

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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English Translated by the Early Bird Translation Group

古人云：
寧動千江水
莫動道人心

The ancient saying goes,
One would rather disturb the water of a thousand rivers than the mind of a cultivator of the Way!

又云
若人靜坐一須臾
勝造浮屠大寶塔
寶塔畢竟化為塵
一念不生成正覺

Master Zhi Gong also said a verse:
*If one can sit in stillness for just an instant,
It is better than building great jeweled pagodas:
Pagodas will eventually turn into dust,
When not a single thought arises, one attains Proper Awakening.*

法界人天應當供養。
此則名為。真淨福田也。
如是之人者。

Humans and gods throughout the Dharma Realm should make offerings to such a Chan meditator because he or she is a true field of pure blessings.

永嘉云。
四事供養敢辭勞。
萬兩黃金亦消得。

For such a person, Great Master Yongjia said, “We dare not spare any efforts when it comes to making the four kinds of offerings because that person is worthy of an offering of ten thousand taels of gold.” When the donor and the recipient are united and harmonized in their purpose, there is no way to measure their merit and virtue!

所以捨財施主。同心
合意。功德豈可稱量也。

Emperor Wu continued by asking, “Someone recites the sutras. What would be his or her merit and virtue and blessings?”

武帝又問。誦經功
德。福田如何。

Master Zhi Gong replied, “The merit and virtue from reciting sutras is inconceivable. How should I explain it? There are three levels of merit and virtue ranging from low, to intermediate, to superior.”

誌公答曰。念經功
德。不可思議。如何所
說。有上中下三等。

Emperor Wu asked, “Master, you have always said that the Buddhadharma is level and equal without high or low. How come you now say there are three levels of the Buddhadharma? Please explain.”

復問。吾師恆說。佛
法平等。無有高下。如何
復有三等。請為解說。

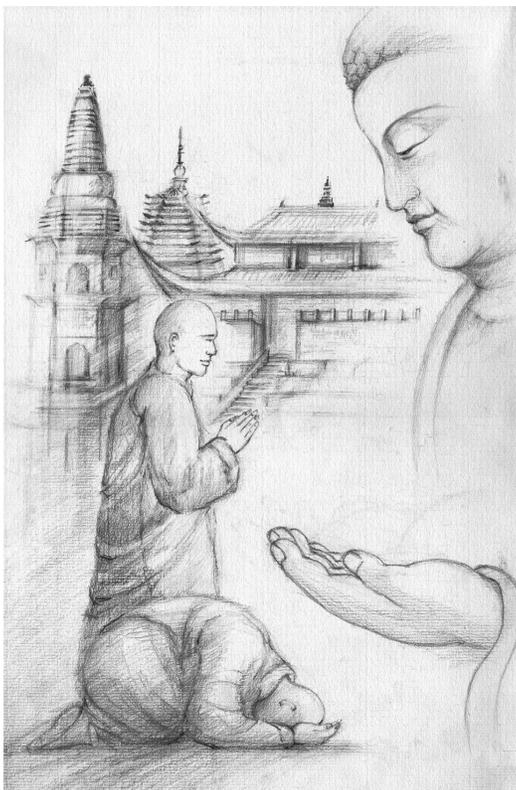
Master Zhi Gong replied, “Even though the Buddhadharma is level and equal, there are distinctions of low, intermediate, and superior for those who create blessings. How is that so? It is of low-grade blessing when someone invites Sanghans to his or her house to recite sutras. It is an intermediate blessing when someone goes to a mountain or the wilderness to pray for blessings by making offerings to a hermit-practitioner. It is of superior grade blessing when someone goes to a monastery to recite sutras or create various blessings.”

答曰。佛法雖然平
等。作福卻有上中下。何
以故。

若人延僧到俗家誦經
者。為下品。

若人山間野地。作個
供寮祈福者。為中品。

“A household is a defiled place; a hermitage in the mountain or in the wilderness is a pure place; a monastery is a Sangharama —a pure ground



若往山門中作福誦經者。為上等。
 所以在家為污地。山間名淨土。但凡
 屬庵堂寺觀。乃伽藍淨地。諸佛神祇。
 常住不離。是故為上也。

佛經浩大。不比尋常。經筵方啟。龍
 天擁護。邪魔聞著。合掌皈依。所以香
 燈供果。時時勿缺。如有欠缺。即是輕
 慢聖賢。不敬之罪。了不可休。

奉事之人。也要知因識果。不可行動
 粗躁。動念經者之心。古云

一動念頭 如隔千里
 譬如行路 失卻伴侶

所以獲罪非輕。或是僧道嬉笑。無有
 誠心。不具威儀。不信經中之理。不解
 經中之義。心猿亂走。意馬奔馳者。是
 他自己有罪。不涉別人之愆。

若有誠心齋戒。禮誦如法。字句清楚
 者。何須定要許多。但誦幾卷。功德甚
 多。若當嬉戲。縱多枉然。

偈曰

念經不還錢 福歸僧道邊
 依數無欠缺 方為大福田

☞待續

where Buddhas and Dharma-protecting spirits are always present. A monastery is protected by Sangharama-guardians and other spirits, and that is why the blessings created there are superior.

“Sutras are immense in scope, and sutra recitations are rare events. Once a sutra recitation starts in a monastery, gods and dragons flock to offer support and protection while demons take refuge with their palms together when they hear it. That is why, for these Dharma events, the offerings of incense, lamps, and fruits should never be missed or fall short of what is deserved. Otherwise, one is slighting or disrespecting sages and worthy ones, and the offense of such disrespect will not easily come to an end.

“Those who support this Dharma event of sutra recitation should also understand the Law of Cause and Effect and should not act recklessly and disturb people who are reciting sutras. An ancient saying goes,

*Once a single thought arises,
 One is off by a thousand miles,
 Like on a long journey
 And losing one's companion.*

Thus, disturbing others' sutra recitation is not a light or minor offense. Similarly, a monastic commits an offense when reciting a sutra in a giggling or laughing manner, devoid of sincerity and deportment, and disbelieving or failing to understand the meanings within the sutra. He lets his mind run around like a monkey and his thoughts run around like a wild horse galloping away—such would be a case of him, and him alone, committing offenses.

On the other hand, if he is sincere, pure in upholding precepts and vegetarianism, and if he can recite with clear articulation and in accord with the Dharma, he will attain abundant merit and virtue—just a few rolls of sutra recitation would suffice, not to mention many rolls. However, if he treats the sutra recitation merely like playing a game, then no matter how many rolls he recites, it will be in vain.”

A verse goes:

*When a monk is not paid for his service,
 The blessings from recitation go back to him.
 By completely fulfilling his duty [of recitation],
 He becomes a great field of blessings.*

☞To be continued