

《妙法蓮華經淺釋》新版序

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宣公上人在《妙法蓮華經》經前懸談上說：「現在我講完了《楞嚴經》，才敢講一點真的東西給你們聽，因為你們夠程度了；若不夠程度，我跟你們講真的，會把你們嚇跑的，聽了一次再也不來了。」

宣公上人說：「所有聽過《妙法蓮華經》的人，沒有一個人將來不成佛的；我們現在能聽到《妙法蓮華經》，將來我們每一個人都有成佛的機會。因為釋迦牟尼佛在數千年以前，就給人授過記；所以我們有機會聽見這《妙法蓮華經》的人，都不要把自己看小了，自己將來都可以成佛的。」（見《妙法蓮華經淺釋·方便品第二》）

這絕非驚世駭俗之言，也不是講眾取寵之論，它是真實不虛的。世間學習佛法的人，都說這部《妙法蓮華經》文字淺顯易懂，不明白為什麼佛不速說這部經；事實上世人只知讀經，心卻迷途，對這唯一佛乘多抱持狐疑，並不真信自己可以見性成佛，所以佛才說這部《妙法蓮華經》難信難解。不過雖則一時不能信解，人人早晚還是要回歸到這法華會上的；就好像經中所述之「五千退席」，雖則一時失去正知正見，終究也會成佛，只是徒然耽誤了自己成佛的時間罷了！那麼為什麼在法華會上人人都要成佛呢？

《法華經》上說：「諸佛世尊唯以一大事因緣故，出現於世。」這一大事

The Preface to the New Edition of *A Simple Explanation of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra*

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Venerable Master Hua made this statement in the preface to *The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra (Lotus Sutra)*: “I dare to say something real to you only now after I have finished lecturing on the *Shurangama Sutra*. You are now up to par. If you were not up to this level, I would scare you off with something true. You would never come back after the first lesson.”

Venerable Master Hua said, “Anyone who encounters the *Lotus Sutra* will become a future Buddha, without exception. Each of us has an opportunity to become a Buddha in the future, now that we have encountered the *Lotus Sutra*. Shakyamuni Buddha made such a prediction several thousand years ago. Any of us who has the opportunity to hear the *Lotus Sutra* should not look down on ourselves because we will become

Buddhas in the future.” (Expedient Devices, Chapter Two of *A Simple Explanation of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra*.)

These are not words meant to shock or win popularity. These are words of truth. People who study Buddhist teachings consider the words of the *Lotus Sutra* simple and easy to understand and wonder why the Buddha did not explain this sutra early on. In actuality, people may read these texts but are confused, remaining skeptical toward the Vehicle of the Buddhas. They do not really believe they can see their real nature and become Buddhas. This is precisely why the Buddha said that the *Lotus Sutra* is difficult to believe and understand. Perhaps people do not believe it or understand it for a time; but eventually, they will return to the Dharma Flower Assembly. This is just as how the 5,000 individuals who left the assembly will nevertheless become Buddhas, even though they lacked proper knowledge and views at the time. They merely delayed their time to Buddhahood. Why will everyone on the Dharma Flower Assembly become Buddhas?

The *Lotus Sutra* explains, “All the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, appear in the world only because of the causes and conditions of the great matter.” The causes and conditions of the great matter revolve around



因緣，就是爲的要說《法華經》；這個大事，就是要令一切眾生開佛知見、示佛知見、悟佛知見、入佛知見。那麼佛的知見又是什麼呢？佛的知見就是這個正知正見：眾生皆有佛性，皆具佛慧，皆堪作佛。所以這個大事，也可以說是個出世的生死大事；要令眾生都能得到無生滅的大般涅槃，究竟成佛。所謂「理雖頓悟，事須漸修」；能悟佛知見，只是在理上是佛，還不真正是佛。眾生之所以未能成佛，只因妄想執著，誤入眾生世間知見；因此誦經久不明，猶如螞蟻在西瓜表皮爬轉，總得不著個中滋味。這不是理有偏差，是未曾在自性上痛下功夫；若要能體一切法空，念念常存正念、善念，以柔和忍辱爲衣，勤修戒定慧，斷絕貪瞋癡。這才叫入佛知見，這才叫心悟轉法華；這時自然就心開意解，見性成佛了。

縱觀佛講經四十九載，除了最初三七日，以法身爲諸菩薩講的《大方廣佛華嚴經》之外；佛以其應化身先說阿含諸經，來開曉眾生世間多苦，指示眾生修道了苦，證入離苦得樂的涅槃。之後佛循序漸入，講方等的經典，廣令眾生漸修大乘之福德；接著再深入般若諸經，以啓迪眾生大乘之智慧。最後，佛用他入滅前的八年黃金時間來宣說這一部《妙法蓮華經》；目的就是開曉眾生三乘歸一，明示眾生一切法空，令眾生能頓悟本然佛性，直入最上一佛乘。這一部經是經中之王，是經中最究竟的一部經，也是圓頓教的至高寶典；眾生一聞此妙法，立即種下成佛這個妙果的因。這妙蓮華既是花開蓮現，花果同時；可是開這花就是爲著結這個果，比喻過去佛所說經法都是權法，只是爲實施權。到了法華會上，就要廢權立實，開權顯實；其實，萬法歸一，這個權就是實，二而不二，只存一佛乘這個妙法。所以說：一切經典，都是爲了要說《法華經》而鋪路的。

☞待續

the speaking of the *Lotus Sutra*. This great matter leads all beings to unveil, manifest, awaken to, and enter the knowledge and views of Buddhas. The knowledge and views of Buddhas are: All beings have the Buddha nature and are replete with the wisdom of Buddhas. All can become Buddhas. This great matter is the great matter of transcending birth and death so that living beings may reach *mahaparinirvana* without ceasing or coming into being, which is Buddhahood ultimately. "We may understand a theory in a second, but it requires more to put it to practice." Awakening to the knowledge and views of Buddhas is about being a Buddha in theory, but not yet a real Buddha. Living beings have not become Buddhas because of rambling thoughts and attachments. Led astray into secular knowledge and views, living beings may recite this sutra for a long time but still not understand it. They are just like ants that crawl about the skin of a watermelon, yet never taste the watermelon. This is not about any erroneous understanding of the principles, but rather a lack of real effort. We only enter the knowledge and views of Buddhas when we have realized that all dharmas are empty, when we maintain proper and wholesome thoughts at all times, and when we embody gentleness and patience, diligently practicing precepts, *samadhi*, and wisdom while eliminating greed, hatred, and delusion. Only then will we have a complete grasp of the *Lotus Sutra*. At that point, we understand quite naturally our inherent nature and realize Buddhahood.

In looking over the Buddha's oral teachings during that 49-year period: he spoke with his Dharma Body the *Great Means Expansive Flower Adornment Sutra* for all the Bodhisattvas in the first 21 days; he spoke with his Response Body the various Agama sutras to elucidate the hardships of the world and guide living beings to the Way of freedom from suffering to nirvana; in gradual steps, he spoke the Vaipulya sutras so that living beings would in time develop blessings and virtues based on the Mahayana on a wide scale; next he went deeply into the various *prajna* teachings to inspire living beings to the wisdom of the Mahayana. Finally, the Buddha spent the last eight years of his life proclaiming the *Lotus Sutra*. He meant to make living beings understand that all three vehicles belong to one, making it clear for beings that all dharmas are empty so that living beings will awaken to their inherent Buddha nature suddenly, heading straight for the Vehicle of Buddhas. This sutra is the king among sutras, a most ultimate sutra among the sutras. It is the most supreme gem among the Perfect and Sudden Teachings. Once living beings encounter this wonderful Dharma, they will have immediately planted the seeds for the wondrous fruition of Buddhahood.

The wonderful lotus blooms and bears fruit simultaneously although the flower blossoms for the sake of the fruit. This is a metaphor for how all the teachings spoken of earlier are provisional. The provisional is given for the sake of the actual. At the Dharma Flower Assembly, however, the provisional is abolished and the actual is established; the provisional is unveiled to make appear the actual. In fact, the myriad dharmas go back to one. The provisional is the actual; the two are nondual. There only remains the wonderful Dharma of the Buddha Vehicle. Hence, it is said that all sutras pave the road for the spoken teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*.

☞To be continued