the greater reward will surface. This is not because there is no reward, it is that the time of reward has not ripened yet.

Once we understand this, we will know how to master the relationship between the three periods and the strength of the intentional or unintentional thought when performing good or bad deeds to multiply our good retribution and minimize the bad retribution. At the end of this life, we will not have any regrets, that is, to live and die with dignity.

~ UNEQUIVOCAL UNDERSTANDING ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH (2) ~



Glossary

Altruistic Joy: Also known as Sympathetic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Amitabha Buddha: The Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life, who presides over the Western Pure Land, to which anyone can be reborn through single minded recitation of or meditation on the Buddha's name.

Anagamin: One who has attained the third stage of Liberation. Such a person has abandoned sensuous desires. Upon passing from the human realm, he will take rebirth in one of the five special worlds in the World of Form, called the Śuddhāvāsa worlds, or "Pure Abodes", from which he will attain Arahatship and will never return to the human realm. Hence, he is also known as a Non Returner. An Anagamin has abandoned the five lower fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatship.

Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi: The Supreme and Complete Enlightenment.

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Arahat: One who has traversed the Eightfold Noble Path to reach the fourth and final stage of Liberation, called Arahatship. An Arahat has abandoned all ten fetters that bind beings to the cycle of existence. Also known as the Perfect One. See also Arahatship.

Arahatship: The fourth and final stage of Liberation, in which one is fully liberated from Samsara and is no longer subject to death and rebirth. The four stages of Liberation are: The First stage known as Srotapanna; the Second stage known as Sakradagamin; the Third stage known as Anagamin; and the Fourth stage known as Arahat.

Avici Hell: Also known as the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture. It is the deepest and worst hell. Those born in this hell suffer, die, and are instantly reborn to suffering without interruption, until they have exhausted the retribution for their evil karma.

Bad existences: The three lower realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals; as opposed to the good existences, which are the three realms of humans, asuras, and heavenly beings. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Bardo: A Tibetan term for the state of existence intermediate between two lives.

Bhikshu: A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist Sangha or monk observing 250 Precepts.

Bhikshuni: A fully ordained female member of the Buddhist Sangha or nun observing 500 Precepts.

Bhutatahata: The true character of reality. The inherent or true nature of phenomena or true suchness. (诸法实相)

Bodhicitta: Also known as the Bodhi-mind or the Bodhi-heart, in which "Bodhi" means "enlightened". It is the aspiration to attain supreme Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Bodhisattva: A being who has developed Bodhicitta and is striving for enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Brahma King: The King of the Brahma World.

Brahma World: In the widest sense, this is the name of the World of Form; in a narrower sense, it is the collective name of the first three heavens of the World of Form. See also Three planes of existence.

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Buddha: The Fully Enlightened One, who possesses perfect wisdom and compassion.

Chakravartin: See Wheel Turning Monarch.

Compassion: Also known as Karuna. See also Four Divine States of Mind and Great Compassion.

Cycle of existence: See Samsara.

Cyclic existence: See Samsara.

Dana: Charity; benevolence; generosity.

Defilements: The mental states of greed, hatred, and delusion which temporarily cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. These defilements are seen as the very roots of samsaric existence and are known as the three poisons.

Deva: A heavenly being.

Dharma: The Teachings of the Buddha.

Dharma-kaya: The dharma body, the truth body, the reality body.

Eight precepts: Observed by lay Buddhists during certain retreats: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual activities; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not take intoxicants; (6) do not wear bodily adornments, use perfumes, engage in singing and dancing, and watching dances or plays; (7) do not sleep in a raised bed; and (8) do not eat after noon.

Eightfold Noble Path: The fundamental teaching of the Buddha that shows the path that leads to the cessation of suffering: (1) Right View or Right Understanding; (2) Right Thought; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Action; (5) Right Livelihood; (6) Right Effort; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Concentration.

Eighteen kinds of transformation: Includes (1) moving objects or even worlds; (2) emitting fire from the body; (3) illuminating innumerable worlds; (4) causing sentient beings in all the six realms to be seen; (5) changing an object into something different; (6) roaming freely by penetrating walls, mountains, water, air, and so on; (7) rolling anything into a minute size; (8) enlarging objects to gigantic proportions; (9) storing up swarms of people, mountains, or earth within the body; (10) entering any group, assuming their forms and voices, preaching to them, and then disappearing; (11) magnifying the body to a thousand fold; (12) hiding this

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magnified metamorphosis; (13) subjecting sentient beings to one's will; (14) controlling the supernatural powers of those below one in spiritual achievements; (15) endowing sentient beings with eloquence; (16) restoring memory to those who forget the Dharma; (17) giving joy to listeners; and (18) lighting up the creatures in all the worlds.

Eon: See Kalpa.

Equanimity: Also known as Upeksa. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

First Stage of Fruition: Also known as the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained the first stage of fruition is known as a Srotapanna or Stream Enterer.

Five aggregates: Form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness.

Five desires: Wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep.

Five precepts: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; and (5) Do not take intoxicants.

Five sensual pleasures: Pleasurable feelings derived from the contact between the five sense bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, and the five sense objects of form, sound, odor, flavor, and tactile object.

Four Divine States of Mind: (1) Maitri or Loving-kindness; (2) Karuna or Compassion; (3) Mudita or Sympathetic Joy; and (4) Upeksa or Equanimity.

Four Foundations of Mindfulness: (1) Contemplation of the body; (2) Contemplation of feelings; (3) Contemplation of the state of mind; and (4) Contemplation of phenomena. See also Right Effort.

Four Noble Truths: (1) The noble truth of suffering; (2) The noble truth of the cause of suffering; (3) The noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and (4) The noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Good existences: The three upper realms of humans, asuras and heavenly beings; as opposed to the bad existences of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Great Compassion: The aspiration to remove the sufferings and causes of sufferings of all sentient beings.

Heavens of the Four Deva Kings: Also known as the Heavens of the Deva Kings of the Four Heavens. This is the first of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Hell of Screaming: One of the Eight Hot Hells. The other seven are: the Hell of Thoughts, the Hell of Iron Chains, the Hell of Crushing, the Hell of Great Screaming, the Scorching Hot Hell, the Extreme Scorching Hot Hell, and the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture (also known as the Avici Hell).

Kalpa: Also known as Eon. It is often used to denote a very long period of time. There are small, medium, great, and incalculable kalpas. A great kalpa indicates the length of time between the creation and recreation of a universe, spanning the period of the universe's formation, existence, destruction, and non-existence.

Karma: The deeds carried out by a person and their effects on the person's future, especially in relation to their succeeding rebirths. Karma can be classified as actions of the body,

speech, and mind, each of which can have the moral quality of wholesomeness, unwholesomeness, or indeterminate.

Karuna: Also known as Compassion. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

King Yama: The King in charge of the hell realm.

Law of causality: Also known as the law of cause and effect. This is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations, in which all actions, which is a cause, will produce a corresponding effect. It is also stated as good begets good, evil begets evil; good will not beget evil, evil will not beget good.

Law of Dependent Origination: The principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of causes and conditions.

Loving-kindness: Also known as Maitri. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Maitri: Also known as Loving-kindness. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

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Mara: The Demon King who resides in the Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven.

Mudita: Also known as Altruistic or Sympathetic Joy. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Naga: Dragon or serpent. A beneficent divine being who governs the various water bodies, such as seas, lakes, rivers, and springs.

National Preceptor: The Religious Adviser to the King equivalent to the position of a Prime Minister.

Nirmanarati Heaven: This is the fifth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Nirvana: The perfect state of mind that is free from greed, hatred, and delusion, and hence all suffering. See also Parinirvana and Residue-less nirvana.

Non Returner: See Anagamin.

Once Returner: See Sakradagamin.

Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven: This is the sixth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Mara, the Demon King, resides in this heaven. See also Three planes of existence.

Parinirvana: Also known as the Great Nirvana; it indicates the Buddha's entering into the state of residue-less nirvana. See also Nirvana and Residue-less nirvana.

Perfect One: See Arahant.

Prajna: Wisdom; insight; divine intuition.

Pratyeka Buddha: Also known as the Silent Buddha, or Self-enlightened One. The Pratyeka Buddha appears in an era when there is no Buddha or the Buddha's teachings. He lives apart from others and achieves enlightenment through self-contemplation and realization of dependent arising.

Pure Dharma Eye: The pure vision of the true Dharma.

Residue-less nirvana: Also known as nirvana without residue. It refers to the state of total liberation from all physical and mental conditions. This is in contrast with nirvana with residue, where the body still exists. See also Nirvana and Parinirvana.

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Right Action: To conduct oneself in moral, peaceful, and honorable ways, that is in keeping with the precepts of not killing, not stealing, and not committing sexual misconduct. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Concentration: To develop one's meditation according to the four Dhyanas. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Effort: To develop the four types of efforts: (1) the effort to get rid of unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind, such as the desire to take another's property; (2) the effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome thoughts; (3) the effort to develop wholesome thoughts of loving-kindness and compassion; and (4) the effort to maintain and develop further wholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Faith: To develop faith in the Triple Gem and the Four Noble Truths, that through practicing Buddhism, all sentient beings can eventually attain liberation from Samsara.

Right Livelihood: To live honorably in a profession which is in no way harmful to sentient beings, and in keeping with the precepts. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Mindfulness: To practice the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. See also Four Foundations of Mindfulness and Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Speech: To abstain from telling lies, slandering, frivolous speech, and harsh speech. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Thought: To have only thoughts which are in line with Buddhist teachings. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Understanding: See Right View.

Right View: To develop the understanding or view that complies with the Buddhist teaching of causality or the law of cause and effect; understanding the Four Noble Truths. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Right Understanding.

Right View of Dependent Arising: Also refer to as Law of Dependent Origination. It is the principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of causes and conditions. It is an elaboration of the Principle of Cause and Effect, highlighting the concept of inter-dependency of existence, and also the duality/non-duality.

Rupa-kaya: The material body.

Saha World: The secular world, which is known as the world that must be endured as it is full of sufferings.

Sakra: The King of Trayastrimsat Heaven.

Sakradagamin: One who has attained the second stage of Liberation. Such a person, upon passing from the human realm, will take rebirth in the heavenly realms, after which he will be reborn in the human realm one last time to attain Arahathship. Hence he is also known as a Once Returner. A Once Returner has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. He is distinguished from the Stream Enterer by the fact that the Once Returner has weakened greed, hatred, and delusion to a greater degree. Therefore, he has fewer than seven rebirths. See also Arahathship.

Samadhi: Meditative concentration. Often used to denote the deepest state of pure concentration, in which the mind is free from distraction and totally absorbed in the object of concentration. There are many levels and types of samadhi, such as the Samadhi of Loving-kindness and Compassion.

Samsara: Also known as the Cycle of existence or Cyclic Existence. This refers to the endless cycle of suffering caused by birth, death, and rebirth in the six realms of cyclic existence.

Sangha: The Buddhist monastic order or community.

Seven Factors of Enlightenment: (1) Mindfulness; (2) Discriminative investigation of the Dharma; (3) Effort; (4) Joy; (5) Ease of body and mind; (6) Concentration; and (7) Equanimity.

Sila: The precept; code of morality; Buddhist ethics.

Siksamana: A female novice nun in waiting observing Six Precepts.

Six consciousnesses: The consciousnesses of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

Six Paramitas: The Sanskrit word Paramita means to cross over to the other shore. Paramita may also be translated as perfection, perfect realization, or reaching beyond limitation. Through the practice of these six Paramitas, we cross over the sea of suffering (Samsara) to the shore of happiness and

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awakening (Nirvana); we cross over from ignorance and delusion to enlightenment. The six Paramitas refer to:

- The Perfection of Generosity (Dana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Ethics (Sila Paramita),
- The Perfection of Patience (Ksanti Paramita)
- The Perfection of Joyous Effort / Enthusiastic Perseverance (Virya Paramita),
- The Perfection of Concentration (Dhyana Paramita), and
- The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita).

Six realms of cyclic existence: The realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, asuras, and heavenly beings.

Six sense bases: Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six sense objects: Form, sound, odor, flavor, tactile object, and phenomena.

Sramenera: A male novice monk observing Ten Precepts.

Sramanerika: A female novice nun observing Ten Precepts.

Srotapanna: One who has attained the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained this stage is said to have entered the Stream that leads to Liberation, hence he is also known as a Stream Enterer. Due to the fact that the Stream Enterer has attained an intuitive grasp of Buddhist teachings ("Right View") and has complete confidence in the Triple Gem, he will not be reborn in the three bad existences again, and will take at most seven cycles of rebirths alternating between the heavenly realm and the human realm before attaining the final stage of Liberation, Arahatsip. A Stream Enterer has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatsip.

Stream Enterer: See Srotapanna.

Supernatural powers: The six supernatural powers are: (1) Divine eye or clairvoyance; (2) Divine ear or clairaudience; (3) mental telepathy or ability to read the thoughts of others; (4) psychic travel or telekinesis; (5) knowledge of the past and future; and (6) ending contamination. The first five supernatural powers can be acquired by one who practices deep concentration, but the sixth supernatural power is only attainable when one has attained Arahatsip.

Sympathetic Joy: Also known as Altruistic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Ten directions of space: The directions of North, South, East, West, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Zenith, and Nadir, thus covering all spaces.

Ten epithets: The ten honorable titles of Buddha. These ten epithets are common to all Buddhas.

- Tathāgata - Thus-Come One or Thus-Gone One,
- Arhat - Worthy of Offerings,
- Samyak-Sambuddha - Equally, Perfectly Enlightened One,
- Vidyācarana-Sampanna - Knowledge and Conduct Perfected,
- Sugata - Well-Arrived One or Well-Gone One. Tathāgata is completely in control of his own births and deaths,
- Lokavid - Understanding the World,
- Anuttara - Unsurpassed One,
- Purusa-Damya-Sārathi - Tamer of Men,
- Śāstā Deva-Manusyānām - Teacher to Gods, Humans, and heavenly beings,
- Buddha-Bhagavān - Buddha the World Honored One.

Ten Kinds of Mindfulness: (1) Mindfulness of the Buddha; (2) Mindfulness of the Dharma; (3) Mindfulness of the Sangha; (4) Mindfulness of the Precepts; (5) Mindfulness of Generosity; (6) Mindfulness of the Heavens; (7) Mindfulness of the Cessation of Thoughts; (8) Mindfulness of Breath; (9) Mindfulness of the Impermanence of the Body; and (10) the Mindfulness of Death.

Ten Stages of Bodhisattva Practice: According to the Prajna sutras, the ten stages of Bodhisattva Practice are:

- the stage of dry wisdom,
- the stage of nature,
- the stage of the eighth person,
- the stage of insights,
- the stage of diminishment of afflictions,
- the stage of freedom from desire,
- the stage of completion of discernment,
- the stage of the Pratyeka Buddha,
- the stage of the Bodhisattva, and
- the stage of the Buddha.

Tenfold meritorious cause of action: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not slander; (6) Do not engage in frivolous speech;

(7) Do not engage in harsh speech; (8) Do not bear greed; (9) Do not bear hatred; and (10) Do not stay deluded.

Three periods: The past, present, and future.

Three planes of existence: The World of Sensuous Desires, the World of Form, and the Formless World. All beings in the six realms of cyclic existence can be found in the World of Sensuous Desires as these beings are plagued by various sensuous desires. Beings in the World of Form have abandoned sensuous desires but still cling on to physical forms, while beings in the Formless World have even relinquished the physical forms and exist only in mental states.

Three poisons: See Defilements.

Trayastrimsat Heaven: Also known as the Thirty-Three Heavens. It is the second of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Triple Gem: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Tusita Heaven: This is the fourth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Maitreya Bodhisattva is currently residing in this heaven, awaiting for the causes and conditions

to ripen for him to descend to the human realm and become the next Buddha to save and liberate all sentient beings. See also Three planes of existence.

Twelve Links of Dependent Origination: The twelve links of dependent origination provide a detailed description on the problem of suffering and rebirth. They are: ignorance, mental formation, consciousness, name and form, the six senses, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, aging and death. There is no existing phenomenon that is not the effect of dependent origination. All phenomena arise dependent upon a number of casual factors, called conditions.

- Ignorance is the condition for mental formation.
- Mental formation is the condition for consciousness.
- Consciousness is the condition for name and form.
- Name and form is the condition for the six senses.
- The six senses are the conditions for contact.
- Contact is the condition for feeling.
- Feeling is the condition for craving.
- Craving is the condition for clinging.
- Clinging is the condition for becoming.
- Becoming is the condition for birth.
- Birth is the condition for aging and death.

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Upekṣa: Also known as Equanimity. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Western Pure Land: Also known as Sukhavati in Sanskrit. It refers to the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha.

Wheel Turning Monarch: Also refer to as Chakravartin. A universal emperor and protector of Buddhism. It is a term used for an ideal universal ruler, who rules ethically and benevolently over the entire world. Wheel turning literally means whose chariot is rolling or whose Dharmachakra (Wheel of the Dharma) is turning everywhere without obstruction.

Yama Heaven: This is the third of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

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