

KARMA

It may be difficult to cultivate a garden in this weather. My father was able to grow a select few vegetables through hard work and determination. When you plant a carrot seed, carrots grow. When you plant an apple seed, an apple tree will grow. When you let weeds grow, you no longer have a garden but a mess.

Karma can be explained like a garden, when you plant a seed of good, good follows, when you plant seeds of bad, bad follows. Our thoughts determine what the outcome would be, ripe tasty fruit or sour, nasty fruit. We cannot escape from our actions, just like a carrot seed will not grow into a rose bush. It would be false to believe that we can wish or pray to change to make the carrot seed into a rose bush. This is ignorance. Ignorance is the cause of all suffering. We are bound to our actions. Only way to stop is to stop the action. If you do not want carrots, stop planting carrots. Plant something else instead. Stop suffering by removing the cause of that suffering. IF your mother is always on your case to clean your room, always have a clean your room then mother will never be on your case. Your action causes either good or bad results.

Buddha reveals that we are governed by many laws, the most important, the Law of Cause and Effect. This is action and results. If you do A, B will happen. If you do C, then D will happen. But also if you do Z, A will happen. Everything is a result by something before. How were the mountains formed? Plate tectonics, where the Pacific shelf is pushing the Continental Shelf upwards, or glaciers carved during the last ice age or through erosion. Where did the rocks in the front yard come from? Someone crush a larger rock into smaller pieces to sell for decorative purposes. There is previous cause in

which we see the results today. We have the carrots because we planted it or some farmer planted and harvested it.

Good things and bad things happen because we sowed the seeds in the past. This could even be from our previous lives. We may have done something so bad or so good that we are reaping the benefits in this life. We are here to learn the lessons of the past, overcome them so that we can then move forward and progress to a higher realm. If we try to do good all the time, think good thoughts and do good deeds, we will reap the happiness that comes from this in this lifetime but also set the stage for even better life in the next. This is re-birth, not reincarnation. We do not come back as ourselves but as a result of what we did in this life, thus a renewed birth. My father may have mentioned this story about one of the cases by Edgar Cayce. A blind man asked Mr. Cayce why he was blind. Mr. Cayce went into his sleep trance and found out that this person in a previous life tortured others by gouging their eyes out. He made others blind in the past, now he has to suffer the consequence of his actions and be blind himself.

Can we change our karma? Of course. By thinking good thoughts and doing good deeds, coming to temple to listen to the sermons and by chanting the Odaimoku. Through the sermons you gain knowledge that will eliminate ignorance. Through chanting you do not necessarily remove bad karma, but recognize that you have bad karma and diminish its poisonous affects. Chanting also changes your attitude, sets the mind up to be calm and creates an understanding so that only good thoughts appear.

So the next time you see a garden or go to the grocery store to see all the wonderful fruits and vegetables, remember that they are the product from seed to growth to harvest. You too can be just like the wonderful fruit by planting the seeds of good.

Remember this: Sow a thought and reap a habit, Sow a habit and reap a character, Sow a character and reap a destiny.