

Fifty Years Later, the Lotus Continues to Bloom

五十年後，法華依舊綻放

By Ron Epstein, Ph.D.

Chancellor Emeritus, Dharma Realm Buddhist University

Chinese Translated by Cindy Wang

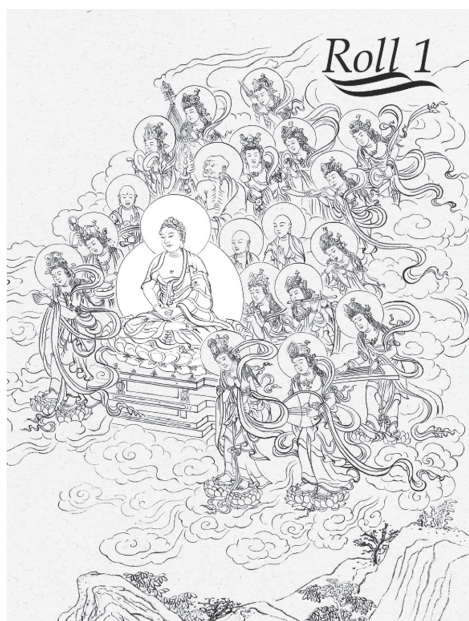
法界佛教大學終身榮譽校長易象乾博士 文

杜親誠 中譯

This new and unabridged edition of the *Wonderful Dharma Lotus Sūtra* (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra, Miàofǎliánhuājīng 妙法蓮華經) has been a long time coming—work on this new edition began in November of 2012, but it has definitely been worth the wait. Fourteen of its fifteen volumes contain mostly linear commentary on the sūtra, which is one of the most highly revered scriptures of Mahāyana Buddhism. The commentary is a sensitively edited version of lectures that the Venerable Tripiṭaka Master Hsuan Hua (1918–1995) gave on the sūtra in San Francisco from 1968 to 1970. The fifteenth volume contains the sūtra text in both Chinese and English, without commentary, and includes full cross-referencing with the translation of sūtra text and commentary contained in the other volumes. The translation also includes an outline of the text written by the great awakened master of the late Ming Dynasty the Venerable Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655 CE).

《妙法蓮華經》未經刪節的新英譯本姍姍來遲——翻譯工程早從2012年11月就開始了，然而這絕對值得等待。此經為大乘佛經中，最受推崇的經典之一。這套新英譯本共有15冊，其中14冊主要涵蓋了經文的淺釋。這些淺釋都是根據尊敬的三藏法師，宣公上人(1918-1995)在1968至1970年間於舊金山所講述的，再經過精確編輯而來。第15冊中有經文的中英對照，沒有淺釋，但包括了其它各冊中所含經文英譯與淺釋的對照索引編碼。書內同時包括了明末時期的高僧，藕益智旭大師(1599-1655CE)所編寫的經文科判。

在中國古代，這部經書六度從印度手稿翻譯成中文，其中三個版本現仍在世。最被廣泛使用的版本，也是這套英譯本所根據的中文版本，則是鳩摩羅什法師(344-413CE)



Modern illustrations originally painted for this edition in a traditional Chinese method by Professor Man Qianhe.

滿芊荷教授專為本套叢書所作中國傳統白描佛像繪畫。

In ancient China this sūtra was translated from Indic manuscripts into Chinese six times, three of which are still extant. The most widely used version (and the one printed here) is that of Kumārajīva (Jiūmóluóshí 鳩摩羅什) (344–413 CE) and his translation team. In East Asian Buddhist traditions, the Lotus Sūtra is considered to contain the most profound and ultimate version of the Buddha's teaching and is the main scriptural foundation of several Buddhist lineages and schools, including the Tiantai in China and the Tendai and Nichiren in Japan. The sūtra is well known not only for its sublime teachings—including the “Universal Door” chapter, about Guanyin Bodhisattva—but also for its beautiful and powerful parables.

The first edition of the Buddhist Text Translation Society's translation of the sūtra text and commentary was published at irregular intervals from 1977 to 1988. This second English translation constitutes a major improvement. It was undertaken over a period of almost eight years by senior members of BTTS led by Dharma Master Heng Yin and Dharma Master Heng Yi, and in its final stages was part of the curriculum of the graduate certificate program in Buddhist translation (<https://www.drбу.edu/programs/iitbt/certificate-buddhist-translation>) offered by Dharma Realm Buddhist University's International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts (IITBT). In contrast to most other English translations of the *Lotus Sūtra*, this work includes a complete commentary, as has long been the norm in East Asia. Rather than translation by a single individual, this edition is the product of teams of translators, including both Chinese and

及其翻譯團隊所譯的。在東亞佛教傳統中，《妙法蓮華經》被視為涵蓋了佛陀最奧妙，也最究竟圓滿的教導，同時也是數個佛教宗派支流主要經文的所源根本，其中包含中國的天臺宗，及日本的天臺宗和日蓮佛教。這本佛經之所以廣為人知，不只是因為佛陀奧妙的教導，包括〈觀音菩薩普門品〉，而且還以那些優美有力的譬喻而聞名。

佛經翻譯委員會早在1977到1988年間，即已不定期的翻譯並印行了第一版經文和淺釋。第二版的英文翻譯則有了長足的進步，這中間，恒音法師、恒異法師與法界佛經翻譯委員會的資深成員，花了將近八年的時間；在最後完稿階段，法界佛教大學所設，國際譯經學院下的佛經翻譯研究班成員也參與了部分工作 (<https://www.drбу.edu/programs/iitbt/certificate-buddhist-translation>)。和其它絕大多數《妙法蓮華經》英譯本不同的是，這個版本涵括了完整註解，這是東亞地區長期的慣例。它不是由個人單獨翻譯，而是群體所共創，成員裡有以中文為母語者，和以英文為母語者，還有僧俗二眾學者等修行人共同參與。

宣公上人的淺釋對經文的義理及重點

English native speakers, and scholar-practitioners both monastic and lay.

Master Hsuan Hua's commentary represents a unique vision of the meaning and significance of the sūtra. The master himself tells us of his first encounter with the sūtra text. At that time he was in his late teens or early twenties and sitting for three years in meditation and sūtra study beside his mother's grave in their little village in northeast China (Dongbei): "At the side of the grave, I extensively examined many texts. First I read the *Dharma Flower [Lotus Sūtra]* and jumped for joy as if mad. Kneeling for seven days and seven nights I recited it, forgetting to sleep or eat until blood was dripping from both my eyes..." (*A Short History of the Sino-American Buddhist Association*, Page 28).

In his teens, the master had already read and explained for others some of the more popular Mahāyana Buddhist scriptures. Later, when he was meditating by the side of his mother's grave for three years, he recited first the *Lotus Sūtra*, then the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, and finally the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. This process of study and practice led him to an awakening that he described as "ocean-like in its boundlessness, vast, nameless, and majestically supreme, a formless perfect comprehension..." (ibid.) His recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra* can be seen as an essential foundation for the full awakening that came to him through the integration of these three great Mahāyana Buddhist works. In this context he came to understand the Lotus Sūtra not only through the frame of the full flowering of the Buddhist tradition in China but also directly, experientially, through his own extended and profound meditation on the text.

Thus his commentary is unique in a number of ways. Foremost among them, it was the incredible insight he gained at the side of his mother's grave that, over thirty years later and halfway around the globe, he endeavored to share with sincere but naïve American university students, who had previously known little of true Buddhism. In accord with those conditions, his commentary is a simple explanation that is at the same time incredibly profound and unique. Almost every evening for twenty-five months from November 1968 to November 1970, he lectured on the sūtra text in San Francisco, first at the Buddhist Lecture Hall in Chinatown, then at Gold Mountain Monastery in the Mission District. Now this English record of those lectures, beautiful, accurate, and easy to read and use, has been made available to all of us in the fifteen volumes of this new edition. ❀

具有特殊獨到的見解。上人告訴我們他第一次接觸佛經的經驗。那時，他只有十幾、二十歲出頭。在東北的一個小村子裏，他在母親的墳墓邊守孝三年，在那期間，他終日打坐、誦經。他說：在母親的墓旁，我廣泛的研習許多佛經，最先讀的是《妙法蓮華經》，讀後欣喜若狂；我長跪讀誦七天七夜，忘了睡覺和吃喝，直到雙眼淌血……。 (摘自《中美佛教總會簡史》第28頁)

上人在十餘歲時已經讀完一些大眾熟知的大乘經典，並為人講解。之後，他在母親墓旁守孝三年期間，首先背誦《妙法蓮華經》，再來是《楞嚴經》，最後是《華嚴經》。這個修習和行持的過程，將他帶領到了一個他所形容為「像大海般，廣袤無邊，不可言狀，至高無上，一種無相正覺……」 (源自簡史同一章)。可見上人經由對這三部大乘經典的融會貫通，而帶領他到完全開悟的境地，且誦讀《妙法蓮華經》卻是不可或缺的基礎。在這情況下，上人之所以領悟《妙法蓮華經》義理，這不僅僅是源自於中國興盛的佛教傳統架構，還有他本身長期以來對經文之研習禪修所得到的直接體悟。

因此，這就是為什麼上人的淺釋在各方面都是獨一無二，箇中翹楚。其中最重要的，是他在廬墓守孝期間得到的不可思議開悟；之後超過30年，他遍歷半個地球，竭力將之分享與那些誠心卻天真，對正法佛教一知半解的美國大學生們。為了順應這些情勢，他的淺釋平易且精闢扼要，同時又極為奧妙而獨特。

從1968年11月起至1970年的11月，共歷時25個月，他每晚在舊金山宣講佛經，一開始是在中國城的佛教講堂，再到米慎區的金山禪寺。現在，那些上人講經的英文版本既精美且準確，又易於理解與實用。終於，新修訂版15冊迄今完備，並公諸於世。 ❀