

貪欲之火可燎原

Single Spark, Mighty Flame

- ❑ 萬佛聖城方丈恒律法師2018年3月31日觀音七前夕開示
- ❑ A Talk Given by the Abbot Heng Lyu in CTTB's Buddha Hall before the Guan Yin Recitation on March 31, 2018

今天農曆二月十五，觀音七前夕，也是本師釋迦牟尼佛的涅槃日。釋迦牟尼佛曾經在《觀音三昧經》中說：「觀音菩薩在我之前成佛，名『正法明如來』，我為苦行弟子。」觀世音菩薩雖在過去久遠劫前成佛，今卻已入涅槃。乃至現在大家發願要往生的西方極樂世界的教主—阿彌陀佛，在遙遠的未來也會入涅槃。

《悲華經》及《觀音授記經》中說，當阿彌陀佛入涅槃之後，觀世音菩薩就會在西方極樂世界成佛。在那個時候，尚未成佛的淨土行者將依止觀世音菩薩，作為他佛國中的眷屬，繼續修行。其後，觀世音菩薩依然要入涅槃，接著大勢至菩薩就會成佛。大勢至菩薩成佛後的國土莊嚴，乃至佛的壽命、眷屬、正法住世等等，皆與觀世音菩薩住世時無有差異。

諸佛具足大慈悲、大智慧、大神通，能夠壽命自在，但是為什麼不選擇長久住世，而要入涅槃呢？《妙法蓮華經》的〈如來壽量品〉中說，諸佛之所以入涅槃，是為了要方便教化眾生的緣故。

為什麼呢？因為若久住於世，眾生就會認為佛陀能永遠慈悲地照顧我們，而變得懈怠乃至不修行。正如《大方廣佛華嚴經》的〈佛不思議法品〉中所提，當佛快入涅槃時，眾生才會覺醒到：「如來世尊有大慈悲，哀愍饒益一切眾生，與諸眾生為救為歸。如來出現，難可值遇。無上福田，但於今卻永滅。」這時候對佛陀生起稀有難遇之想，心懷戀慕渴仰於佛陀，才能進而修行佛法，種下解脫的善根。



Today, on the 15th day of the second lunar month, is the eve of Guan Yin session and it is also the Nirvana day of our fundamental teacher Shakyamuni Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha once said in the Sutra *Samadhi of Guan Yin Bodhisattva*, “Guan Yin Bodhisattva had realized Buddhahood, before I did, with the name Light of Proper Dharma Tathagata. At that time, I was his ascetic disciple.” Although many eons ago, Guan Yin Bodhisattva realized Buddhahood, had already entered Nirvana. Even Amitabha Buddha in the Western Pure Land, where we vow to be reborn, will eventually enter Nirvana in the far future as well.

According to the *Compassionate Flower Sutra* and the *Prophecy of Guan Yin Sutra*, after Amitabha Buddha enters Nirvana, Guan Yin Bodhisattva will become the next Buddha of Land of Ultimate Bliss. At that time, those Pure Land practitioners who have to yet accomplish Buddhahood will take refuge with Guan Yin Bodhisattva and become his retinue in the Pure Land to continue to cultivate. After that Guan Yin Bodhisattva will also enter Nirvana and Great Strength Bodhisattva will become the next Buddha afterwards. His Pure Land, lifespan, teachings and retinue will be

這使我想到了則小故事。過去有一位老父親，生了四個整天只知吃喝玩樂的兒子。這位老父常常苦口婆心地告誡兒子：「我有一天會死的，你們要自力更生。否則我死之後，你們要靠什麼來生活？」兒子們聽了卻覺得老生常談，心想不用擔心，老爸都會在身邊照顧我們的。所以他們還是繼續揮霍，享受人生；日子久了，富裕的家境也變得窮苦潦倒。

有一天，老父親病得很嚴重，知道自己就快去世了，於是把兒子們都找來說：「兒啊，我就快要死了，你們以後生活會成問題的，所以我預備了五十兩黃金給你們來用。」兒子們一聽，眼睛立刻張得大大的，趕緊問：「這些黃金在哪裡？」老父說：「我把金子埋在山腳下的果園，你們千萬別把這塊土地給賣了。」兒子們又問：「那您到底把黃金埋哪兒？」老父親說：「我實在不記得了。但是黃金就埋在那兒，你們一定找得到！沒多久，老人就去世了。

老人一死，四個兒子立刻就拿著鏟子、圓鋤、耙子趕往果園去挖黃金。他們仔細地翻遍每一吋土地，但就是沒有黃金。由於土地被翻鬆了，於是那一年果園的收成特別好，收入算一算，真的有五十兩黃金。

佛陀就像那位慈悲的老父，眾生就像那四個兒子，果園就是我們的心地，而鏟子、圓鋤和耙子就是佛法。只要肯用佛法來開墾心地，產生的收益將比任何數量的黃金都更為有價值。為什麼？因為黃金有用完的時候，而用佛法開墾心地得到真正的解脫，這是受益無窮的。

但是眾生為什麼不修行佛法開墾心地，啟發本具的智慧呢？《法句經》中有這麼一則故事。

有一次佛陀在祇樹給孤獨園，有五名在家人來精舍聽聞佛法。這五個人見到佛陀之後，說明來意，便頂禮佛足，恭敬地坐在一旁。佛陀也很慈悲地為這五位居士開示佛法。

就在佛陀為他們開示的時候，五個人當

no different from those of Guan Yin Bodhisattva.

All Buddhas have great kindness, compassion, wisdom and spiritual powers, and they can live as long as they wish. However, why do they enter Nirvana instead of continuing transforming living beings for as long as possible? In Chapter 16, the *Tathagata's Lifespan* of the *Dharma Flower Sutra*, it states that the Tathagata enters Nirvana only as an expedient to teach and transform living beings.

Why is that? if the Buddha were to stay in the world for a long time, living beings would think the Buddhas would take care of them forever, they would become lax and stop cultivating. Therefore in Chapter 33, the *Inconceivable Dharmas of Buddhas* of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, it says that when a Buddha enters Nirvana, living beings will realize that “the Buddha, with great kindness and compassion, takes pity on all living beings and benefits the whole world. He rescues sentient beings and be their refuge. It is rare to encounter the Tathagata in the world, and now the unsurpassed field of blessing is gone forever.” At this time, living beings will realize how precious is the opportunity to encounter the Buddha. Because of this cherishing and the longing for the Buddha, they will practice according to the Buddha's teachings and plant good roots of liberation.

It reminds me of a story I'd like to share. Once upon a time there was a family—an old father and four lazy sons. These four boys did nothing but eat, drink and be merry all the time. The father always reminded them patiently, “I know I will die one day so you must rely on your own efforts, otherwise when I'm dead, how will you four manage to live by yourselves?” The sons thought the father was nagging and did not pay attention to his words. They thought their father would always be around and they could live off of him. So they continued wasting away their family's wealth for pleasures until their wasteful ways brought the once prosperous family into deep poverty.

One day the father became very ill and bedridden. He knew he would soon pass away. So he called his four sons and said, “My dear sons, your father will soon be dead. Your livelihood will soon be a problem, so I have prepared 50 ounces of gold to take care of your future needs.” Upon hearing that, the four sons' eyes lit up immediately and they asked, “Is the gold at home?” The father told them it's hidden in the orchard at the foot of the mountain, so you shouldn't sell the land for cash. They asked again, “Where exactly did you hide it?” The father said, “I don't know the exact spot but it's there. You will surely find it, so go and find it yourselves.” Then he passed away.

After their father's death, the four sons immediately picked up rakes and shovels and headed for the orchard in search of the gold. They carefully dug over every inch of the land but didn't find any gold. As the soil was so well loosened, the succeeding crops were of extremely good quality. They sold the harvest and when they counted their earnings they discovered that it came to exactly 50 ounces of gold.

The Buddha is like the compassionate old father; living beings are like the four sons; the orchard is like our mind and the rakes and shovels represent Dharma. If we cultivate our mind with Dharma, our harvest is worth more

中的第一個人竟然睡著了；第二個人心不在焉地用手指頭在地上畫來畫去；第三個身體動來動去，甚至去搖動旁邊的樹幹；第四個人仰視天空；只有第五個人在專心地聽佛說法。

此時阿難尊者在佛陀的身邊，對這五個人的不同反應和表現感到很好奇，於是就請問佛陀：「為什麼只有一個人專心聽您說法，其他四個人卻表現得那麼奇怪？」

佛陀解釋說：「這與他們前生的習氣有關。那個打瞌睡的人，前生是條蛇，蜷起身體就是睡覺；所以今生投胎為人，只要一盤起腿來，不由自主地就想睡覺。那個用手指在地上畫來畫去的，前生是一條蚯蚓，遇到土壤就會想鑽，所以今生一碰到土，便不自覺地亂抓亂畫。那個坐立不安、搖樹幹的，前生是一隻猴子，喜歡在樹林間爬來爬去，到了今生依舊躁動，只要看到樹就想去搖。至於那個仰望天空的人，前生是一名天文學家，經常仰望星空，所以習氣仍舊沒有改變。

佛陀告訴阿難：「若是想要領悟佛法，就必須專心聽聞佛法。但是很可惜，許多人無法做到這一點。」於是阿難請問佛陀，什麼因緣障礙人們學習佛法？佛陀回答：「因為被貪瞋癡所障礙。貪欲就像大火，能夠燒毀一切的生命，只留下灰燼。因此我說在這個世間上，沒有任何火能夠比得上貪欲之火。」佛陀說完法之後，那位專心聽法的當下就證得了初果。

當被人無理取鬧，心生煩惱的時候，我們往往會不自覺地抱怨。這個故事提供一個很好的解決方法，就是可以試著觀想對方被宿世習氣所影響，今生做不了主，所以才會做出那麼無理取鬧或粗魯的事情來。這樣觀想能幫助我們免於抑鬱於心，進而不計較，乃至慈心悲愍對方。

剛剛佛陀提到了貪欲，修行千萬不要小看一點點的貪欲，所謂「星星之火可以燎原」。在這裡再分享一個佛陀在世的故事。

蒂哈（Tissa）尊者，出家之前是舍衛城裡的名門望族，出家之後很精進地修行。有一天早上他接受了一件袈裟的供養，但是很不幸的，由於中午吃了一些東西沒法消化，當晚就去世了。死後他變成一個跳蚤，住在早上才剛剛接受的那件袈裟上。

than any amount of gold. Why is that? Gold will be used up eventually but if we cultivate our mind with Dharma, we will receive the fruit of true liberation and it will benefit us infinitely.

So why don't many living beings cultivate their mind according to Dharma and develop their inherent wisdom? In the *Dharmapada* there is a story that I'd like to share.

When the Buddha resided at the Jetavana Monastery, five laymen went to the monastery desiring to hear the Dharma. Having bowed to the Buddha, they sat down respectfully on one side. The Buddha instructed them in the Dharma with kindness and compassion.

When the Buddha was teaching the Dharma to the five laymen, one of them was asleep while sitting. Another one was drawing lines with his fingers on the ground; the third one was moving his body and trying to shake a tree; the fourth was looking up at the sky. The fifth one was the only one who was respectfully and attentively listening to the Buddha.

Venerable Ananda who was near the Buddha, saw the curious behavior of the five laymen and asked the Buddha, "World Honored One, while you were speaking the Dharma, only one of the five people was listening attentively." Venerable Ananda described the different behavior of the other four and asked why they were behaving in such a manner.

The Buddha explained to Venerable Ananda, "These people haven't gotten rid of their old habits. In their past lives, the first person was a snake. As a snake usually coils itself up to sleep, so this man, while listening to the dharma, goes to sleep soon as he sits cross legged. The one who was scratching with his hand was an earthworm, digging around all the time. The one who was shaking the tree was a monkey running around in the trees the whole time. The one who was gazing up at the sky was an astronomer, who had done just so frequently in his past life."

The Buddha continued, "Ananda, you must remember that one must be attentive to be able to understand the Dharma. However, it's a shame that there are many people who cannot do so." Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha what prevented people from being able to take in the Dharma. The Buddha replied, "Ananda, they are confused by greed, hatred and delusion. For there is no fire like the fire of greed, consuming living beings as it does, only leaving ashes behind. Therefore, I say there is no fire like the fire of greed." After the end of the Buddha's discourse, the one who was listening attentively attained the first fruition.

When we are affected by someone unreasonable, we may complain and think, "Why is this person so rude and unreasonable?" We may feel very puzzled and upset. This story provides a good solution. We can try to contemplate that this person is influenced by inclinations or habits of their past, so their behavior is out of their control. In this way, we can easily let it go without complaints or resentment. We may even give rise to kindness and compassion towards this person.

When it comes to greed, we shouldn't slight even the minute greed of ours, because a single spark can start a wildfire. I'd like to share a story of



Namo Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva

當僧眾為他辦完喪事之後，依照戒律必須將他的袈裟平分。此時，那只跳蚤大喊：「你們這些出家人要搶我的財產啊！」佛陀在精舍裡聽到跳蚤的喊叫聲，立刻吩咐阿難：「去告訴比丘們，暫時不要動那件袈裟，等到七日之後才可以處理。」到了第七天，跳蚤死了，往生到兜率天。直到第八天，佛陀才允許僧眾去平分蒂啥尊者的袈裟。

很多僧眾們都感到困惑，為什麼要七天之後才處理那條袈裟？於是他們請教佛陀，佛陀告訴比丘，蒂啥尊者死後投生一只跳蚤，住在才剛接受的袈裟上面：「如果當時就平分他的袈裟，他會產生不好的念頭，而墮落到地獄去。現在他已經往生到兜率天，所以我才允許你們將袈裟給分了。」

佛陀最後開示比丘，對於這個世間的眾生來說，最不幸的就是貪欲，它能夠令眾生墮落到地獄之中。因此，修行不要貪求神通或是感應，而是要消除自己的貪瞋癡，這才是最根本、最重要的。

剛剛提到觀世音菩薩雖然在過去已經成佛了，但是當釋迦牟尼佛在娑婆世界成佛之後，他還是化身為菩薩來到這個世界幫助釋迦牟尼佛，繼續度化眾生；同時也和大勢至菩薩在極樂世界幫助阿彌陀佛，教化極樂世界的眾生。所謂「一佛出世，千佛護持」，這就是在教我們要慈悲，要彼此互相幫助。

觀世音菩薩所象徵的特質就是慈悲，而慈悲的基礎就是設身處地為他人著想，幫助他人，使他人能夠離苦得樂。其實這就是成佛之道。☸

when the Buddha was in the world.

Venerable Tissa came from a respectable family in Shravasti. After becoming a monk, he cultivated vigorously. One morning he received a robe. Unfortunately he was unable to digest food he had eaten so he died that night and was reborn as a flea on that very robe.

After the monks performed his funeral ceremony, according to the Vinaya, the robe belonged to the Sangha and they were going to divide it. At that time, the flea screamed, "You monks are robbing my property!" The Buddha heard that scream and asked Venerable Ananda to tell the monks to lay aside Venerable Tissa's robe for seven days. Venerable Ananda did as he was told and after seven days, that flea died

and was reborn in Tushita Heaven. On the eighth day, the Buddha allowed the monks to divide Tissa's robe proportionally.

The monks did so and amongst themselves discussed why the Buddha had them put aside the robe for seven days. When the monks told the Buddha their discussion, the Buddha said, "Monks, Tissa was reborn as a flea on his own robe which he just received. If you were to divide up his robe, he would have held a grudge against you and been reborn in hell. Now that he has been reborn in Tushita Heaven, for this reason, I permitted you to take the robe and divide it amongst yourselves."

The Buddha then concluded that craving is indeed a grievous matter amongst living beings here in the world, it causes living beings to be reborn in hell. Therefore, we should pay attention to the purpose of our cultivation, it is to get rid of our greed, hatred and delusion instead of seeking for psychic power or responses.

We just mentioned that Guan Yin Bodhisattva had become a Buddha in the past. After Shakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha, Guan Yin becomes a Bodhisattva to help Shakyamuni Buddha teach living beings in the Saha world. At the same time, he and Great Strength Bodhisattva help Amitabha Buddha in the Western Pure Land. So in Buddhism it is said, "When one Buddha comes to the world, a thousand Buddhas come to the world to support him." It shows that we also should be kind and compassionate and always help each other.

Loving kindness and compassion is the characteristic of Guan Yin Bodhisattva. And the foundation of loving kindness and compassion is to put yourself in other's position and help others elevate sufferings and attain bliss. It is a way to accomplish Buddhahood. ☸