

# 妙法蓮華經淺釋

THE DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA WITH COMMENTARY

【分別功德品第十七】

ROLL FIVE, CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: DISCRIMINATION OF MERIT AND VIRTUE

宣化上人講 Commentary by the Venerable Master Hua  
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譬如虛空，東西南北、四維上下，無量無邊；是人功德，亦復如是無量無邊，疾至一切種智。

「譬如虛空，東西南北、四維上下，無量無邊」：譬如太虛空似的，你找不著它的邊在什麼地方，你也不知虛空究竟有多大。現在一般人雖然有太空的研究，但是也不知道虛空究竟有多大。東、西、南、北，這是「四方」。四維、上、下，這又六方。四維，就是東南、西南、東北、西北。這「四方、四維、上、下」合起來，就是「十方」；這十方是無量無邊。

「是人功德，亦復如是無量無邊，疾至一切種智」：誦持、讀誦、書寫、講說《法華經》，這個人的功德，也就像虛空這十方無有限量的樣子，很快他就達到佛的智慧、佛的果位。一切種智，有「道種智、一切智、一切種智」；一切種智，就是佛的智慧、佛的果位。

若人讀誦受持是經，為他人說，若自書，若教人書，復能起塔及造僧坊，供養讚歎聲聞眾僧，亦以百千萬億讚歎之法，讚歎菩薩功德，又為他人種種因緣，隨義解說此法華經。

「若人讀誦受持是經，為他人說，若自書，若教人書」：假使有人，能讀誦此經、受持此經；對著本子叫「讀」，離開經的本子叫「誦」。不論你對著本子讀，還是離開本子來誦，或者你受之於心，

*Sutra:*

**Just as empty space to the north, east, south, west, the intermediate points, the zenith, and the nadir is limitless and boundless, so too this person's merit and virtue shall be limitless and boundless, and he shall speedily attain to the wisdom of all modes.**

*Commentary:*

**Just as empty space to the north, east, south, west, the intermediate points, the zenith, and the nadir, that makes ten directions in all, is limitless and boundless, so too this person's merit and virtue shall be limitless and boundless, and he shall speedily attain to the wisdom of all modes.**

Try to find the borders of empty space. You can't. No one can know ultimately how great it is. Although presently there are those who make scientific inquiries into these matters—the astrophysicists—they will admit that ultimately they do not know how big empty space is. There are Three Types of Wisdom: 1. Wisdom of the Way. 2. All-Wisdom. 3. Wisdom of All Modes. The Wisdom of All Modes is the Buddha position.

*Sutra:*

**A person may read, recite, receive, and uphold this Sutra, explain it to others, write it out, or instruct others to write it out, and he may further build stupas or Sangha dwellings. He may make offerings to and praise the assembled Sangha of Hearers, and with hundreds of thousands of tens of thousands of millions of dharmas of praise, laud the merit and virtue of the Bodhisattvas. Further he may explain**

行之於身；你自己明白了，那還不算，你能照這部《法華經》的道理來實行，還能為他人講說這部經典；或者自己書寫這《法華經》，或者教人來書寫《法華經》。「復能起塔及造僧坊，供養讚歎聲聞眾僧」：又能造塔、造廟、造寺院，或者造僧人所住的地方；又能供養三寶，又能讚歎佛、讚歎法、讚歎聲聞眾僧。

「亦以百千萬億讚歎之法，讚歎菩薩功德」：不是用一種方法來讚歎三寶，而是用百千萬億種讚歎的方法，來讚歎菩薩的功德。「又為他人種種因緣，隨義解說此法華經」：又為他人種種的因緣，隨著經的義理來解說這部《妙法蓮華經》。

講到這個地方，想起一個公案。從前有一個人，他做很大的官，也護持三寶，給三寶作護法，他也學《法華經》這部經典；可是《法華經》有七卷二十八品，在前邊這三卷半，他很快就都記住了，後邊這三卷半，他怎麼樣讀也記不住、也背不出來。自己覺得很奇怪，怎麼前邊這一半就能記得很清楚，後邊怎麼就這麼難記呢？念了也不會。

在當時有一位善知識，他有宿命通，人前生是做什麼事情來的，他一看就知道。這位大官於是到廟上請問這一位善知識，很好奇的，就問：「人人都有種種的因緣，我對於這部《法華經》非常歡喜，相信這經的道理；可是只前半部我記得很清楚，後半部也沒有法子背得出來，這是一種什麼因緣呢？一部經，怎麼只對前半部很熟似的，後半部就不知道了，讀不出來了？」

這位善知識為他人定一觀察，就對他講：「你這個因緣是很特別的！你前生是人家送到廟上來放生的一頭牛。在暑天，農曆六月六日那一天，廟上都要把經典搬到外面去曬一曬，不令經書發霉，蟲子就不咬了。在曬經的時候，這放生的牛就走到曬《法華經》的地方，用鼻子聞這《法華經》上半部，而下半部因為沒有在那個地方，就沒有聞到。你因為只聞了上半部《法華經》，所以你對於上半部《法華經》就很有緣的，記得很清楚；下半部因為你沒有聞著，所以你就記得不清楚。」

這個做大官的，在一開始聽見這種的因緣，就很高興，說：「你怎麼說我是一頭牛？你有什麼證據？」善知識對他說：「你要什麼證據嗎？在我廟後邊有一個墳，那頭放生牛死的時候，就埋到那個地方。當時的方丈和尚也是得到宿命通的，他一看這頭牛將來會生到什麼地方，姓什麼，叫什麼，他詳細地寫在白布上，和這牛就埋在一起。你若不相信，可以把那個墳打開！」

待續

**the meanings in the *Dharma Flower Sutra* to others while according with their various causes and conditions.**

**Commentary:**

**A person may read, recite, receive, and uphold this Sutra.** He receives it with his mind and practices it with his body. He may **explain it to others, write it out, or instruct others to write it out, and he may further build stupas or Sangha dwellings. He may make offerings to and praise the assembled Sangha of Hearers, praising the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha of Hearers, and with hundreds of thousands of tens of thousands of millions of dharmas of praise, laud the merit and virtue of the Bodhisattvas. Further he may explain the meanings in the *Dharma Flower Sutra* to others while according with their various causes and conditions.**

This reminds me of a story. Once there was a very high official who protected the Triple Jewel. He also studied the *Dharma Flower Sutra*. He was able to remember the first three and a half rolls very quickly, but no matter how hard he studied, he could not remember the last three and a half rolls. Thinking this strange, he asked a Good and Wise Advisor, one who had gained the penetration of the knowledge of past lives, about his erratic memory. Curious, he asked him, "I really like the *Dharma Flower Sutra*, and I am able to remember the first half of the Sutra very easily, but no matter how hard I try, I cannot remember the second half. Why is this?"

The Good and Wise Advisor went into samadhi and took a look. Then he told the official, "Your causes and conditions are very special. In your last life, you weren't a human being. You were an ox! Someone let you go in a liberating life ceremony and gave you to a monastery. In the middle of the summer, the monks would set the Sutras out in the sun to dry them so that worms would not eat them. As an ox, you happened to walk over to the Sutras and sniff the first half of the *Lotus Sutra*. You, as the ox, didn't sniff the second half. Because you sniffed the first half, you can remember it very easily. But since you didn't sniff the second half, you aren't able to remember it clearly."

The official was not very happy when he first heard the story. "How can you say I was an ox! What proof do you have?" "You want proof? Go look out behind the temple. There's a grave where we buried an ox that died, an ox that was given to temple in a liberating life ceremony. The abbot at that time also had spiritual powers, and he knew where that ox would be reborn in the future, what its name would be, and so on. He wrote it on a piece of white cloth and buried it with the ox. So if you don't believe it, you can dig up the grave."

To be continued