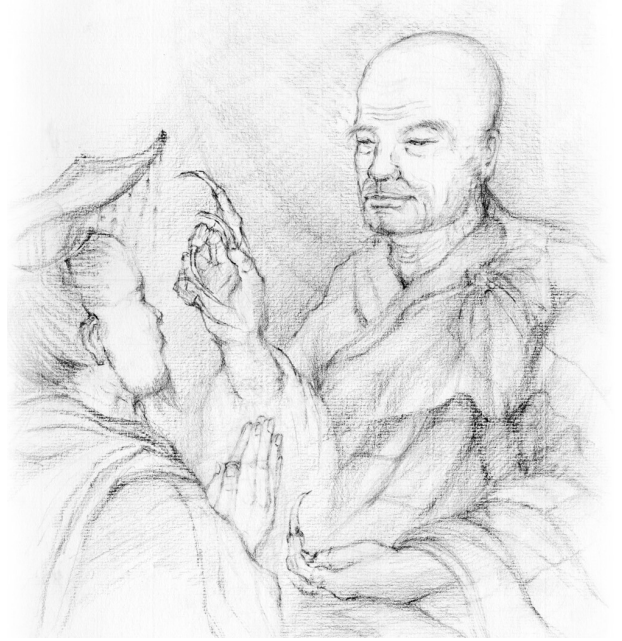


梁武帝問誌公禪師因果經

The Sutra of Emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty Inquiring of Chan Master Zhi Gong about Cause and Effect

晨瑛譯組 英譯

English Translated by Early Bird Translation Team



編按：這部經是由誌公禪師和梁武帝，在來回的對話裡，說明了因緣果報的複雜性，用來對治一般人追求名利的通病，願有心者切勿錯失此殊勝法會。

Editor's note: In this Sutra, Chan Master Zhi Gong and Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty engage in a dialogue, in which the complex nature of cause and effect is explained to help people desist from the pursuit of fame and profit. This is something you surely pay attention to if you are interested.

昔日蕭衍帝。即梁武帝。
心中樂善好愛修行。禮拜誌
公和尚。為國師也。

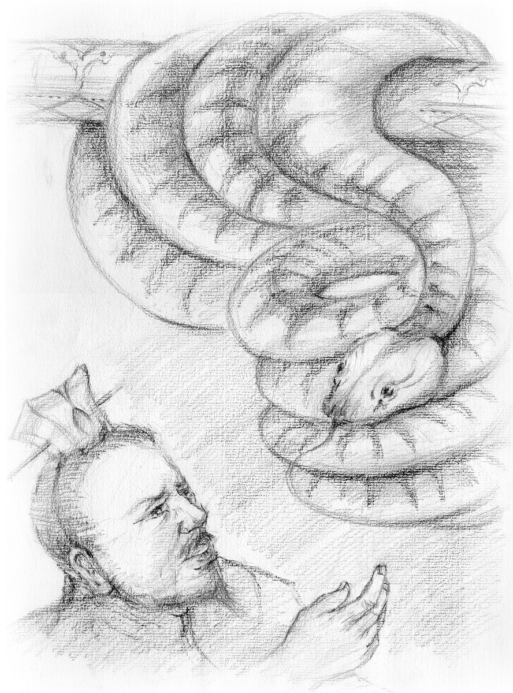
惟有郗氏皇后。心不信
善。造業深重。死後墮落。
作一蟒蛇之身。武帝得師。
究竟指明。心向修行。忽日
宮中夜臥不睡。起往乘涼閣
乘涼。須臾之間聽得殿下嚙
啐之聲。武帝舉眼一觀。只
見一條蟒蛇。直至殿下。帝
見失色。嘆而言曰。朕宮嚴
潔。何更有此蛇怪。

只見其蛇。口作人言告知。
我主不要心驚。妾今不是別

In the past, Emperor Xiao Yan (蕭衍), also known as Emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty (梁武帝), was a philanthropist and delighted in cultivation. He respectfully took the Dharma Master Zhi Gong (誌公) as his mentor, thus making him the teacher of the nation.

However, his wife, the empress whose maiden name was Chi (郗), did not believe in doing good deeds and committed heavy offenses. After passing away, she fell into a lower realm and became a python. Emperor Wu had the Dharma Master's clear and supreme instructions and kept his mind on cultivation. One night in the palace, lying on the bed yet unable to fall asleep, he got up and went to a pavilion to enjoy the coolness. Soon he heard some noise beneath the palace. He took a look and saw a python coming directly toward him. The emperor gasped and exclaimed to himself, "My palace is well maintained with tight security! How can a serpent get in here?"

The python then spoke verbally with its mouth, "My lord, please do not be scared. I am nobody else but your wife Empress Chi being punished. When



怪。乃是主宮中郗氏遭貶。妾因在生。不信佛法。至今墮落。得此苦報。尚且無穴藏身。肚中饑餓。遍身鱗甲。多諸毒蟲。恆抱痛苦。無有休息。只得奔投。乞賴我王。慈悲為主。憫念昔日。夫婦之情。施恩救拔。吾若得脫此苦。啣環當報。不負主恩。

武帝見說。魂飛魄散。悶倒龍床。良久方甦。不見蟒蛇。坐守天明。嗟嘆而曰。人若不能行善。豈有超昇之分。是故即發誠心。投拜誌公和尚。啟問師曰。不知我郗氏夫人。何因緣故。死後墮作蟒蛇之身。

誌公答曰。此郗氏娘娘。只因心不信佛。嫉妒六宮。不敬三寶。不修片善。只說此間。便是天堂。倚福受福。不信因果。不懼罪業報應。廣造無邊惡業。不堪言也。所以被值日功曹。具錄文簿。奏上天界。牒下冥司依罪判斷。打失人身。做一蟒蛇之報也。

帝復請曰。乞賴我師。金口究竟。云何懺悔。超度他去。

I was your wife, I did not believe in the Buddhadharma; therefore, I fell and am now experiencing this suffering as retribution. I have no place to dwell and always feel hungry. My entire body is covered with many noxious insects that live under my scales, causing me constant pain. I have no choice but to turn to you my lord. I hope you will have compassion and mercy on me, remember our past affection as husband and wife, and bestow upon me a favor—rescue me. If I could be free of this suffering, I would never let you down and would definitely repay your kindness, like a siskin holding jade rings in its mouth to repay the person who rescued it.”

Hearing this, Emperor Wu was frightened out of his wits. He passed out on his seat and regained consciousness only after a long while. The python had already disappeared by then. He sat there stunned as he waited for daybreak. Finally, he sighed and said to himself, “If a person does not perform good deeds during one’s lifetime, how is it possible for that person to ascend to a higher realm of rebirth after passing away?” Therefore, he gave rise to sincerity and went to visit Master Zhi Gong. After bowing to the master, he asked respectfully, “I wonder what the reasons were for my wife Empress Chi falling and becoming a python after she died?”

Dharma Master Zhi Gong answered, “The empress did not have faith in the Buddha. She was jealous of the emperor’s concubines and disrespected the Three Jewels. She did not perform a single act of kindness and claimed that the world around her was already heaven. She relied on her blessings and indulged in them, and she did not believe in the law of cause and effect. Unafraid of the consequences of creating offenses and bad karma, she committed innumerable offenses. They were so terrible that I can’t stand to mention them. The ‘time guardian spirits’ recorded all her offenses and reported them to heaven. Heaven then sent the records to the underworld for her judgement. Based on the verdict rendered, she was expelled from the human realm to become a python.”

The emperor then respectfully asked again, “I implore my master to thoroughly instruct me on how I should conduct the repentance on her behalf so that she can be rescued?”

The Master answered, “To rescue her from suffering so that she can have a better rebirth, my lord must resolve to perform the following: have all residents in the palace uphold the vegetarian precept and prepare a large vegetarian feast to invite five hundred eminent monks with high virtue. They can prepare a platform of repentance to conduct the ritual and propagate the Buddhadharma. You, my lord, need to personally participate in the bowing repentance. Together with these

禪師答曰。若要救拔超度。然當我主發心。合宮齋戒大辦齋供。延請五百高僧。啟建道場。稱揚佛法。我皇親自禮拜。檢尋藏典。禮懺誦經。求哀懺悔。畢竟出離苦海。超生天界也。

待續

monks, you can investigate the Tripitaka to compile the appropriate repentance texts. Having compiled them, you need to bow in repentance and recite the sutras. You must earnestly seek to repent on her behalf so that she can ultimately transcend the sea of suffering and be reborn in the heavens.”

To be continued

BUDDHISM A TO Z

寶誌禪師



梁寶誌公長老

禪宗毗盧派創始人。

金陵朱氏婦聞兒啼，鷹巢中得之。

七歲出家。往來皖山、劍水之下，俗呼為誌公。

面方而瑩澈如鏡，手足皆鳥爪。嘗食鱸，吐水中成活魚。

武帝令僧繇畫像，公自以指戳破面門分，披出十二面觀音，妙相殊麗，繇不能畫。

天監十三年，忽詣帝永訣。帝大驚，曰：「朕壽幾何？」誌不答，以手指脰及頸而出。回山然一燭，以付舍人吳慶；慶以聞帝。歎曰：「大師不復留矣！其將以後事囑我乎？」及終，帝建浮屠五級。葬日，公忽現於雲間。

Baozhi (Chan Master) (418-514 AD)

Founder of the Pilu 毗盧 (Vairochana) lineage of Chan School.

In Nanjing a woman named Zhu heard the sound of a small child's cries coming from an eagle's nest, went searching, and got him out.

At age seven he left home. Later he went to Wan 皖 Mountain in the province of Sichuan at Jianshui ("Sword Water"), a treacherous area of the Yangtse River. He was commonly known as Zhi Gong ("Noble Zhi 誌").

His face was rectangular and gleamed like a mirror. His hands and feet looked like birds' claws. Once after eating minced fish, he spat the fish meat back into the water where it once again became living fish.

Emperor Wu instructed an expert painter named Zhang Sengyao to paint the Master's portrait. The Venerable One scratched open his face with his talons, and from the gashes, one after another, emerged the twelve faces of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara—too extremely beautiful to paint!

In the 13th year of the reign period Tianjian 天監 (514 AD), he went unexpectedly to the emperor to announce his final farewells. The emperor was astonished and asked, "How long will I live?" Zhi Gong did not reply. He merely drew his finger across his throat [Hóu 喉] and neck [Jǐng 頸], then left. [Note: This ominous gesture was probably the Master's prophecy of the emperor's subsequent death by starvation because of Hóu Jǐng's rebellion. In a past life Emperor Wu had been a practitioner. Annoyed by a pesky monkey, he locked it in a cave. After a time he forgot about it, and the monkey died of starvation. In a later life, the practitioner had accumulated blessings enough to become an emperor, but military forces, with the monkey reborn as their commander, locked him in a tower and left him to starve.]

Returning to his temple, he lit one candle and gave it to an official named Wuqing 吳慶. Wuqing made this known to the emperor, who lamented, "The great Master will no longer stay in the world. Does he entrust me with the funeral arrangements?" Afterwards the emperor sponsored the construction of a five-story pagoda (stupa). On the day of his burial, the Master was seen standing among the clouds.