

國際佛光會華府協會於六月十九日週五晚上七時，假馬里蘭州蒙哥馬利郡政府大樓，繼續進行2015年春季讀書會。本次讀書會仍由北卡佛光山寺當家覺上法師專程從北卡開車趕來，帶領大眾深入經藏，啟發智慧。

華府協會在佛光山的諸位法師帶領下，花了幾年的時間研讀《金剛經》，終於在上次上課做個總結。接下來發心要用未來幾年，好好研究《妙法蓮華經》。因此覺上法師利用本季讀書會的最後一堂課，先將《法華經》做了一番有系統的介紹。

覺上法師指出《法華經》是講如何從初發心學佛，一直到成佛，要經過的道路。而梵文經名的本義是“白蓮花”，象徵了凡夫就要像污泥中的蓮花，從五濁惡世中，修煉精進，而達到清香的聖人境界。

這一次選定的課本是太虛大師著的《法華經教釋》。太虛大師是近代有修為的高僧大德，所以此書既易讀、又可信。法師接著介紹了譯者鳩摩羅什大師的生平，佛教的時代演變，和大乘經典的出土和爭議。法師也概略的說明了從原始佛教、到部派佛教、到大乘佛教、到密教的佛教發展史。

這次覺上法師的“講在前面”，讓學員對《法華經》有了更進一步的認識。我們帶著信心和法喜，期待秋季讀書會的“法華”洗禮。(王立旻)

BLIA, DC held its bi-weekly book study session for the 2015's spring season at 7 pm on June 19th, at the Montgomery County Council Building in Rockville, Maryland. This session was once again led by the Venerable Chueh Shan from IBPS, North Carolina, who has been driving, every other week, all the way from North Carolina to help the people in the Washington metropolitan area learn about Buddhism. Led by many venerables from IBPS, NC, during two seasons every year, our group has spent the last several years studying «The Diamond Sutra». It was concluded in last week's book session. To continue our learning, we have all committed to the next several years' study of «The Lotus Sutra», again luckily with guidance from venerables of IBPS, NC.

To prepare for the fall season classes, Venerable Chueh Shan used this season's last class to give us a systematic introduction to «The Lotus Sutra». Just like the Sanskrit meaning of the title - “white lotus flower”, this sutra teaches laymen the ways to be enlightened, just like lotus flower grows from muddy environments, aka, our complex world.

The textbook we will use is 《The Teachings of The Lotus Sutra》 , written by Venerable Tai Xu, who is renowned within the Buddhist community for his deep understanding of the Buddha’s teachings and his work to propagate this wisdom to the common man. His writings date to the 20th century, and he strived to create a world of “Buddhism for Human Life” on this earth.

Since 《The Lotus Sutra》 belongs to the Mahayana branch, Venerable Chueh Shan also spent some time explaining the development of Buddhism, from Early Buddhism, to Sectarian Buddhism, to Mahayana Buddhism, to Vajrayana Buddhism. Since Venerable Kumarajiva translated this sutra into Chinese in the time of the Six Dynasties, Venerable Chueh Shan also shared several interesting stories about his life.

After learning so many intriguing facts about 《The Lotus Sutra》 , we cannot wait to delve into the details of this sutra in the near future. We are all very appreciative of this opportunity to gain wisdom from the close study of this renowned sutra.