

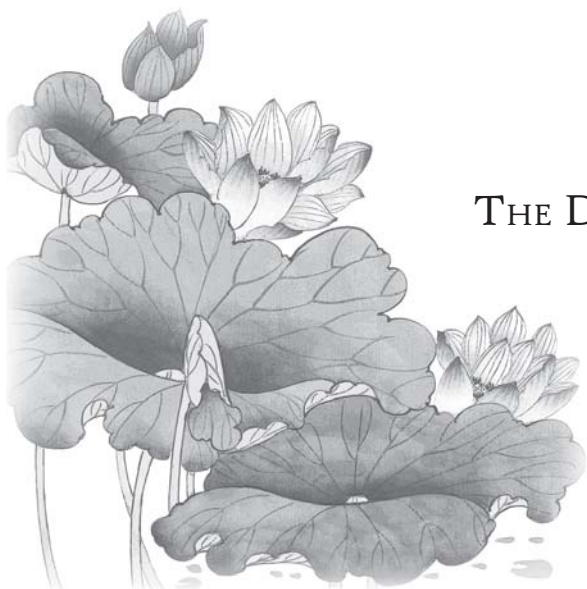
妙法蓮華經淺釋

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

宣化上人講 Commentary by the Venerable Master Hua
國際譯經學院記錄翻譯 Translated by the International Translation Institute
修訂版 Revised Version



「以常見我故，而生憍恣心，放逸著五欲，墮於惡道中」：佛又說，我為什麼說入涅槃呢？因為眾生若天天見著我，就會生出一種驕傲、縱恣的心。縱恣，就是不守規矩，不依照佛法來修行。就很放逸、很不守規矩的，著到五欲上——財、色、名、食、睡，或色、聲、香、味、觸，墮落到「地獄、餓鬼、畜生」這三惡道裏邊去。

「我常知眾生，行道不行道」：我知道這一切眾生心之所念，所謂「一切眾生若干種心，如來悉知悉見。」所以我常常知道眾生的這種思想，他想什麼我都知道，知道他或者修行和不修行。

我告訴你們，你們現在我這一些皈依弟子，你們誰修行、不修行，我也知道；你們誰守規矩、不守規矩，我也知道。那守規矩的人，就天天來聽經；不守規矩的人，就天天要往外跑。這暑假班也是這樣子，守規矩的，無論哪一個課程，都來守規矩；不守規矩的，人上這個課，他做那個事。你們必須要認真去學習佛法，不要馬馬虎虎的；你若馬馬虎虎的，我講經費這麼多的氣力，你不要以為很容易的。講經也是很費氣力的！

「隨所應可度，為說種種法」：這個眾生，應以佛身得度者，佛就現佛身而為說法；應以眾生身得度者，佛就隨類應現。佛變種種的眾生，去度種種的眾生，為眾生說種種的法。

「每自作是意，以何令眾生，得入無上

Otherwise, because they often see me, / They would grow arrogant and lax. Why do I say I am going to enter Nirvana? I do so because if living beings see me every day they will grow sloppy and **unruly**. They won't cultivate according to the Dharma, **and** they will be **attached to the five desires** of wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep, or else to forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and dharmas. **They would tumble into the evil paths**, the three "evil paths" of the animals, ghosts, and hell beings.

I am ever aware of living beings. I, Shakyamuni Buddha, keep track of all the thoughts in the minds of living beings. So the *Vajra Sutra* says, "The Thus Come One completely knows and sees all the thoughts in the minds of living beings."

I keep up with the thoughts of living beings—**those who practice the Way and those who do not.**

Let me tell you—all the disciples who took refuge with me, I knew who cultivated and who did not cultivate. I knew who followed the rules and who did not. Those who followed rules came to the lectures every day. Those who did not follow rules wanted to run outside every day. It was the same for the summer class. Those who behaved themselves attended all classes according to the regulation. Those who did not behave themselves did other stuff in the class. You must take it seriously to study Buddhadharma, and do not muddle it through. Do not take it too casual. It takes me lots of energy to lecture the sutras. Don't think it's really easy. It does take lots of effort and strength to lecture the sutras.

And I speak various Dharmas for their sakes, / To save them in an appropriate manner. If a person can be saved by means of a Buddha body, I, the Buddha, take the body of a Buddha and speak Dharma for that person. If a person can be saved by means of another kind of being, the Buddha will take the appropriate form and save that person.

道，速成就佛身」：我常常這麼樣想。想什麼？用什麼方法來教化眾生，使令眾生能得到無上智慧的道法，很快成就佛的法身呢？

【分別功德品第十七】

這一品是「分別功德品」。分別，就是因為功德有大，有小，有多，有少，那麼必須要來把它分別說一說。

什麼是「功」？什麼是「德」？「功」是對外而言，「德」是對內而言。你在外邊能立功，在裏邊才有德。功，是你所行所做的善事。本來這種善事，你可以做，也可以不做；可是，你在這可做、可不做的情形之下，你能做這種善事，這就是有了功。有功之後，你自性上就會有一種快樂的感覺；有這種快樂的感覺，這就有德了。

這功德不是由一件事情而成就的，而是要由小而大，由少而多，由種種的善事積累而成的。積累，也就聚集；由少而多，或者由小而大，這都是積累。好像山，本來沒有山來著，因為微塵一天比一天多，這山也就高了。山高，不是由一天、兩天、三天、五天高的，是由每天、每天，每一個月、每一年，它慢慢高起來的。所以現在我們看見這座山那麼高，這不是一個短時間而成的，是經過很長的時間成的。山，比方是個功；海，就比方是個德。海，也不是一天、兩天成一個大海，不知道經過幾多個大劫，才成就一個大海的；所有的水都向海裏流去了，這就比方「德」。

這功德，也就好像山海聚集而成；由少而積聚成多了，這就叫「功德」。外邊有功，裏邊有德，功德多了，你這道業就會成就了！釋迦牟尼佛為什麼成佛？也就因為他功德多了，功德圓滿了，就成佛了。

現在分別功德，在功德沒圓滿以前，如何做功德？所以這叫「功德品」。我們聽了這功德品，就要做功德；不要聽了不做，那就是沒有功德。你聽了，然後做功德，這功德一天就比一天多；好像海和山一樣，等你圓滿的時候，就成佛了。

待續

I am always thinking, / “How can I cause living beings / To enter the unsurpassed path—to be certified to the supreme Way and to quickly perfect the Buddha body, the Dharma body?”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: DISCRIMINATION OF MERIT AND VIRTUE

We speak of a discrimination of merit and virtue because merit and virtue can be great or small, a lot or a little. Here we will discuss these discriminations.

What are “merit” and “virtue”? Merit is an external attribute and virtue is an internal one. Only if one establishes merit on the outside does one then have virtue inside. Merit is what one gains as a result of doing good deeds. Basically, one has a choice. One can do good deeds or one can not do them. If one makes the choice to do them, then one gains merit. Once one has merit, one’s self-nature will feel happy. That happiness is virtue. Merit and virtue aren’t accomplished through a single deed. One has to do many, many good deeds and accumulate them in order to have great merit and much virtue.

Merit is the gradual accumulation of many good deeds, created layer by layer. A few accumulate into many; the small grows to become the large. Just as a mountain is slowly formed from an accumulation of tiny dust particles day by day, merit grows from small to great. The mountain doesn’t get that high in two days, three, four, or five days. It grows every day, every month, and year by year. This doesn’t happen all at once, but rather over a long period of time. Merit is just like the mountain.

As for virtue, it is like the sea. The sea also isn’t created in a day. Who knows how many great eons were needed to create the sea? All waters flow into the sea, which is analogous to virtue. Merit and virtue accumulate in the same way that mountains and seas form. But this is an analogy. You don’t want to say that the Dharma Master defined mountains as being merit and seas as being virtue. This is an analogy; it is not the thing itself.

External merit and internal virtue are accumulated bit by bit until the point is reached that a great measure has been amassed. Then one’s spiritual practice of the Path is realized. Shakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha due to his perfection of merit and virtue.

This chapter is called “Discrimination of Merit and Virtue” because we are dealing with the different deeds that can be done in the process of accumulation before merit and virtue have been perfected.

Upon hearing this chapter, we should then set about doing deeds of merit and virtue. To simply listen and know about merit and virtue, but not do any acts of merit and virtue, will bring no merit and virtue. If you hear about merit and virtue and then practice doing meritorious and virtuous deeds, your merit and virtue will grow daily, like the mountains and the seas. When they are perfected, you will become a Buddha.

To be continued