

談戒貪

To Refrain from Greed

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佛教裏面常常講到

「去三毒」，這「三毒」是什麼？就是「貪、瞋、癡」。上人常常指示我們要遵守「不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不打妄語」的六大宗旨。其實，這「三毒」，就一個「貪」，是最根本的毒；六大宗旨，也總歸要「不貪」。因為一切惡業全是由一念「貪」衍生出來的，所以戒「貪」是最根本，也是最難戒止的。

中國古時候有個人，他膽子很小，貪心卻很大。他從小也不讀書，長大了就用錢買個官做，他認為這是賺錢最容易的了！果然，官做了沒有多久，他不但把投資的錢賺回來，還蓋起了大房子、又娶了三個小老婆，每天就殺雞宰羊的吃大餐和玩樂。他工作非常有「效率」，無論審什麼案子，都不必推問調查；怎麼呢？他把雙方送的財物放天秤一稱，喔！這一方貴重得多，那這一方贏了！可惜他好日子沒過太久，閻羅王就請他去作客！閻羅王一看他的功過簿，說：「喔！你這個貪官！本來你該下地獄，念你還沒有濫殺無辜，罰你做狗去！」這貪官急忙叩頭說：「啊！做狗沒關係，只求讓我能夠選擇做甚麼狗！」閻羅王說：「噫！你還有心情挑啊？說說看！你

In Buddhism, it is said that one should “renounce the three poisons.” The three poisons are greed, hatred and delusion. The Venerable Master also guides us to follow the Six Great Principles of “no fighting, no greed, no seeking, no selfishness, no pursuing personal advantage, no lying.” In fact, greed is the most deep-rooted poison among these three and all six principles are based on the one of not being greedy. Because all evil deeds result from being greedy, greed is the most important one. It is also the most difficult one to refrain from.

In ancient China, there was a person who had little courage but a lot of greed. He never studied hard, rather he just wished to make money. So after he grew up, he paid some money to become an official, assuming it was the easiest way to make a fortune. It seemed that he got his way and before long he not only got his “capital investment” back but also built a big mansion and took three concubines. Everyday he feasted and enjoyed himself. He was extremely “efficient” in his position of authority and did not bother to investigate the cases that came before him. Instead, he decided each case by weighing the bribes. He had the valuables given to him as bribes weighed on the scale. The person who sent the heavier bribe would win the case.

Unfortunately, these good times did not last long because King Yama invited him to the hells. After reviewing his life record, King Yama said, “You corrupt official! You are supposed to go to hell; however, you never engaged in the indiscriminate killing of innocent people. Okay, you can go be reborn as a dog.” This greedy official said immediately, “That’s fine, as long as I get to choose what kind of dog I will be.” King Yama said, “Ha! You still wish to be so picky. Okay, what kind of dog do you wish to become?” All of you may also wish to guess what kind of dog he wished to become. Ha! This greedy official said, “I wish to be reborn as a female dog.” “Why?” King Yama said in surprise. This greedy official said, “Isn’t it said in the books of the sages? ‘When facing money, let the mother dog have it first. When facing disasters, let the mother dog run away first.’” King Yama stared at him wide-eyed, “Huh? Which sage ever said these words?”



想做甚麼狗？」各位你們不妨也猜猜：這貪官想做甚麼狗呢？哈！這貪官說了：「我希望投生做隻母狗！」「爲什麼？」閻羅王非常的驚訝。這貪官正經八百的說：「聖賢書上不是說『臨財毋狗得，臨難毋狗免』嗎？只要有財可得，有難能免，做狗也沒關係！」閻羅王瞪大了眼睛：「啊？哪個聖賢說過這話？」原來這是「臨財毋苟得，臨難毋苟免」，意思是說「君子對於錢財，不隨便收取；遇到禍患，也不隨便逃避」，這是教人家不要貪財，也不要貪生怕死，這是誠「貪」的。這不學無術的貪官，卻以爲是教他貪多一點。怎麼呢？原來這「毋」字的字形和「母」字相近，「苟」字的讀音又和「狗」字又一樣；所以，教人不可苟且隨便的「毋苟」兩個字，他就把它當成是「母狗」了！於是他認爲做母狗也挺不錯的，既有財可得，又不會有災難。

這雖然是個笑話，但是可以看出：「貪」，真是到死還斷不了！或許我們會想：我不貪財的。不貪財，或者就貪色？色，不是就「男色」、「女色」而已，所有的「好色」、「好相」，都叫「色」。說，我也不貪財、也不貪色；那或者就貪名，總希望人家知道我有修行或者有才幹？說，我名也不貪的；那麼是不是會貪吃點營養的、或者好味道的？或者貪多睡一會兒？總而言之，這個「貪」的範圍可大了！舉凡生活中的衣、食、行、住、坐、臥，處處都有讓我們動貪念的陷阱。若不時時觀照本心，貪念可能悄悄冒出頭了還不知道呢！等到我們察覺的時候，恐怕早已被「貪愛」的胃索縛住，甚至縛死了！所謂「財、色、名、食、睡，地獄五條根」，我們人因爲認識不清，以爲這些都是好東西；不明白五欲，其實是沒有實體的一個虛幻相，所以重複著「起惑、造業、受報」，以致長久流浪生死，不得出離愛欲的苦海。

The fact is that the original saying is, “When facing money, do not acquire it illicitly. When facing disasters, do not escape illicitly.” It is teaching people not to be greedy for money, nor to escape imminent disaster by living a dishonorable life.” This saying exhorts people not to be greedy. However, this greedy official misunderstood it as saying that one should be greedier for money. How come he thought this way?

The Chinese character meaning “do not” looks like the character meaning “female.” The Chinese character for “illicit” is pronounced *gou* which sounds the same as the word for “dog.” That’s why he mistook the phrase to mean “female dog.” He thought, it is not bad to be reborn as a female dog, because he could then have money while avoiding all disasters.

Although it is just a joke, we can see that greed follows one even to one’s grave. Maybe you think, “I’m not greedy for money.” Then are you greedy for beautiful forms? This “form” does not just refer to “lust”; all “nice colors” or “pretty features” are included. One says, “I am greedy for neither money nor form.” Then maybe you’re greedy for fame and always wish that others know that you are a good cultivator or have great abilities? “No, I am not greedy for fame, either,” you might say. Then you might very likely be greedy for nutritious or tasty food. Or, maybe you desire to sleep more? Anyway, this greed has a large scope; it can apply to clothes, food, transportation, dwelling, sitting and bedding. Greed can be found behind everything that people do. If we do not always guard our own mind, we may not recognize the seed of greed which has sprouted out quietly inside our hearts.

When we recognize it, we may be tightly bound by it. What can be even worse, is we may become totally entrapped by it so that it follows us into our grave.

It is said that “money, form, fame, food, sleep are the five roots that lead us to the hells.” Because we cannot distinguish the truth, we think that these five desires will benefit us. We do not realize that these five desires are in fact illusory, without a true nature.

So we keep repeating the cycle of “giving rise to delusion, creating karma and undergoing the retribution of suffering.” Therefore, we wander about on the path of birth and death for so long and cannot transcend this sea of suffering of love and desire.

