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Lotus Sutra Episode 1

Lotus Sutra Preface (1)

靜思晨語-靜思妙蓮華第001集

靜思妙蓮華-法華經序(一)

The incense is now lit, perfuming the Dharma-realm. From afar the scent is inhaled by the Buddha Assembly. Auspicious are the clouds that gather. With utmost sincerity, we request the presence of all Buddhas. Namo Incense Cloud Canopy Bodhisattva-Mahasattva.

Namo Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the Lotus Dharma-assembly. We wholeheartedly prostrate to the ever-abiding Three Treasures of all ten Dharma-realms.

May this cloud of fragrant incense pervade the realms of the ten directions as an offering to all Buddhas. The Wondrous Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra is received by Bodhisattvas and Hearers to do the work of the Buddha.

We prostrate to the Buddhas of the ten directions. This perfect and supreme vehicle is divided into two parts, the intrinsic and the manifested. The Dharma-analogies reveal true mysteries. Even those who practice lesser vehicles can realize the Buddha's wisdom.

一、< 爐香讚 >：「爐香乍爇 法界蒙薰 諸佛海會悉遙聞 隨處結祥雲 誠意方殷 諸佛現全身 南無 香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩」。

二、經文：「南無 法華會上佛菩薩 一心頂禮 十方世界常住三寶」

三、< 法華經序 >：「願此香花雲 遍滿十方界 供養一切佛 妙法蓮華經 菩薩聲聞眾 受用作佛事」

四、< 法華經序 >：「稽首十方佛 圓滿最上乘 本跡開二門 法喻談真祕 普使諸權小 悉證佛菩提」

Previously, in the Dharma as Water series, I shared that our mind is like a room in a house that has been dark for thousands of years. No one has lived there for a long time. The room has never been opened. Then we were given this key to open the door. When we lit a lamp, we discovered that this dark room, which has not been opened for thousands of years, is covered in so much dust. There are so many dirty corners. The lamp we lit illuminates everything. Hurry, we must eagerly enter this house and examine which corners are filled with dirty things and covered with layers of accumulated dust. We must quickly wash them with water, and clean and clear out all those dirty, dusty things.

我們之前「法譬如水」和大家分享：就好像一間房子，千年的暗室，久了都沒人住，不會打開過，所以給我們一支鑰匙，打開這扇門。點上了一盞燈火，被我們發現，千年萬年不會打開的暗室，原來裡面有這麼多的灰塵，這麼髒的角落很多。這盞燈讓我們照一下，趕快我們要殷勤，進到這間房子裡，要好好知道哪一個角落有髒東西，堆積了多少塵埃，我們要趕快以水清洗，將那些塵埃、髒的東西全部清掃、搬出去。

This is why water is a good analogy for the Dharma. We can understand that for some unknown number of lifetimes, our minds have been in a state of ignorance. We have created so much karma, and ignorance has covered our minds. Therefore the built-up defilement and ignorance must be cleared away, layer by layer. Gradually, as we eliminate this filth, our intrinsic mind will slowly appear.

這就好比「法譬如水」。我們能了解，了解我們不知道在幾生幾世，生生世世，我們的心在無明中不曉得造了多少業，無明覆蔽了我們的心。所以我們一層一層污垢、無明，我們趕快一層一層去除，漸漸垢穢去除了，我

們的本心就漸漸顯現出來。

Purifying the spirit is like cultivating the fields in our minds. The mind needs to be pure. When the mind is pure, the field is pure. Therefore, we must all be as reverent as farmers. Notice how the farmer cultivates his land. First, he must respect nature and understand the timing and the seasons. This is his wisdom. Because he is dedicated, he can take advantage of the time and the season by knowing what seeds to plant and how to cultivate them. Farmers consciously respect nature and understand the seasons to cultivate this land. So we spiritual practitioners are like farmers, and must also practice with that respect and love.

清淨心靈就好像耕耘心地一樣，心要清淨，心淨則土淨。所以我們人人要有這分虔誠的心，虔誠如農夫。看看農夫在耕地，他第一要敬天知時，知季節，這就是農夫的智慧。他懂得把握什麼時間，什麼樣的季節要下什麼樣的種子，如何耕耘，這就是很用心。農夫用心，敬天愛地，知季節，來耕耘這片土地，所以我們修行者和農夫一樣，也是要行那分敬與愛。

As spiritual practitioners, when the bell rings each morning, we slowly assemble and come to the Great Hall. Hearing the bell, afflictions are alleviated, wisdom grows, and Bodhi arises. The enlightened Bodhi-path appears before us. After we enter the Great Hall, the morning recitation begins. The fragrance from the incense burner before the Buddha, the smell of sandalwood, gradually rises along with the delicate spirals of smoke from the incense. This environment can mold our minds.

修行者，我們也是每天、每天，一早的鐘聲響了，我們開始就慢慢集合來到大殿，「聞鐘聲，煩惱輕，智慧長，菩提生。」菩提的覺道就現在我們的面前。入大殿時，早課開始了，佛前香爐裡的香，檀香陣陣的香氣，隨著爐裡的香如此漸漸、漸漸升起，裊裊的煙，這個境界能陶冶我們的心靈。

A sense of reverence arises as we enter the Great Hall and see the smoke spiraling up from the incense burner like a swelling cloud. Sometimes when we check the weather report and see the clouds swelling, we contemplate how there may be Buddhas and Bodhisattvas high in the clouds. In this sky, in this universe, if we contemplate a Dharma-realm like this, we will be there at all times.

從入大殿來，那個時候的虔誠，從香爐裡裊裊的香煙，好像雲一直湧現起來。有時我們若看到在氣象報導，氣候，看天氣，有時看到雲湧現時，我們就觀想，雲端裡諸佛菩薩，在宇宙之間、天空之間，以這樣去觀想這種的法界，無時不在法界中。

Look at this picture of the "Great Enlightened One of the Universe." It shows many Buddhas, shadowing each other closely. The Buddhas' transformation bodies and original bodies appear to be coming from the ten directions to assemble here, on this planet. May our Earth be safeguarded by all Buddhas in this universe. This is a Dharma-realm. All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas gather in this universe. If we have this sense of reverence, through all space, across realms of reality, there will be an assembly of Buddhas in all places.

看看我們「宇宙大覺者」這幅圖，很多的佛形影相隨——分身佛、本身佛，好像從十方來集會一樣，向這顆地球而來。但願我們的地球在宇宙之間受諸佛護念。這是一個法界，諸佛菩薩海會在宇宙空間裡。我們若能以如此虔誠，盡虛空遍法界無不都是諸佛海會。

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◎ < 爐香讚 > : 「爐香乍爇 法界蒙薰 諸佛海會悉遙聞 隨處結祥雲 誠意方殷 諸佛現全身 南無 香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩」

Therefore, we must be reverent. The Jing Si path is to diligently practice the teaching of Infinite Meanings. Our bodies and minds are tranquil and clear. With vows as vast as the endless void, we will remain unwavering. All of us, as Tzu Chi volunteers, must first have this thought. We must make a vow. We must have the aspiration to promote the Noble Path for the Buddha's teachings and for sentient beings. The teachings that the Buddha left behind in this world are what we must promote. We do not just listen to or

talk about them. We must physically practice them.

所以我們要虔誠。我們「靜思勤行道」，就是「無量義」，我們的身心「靜寂清澄，志玄虛漠，守之不動」。這就是我們慈濟人，人人都是要先有這一念心念。我們要發願，我們要發心，來發願弘聖道，「為佛教，為眾生」。佛陀來人間，所留下來的教法我們應該要弘揚。不只是聽，不只是說，我們是身體力行去做。

Namo Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the Lotus Dharma-assembly. We wholeheartedly prostrate to the ever-abiding Three Treasures of all ten Dharma-realms.

◎經文：「南無 法華會上佛菩薩 一心頂禮 十方世界常住三寶」

The Sutra of Infinite Meanings comes from the essence of the Lotus Sutra. Therefore, every day we feel as if we are at the Vulture Peak assembly. So, as for the opening of the Lotus Sutra Preface, every morning when we are bowing to and chanting the Lotus Sutra Preface, we must first establish a reverent mind. With great reverence, we face the Buddha's image. Even though it is just an image, in our hearts there are countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. When we bow to and chant the Lotus Sutra Preface, we have the mindset of taking refuge. We completely dedicate our body and our lifespan to taking refuge. That is why we say Namō, meaning to pay homage and take refuge.

《無量義經》就是從法華的精髓而來，所以我們每一天就好像自己親臨靈鷲山會上。所以在《法華經》的〈開經序〉開始，每天早上你們在禮拜〈法華經序〉，那就是要先建設自己內心的虔誠，我們要以很虔誠的心來面對佛像。雖然是佛像，不過我們心中都是有無數無數的諸佛菩薩。所以我們禮拜〈法華經序〉，我們的心態就是要有那分皈依，「形命皈依」——盡形壽、獻身命來皈依；所以叫做「南無」，那就是皈依。

Every time we say Namō, we say it with the deepest reverence and wholeheartedly draw near to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. That way of taking refuge and paying respect arises from taking refuge with the body and mind. That is Namō.

每一句「南無」出來，就是以最虔誠的心，盡形命靠近佛、法、僧，那種「皈依禮」，發自我們身心的皈依，所以叫做「南無」。

Who are we taking refuge with and relying on? "The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the Lotus Dharma-assembly." Let us have the mindset that we are present at the Vulture Peak and the Buddha is about to expound the Lotus Sutra. At Vulture Peak, countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas assembled from worlds of all directions. Since we are all the Buddha's disciples, we must have a sense of reverence. Let us take refuge with the body and mind, reverently bow and chant to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the Lotus-assembly. With a deep sense of respect, we pay reverence to the "Three Treasures of all ten Dharma-realms."

我們還要皈依依靠的在哪裡呢？就是「法華會上佛菩薩」。我們所面對的，就像在靈鷲山。佛開始要講《法華經》時，在靈鷲山，無量數的諸佛菩薩，從諸方世界集會到那個地方。所以我們人人既是佛教徒，我們必定要有這分虔誠的心，身心皈依，虔誠禮拜在法華會上諸佛菩薩。所以要以最恭敬的心來敬禮「十方法界常住三寶」。

May this cloud of fragrant incense pervade the realms of the ten directions as an offering to all Buddhas. The Wondrous Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra is received by Bodhisattvas and Hearers to do the work of the Buddha.

◎〈法華經序〉：「願此香花雲 遍滿十方界 供養一切佛 妙法蓮華經 菩薩聲聞眾 受用作佛事」

We read this passage whenever we bow and recite the Lotus Sutra. Those words do not just come from our mouths, but from our hearts, as if we are offering abundant incense and flowers and our deepest reverence, as if we are offering up our body and mind to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It is not just one Buddha in one direction. It is as if our body can also multiply and travel in all directions to go in front of every Buddha and reverently present flowers. When we reverently offer the flowers of the heart, it "pervades the realms of the ten directions." We must make offerings to all Buddhas.

這段文字，在禮拜《法華經》時都會念到。不是口頭上念，是要從內心，好像我們以很豐盛的香、花，我們以

最虔誠的心，好像我們身心在佛菩薩的面前在供養。不是一尊，不是一個方向，我們是好像我們的身也能分身在每一個方向、每一尊佛的面前，我們都是虔誠奉花、獻花，這樣虔誠的心花供養。尤其是「遍滿十方界」，我們所要「供養」的是一切佛。

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這段文字，在禮拜《法華經》時都會念到。不是口頭上念，是要從內心，好像我們以很豐盛的香、花，我們以最虔誠的心，好像我們身心在佛菩薩的面前在供養。不是一尊，不是一個方向，我們是好像我們的身也能分身在每一個方向、每一尊佛的面前，我們都是虔誠奉花、獻花，這樣虔誠的心花供養。尤其是「遍滿十方界」，我們所要「供養」的是一切佛。

This even applies to all Dharma. The true path to all Dharma is the Wondrous Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra. For the first 42 years, the Buddha's teachings were provisional. After 42 years, He began revealing the perfect teachings, which is the Wondrous Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra. Therefore, we are not just applying these teachings, we need to reverently take them to heart and make offerings to them. There are "Bodhisattvas and Hearers." We do not just show reverence to the Buddha or the Dharma. Bodhisattvas and Hearers are also part of that Dharma-assembly. We reverently make offerings to each of them. When we make these offerings we are doing the Buddha's work, which is to promote the Buddha-Dharma in the world.

甚至法，一切法，一切法的最真實道就是《妙法蓮華經》。佛陀之前四十二年的「權教」，到了四十二年後才開始顯真實道，那就是《妙法蓮華經》。所以我們這個法，不只是用到而已，是如我們內心最虔誠的接受的供養。所以「菩薩聲聞」，我們的虔誠，不只是佛，不只是法，還有菩薩、聲聞同在那個法會中，我們都一一虔誠供養。甚至我們的供養，就是能為佛事，為佛事就是弘傳佛法在人間。

From the Lotus Sutra Preface: We prostrate to the Buddhas of the ten directions. This perfect and supreme vehicle is divided into two parts, the intrinsic and the manifested. The Dharma-analogies reveal true mysteries. Even those who practice lesser vehicles can realize the Buddha's wisdom.

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After this we must then reverently prostrate and pay respect. We do not prostrate with just our body. With a heart of utmost sincerity, we "prostrate to the Buddhas of the ten directions. This perfect and supreme vehicle" is the Lotus Sutra, which can be divided into two parts, the intrinsic and the manifest. The intrinsic is the Buddha-nature we all have. The manifest is the trace we leave in the world, the role we take on.

甚至我們還要再很虔誠地「稽首」禮拜。這種稽首不只是身形，是最誠敬的心，「稽首十方佛」，尤其是「圓滿最上乘」。圓滿最上乘就是《法華經》。《法華經》中有「本跡開二門」，「本」就是人人全都有佛性，「跡」是顯跡來人間，扮演什麼樣的角色。

The role the Buddha played was to manifest in India. In that land, He was born into the palace. Then, to save sentient beings all over the world, to open every person's heart, to bring light to the house in each heart that has been dark for thousands of years, He first cleansed and organized His own mind. Then, He taught us how to clean and organize this house, how to illuminate this house. This is a manifestation, the footprints He left on this world. The manifested Buddha left traces in this world. This is called leaving a footprint. He did not stay here forever; He was in this world for 80 years. However, the intrinsic Buddha is the Dharmakaya, which remains the same, and lasts forever and forever, as long as heaven and earth, and will

pervade the universe. He even said that you, I, and all people have the same nature as the Buddha. So, [the teachings were] "divided into two, the intrinsic and the manifest."

佛所扮演的，他顯跡在印度那個地方，他的生態在皇宮裡，然後他為了要解救普天下的眾生，開啟人人的心門，點亮人人千年黑暗的心宅，所以他就要自己先去清理他的內心。所以教我們，要如何清理這間房子，這間房子要如何讓它光亮起來。這是一個跡，是走過世間的足跡，所以這是佛陀他出現在世間的「跡佛」，這叫做留下足跡。他不是永遠在人間，在人間八十年。不過「本佛」，就是法身，還是一樣，是永遠、永遠，天長地久，遍滿宇宙之間。甚至告訴我們，你、我、人人都有與佛同等的佛性。所以「本跡開二門」。

"The intrinsic and the manifest" means the Buddha used His purest intrinsic nature to come to this world. He revealed this appearance to teach us that even glory and wealth are like drifting clouds that pass by very quickly. He did not crave status and fortune. He willingly suffered for sentient beings so He could reveal the Buddha-Dharma. This kind of truth can save sentient beings. There are two doors. Even though there are two, they lead to the same place. So we say, "divided into two, the intrinsic and the manifest."

現在所說的「本、跡」，是佛以他最清淨的本性再來人間，他示現這個形態來教導我們，即使榮華富貴也如浮雲一樣，很快就過去了。他不去貪著榮華富貴，他甘願為了眾生吃了很多苦，所以才能顯現佛法如此真實，能夠拯救眾生。這有兩道門，說是兩道門，其實回歸為一，所以叫做「本跡開二門」。

"The Dharma-analogies reveal true mysteries." [He spoke] the True Dharma, but we could not understand it, so He used many kinds of analogies. Take the Dharma-body for example: If we were told what it looks like, we still would not see it. The birth of the crown prince in India was recorded in history. That is a Dharma-analogy. So the manifest and the Dharma-analogies mean similar things. Manifestation refers to where He was and how He walked this path. Now we have maps and a sense of the geography, so we know that His country was somewhere in ancient India. Now the place is called Nepal. Because He left this trace, we can use it as a Dharma-analogy.

「法喻談真祕」，是真正的法，但是我們聽不懂，所以用譬喻，很多種的譬喻。就如，法身是什麼樣子？告訴你也看不到。出生在印度那位太子，有，歷史記載中有。這就是「喻」。同樣的意思，「跡」和「喻」是相同的。「跡」是這樣走過來的，走過來的這條路怎麼走，現在有地圖、有地理，讓我們知道原來他的國家是在過去印度的某一個點，現在的名稱叫做尼泊爾。這就是有過這個蹤跡，我們能夠譬喻它。

The Dharma will always be the same, but the manifest and the analogies will not. The Dharma is the same in the past, present and future, but different analogies are used to describe it at those different times. Therefore it is said, "the Dharma-analogies reveal true mysteries." To discuss the Dharma, we must use many kinds of worldly matters to illustrate these truths.

法是永遠永遠都是如此，但是這個「跡」和「譬喻」，就有過去、現在、未來的；法是過去、現在、未來都是一樣的，所以有不同的譬喻，所以叫做「法喻談真祕」。就是要來談法，就要用很多人間的事相，來配合著道理說話。

Everything said is the Truth, but it is very profound and mysterious. Take humans for example. Why do humans exist? Why are we so small when we are born, but turn old at the end? What happens biologically? Whatever happens, we are living each day, we are changing each day, and every day we coexist with the profound mysteries of life but we do not understand them. Yet biological principles exist. This is similar to the Dharma in the world. So Dharma uses analogies to reveal true mysteries. The Buddha told us that aside from our biological appearance, we have the Dharma of True Emptiness and Wondrous Existence. So, how will we comprehend true emptiness and wondrous existence? These are indeed "true mysteries."

所以，所說的都是真實，但是它很奧祕。如同我們人，為什麼會有人？人為什麼生出來只有那麼小而已，為什麼到頭來就老了？到底生理上如何？無論如何，每天在過日子，每天都在變化，每天都和生命中的奧祕在一起，但我們就是沒辦法了解。不過，這個生理一定是存在的，所以人間的法就是如此。所以「法喻談真祕」，佛陀能夠告訴我們，我們除了生理的形態以外，我們還有一個真空妙有的法。所以我們要如何去體會真空妙有，這就真正是「真祕」。

"Even those who practice lesser vehicles can realize the Buddha's wisdom." We must hope to deeply penetrate this Dharma. We can look forward to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas awakening us to this supreme

Dharma so "those who practice lesser vehicles," even those with weak, low capabilities can accept it and can also attain Buddhahood.

「普使諸權小，悉證佛菩提」。我們一定希望要深入這個法中，我們能夠期待，諸佛菩薩這種最上乘的法能夠開啟。「普使諸權小」，哪怕是根機很劣弱的也能夠接受，全都能夠來證菩提。

Therefore, we must make vows, dedicate merits and take refuge. We hope we can take refuge in body and mind with this assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and transcend the mindset of life and death. Therefore before we bow and recite every day, we must prepare with a sense of reverence so when we come together with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, our spirits will be more in line with theirs.

這就是我們大家要發願、要回向、要皈依。所以希望我們的身心能夠皈依在諸佛菩薩的海會中，我們能脫離這個生死得失的心。這就是我們大家要以虔誠的心，每天的禮拜必定要有這種虔誠的心理準備，這樣才能與諸佛菩薩會合，這個心靈才能很貼切起來。

So, starting from now, I hope we will all be farmers of the fields in our minds. Now is the right time to sow seeds. Just as a farmer is reverent, respects the heavens and earth, and knows the proper season to plant, so too must we seize this moment to truly purify and brighten our minds. Therefore, every day, we must be very reverent and treat all the people around us as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas assembled on a cloud of incense by showing them this respect. I believe that if we constantly nurture and develop this mindset, every day our mind will be refreshed and we will draw near to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. So everyone, please always be mindful.

所以從現在開始，希望我們人人要為自心地的農夫，這個時候正是要撒種子的時候，農夫的虔誠，敬天愛地，能夠知季節，我們也要把握這個時候，真正我們的心地要讓它清新，要讓它亮麗起來。我們應該要每天都是很虔誠的心，將所有周圍的人都當作「香雲海會諸佛菩薩」這樣來尊重。相信這分虔誠的心若能時時培養起來，日日都是我們新的心地，日日是與諸佛菩薩接近的時刻。所以大家要時時多用心。