

梁武帝問誌公禪師因果經 (續)

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

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師曰。我王前世。捨笠蓋佛。乃是無意之中。傾心布施。故得大福。你今敕行天下。廣造庵宇。自己又不捨財施利。惟使天下百姓之力。但為主上造庵。以此人人受苦。個個艱辛。磨殺世人。不知幾何。所以天下軍民。盡皆怨嘆。雖是真命天子。難當萬民遭怨。故曰汝是造業人也。

武帝聞說。心中慚愧。復問師曰。吾今太子。遍身瘡疥。日夜不安。未知是何緣故。師言。皆因此業累及於他。帝曰。如此萬望吾師。究竟寡人如何懺悔。得生福也。

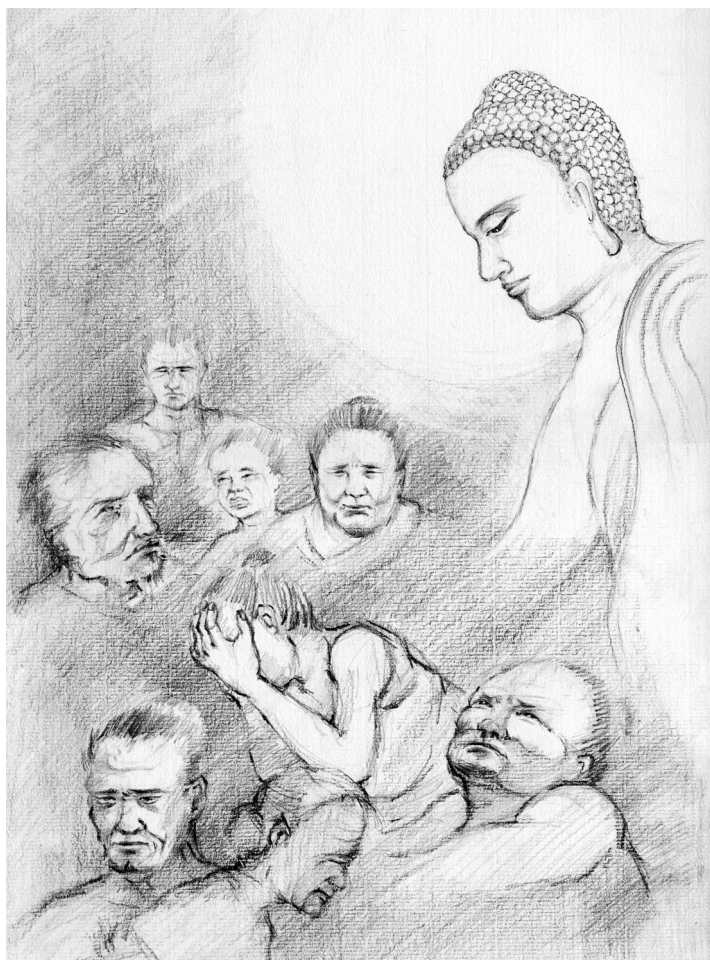
誌公答曰。我主若要懺悔。仍然快敕聖旨。曉諭天下。即將錢糧賞給工資。自

The Master said, “In a past life, my lord offered your bamboo hat to cover a Buddha statue. You did it spontaneously, making an offering with your whole heart. Therefore, it brought you great blessings. Now, you have ordered the people in the nation to build monasteries all over, but you haven’t contributed any funds or help. You have only used the people’s resources and have had them build monasteries for you. Therefore, every one of them has suffered and toiled. Who knows how many people have been tormented and died from it. Consequently, the military and civilians throughout the nation have all resented this. Although you are the true Son of Heaven mandated by Heaven, it’s still hard to withstand thousands of people’s resentment. That’s why I say, ‘You are a person who has created bad karma.’”

Emperor Wu felt ashamed upon hearing this. He further asked the Master, “My son, the crown prince, developed sores and scabs all over his body, causing him to be uneasy day and night. We don’t know what the reason is.”

The Master replied, saying, “It is your current karma (of constructing monasteries all over the kingdom) that is burdening him and causing him to become like this.” The Emperor then said, “I sincerely request that the Master please teach me how to repent and gain blessings.”

Master Zhi Gong replied, “My lord, if you truly wish to repent, then you



should promptly proclaim a kingdom-wide imperial edict that money and grains be offered fairly to all who have rendered their service or contributed their labor. In this manner, you will naturally accumulate merit and blessings, and the crown prince will have peace and health.

If you wish to do good deeds, you should not force the citizens to do the work on your behalf. If you do use their labor, then you must reimburse them fairly.

You should particularly cherish those socially disadvantaged such as widowers or widows as well as the elderly and young children. If monastics or poor people come for alms, it is the right time for you to be compassionate; you should not look down upon them or, worse, take advantage of them. Those virtuous monastics may be physically poor but not poor in the Way. They come before you to teach and guide you to do good deeds. If you slight them, they will leave, and you will miss the opportunity to do good; thereafter, your ancestors will be afflicted, and your ancestral shrine will no longer be at peace and those shrine spirits are not at peace, either.”

Emperor Wu then asked, “Why would one’s ancestral spirits and shrine spirits give rise to afflictions if one does not practice giving and cultivate blessings?”

Master Zhi Gong Answered, “The ancestral spirits especially wish that their descendants practice good deeds and amass blessings because some of these ghosts and spirits had failed to do so when they were alive and have had to undergo suffering in the underworld of the dead for a long time. When their descendants plant good causes, these ancestral spirits will be able to lessen their karmic offenses by being associated with their descendants. If their descendants are up to no good, they will have no one to rely on to relieve their suffering, thus giving rise to afflictions. Similarly, the various deities who partake in the offerings of incense and food, such as door gods, kitchen gods, well spirits, local earth spirits, local household spirits, and so on, all prefer that people do meritorious deeds, so that they can derive the benefits.”

然有福。太子安康。

若欲修諸善事。不得空勞眾力。如用眾力者。務宜賞賜工資。

或是矜孤惜寡。愛老憐幼。或有僧道及貧子。來化討者。方可發心。不得輕欺。為僧有善者。身貧道不貧。故來化引者。能令汝等。為善事故。若空慢他去。元是自己錯過了也。自後你家祖宗煩惱。香火神不安矣。

武帝又問。人不修捨作福。祖宗香火神為何生煩惱。

答曰。人家祖宗。或有生前未修善作福。死後久滯幽冥受苦。專望陽世子孫為善積福。有善因相助。亦得沾恩減罪。所以子孫。不為善事者。他無所靠。故生煩惱。人家香火神。正是門丞戶尉。井灶神君。土地神等。掌管人家住宅。亦復愛人行善。亦可同沾善力也。

待續

To be continued