

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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帝又問曰。僧道修行。信是好事。如何又要去化緣。

誌公答曰。我佛釋迦如來。有大慈大悲。愍念眾生。猶如赤子。平等救度。

佛在兜率天上。觀見一切眾生。雖得人身在世。只知恩愛貪戀。但知受福。不肯作福。只知造業。不知懺悔。受盡陽命。死入幽冥。受大苦惱。無有出期。

故從兜率。下降人間。托生梵王宮中。為悉達太子。棄捨皇宮。雪山修道。成等正覺。普度眾生。法說四十九年。教啟三百餘會。教化佛門弟子。住在一方一所。且要教化一方人慈。回心向善。修辦前程。

正是與佛掌教。所以此

The Emperor asked, “We all believe that it is good for monastics to cultivate the Way; but why do they go on alms-rounds?”

Master Zhi Gong replied, “Our Buddha Shakyamuni has great kindness and compassion. With empathy, he regards all beings as his own children and equally rescues them.

“When the Buddha was in Tushita Heaven, he observed this about all living beings: when living beings attain human bodies, they only know how to have a mind of seeking and craving and how to indulge in affection; they only know how to enjoy blessings but don’t realize they need to create blessings; they only know how to commit karmic offenses but don’t realize that they should repent for their wrongdoings.

“When their lifespans have ended, they fall into the underworld where they are greatly distressed and agonized, finding no hope of liberation. Therefore, the Buddha descended from the Tushita Heaven into the human realm, being born in Suddhodana’s palace to become Prince Siddhartha. Later Prince Siddhartha renounced the royal life, went to the Himalayas, and cultivated there. After he realized the unsurpassed Right Awakening, he universally taught and transformed living beings. He spoke the Dharma for forty-nine years in over three hundred assemblies.

“His disciples whom he taught later dispersed and traveled to their own regions where they lived. These disciples taught and transformed the people



佛歡喜。龍天擁護。若為出家者。遊手好閑。不務究理。不肯看經念佛。不去搬柴運水。不顧常住。空消信施。辜負四恩。如此之人。罪業不輕也。

若是好僧道人。早晚之中。務要勤參三寶。苦下慇懃之心。勿起懈怠之意。看見常住淡泊。或是庵堂佛像朽壞。應當發起勇猛精進之心。募緣修整。施主錢米不可私自受用。務要公平正直。交入常住。公使公用。乃是化緣者之功德也。

古人云。難行能行。難做能做。方是出家之佛子。學道之好人。是以天寬地闊。男女善心者多。若不去化他。縱有錢米。無處下手作福田也。乃是僧道有過。枉在空門。為人無慈悲心。不肯引他出苦。僧道善人。化到你家。汝若慳吝不捨。是自己當面錯過了也。

living in their areas to become kind-hearted and to turn away from evil and towards the good; thus, people improved their lives and had a brighter future. This is how the disciples of the Buddha helped perpetuate the Buddha's teachings. Their work made the Buddha happy, and the dragons and gods came to support and protect them.

“However, a monastic will commit grave offenses if he remains idle in his cultivation, behaves unscrupulously, does not study or investigate the ultimate truth, is not willing to recite sutras and the Buddha's name, is not willing to work hard, and doesn't care about the wellbeing of the monastery, thereby wasting others' offerings and letting down the four kinds of benefactors who have shown their kindness.

“Good monastics and serious practitioners of the Way are diligent day and night in their studying of the Dharma; they always exert utmost earnestness in performing the duties of the Three Jewels without giving rise to thoughts of laxness and negligence.

“When anyone sees that resident monastics live very humble lives or that their temples or monasteries are in really poor condition, with images or statues rotting away or decaying, they should courageously and vigorously resolve to raise funds for repair work or renovation.

“Donors' offerings of money or food should not be allocated for personal use. Instead, the offerings should be handled with fairness and integrity and be passed over to the temple's administration who then puts them into use for the public's good. By then, those [monastics] who had raised these funds have gained merit and virtue.

“The ancients said: ‘Practice what is difficult to practice, and undertake what is difficult to undertake — that characterizes a true monastic and a true disciple of the Buddha.’ Thus, those virtuous people who aspire to cultivate the Way feel that Heaven is so vast and Earth is so immense [they can always find resources provided by Heaven and Earth for their noble purposes]. There are so many faithful and good-hearted people out there; if no one goes out to seek alms from them, then these people, regardless of whether they are wealthy, cannot find a place where they can plant their blessings. The monastics would then be at fault because they lack the heart of compassion and are unwilling to guide others to escape suffering. In this sense, they have entered the monastic order in vain. On the other hand, if monastics are coming to your house and you are too stingy to make offerings, then it is you who have missed the opportunity right in front of your eyes.”

待續

To be continued