

四十二章經研討

Discussion of the Sutra in Forty-two Sections

摘自恒齋法師2023年2月5日於馬里蘭州華嚴精舍講法

比丘尼法積 英譯

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今天，我們來討論《佛說四十二章經》，我們先把這一段念一遍。

《佛說四十二章經》，這一段：

世尊成道已。作是思惟。離欲寂靜。是最為勝。住大禪定。降諸魔道。於鹿野苑中。轉四諦法輪。度憍陳如等五人。而證道果。復有比丘所說諸疑。求佛進止。世尊教敕。一一開悟。合掌敬諾。而順尊敕。

Today we will be discussing *the Sutra in Forty-two Sections*. We will begin by reciting the preface together:

When the World Honored One had attained the Way, he thought, "To leave desire behind and to gain calmness and tranquility is supreme." He abided in deep meditative concentration and subdued every demon and externalist.

In the Deer Park he turned the Dharma Wheel of the Four Noble Truths and took across Ājñāta-kaundinya and the other four disciples, who all realized the fruition of the Way.

《佛說四十二章經》，也可以說是佛的語錄，是佛的弟子把佛所說的話，結集在一起，成為一部經。「四十二章」，就是四十二段語錄。

這是第一部傳到中國的佛經，由迦葉摩騰和竺法蘭這兩位尊者用白馬馱到中國。所以當時的皇帝——漢明帝在洛陽那兒造了一座白馬寺。這部《四十二章經》在修行上是很重要的。

「經」這個字，具有「貫、攝、常、法」四種意思。經典是由文字組成的。「貫」就是把文字貫穿，貫穿這個文字的義理。上人比喻說：這就好像一串念珠，把經的道理，一個字一個字貫穿在一起，就是「貫穿所說義」。

「攝」——「攝持所化機」。攝持，就是能把你收攝過來。所化機，就是度化與祂有緣的這類眾生。「機」，就是剛好對這個眾生的機。這個叫「攝持所化機」。

「常」——「古今不變，曰常」。就是過去不變、現在不變、將來也不變，這是古今都不變，這叫「常」。

「法」，就是「三世同遵，曰法」。「三世」就是過去世、現在世、未來世，那三世都遵照這個法去修行，所以叫做「貫攝常法」。

事實上，經典講的道理就是一個真理。過去是這樣子，現在是這樣子，將來也是這樣子。你知道是這樣子，不知道還是這樣子——這個就是法。所以，我們大家一起來研究研究，希望我們在修行上，能夠知道我們應該怎麼做。

「世尊成道已，作是思惟」：

Then the bhikṣus expressed their doubts and asked the Buddha how to resolve them. The World Honored One taught and exhorted them, until one by one they awakened and realized enlightenment. After that, they each put their palms together, respectfully gave their assent, and followed the Buddha's instructions.

The Sutra in Forty-two Sections is a record of the Buddha's words, compiled by the Buddha's disciples into a sutra. "Forty-two sections" indicates that it includes forty-two passages.

This is the first Buddhist sutra that was transmitted to China. Venerable Kāśyapa-matanga and Venerable Gobharana (Dharmāraya) carried it to China, as they rode on the back of white horses. This led the Emperor Ming of the (Later) Han Dynasty to build White Horse Temple in Luoyang. *The Sutra in Forty-two Sections* is very important to our practice.

The word "sutra" has four meanings: "Stringing together," "attracting," "constant," and "a standard." Sutras are composed of words.

"Stringing together" means that the principles and meanings spoken by the Buddha are strung together from the beginning to the end. The Venerable Master once compared this to a string of chanting beads (rosary) which holds together the principles of the sutra one word after the other. This is what it means to "string together the meaning of the words."

"Attracting" is "Attract[ing] and embrac[ing] the capacities of those being transformed." To "attract and embrace" means to gather in sentient beings. The "capacities of those being transformed" refers to guiding and transforming sentient beings with whom one has affinities. "Capacities" refers to being appropriate to the individual capacity of any particular sentient being. That is what it means to "Attract and embrace the capacities of those being transformed."

"Constant" means "never changing from ancient times to the present." The principles spoken are the same whether it is spoken by the Buddhas of the past, present, or future.

"A standard" means that a sutra is a standard for everyone, whether in the past, present, or future, to follow in their practice. A sutra "strings together and attracts, is constant and is a standard."

The principles discussed in the sutras are principles of truth. These principles remain the same in the past, present, and future. Whether or not you know about them, they remain the same—they are standards. Therefore, let us investigate them further so that we will know how to

就是說當佛成道的時候，他就思惟了一下。

「離欲寂靜是最為勝」：就說這個「離欲」跟「寂靜」是最殊勝的。「離欲」，就是沒有欲念了，沒有染污心。「寂靜」就是清淨，所謂「無所作為」。關於「無所作為」，有時候文字這樣寫，但是這個義理呢，我們不可以用我們自己的心去想。

無所作為，不是說你都不做事了。這個「作」呢，不是我們凡夫有相的這種作為；是無相的，你看不到。就好像我們的佛性一樣，我們凡夫是看不到的，但卻是最殊勝，最不可思議的。「離欲」是最重要的一點。就是要把我們的慾念放下來。我們要盡量在我們的清淨心上去努力啊。

「坐大禪定，降諸魔道」。能夠離欲，能夠寂靜，時間久了，一個人就有禪定，有定力。有定力了，那麼諸魔外道，他就動不了你，他會被你降伏。

事實上，佛跟魔，也是正面跟反面，如果我們的心裡常常想的都是佛，佛所說的道理，心裡就是一種清淨的境界。那麼那些不好的念，或者不好的境界，它就會遠離你。所以說你能夠有定力，就能降伏外在這些不好的干擾。

「於鹿野苑中轉四諦法輪」：「四諦法輪」，就是「苦、集、滅、道」。

「苦」，就是世間的苦；那「集」呢，是世間的因；「滅」呢，是出世的果；「道」是出世的因。佛在轉這個四諦法輪的時候，有三轉。

第一轉是「示轉」，就是指示你，讓你知道。——「此是苦，遍

proceed in our cultivation.

“When the World Honored One had attained the Way, he thought,” indicates that when the Buddha realized enlightenment, he thought for a moment.

“To leave desire behind and to gain calmness and tranquility is supreme.” This means that “leaving desire behind” and “gaining calmness” are the most supreme. “Leaving desire behind” means to not have any thoughts of desire and defilement. “Calmness” refers to purity, as in “there is nothing to be accomplished.” The meaning of this line is not to be interpreted using our cognitive minds.

“Nothing to be accomplished” does not mean that we do not do anything. “Accomplishment” here is not referring to the tangible accomplishments of ordinary beings. These “accomplishments” are without any form or characteristics. They are not visible to ordinary beings, but they are the most extraordinary and inconceivable. “Leaving desire behind” is the most important point, meaning that we need to let go of our desires. Instead, we need to apply effort toward uncovering our pure mind.

“He abided in deep meditative concentration and subdued every demon and externalist.” When one is able to leave desires behind and be calm and tranquil, then over time, one will develop samādhi, the power of concentration. With the power of concentration, you will not be moved by demons and externalists. Instead, you will be able to subdue them.

In fact, Buddhas and demons are like front and back sides. If we are constantly mindful of the Buddha and his teachings, we will be in a pure state of mind. In that case, unwholesome thoughts and states will be far away from you. With the power of concentration, you will be able to subdue these harmful disturbances.

“In the Deer Park he turned the Dharma Wheel of the Four Noble Truths”: “The Dharma Wheel of the Four Noble Truths” refers to the truths of “suffering, the arising of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering.”

“Suffering” refers to the suffering of this world. “Arising of suffering” refers to the worldly causes. “Cessation of suffering” refers to the world-transcending results. “The path to the cessation of suffering” refers to the world-transcending causes. When the Buddha turned the Dharma Wheel of the Four Noble

迫性」。讓你知道這個世間都是苦的。這個苦就是有這個逼迫性。令你氣都透不過來，壓迫著你，這就是逼迫性。

「集」呢，「此是集，招感性」。「集」就是聚集煩惱，這是有一種招感的。你內心有煩惱，外面的煩惱才會來；你內裡邊有貪嗔癡，外邊不如意的事情才會來。所以說，「此是集，招感性」。

「此是滅，可證性」，這個是滅，就是寂滅為樂，這是可以證得的。可以證得這種寂滅之樂，我們可以看到過去有很多大德他們也都是證到了，所以說，這是可以證得的。

「此是道，可修性」，這個戒、定、慧的道，是可以修的——戒道、定道、慧道。戒、定、慧這個道呢，如果往多的說，就是三十七道品，有「七菩提、八正道、五根、五力、四念住、四正勤、四如意足」。所以這個道是可以修的，可以修道。

因為這樣，佛就到鹿野苑去轉四諦法輪了。那四諦就是苦、集、滅、道。這些道理我們都常常聽到，但是我們要怎麼修呢？我們要怎麼把這些道理應用在自己身上來讓自己離苦，得到解脫呢？所以我們要從這個法裡面去思惟，然後去實行，怎麼做，我才能離苦。

「此是苦，逼迫性」。我相信每一個人都有苦。但是你可以看到，每一個人的苦都是不一樣的。你看這個世間的人都是有追求的。沒有的時候追求有；等追求到了，你又不高興了，又希望它沒有。

☯ 待續

Truths, there were Three Turnings.

First was the “indicative turning” in which the Buddha taught us, “This is the truth of suffering, its nature is oppressive.” He let us know that the world is characterized by suffering, and that this suffering is oppressive. It makes you unable to breathe, and presses in on you—that is what is meant by “its nature is oppressive.”

“This is the truth of the arising of suffering; its nature is to attract.” “Arising” refers to the accumulation of suffering; it is a kind of attraction. When there are afflictions in your mind, external afflictions will come; when there are greed, anger, and ignorance in your mind, unfortunate events will arise. That is why it is said, “This is the truth of the arising of suffering; its nature is to attract.”

“This is the truth of the cessation of suffering; it can be realized.” Cessation here refers to nirvāṇa, which is a blissful state that can be realized. This realizable state of nirvāṇa has been accomplished by many virtuous practitioners of the past; that is why it is said to be realizable.

“This is the truth of the path to the cessation of suffering.” This refers to the paths of moral precepts, samadhi, and wisdom, all of which can be cultivated. If we expand this to include the thirty-seven wings of enlightenment, then there are also the “the seven Bodhi Shares, the eightfold noble path, the five wholesome roots, the five powers, the four bases of mindfulness, the fourfold right effort, and the four bases of transcendental power.” These are the paths which can be cultivated and practiced.

Thus, the Buddha turned the Dharma Wheel of the Four Noble Truths in the Deer Park. The Four Noble Truths include the truths of “suffering, the arising of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering.” We often hear of these teachings, but how are we to put them into practice? How can we apply these principles in ourselves in order to be free from suffering and attain liberation? We need to contemplate these teachings and put them into practice, and consider what we need to do in order to be free from suffering.

“This is the truth of suffering, its nature is oppressive.” I believe everyone has their individual suffering and you can see that everyone’s suffering is different. People in the world all seek for something that they don’t owe. Once they have it, they are unhappy about having it and wish that they don’t have it.

☯ To be continued