

Luang Poh's Karma

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I have had experience with the law of karma, through which we must receive results. When wisdom arises in our minds, from the development of insight meditation, we immediately understand the law of karma. Karmic retribution has followed me, that's why I've understood about good and bad karma. Before, when I lived with my grandmother, I never took any interest in monks. When we went to the Wat to make offerings, my grandmother would always have to collect some lumps of earth to take with us, and put three in each of the basket she carried on each side of her. When we got to the Wat she would throw them wherever there were potholes or depressions in the earth. She said she was making merit. I said that nobody else carried earth to the Wat, only us, it was embarrassing. Grandma said that when we go to the Wat we tread the earth and it sticks to our feet, making us accrue bad karma. Being in debt to the Sangha, the Order of monks, is very bad karma. But she didn't explain why. It was something that had been passed down from previous generations, she remembered it and practiced accordingly. Not like people these days. They say it isn't bad karma. How can it be bad karma just to tread on the earth? The monks can fill it in themselves, can't they? This is how the new generation really adhered to this. They upheld it. They gave it the benefit of their belief. Believing was better than disbelieving, it made their lives more profitable, so they believed the law of karma.

When I was younger, when I first ordained as a monk, whenever I went to houses of hoodlums, bandits, or gangsters, if they were drinking alcohol they would quickly put all the glasses and bottles away. They were still afraid of bad karma. But these days they don't bother. They just go ahead and drink

right in front of the monks, completely unabashed. In funeral ceremonies they just play cards in front of the body as a way of “merit-making” while the monks are chanting. They aren’t the slightest bit wary of bad karma. They say there is no such thing.

BAD KARMA – EATING FOOD PREPARED FOR THE MONKS

When I was in secondary school I was still living with my grandmother. She gave me some food to offer to the monks, but I ate it myself. I ate it all, the savories and the desserts, and told her that I had offered it to the Abbot of the Wat. I had to walk to the Wat—there were no cars—a distance of about one kilometer. On my way I met some of my school friends, we had made good times together, running away from school. My friends told me they hadn’t eaten yet, so I thought, why should we give it to the monks? I hadn’t eaten either. There were four or five of us, we all agreed, and so we all sat around and ate everything, then washed the trays. When I went home my Grandmother asked if I met the Abbot at the Wat. I said I didn’t go up into the kuti, I just left the food with one of the temple boys and came back. Grandma said that next time I have to stay and receive the blessing from the monks, to receive the blessing from the Abbot before coming back. If I did that Grandma would be very pleased. She said to tell the Abbot also that the food was from her.

On another day the same thing happened. She gave me the good again, I met my friends again. The school was closed, and so we did the same thing. When we had finished eating we went and played. Grandma asked, “Did you meet the Abbot?” I said I had met him, and received the blessing before coming back. In fact the Abbot was sitting upstairs in our house. Nobody told me he was there. He had been sitting there for long time. He had gone to eat in a supporter’s house

in the southern section of the village, and after the meal had come to visit my grandmother. I didn't know, they didn't tell me, I hadn't yet looked inside the house. The Abbot was sitting there smirking. Grandma was a kindhearted lady, the monks liked visiting her, but I found their visits annoying. When the Abbot had gone I really copped it. She said that I had made a lot of bad karma. She asked how many times had I done this? I said twice already. Grandma said I would have to be reborn as a hungry ghost, with a mouth as small as the eye of a needle, unable to swallow any food. I asked her if hungry ghosts were taller than sugar-palm tree. She said she hadn't seen any. I didn't believe her, I thought she was just trying to scare me, but I didn't say anything. I couldn't argue back with her.

CHEATING ON THE BOAT FARE

At the later time I had to catch a ferry to go to school. It cost 25 stang each month. I would cheat on the boat fare and spend the money on noodles instead. I even had enough to buy some for my friends. And then I cheated on the price of the noodles as well.

SHOOTING BIRDS

Later, when the school had closed down for the end of term holidays, the head teacher of the government school asked me to help on the bird shooting expedition. I didn't know anything about good and bad karma, it seemed like a lot of fun. I took a five-shot shot gun, telling my mother that I was going to do some extra studied while the school was closed for about seven days. I asked for about 100 baht, which my mother gave to me. How did I take the gun? I took sleeping gear with me, and rolled the gun inside the sleeping mat. The next morning after breakfast we set out across the fields pecked at me I

would skin them. They really suffered. I didn't think that it would be bad karma. One day I shot a heron, its wing was broken and it couldn't fly, so I chased after it. It was a real chase but I caught it. Then what did I do? I broke its legs. The bird struggled and cried out until it died. In short, I'm telling you that I had made some bad karma.

Later, I ordained in the Buddhist religion. My mother and my father made me ordain, I didn't have any faith and had no idea that I would end up living like this. Before I ordained I went to study in Bangkok. I went to many schools and stayed in many Wats. When my studies were finished I ordained. I intended to ordain for about one Rains Retreat, memorize all the required texts and develop meditation in the forests.

PAYING THE NOODLE DEBT

I began to live here as acting Abbot. In 1956 or 1957 I was officially appointed as Abbot, and I began to repay the debt of my past karma from that time on. In the following year I paid for the noodles. I was sitting in meditation and it happened that a vision arose in my mind of a certain lady named Gloom. She had a husband name Gim. They didn't know that I had stolen noodles from them. Gloom and Gim both dreamed on the same day that an angel came and told them that If they wanted their son to stop being so naughty, to behave himself and apply himself to his studies, they would have to take him to be ordained as a novice at Wat Ambhavan. Then he would definitely come good. This being the case, Gloom and Gim brought their son to me. I can still vaguely remember the three of them walking up to me and the parents telling me that they wanted to leave their son here to ordain as a novice. I asked them why they didn't take him to be ordained at another Wat, and Gloom told me that they brought their sons to this Wat

because they had dreamed that an angel told them to bring their son here to ordain, and could I receive him ?

I had figures that one day I would have to repay the debt of the stolen noodles, but I didn't tell them. I just said that I would organize it. I sent the two parents back and immediately went about shaving his head. We had a motor boat, so I went to see the Preceptor. On the way I bought a set of robes, shoes, towels, an alms bowl, and an umbrella. Altogether it cost 200 baht. Then we raced off to see the Preceptor and asked him to ordain the boy as a novice. When he had ordained I brought him back (and taught him) to do sitting and walking meditation.

After he had been ordained for seven days I told the novice about my past and how "I cheated bowls of noodles from your mother. Your mother doesn't know about it, mind you. You can take these robes and requisites, 200 baht worth, and tell your mother that now we are evens. She doesn't have to pay me back for them. Take it that I am paying her back for the bowls of noodles." After I had told him the novice said that his faith had been aroused, and he wanted to really do the practice.

Later on he asked to disrobe to go and continue his studies. That year he gained entrance into a military academy and later on he became an air force officer.

This was how I paid back the debt of the noodles. If I didn't pay it back in this life I would have had to pay it in a future life. There really is a law of karma. But that I have been able to gauge the law of karma and predict its effects in advance is through having mindfulness (*sati*), being aware of future consequences, and having clear comprehension (*sampajanna*), which has enabled me to deal with circumstances as they arise. This is *sampajanna*. I have been able to know these things through constantly developing

samadhi (concentration) and mindfulness. You should also try to look into these things for yourselves by developing skillful qualities (*kusala bhavana*) at all times. It isn't necessary to try to find spare time. Even while you are working you can cultivate virtue. When your ears hear sounds you can meditate on it, while you are eating you can meditate, establishing mindfulness at all times. Meditation (*kammatthana*) is important to your work.

Another time I was practicing sitting meditation uninterruptedly and developing thoughts of forgiveness (*ahosikamma*) and goodwill. All of you should do this also. Before you spread loving kindness you should spread thoughts and forgiveness. If you do not develop thoughts of forgiveness you will not be able to generate thoughts of goodwill. Forgive first, make the mind at ease, not resentful, angry or hateful. Whenever you spread such thoughts they reach their objects immediately, and there is response. It is something each must experience for oneself. I can't explain the ways of karma according to the texts, but only recommend the way of practice, using the mind empowered by mindfulness. It all comes down to this simple method of practice.

As I said, I came to live here, and practiced meditation and generating thoughts of goodwills. There is a principle that when spreading goodwill. There is a principle that when spreading goodwill you should also spread forgiveness. The chanting that we do is very meaningful; *kayana vaca*, both in body and speech, we ask forgiveness from the Holy Triple Gem: for whatever we have done that is disparaging to the Holy Triple Gem: for wherever we have done that is disparaging to the Holy Triple Gem we asked for forgiveness. Then if we spread thoughts of goodwill, we will definitely get results.

REPAYING THE DEBT OF GOY'S FERRY

As I developed meditation and my mind became quieter the thought came into my mind that I had to go and repay a debt for a boat ride. I reflected for a while and sure enough, I had cheated on this as well. I hadn't been to their house for a long time, up until the time I had ordained and become an Abbot. I took some milk and ovaltine and an envelope with 200 baht in it (taking the price of the noodles as my standard). His name was Goy. He was old. When I landed the boat at his house he got a fright, why was a monk coming to see him? He was very ill, paralyzed and at death's door. I put the money into his hand and whispered into his ear, "Patron Goy, when I was a child I cheated you for some boat rides, 30 stang each month. Can you remember? I've brought some mild and ovaltine for you, and told your daughter to mix it for you. Now we are evens, right? I was only a child, I didn't know what I was doing.: Oh, what a blessing. He was so surprised as he had been to many Wats before, but the monks he saw only told him about collections that were being taken—this monk was bringing money to him! Later on his daughter brought a sack of rice to offer to the monastery. It seemed my merit had flowered. One who has a good heart must encounter Mara (the Devil) and must repay his debt, there are always obstacles. One who has goodness will definitely encounter obstacles, it isn't all easy going. We tend to think that when we are trying to make merit bad karma is an obstacle, but the fact is paying back your karmic debts is a kind of goodness.

REPAYING THE DEBT FOR YAI NUAM'S BOAT RIDES

About two or three months later I was sitting in meditation when I recollected that I had cheated a boat fare from another person, named Yai Nuam. I went and she was also at death's door. I went up and whispered in her ear, "Patron, when I was a kind I cheated you of a boat fare. I have come to ask your forgiveness." Then I gave her 200 baht together with some

milk and ovaltine, as before. Later on they came to make offerings for seven days at the monastery, and they offered money too, more than 200 baht, as two days after I visited her Yai Nuam passed away. I have always been paying back my debts, my karmic debts.

Another time I was going to visit the shop Be Tek Seng at Bahng Pa-in. I had often visited and eaten there. Eventually they didn't take any money because every time I went I would pay for the food. They said that from the time I had gone to eat at their shop their business had really boomed, so they wouldn't take any money from me anymore. We liked each other. One time one of them had an operation at the health clinic, first floor, Bahng Pa-in, on the banks of the river. I intended to go and visit her.

That night I was spreading loving kindness and forgiveness when my mindfulness once again informed me that I had to repay the debt of previous karma, this time for boiling turtles for one bath each for the drinkers to eat. It turned out that the turtles knew about team work, as they all struggled so hard that the earthen bowl broke and they all fled into a bamboo clump. I had forgotten about this karma, but now my mindfulness was saying, "Be careful, tomorrow don't take anyone with you." I went with only the driver of the pickup. If everybody went they would have all surely died. I made excuses but they were all very angry. Why had I visited them and then refused to take them along? Why had I invited them and then refused to take them along? I just said to the driver, "We are going to visit this person who is sick. Keep an eye on the time, make sure we stay on longer than fifteen minutes, warn me when the time is up." I had to rush back because I had figured that if I didn't go right on fifteen minutes the car would overturn at Ayudhya and we would all be killed. That's why I took nobody with me but the driver. As soon as we had visited the patient for fifteen minutes, I said to the owner of the shop, her name was Srinuan, that I had to go. I said I had

some urgent business and had to rush back. Once we got into the car we sped off, doing 120 kph. We really drove along. The Asia highway was just newly finished, there was rain and thunder. When we reached Ang-tong the rain stopped. At Amphur Promburi it was still raining and the road was slippery. At the bend at Wat Khu the car was speeding along and just went into a spin and out of control. The steering wheel turned uselessly, we rolled over eight times. My head was battered from above and below. The doors were locked. My robes were all torn, the car battered and smashed. I had to put up with the pain for over a month. I didn't dare go to the hospital because I was ashamed. The car was all dented, we had to use a crow bar to open it up. The passing cars all stopped to have a look. It was just a good thing that there wasn't a car coming the other way, otherwise we would have all been killed. We had to spend thirty, forty thousand bath on repairs and suffer from our painful injuries. I was all grazed. This was how I paid for boiling the turtles, but it wasn't all finished yet.

PAYING THE DEBT OF BROKEN BIRD'S NECKS

As time went on, I sat meditation for a full six months, I received a vision of my death. A voice told me, "Venerable Sir, on October 14, 1977, at 12.45 Hrs., you will have to leave the Wat and die to repay for the karma of having broken bird's necks." The 16th of October was the last day of the Rains Retreat. I thought to myself that I would have to take leave of everybody, so I convened a meeting of the Sangha and bequeathed all my requisites, I gave it all up to the monks. I left all the monastery funds in the care of the Wat stewards and appointed who was to act as Abbot in my absence. I told the *upasika* (female lay devotees) to come and practice meditation for a month in the Wat, and when they had all gone back, for the male devotees to come and practice meditation. Later on there would be no-one to teach them, I was definitely taking my leave on the 14th of October.

It's possible to know in advance. Meditation is so beneficial. If you know in advance you are not so put out. Mindfulness is the factor that organized your work, clear comprehension (*sampajanna*) is that which does the calculations. Mindfulness and clear comprehension told me these things, so I took my leave of everybody, passed on all my duties and responsibilities.

I reflected that according to the Buddha's teaching we all have to die anyway, so I thought I would take leave to everybody. I could tell all the people who came to the Wat, but what to do about those who did not come? I developed meditation, sitting meditation and walking meditation.

There was one man named Chan Korisritipah who knew me through the company of Sumedh Tejaphaibool. Khun Chan Kornsrutipah had a sugar factory in Singhburi. He once dreamt that King Chulalongkorn entered his dreams and told him to come to this Wat. He was able to describe the picture of King Chulalongkorn which His Majesty had left at the monastery here when he made a Royal Visit in Year 125 (Chakri Dynasty). The picture His Majesty had left was a photograph of him at his coronation. On that visit, the Abbot was here also.

That day, Khun Chan, together with Khun Sumedh, walked into the Wat. I didn't know, I said, what brings you here? When they saw the picture they told me about the dream, and so I have known them ever since, for many years. Later on I figured that this man is an important man for the Wat, and that if ever something was to happen to me I should tell him. This is a way in which sitting meditation and spreading thoughts of goodwill can be of benefit. The flow of mental energy is a kind of force, I've experimented with it. For example, if you take a pile of white cloth, then place a piece of colored paper on top of it, by using the power of sunlight or an electric current the color of the paper can be imprinted on the

cloth. In the same way, when spreading fruits of skillful actions, make your mind good, and it can go (to others). But it's not easy to do. You have to bring your mind to the right level first.

A GOOD-BYE SENT AS A PSYCHIC CURRENT

As 14th of October approached, I began by chanting then spreading thoughts of goodwill to Khun Chan and taking leave of him. I thought, "We have been friends for many years already, now I take my leave. On October 14, I will definitely have my neck broken, and die at Singhburi Hopital." That's what I told him. I took my leave. Later on Khun Chan was working at his office, and sat down to write a note. But it turned out that what appeared on the note he was writing was the words I had spread to him in my meditation. It was in my own handwriting, too, exactly as I had thought in my meditation.

Take good note of this method of spreading merit. It is possible for it to even become written words, appearing in other places!

Come the 14th October, at 12.45 hrs. I had to go to a meeting at Wat kavisraram, in Lopburi Province. Luang Poh Dhammanana, the ecclesiastical head of Lopburi Province, had written to me advising of a meeting of the ecclesiastical heads of all the districts in Lopburi. It so happened that on that day a group of doctors from Siriraj Hospital had come for the offering of the midday meal. As soon as the meal was finished I got ready. I knew that I would not be coming back to the Wat, as I had been advised in my meditation six months before. I had to pay the dept for the birds. How I was going to pay it I wasn't quite sure, but I probably wasn't going to come back. I passed on all the Wat business. The female supporters had come to practice for one month in the Wat, then the male supporters. The laymen could help get the body and embalm it in the main hall, prepare the kitchen arrangements, and so on.

Having taken my leave of everybody I got into a car. It was 12.30 Hrs. I had put on a new set of robes and collected my books into the car with me. I was sure I wasn't going to come back. Colonel Wad Keskaew was going with me. He had put on a white jacket and white pants. He was probably going to die with us. We left the Wat and turned right towards Lopburi. When we got to just behind the Pak Bang market, at the petrol station, a car had put on its indicator to turn right, three cars coming behind it were overtaking it on the left, when a tour bus from Tunjitt Tour Company pulled out of the petrol station and immediately crashed into them. It was exactly 12.45 Hrs. Colonel Wad Keskaew floated over the back of the tour bus. The people in the market, seeing his white suit, thought it was a newspaper blowing over the bus. He got a broken back.

My shoulder was smashed against some metal and broken. The wind screen scraped the skin off my skull right back to my neck. My head was white. My neck was bent down to my chest. I could turn it around. My nose was full of blood, the wind screen had cut me up. I flew through it like a bird and landed about forty meters away from the car. But it seemed I was lucky, I could still move one arm, and raise it up. I touched myself to see whether my neck was broken. My eyes weren't taking anything in, neither were my ears. I was in a state of paralysis, but I had one good hand and good mindfulness. But I had to breathe from my stomach, "rising, falling". Yes, I could do it. If you want to know whether it's possible to breathe through the stomach try breaking your neck. The driver was unconscious. I could still speak because my mindfulness was still good, I established it at the chest bone and so doing was able to breathe through my navel. How did I do it? Think of a baby in the mother's womb, it eats and breathes through the navel. So I could breathe. "Rising, falling," all the time. I had discovered new technique. But you have to have trained your mindfulness. You must have mindfulness, mindfulness when

you sleep, mindfulness when you wake, really be aware. I said, "Someone help me up," but none of the spectators standing around dared touch me, a mangled, talking head. They thought my head was mangled because it didn't have any skin on it. Eventually the highway police arrived and announced that I wasn't dead. If they hadn't arrived on the scene I would probably have been left for dead.

RETURN OF THE KARMA OF BOILING TURTLES

Just by was a brick factory. The owner drove up. I had propped my chin up with my one good hand, but I couldn't feel anything. As the car reached the Agricultural College I heard a faint sound from afar, "Serves you right, serves you right;" I heard it continually. "Now you're going to get it again. Your neck may be broken but you don't get our pity, you're going to get some more." In a moment I could see the turtles, and right then the car's radiator boiled over the spilled all over me. What a mess, I was wet through. Now my one good arm could feel the heat. The water splashed off me onto the driver. The man holding me up screamed out, "Stop, stop, the guy behind you is going to die!" The turtles were adding their revenge. It seems I hadn't paid my debt in full the last time. By the time the car reached the hospital the radiator was dry.

I determined to myself, "May I go peacefully, I know now, I understand, I ask for forgiveness, and spread forgiveness to all in the human world. If I haven't spent all of my past karma in this human world may I spend it in the next life. Secondly, if I have spent all my karma in the human world, may I pass away from it right now, may I not have to suffer any longer." That was my second determination.

It so happened that that day the supervisor of the hospital was not in, he had gone home near Wat Ges, but the Chief Surgeon was in, Doctor Sommai. He had come rushing from

his home when he heard that I had been involved in a car accident. He took me into the room for an X-ray. They spoke softly together, I could hear them talking. “No way,” The Chief Surgeon was saying. He ordered me to lie down straight on the stretcher, which had wheels on it, and the male nurse wheeled me into the intensive care unit. They were going to do an urgent job, stitching the skin back onto my head, before anything else.

I kept on determining to myself. I had one good hand, but apart from that everything seemed to have died. Still I could breathe through my stomach, “rising and falling” constantly. The two nurses had put me onto the stretcher and were wheeling me in when the wheels got caught in the doorway and I came crashing down! The wheels had collapsed, one of the doctors cried out, “Now he must be gone for sure?!” My neck have a crack and seemed to click into place! I opened my eyes and could see, but I couldn’t breathe. My throat seemed to be blocked, my backside was in so much pain it seemed it was going to fall off. So I learned another two things: What two things? I refer to the nervous system, how the nerves for the throat are connected to the nerves in the posterior. I went into the emergency ward and they began pulling my skin back and stitching away. The doctors were wondering whether I was going to be paralyzed and wouldn’t get better. One of the make nurses said to the other, “It’s because of you. If you didn’t let the trolley slide off the floor his neck would be all right.” I just thought that I was paying for old karma. Eventually the doctors found it impossible to treat me because I kept kicking at them. The doctors and nurses had me try to squeeze their hand to see if I had any control, and it seems I was lucky.

Come morning Khun Chan arrived on the scene holding my “psychic telegraph message.” He said, “Sir, why did you write this message to me? I had just seen you a few days previously, why didn’t you tell me then? Why write a letter and

send it to me?” I said that I didn’t write any letter, but he said “Here, it’s in your handwriting!”

The supervisor of Singhburi Hospital didn’t know what to do, so he telephoned to the Lert Sin Hospital. His teacher was Doctor Pradit. He said, “This Venerable monk’s neck is broken but he’s not dead yet, what should we do?” Doctor Pradit said, “I’ve never seen such a thing, wail till I get there.”

The next morning he came to see me and put me on an ambulance to the Lert Sin Hospital. They carried me in, I couldn’t even turn over. I could lift my legs and arms but still couldn’t get up, so they carried me up to the second floor. Doctor Pradit came to examine me with a number of doctors to help diagnose the situation. Doctor Pradit said, “Leave it to me.” He put a plaster on me and in fifteen minutes I could get up and walk around. I go into a car and came back to Singhburi Province. It was strange, a great number of visitors came to see me, even from other provinces. They had heard the story of the monk who got a broken neck and didn’t die. There was such a great amount of sweets and rich food. I thought to myself, “When I’m healthy and have a good appetite why don’t they bother coming to see me, why do they bring such things when I’m on death’s door? They know I can’t eat them, and yet they bring them, but they don’t give them to me when I’m well.”

When I got back to the Wat I chatted all day because there were so many visitors. Doctor Pradit had ordered that I was not to talk to much because if I did the wound would heal slowly. He had given me sedatives but I couldn’t sleep/ One of the nurses said I was fighting the medicine. Doctor Pradit conceived a plan, and got me to come back into hospital. He said, “Come to Lert Sin Hospital and we will take off the plaster.” I was so pleased at that I rushed over to the hospital. When I got there they took off the cast all right, and I fainted, but then, after a short rest, the Doctor said, “Wait a moment,

Luang Poh, we are going to put on another caste. I tricked you into coming because I knew that if I told you we were going to put on another caste you wouldn't come." They put on another caste, weighing an extra four kilos. Fifteen minutes after they had put it on I couldn't open my mouth and had become a reluctant hermit!

THE HUNGRY GHOST WITH A MOUTH THE SIZE OF A NEEDLE-EYE

Getting back to Singhburi I was in a real state, I couldn't open my mouth. Eventually I got terribly thirsty. I couldn't eat, they had to feed me with a plastic straw. I couldn't suck it in myself. For the morning meal they had to slowly feed the food in. I was reminded of how my grandmother had said I would have to be a hungry ghost with a mouth the size of a needle's eye. I couldn't eat regularly for fifty days. Not only that, I couldn't speak either. If I tried to open my mouth wide the upper jaw would clamp down and blood would start to flow. If I move while I was eating the blood would flow again. I had to be spoon fed all the food so I had to suffer like a hungry ghost, just like my grandmother had said how I would have to be a hungry ghost for eating the food made for the monks.

After I had returned from the hospital for fifty days I thought to myself that I had to pay for the karma I had made in the human world, so I began filling in the earth around the monastery and building this large meeting hall for giving teachings. That is how I had resolved myself—to pay for the bad karma I have made in this human world by teaching the Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha. I won't be building any more material constructions. Finally there was a merit making ceremony for restoring my spirit ("rup kwan"), and many people participated. On the last day Chan Kornsrutipah and Sumedh Tejaphaibool came along to "restore my spirit", and brought with them the note "I" had written. He had folded it up

nicely. After the merit making ceremony and the sharing of merits had been duly conducted, he took out the piece of paper to read it to the other people there, but it turned out that there was no writing on it, it was empty. Now he had put it into a frame as a memento of the occasion.

**Do not regret the past, the future you
cannot see**

**The present is the important thing plan and
act in the present**