

《妙法蓮華經淺釋》新版序(續)

*The Preface to the New Edition of
A Simple Explanation of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra
(continued from last issue)*

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這部《妙法蓮華經》分七卷二十八品，始於〈序品〉，終於〈普賢菩薩勸發品〉。〈序品〉，在敘述這部經的因緣；這個因緣不是個普通的、小的因緣，是個要教大家成佛的大因緣。以〈普賢菩薩勸發品〉為終，是「因為普賢菩薩他是大行，他修行的行門最大，並且他發的十大願王；以他這個身份、地位來勸一切眾生發菩提心，一切眾生都會相信這普賢菩薩，就都來發大菩提心。」（錄自上人《妙法蓮華經淺釋·普賢菩薩勸發品第二十八》）

古德云：「開慧的楞嚴，成佛的法華。」《法華經》和《楞嚴經》這兩部經，在佛教裡佔的地位最重要；若沒有先把智慧開開，也沒法頓悟《法華經》的精髓。是故一九六八年，宣公上人在美國三藩市舊金山佛教講堂，先開辦了為期九十六天之暑期楞嚴經講修班；西方學子皈依者日增，更有兩人相繼出家。緊接著，上人在同年十月六日就先開講這部《妙法蓮華經》中最家喻戶曉的〈普門品〉；十一月九日講完〈普門品〉後，隔天(十一月十日)就又正式開講全本《妙法蓮華經》。上人在經前懸談上說：「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。」

隔年(一九六九)的暑期班，即是以講《妙法蓮華經·見寶塔品》為題，藉以讓遠

The *Lotus Sutra* contains 28 chapters in seven rolls. It begins with an Introduction chapter and concludes with the chapter on the Encouragement of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy. The Introduction describes the circumstances that led to the speaking of this teaching. This set of circumstances is not minor, but one that teaches everyone to become Buddhas. This sutra concludes with the Encouragement of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy because “Universal Worthy Bodhisattva practices the greatest deeds. He made ten great kings of vows. Given his status and position, he encouraged all beings to bring forth the resolve for Bodhi so that all beings will believe in Universal Worthy Bodhisattva and set their sights on enlightenment.” (The Encouragement of the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy, Chapter 28 of *A Simple Explanation of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra*.)

The ancients said, “The *Shurangama* uncovers wisdom while the *Lotus* is about the realization of Buddhahood.” The *Shurangama Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra* hold critical positions in Buddhism. Without having developed wisdom first, we cannot awaken to the essence of the *Lotus Sutra* all of a sudden. Therefore in 1968, Master Hua held a 96-day summer *Shurangama* study session at the Buddhist Lecture Hall in San Francisco. Increasingly, Westerners began to take refuge and two people decided to become monastics. Immediately thereafter, the Venerable Master began to lecture on the most well-known chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, the Universal Door Chapter, on October 6th that year. After lecturing on the Universal Door Chapter, Master Hua began to officially lecture the entire *Lotus Sutra* on November 10th. In his comments on the preface to the sutra, the Venerable Master states:

“I only dare to say something real to you now that 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.”

The following year, 1969, the theme of the summer session was based on the Chapter of Vision of the Jeweled Stupa in the *Lotus Sutra* so that students from all around may pay their respects to the Many Jewels Buddha of Antiquity and experience the wonder of the *Lotus Sutra*. At

道而來的諸學子同瞻多寶古佛，共體《法華經》之妙；至當時，出家者已達五人。一九六九年十月杪，因五位出家眾要到臺灣受戒，上人爲讓他們都能聽到完整的《法華經》，而暫時停講；直到一九七〇年春，出家眾受戒歸來，才又繼續開講《法華經》，於此亦可見上人對此經之重視。總計上人用了大約二十五個月的時間，於一九七〇年十一月十日，終於把這部《妙法蓮華經》圓滿結經。

上人在結經時，語重心長地說了這麼一段話，願以此與一切眾生共勉：

這是在西方第一次有這麼長的一個法會，來講這麼長的一部經；希望以後你們都學會這部經了，到各處去輾轉教化眾生，令一切眾生都得到《法華經》不可思議的這種的妙處。你得到這個妙處了，你再能令其他人也得到這個妙處，這就是輾轉教化、弘揚佛法，轉大法輪、擊大法鼓、吹大法螺、雨大法雨。這些工作，我們在座的人，都應該把它負擔起來，令一切眾生都得到法喜充滿！

最初上人講經時，鑒於習法者多爲初機，故一反歷來大德講經方式，以淺白文句逐句講譯，稱之淺釋；於教西方學子認識中文之際，從中剖出佛法精髓，正所謂深入而淺出。可惜由於當時錄音設備有限，上人講經之錄音時有中斷或雜音，難窺全貌；而且初次出版之《妙法蓮華經淺釋》，也因剪輯不當，難免有遺珠之憾。故後來弟子們曾敦請上人再補講多處，並決定重新編輯，出版大字本之《妙法蓮華經淺釋》。十餘年來，編輯部以有限之人力資源，展開跨國越海之分工合作，自複聽當年上人講經錄音帶始，經仔細謄錄，再謹慎潤色；唯願能以恢復原講者風貌，保全原講者精髓，並方便今人閱讀。此次新版《妙法蓮華經淺釋》，不惟已將上人補講融入原釋文，更謹依上人慈誨，酌加科判，俾使脈絡分明、終始一貫。其或尚有未詳確處，如能惠蒙各方大德垂教，是所至盼至禱。是爲序。

that point, five people were already monastics. These five monks and nuns were about to go to Taiwan for the precepts toward the end of October, 1969. So that they may hear the *Lotus Sutra* lectured in its entirety, the Venerable Master stopped his lectures until the monastics received the precepts and returned in the spring of 1970. This is a testament to the importance that the Venerable Master attaches to this sutra. Master Hua spent approximately 25 months lecturing on the *Lotus Sutra*, finally completing his lectures on November 10, 1970.

While concluding his lectures to this sutra, the Venerable Master spoke these heartfelt words. May all be encouraged by these words:

“For the first time in the West we have such a lengthy Dharma Assembly on such a lengthy sutra. I hope that you will study this sutra and in turn teach living beings everywhere so that all may attain the inconceivable wonder of the *Lotus Sutra*. Once you experience its wonder, you can then lead all beings to experience this wonder. All of us here should shoulder the tasks of teaching and propagating the Buddhist teachings, turn the great wheel of Dharma, beat the great Dharma drum, blow the great Dharma conch, and pour the great Dharma rain. May all beings be filled with the joy of Dharma!”

When the Venerable Master first lectured this sutra, most of the students were new to Buddhism. Hence the Master's lecture style at that time differed from those of lecturers of the past, which was usually a line by line explanation. The Master called his commentaries a simple explanation. The Master was teaching his Western disciples Chinese while dissecting and sharing with them the essence of the Buddhadharma, putting the profound simply. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of the recording system at that time, it has been difficult, at times, to get a glimpse of the whole picture of these lectures. There are pauses or background noise in these recordings. Furthermore, the first publication in Chinese of *A Simple Explanation of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra* was not edited well so some valuable parts were regrettably omitted. Later the Master's disciples requested the Venerable Master to fill in those many missing parts. A revised edition of *A Simple Explanation of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra* in large fonts was issued. Due to limited resources by the editors in the last decade and more, we began to cooperate internationally in reviewing the Venerable Master's taped lectures, transcribing carefully, and polishing with care in the hopes that we may restore the style of the speaker in its full force and that the essence of the lectures be preserved. To make it more convenient for present-day readers, this new edition of *A Simple Explanation of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra* not only integrates all the addenda into the original commentaries, but furthermore observes the Venerable Master's teachings by including an outline to make the structure clear and consistent. Perhaps there are parts that are still unclear, and we sincerely hope that everyone will provide us with feedback.