
TRAPPED!

-told by Bhikshuni Heng Wen

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One time a hunter went deep into the forest and set about making a bear trap. He dug up the earth and inserted the trap in the hole. Then he carefully covered the top of the hole with branches and leaves and grasses. He did such a good job that no human would have suspected there was such a trap beneath, let alone a bear. Then he went off to search out the area to see if he could flush out any other game, skirting the bear trap so the animals would not detect his smell.

Time passed and he lost his way in the unfamiliar woods. Wandering at random and beginning to get concerned for his own safety and welfare, he suddenly plummeted down into the very bear trap which he himself had constructed! The trap snapped securely onto his leg, biting into his flesh. He was trapped!

At first he called out frantically, but soon realized that he had purposely come far into the woods, well away from inhabited areas. In pain and dejection, he sat contemplating his fate. He went through many emotional reactions: anger at his own stupidity, fear for his life, desperation, depression, resignation. Meanwhile time passed and he got cold and hungry. More time passed and as the pain in his leg increased, so did his cold and hunger. The cold night air soon penetrated to his bones. Unable to get water, his thirst grew unbearable. As he endured this torture, a new thought occurred to him. This is what the bear he hoped to trap would have gone through! He was forced to take a long, hard look at what kind of karma he had been making as a hunter. Eventually all the other emotions he had been experiencing, which were selfish and concerned only with his own well-being, were replaced by a true thought of repentance for having caused other beings to endure what he was now having to endure. He was really sorry and spontaneously made the vow that he would never hunt or trap animals again, in fact, that he would never kill any living creatures any more.

After that thought of true repentance and that sincere vow were made, he suddenly heard the sound of footsteps crushing the underbrush. Fearing it to be an animal come to prey on his flesh, but hoping against hope that it might be a person, he decided to call out. His cry for help was instantly answered and he heard the footsteps running toward the spot where he lay trapped. The person helped him out of the trap and took him back to his home. Such was the response to the power of his vow and the sincerity of his shame and remorse.

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