

第 41 篇 [神話的解說] [Retell a Fairy Tale] 弟子

命題大意：就神話或童話故事作解說

寫作大意：釋迦牟尼 誦 梵文 佛教

ASSIGNMENT: 4/9/2003

Retell a favorite fairy tale or kids story from a contemporary point of view. Write it as a poem, a story, a personal essay, or a play in 500 words or less.

WRITING : 4/16/2003

. Holy books generally contain both fairy tales and truth. The Buddhist holy book, Jin Gang Jing (JGJ, 金剛經) in Chinese translation is a classic. As quoted from the book, " Timetables of HISTORY", authored by Bernard Grun, "Buddha (釋迦牟尼, 550 to 480 BC) leaves his home to devote himself to philosophy and asceticism, preaches his first sermon in deer park of holy city of Benares (521BC)." I have a copy of JGJ in hand. After studying it, I find that JGJ was translated from the old Indian language to Chinese by a famous foreign Buddhist (鳩摩羅什, 344 to 413 AC ), detailing a sermon with 1250 pupils by Buddha in a park in one of the countries in India. It seems to me the above history and the KKK are talking about the same story.

JGJ has been extensively chanted and or recited, by many Asian Buddhism believers in the past and nowadays. Since there is no punctuation on the book, it is difficult to interpret literally, they mostly don't care the meaning in the book. Actually, using the old style Chinese, to translate an old style Indian writing, by an old time foreigner, on a preaching made about 2500 years ago; it's no wonder why it is hard for contemporary people to know the meaning in it. The work of chanting and supplying printed copies for public are deemed as a contribution in the Buddhahism realm and would be rewarded by fulfillment of their wishes including getting rid of a possible disaster.

My first impression on JGJ was made at an age of about 10 while practicing Chinese character hand writing, against a printed JGJ book of hand script by a famous ancient calligraphist (趙松雪). In recent years, I have come across the same book. Out of curiosity, I tried to punctuate the text and searched for an explanation. I found a portion of the text to be comprehensible to me, while the rest, mostly phonetic translation unknown to me, possibly included some fairy tales in it, some of which originated some superstitions and the so called "folklore religion" in China nowadays.

The understandable portion in JGJ indicates that, before the preaching, one of Buddha's followers raises a question asking about how to make the mental activities of a person well controlled and maintained on the right track. The Buddha responds with full explanation in his preach which becomes the holy book later on. The following is a briefing on what I find make sense about the book.

1. Buddha points out that, all the living things including those born of wombs, eggs, wet places, and evolutions, countless comparable to the quantity of sand particles in the India river, all have their lives to be equally honored.
2. Universe space and time are infinitively huge. Comparably, the human individuals are too small and short lived.
3. To maintain tranquility of mind, (especially in sleep) a person must entirely forget about himself, all the persons he knows, all the livings in the world, and the desire to live long.
4. Make unlimited contribution and service to others without expecting reward.

5. Get along only with good persons.

6. All living things will live and die in endless circulation. (My explanation is that, the elements in a dead body might enter into the bodies of other living things to cause living recirculation)

Finally the Buddha presents a poem as a conclusion of the preach:

"All living and performing, like a dream or bubble busting, like dew watery or flashing electricity, that is human reality."