

妙法蓮華經淺釋

THE DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA WITH COMMENTARY

【卷五如來壽量品第十六】

ROLL FIVE, CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE THUS COME ONE'S LIFE SPAN



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 Revised Version



就是佛教的國家，也有信天主教的，也有信耶穌教的，也不一定全部都懂得佛法。是不是啊？你們想一想，有多少人不懂佛法？在表面上好像是懂了，實際上，佛法的內容、道理，一點都不通；所以這佛法不容易遭遇的，要生出一種「難遭難遇」的這種想。「恭敬之心」：又要恭敬三寶。因為佛若久住於世，眾生就沒有這種難遭難遇的想了，也沒有恭敬心了。佛看見你們這一些個眾生現在都不恭敬了，就說：「我入涅槃了！」

有的人聽見做人和做佛一樣，也這麼長的時間，就生出一種歡喜心，說：「這也不錯！我雖然沒有做佛，我做人也可以做這麼長的時間；生生世世都做人，那我就不要成佛了，我就做人好了！吃一點好東西、穿一點好衣服、住個好房子、買個好的車、再買個好的飛機，或者再有多多的錢，將來科學發明能到月宮去，我到那地方去旅行一下，這也都不錯的！」你這個主意雖然很聰明，但是可沒有把握，你沒有一定可以靠得住的把握！我雖然說你做這麼長時間人，這是大約說的；其實這麼長的時間，你不單做人，這一切的眾生，什麼都做過。你又到過天上去，見過天主；你又到過地府裏去，見過地主；你又到過人間，見過人主。各處你都去過！甚至於月宮，你早就去過了；不過你去了回來，又忘了！就好像你小時候做的什麼事情，長大時，有很多就忘了；你昨天做的事情，今天也就忘了！是不是有這個感覺呀？甚至於十二點鐘你所做的事情，到一點鐘的時候就忘了。你看！是不是啊？今生的事情你都忘了，何況前生、再來生的事情，你怎麼會不忘呢？

Even in Buddhist countries, many believe in Christianity, right? Even in Buddhist countries not everyone understands the Buddhadharma. Think about how many people don't understand it. They may appear to understand it, but they haven't penetrated the inner doctrines at all. It's not easy to meet up with the Buddhadharma. You should consider how rare it is to encounter. "Nor would their hearts would be reverent." You should pay reverence to the Triple Jewel. If the Buddha remained long in the world, people wouldn't think of the Buddhadharma as rare, and they wouldn't be reverent. Seeing that living beings weren't being reverent toward him, the Buddha said, "It's time to go. I'm entering Nirvana!"

Hearing that, someone is thinking, "Being a person and becoming a Buddha take the same length of time." They are happy and say, "That's not bad. I may not get to be a Buddha, but if I can be a person for such a long time, life after life, then I don't need to become a Buddha. I'll just be a person, eat some good food, wear some nice clothes, live in a fine house, buy a good car, a plane—when I'm rich, I'll go for a vacation on the moon! That won't be bad at all." That is a fairly intelligent plan, but it doesn't leave you any real control. There is no way to know with certainty if you can do it. I said that we have been people for a long time, but that was just an estimate. Actually, during all this time, not only have you been a person, but you've been everything else as well. You've been up to heaven and met God, and entered the earth to see one in charge of the earth. You also roamed among human beings, meeting the leaders. You've been all around. In fact, you went to the moon a long time ago, too. You just forgot, just as you have forgotten a lot of things you did as a child. There are even times when you forget the things you do from one day to the next. In

那麼佛呢？佛是不變隨緣，隨緣不變，永遠都是不變的。做人，隨時都會變的，變貓、變狗；變小蟲子，各處去爬；變鴿子，各處去飛；什麼都會變的！你若不相信，在前幾天報紙上都登過，居然就有那麼多人願意做貓、做狗、做老虎、做獅子、做鷹，做蛤蟆、老鼠，什麼都有願意做的！你看，他願意做，他就去做這一些個畜生！很多種類的眾生，都是「一切唯心造」；你心裏願意做什麼，就做什麼了。「那麼我心裏願意成神，會不會成？」也會的！你願意做什麼都可以；你所願意，就會達到你的目的。因為有這種道理，所以我們願意成佛，就會成佛的；你若不願意成佛，那就不成佛。所以我們做人是很危險的，做佛是很平安的。你願意危險，你就做危險的事情；你願意平安，你就去做快樂平安的事情！

是故如來以方便說。比丘當知！諸佛出世，難可值遇。所以者何？諸薄德人，過無量百千萬億劫，或有見佛，或不見者，以此事故，我作是言：諸比丘！如來難可得見！斯衆生等聞如是語，必當生於難遭之想，心懷戀慕，渴仰於佛，便種善根；是故如來雖不實滅，而言滅度。

「是故如來以方便說」：因為前邊所說的道理，所以佛用方便法門為眾生說法。「比丘當知，諸佛出世，難可值遇」：你們這一些個大比丘、阿羅漢等，你們應該知道！諸佛出世，是不容易遇見！百千萬億劫，都不一定遇見佛出世，這非常的難遭難遇的。

「所以者何」所以然的原因是什麼道理呢？「諸薄德人，過無量百千萬億劫，或有見佛，或不見者」：因為這一些個沒有善根的、德行薄的人，要經過很長很長的時間，無量百千萬億那麼多個大劫，或者有善根的，就會見著佛；或者沒有善根，在這百千萬億劫這麼長的時間，也見不著佛。你看！多困難！

☞待續

fact, sometimes by one o'clock in the afternoon you can't remember what you did at noon. If you forget the things you do in this life, how much more likely are you to forget the things you did in your previous lives.

We say that the Buddha does not change but accords with conditions, and accords with conditions but does not change. He is forever unchanging. But as a person, you can turn into something else anytime. You can turn into a cat, a dog, a little bug running around, or a pigeon flying through the air. Take, for example, the article in yesterday's paper in which people wanted to become animals—cats, dogs, tigers, lions, vultures, frogs, mice, and so forth. Everything is made from the mind alone; you become what you want to be.

“Well, I want to become a god. Can I do that?” you ask. Yes, you can. You can be whatever you want. Because you have a wish and an intention, you can arrive at your aim. Based on this principle, if we want to become Buddhas, we can do so. If you don't want to become a Buddha, you won't. Being a person is very dangerous. Being a Buddha is very peaceful. If you like danger, then do dangerous things. If you prefer peace and quiet and happiness, then do peaceful and happy things.

Sutra:

“For that reason, the Thus Come One expediently says, ‘Bhikshus, you should know that it is difficult to meet with a Buddha appearing in the world.’ What is the reason? Those of scant virtue may pass through limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of *kotis* of eons, during which time they may see a Buddha or they may not. Because of that, I tell them, ‘Bhikshus, the Thus Come One is difficult to get to see.’ These living beings, hearing such words, will necessarily realize how difficult it is to get to encounter the Buddha and will cherish a longing and thirst for him. They will then plant good roots. That is why the Thus Come One, although he does not really become extinct, still speaks of passing into extinction.”

Commentary:

For that reason, because of the doctrines just discussed, the Thus Come One expediently says, he uses skill-in-means in speaking the Dharma for living beings. “All of you great Bhikshus and Arhats, you should know that it is difficult to meet with a Buddha appearing in the world.” In a hundred million eons, a Buddha may not appear in the world even once. What is the reason? Those of scant virtue, who do not have good roots, may pass through limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of *kotis* of eons—such a long time, so many great *kalpas*—during which time they may see a Buddha or they may not. If they have good roots, they may see a Buddha. If they don't, then throughout all that time—hundreds of thousands of myriads of *kotis* of eons—they will not encounter a Buddha. Consider how difficult it is!

☞To be continued

啟事：本期因稿擠，佛祖道影、靈光獨耀照法界、論語等暫延，特此告知。

Notice: Due to the large number of articles for this issue, “Lives of the Patriarchs,” “A Spiritual Light Illumines the Dharma Realm,” and “The Analects of Confucius” have temporarily been discontinued for this issue.