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Essence of the Infinite Life Sutra - Venerable Master Chin Kung



EXCERPT THIRTY FIVE

In worldly matters, people alternate harming one another. Retribution may not occur right away. One should see through to this reality as soon as possible.

The people in this world do not understand this truth and they take revenge over and over, back and forth. They have a strong desire for vengeance. Revenge may not happen right away, but we should know that when an enmity is created, sooner or later revenge will come.

Therefore, we should see through [retribution] and let go [of enmity]. We should completely change from within. This excerpt alerts us to guard against disasters—not just natural disasters but, more importantly, man-made ones. We may not be experiencing a disaster now but we should be far-sighted and look into the future. This way, we will know how to deal with matters at this present moment. There is a Chinese saying: “Those who fail to see ahead will soon find trouble right before them.”

Besides, everything in this world changes all the time! In the past, no matter how things changed, the changes could be predicted somewhat because there were moral standards. No matter which dynasty it was, things did not deviate much from the standards.

Today, the standards have been discarded. The teachings of the ancient sages and the teachings of Confucius and Mencius have been discarded. Even the Buddha's teachings are unwanted. Therefore, people today are at a loss as to what to do. This is very frightening!

EXCERPT THIRTY SIX

All of you should consider carefully. Stay far away from all evils. Choose what is virtuous to diligently practice. Love, desire, prestige, and splendor cannot be had forever. . . . There is no happiness at all.

“All of you should consider carefully.” We should seriously contemplate everything. Understanding the truth, we will be diligent in our cultivation.

Simply put, “stay far away from all evils” refers to [staying away from] all those things that are harmful to others and that are beneficial solely to oneself.

For ourselves, “choose what is virtuous” refers to having belief and vow, mindfully chanting the Buddha-name, and seeking rebirth in the Western Pure Land. From all the sutras that Sakyamuni Buddha taught in the forty-nine years, [33] we choose only the three Pure Land sutras. Putting aside all others, in this lifetime we learn and practice according to the teachings in the three Pure Land sutras. This way, we will achieve our goal. In daily life, we must do things that benefit society. When we do our best and accord with conditions, the merit accrued will be perfect and complete. In addition, we should be able to tell good from bad and right from wrong, and should make the right choices.

“Diligently practice” means that we should put in our best efforts to do things diligently. [In doing so,] both ourselves and others will benefit.

“Love, desire, prestige, and splendor” refers to fame, prestige, gain, wealth, the Five Desires, and the Six Dusts. The Five Desires are wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep.

Love, desire, prestige, and splendor “cannot be had forever” because they are transient, like fleeting clouds. At the end of one's life, if one is still attached to this world, this will obstruct one from attaining rebirth in the Western Pure Land. Therefore, one must give up fame, prestige, gain, wealth, the Five Desires, and the Six Dusts, and stay far away from all evils.

When we truly understand the truth, we will be highly cautious in all situations and remain constantly vigilant.

[33] The Buddha taught for forty-nine years after he attained enlightenment.—Trans.

Web link to the article:

<http://www.purelandcollege.org.au/page88.html>

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