

佛入涅槃

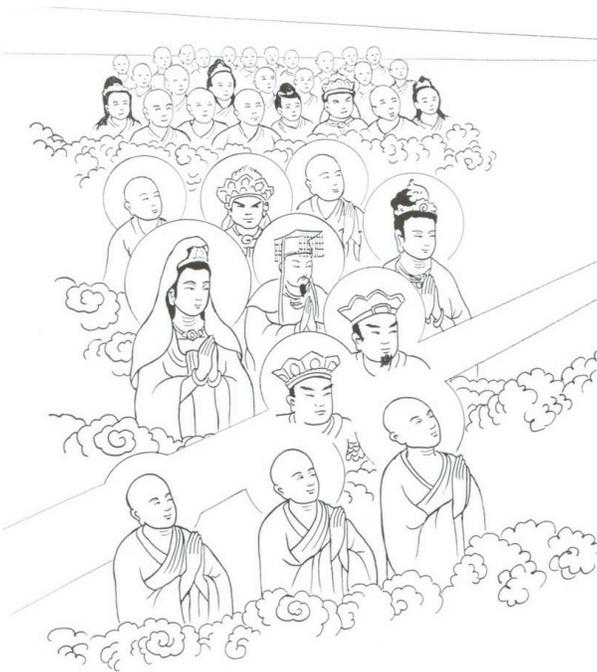
The Buddha Entered Nirvāṇa

摘自宣公上人《大般涅槃經淺釋》

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An Excerpt from a commentary on the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

English Translated by Katherine Wang and Leo Wang



Ordinary Bodhisattvas, Arhats, Śravakas, and Pratyekabuddhas (Those Enlightened by Conditions), as well as the gods, dragons and others of the Eightfold Division knew that the Buddha entering Nirvana was a very sorrowful event. In reality, the Buddha neither has come into being, nor cease to be. The lifespan of the Buddha is eternal, constant, unchanging, and without an end; it has no birth or death, which can be compared to an ocean. We disciples of the Buddha should not give rise to strong attachments: attachments to a long lifespan or a short lifespan, attachments to existence or non-existence, or attachments to coming into being or ceasing to be. We should break through these attachments. After you break free of these attachments, you will understand that the Buddha's lifespan is limitless. Otherwise, you will never understand how long the Buddha's lifespan is. It's just like the ocean, in which all the little streams trickle into. All living beings are just like the streams that flow into the ocean—the lifespans of living beings gradually disappear, but the big ocean will forever be there.

一般的菩薩、阿羅漢、聲聞緣覺、天龍八部，知道佛要入涅槃，是很悲哀的。實際上佛沒有生，也沒有滅，佛這個壽命是恆常不變的，沒有一個窮盡的時候。佛的壽命就和大海是一樣的，永遠不生不滅。

那麼你們佛弟子，不需要生大執著——執短執長，執有執無，執生執滅；要把這些個執著破了它。你破了這些執著，那就懂得佛的壽命是無量的。要不破這些執著呢，你永遠也

Therefore, the lifespan of the Buddha is the lifespan of all living beings in their entirety. Even though the lifespans of living beings are short, they will return to the ocean of the Buddha-nature in the end. The Buddha-nature is bright and pervasively illuminating; even though the Buddha entered Nirvāṇa, there is still no birth and death. Ordinary people are attached to the idea that the Buddha only lived eighty-some years before entering Nirvāṇa. In reality, up till now, the Buddha is still speaking the Dharma for us and teaching and transforming living beings. Because of this, when Great Master Zhi Zhě (the Wise One) was reciting the *Lotus Sūtra*, he still saw the Dharma Assembly on Vulture Peak vividly carrying on with detail. Was the state he saw real? It was real. Once the light of our inherent nature becomes one with that of the Buddha, we will also attain an immeasurable lifespan.

Thus, we must diligently cultivate. To diligently cultivate means to get

不明白佛這個壽命是多長。就像大海啊，所有的細流流入到海中。一切眾生就好像那個細流，細流流到大海裡後，眾生的壽命就不顯現了，但大海是永遠都存在的。

所以佛的壽命，就是眾生的壽命。眾生的壽命雖然是短暫的，可是最後都會歸入到佛的性海中去。佛性是光明遍照的，佛雖示現涅槃，但仍然是沒有生滅。凡夫執著佛活了八十多歲就入涅槃。實際上佛到現在還是在給我們說法，還是在教化眾生。因為這個，智者大師念法華經，仍然見到靈山一會，儼然未散。那麼這種境界是不是真的呢？是真的。我們人的自性要是和佛性合光了，我們的壽命也是無量。

所以我們要努力修行，努力修行就要去自己本身一切的毛病，一切的習氣。你不去你的習氣，不去你的毛病，就讀多少經，念多少佛，那也是不明白佛法的。尤其那個貢高我慢，做事忌妒障礙，不知以為知，不能以為能，這樣子可以說是昏昧的，對佛法是不明白的。

在這一段《涅槃經》迦葉菩薩對釋迦牟尼佛說，佛陀的壽命應該可以在這個世界住上一劫，不應該這麼早走，可以留在這個世界上宣揚佛法、講經，令眾生離苦得樂。

釋迦牟尼佛就對他說：「迦葉，不應該這樣想，不應該對如來有這種生滅的思想。」有生就是一個開始，有滅就是一個斷了、終了。不應對如來有這樣的想法。

這並不是佛的壽命盡了，而是佛的化緣已盡。佛應該教化的眾生，他已經教化好了。至於佛還沒有教化的眾生，佛的教法還留在這世界上，那麼後人來學習、來研究就能明白。

不過就是佛的事情做完了，他要入涅槃免得一切眾生都生一種依賴的心，依賴佛住在世界上，他自己就不修行了；等到眾生沒有依賴的時候，自己就會站起來了。

這個佛的境界，不要說聲聞緣覺不知道，就是到了等覺菩薩，他也不知道佛的境界。所以才說初地菩薩不知二地的境界；

rid of all of your past faults and bad habits. If you do not rid yourself of your faults and bad habits, no matter how many sūtras you read or how many times you recite the Buddha's name, you still won't understand the Buddhadharma. Especially for those who are arrogant, when they do things, they obstruct people out of jealousy. They don't know, but they still think they know; they think they can do something, but cannot do it. You can say that this is ignorance and not understanding Buddhadharma.

There is a paragraph in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* where Kāśyapa Bodhisattva said to Śākyamuni Buddha, "The Buddha has a lifespan that should allow him to stay in this world for a kalpa. The Buddha shouldn't leave the world this early. He could continue to propagate the Buddhadharma and lecture on sūtras, enabling living beings to leave suffering and attain bliss."

Śākyamuni Buddha said to him, "Kāśyapa, you shouldn't think like this. Regarding the Thus Come One, you shouldn't have such notions of birth and death." To come into being is to have a beginning, and to cease to be is to have an end. You shouldn't think like this regarding the Thus Come One.

This does not mean that the life of the Buddha has come to an end; instead, it means that the transformation affinities of the Buddha are at an end. The living beings who the Buddha was supposed to teach and transform have already been taught and transformed. As for the living beings that he did not teach and transform, the Buddha's teachings, the Dharma, stayed in the world for later generations to learn, investigate, and understand.

The Buddha entered Nirvāṇa because he finished everything that he needed to do, and to make sure living beings don't develop a mindset of dependence. If the Buddha was still in the world, then they will not cultivate and stand on their own. When living beings do not have that kind of dependence, then they can learn to stand on their own.

Even if Bodhisattvas reached the level of Equal Enlightenment, they would still not be able to understand the Buddhas' states, not to mention Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. Therefore, we say Bodhisattvas on the first ground do not know the states of Bodhisattvas on the second ground. Tenth ground Bodhisattvas do not know the states of Equal Enlightenment. For example, it's just like when studying, first graders would not understand second graders' subjects; when you are in middle school, you would not understand college subjects.

Today we are talking about the Buddhas' states which only

十地菩薩不知道等覺的境界。舉個例子，好像讀書，一年級不知二年級的課程；你這個讀中學的就不知道大學的課程。

今天就說這個佛的境界，佛與佛才能互相了解，聲聞緣覺和凡夫當然不能明白佛的境界。不要說佛的境界，就是說我們人與人之間，都是互不相知的，更何況你想知道佛？這叫「妄自揣測，無有是處」。

你們知道我是怎麼回事嗎？你能知道我一天吃多少粒米嗎？所以說「若人欲識佛境界」，你想要明白佛的境界啊，「當淨其意如虛空」。你首先要自淨其意，把你這個意念裡頭那一些個癡心妄想、狂心野性，那一些個烏魯拉扎的東西都乾收拾乾淨了它。你要把它收拾乾淨了，就與道合一，與佛同體了。可是你沒收拾乾淨，你冒充哪，那到什麼時候也是也是考不上的，不及格的。❀

Buddhas can mutually understand. Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and ordinary people of course can not understand the Buddhas' states. Not to mention the Buddhas' states, even among us people: we don't know about each other's states, how much the less can we possibly fathom the states of Buddhas. It is said, "If you arbitrarily guess their [Buddhas'] states, it is useless."

Do you know what's going on for me? Do you know how many grains of rice I eat a day? [Impossible!] Therefore it is said,

*If one wishes to fathom the state of the Buddhas,
One should purify one's mind to become like empty space.*

If you would like to understand the state of the Buddhas, you should first cleanse your mind, cleansing it of anything messy, smelly, or cluttered so that all of your deluded and ignorant thoughts from your wild mind and untamed nature dissipate. Once all of these are gone, you will merge with the Way and become one with the Buddhas. However, if you have not cleaned yourself up, but pretend that you have done your work, then you are just being phony; you will never be able to pass the test. ❀

我們講經，尤其是《華嚴經》，講一百個大菩薩的名字；我們聽見這一百個大菩薩的名字，就消除我們百千萬劫的十惡不善的罪業。因為這個，大家不要一聽講菩薩的名字，說：「這都是菩薩的名字，沒有什麼大意思，不要聽了。」你不要聽，你那個罪業就不能消除；你聽一聽，比不聽好得多。所以我現在請大家都不要打那麼多妄想；要平心靜氣，沒有那麼多染污的念頭，在這兒聽經！聽了一趟經，就得到清淨了，就沒有妄想了；所以我們聽菩薩的名字，不要討厭，不要嫌菩薩名字多。因為我看見有幾個人，聽見盡講菩薩、菩薩、菩薩，說沒有什麼大意思。我現在跟你們解釋一下。

—摘自宣公上人《華嚴經淺釋》十定品第二十七

When we explain sutras, especially the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, which has one hundred Great Bodhisattvas' names, lessens or eradicates our limitless kalpas of offensive karma from the ten evils. So don't say, "I've listened to so many Bodhisattvas' names. They are all just Bodhisattvas' names and there's no great meaning in that. I don't want to listen anymore." If you don't listen, then you won't be able to lessen your offensive karma. Listening is much better than not listening. Now I'm asking you to not have so much false thinking. Calm your mind and quiet down. Don't have so many defiled thoughts when you listen to the sutra. If you listen to the sutras, you will obtain purity because you won't have false thinking. Don't dislike listening to the Bodhisattvas' names. Don't think that there are too many. I can see a few people who are listening and they are thinking, "Bodhisattva, Bodhisattva, Bodhisattva! There's no great meaning in this." That's why I'm giving this little bit of explanation now.

—An Excerpt from Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's Commentary on Chapter Twenty Seven, "The Ten Samadhis," of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*