

Lotus Sutra Episode 2
Lotus Sutra Preface (2)

靜思晨語-靜思妙蓮華第002集
靜思妙蓮華-法華經序(二)

A sincere thought can pervade the 3000 worlds, and reach all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. May all Dharma-protectors forever safeguard us. May we reverently invite them, with their compassion, to guard this Tzu Chi training ground, where the teachings of the Jing-Si Dharma-lineage are practiced.

We wholeheartedly prostrate to our Fundamental Teacher, Sakyamuni Buddha. We wholeheartedly prostrate to the Many Treasure Buddha of the past . We wholeheartedly prostrate to the manifestations of Sakyamuni Buddha in all the ten directions. We wholeheartedly prostrate to all Buddhas in the Lotus Sutra and of the ten directions and Three Periods of Time.

We wholeheartedly prostrate to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the Lotus Sutra Dharma-assembly and the wondrous treasure of One.

一念虔誠遍三千，上達諸佛菩薩聽，諸天護法恆守護，虔敬迎請慈悲護念，靜思法脈慈濟道場共修法。

經文：「一心頂禮 本師釋迦牟尼佛」、「一心頂禮 過去多寶佛」、「一心頂禮 十方分身 釋迦牟尼佛」、「一心頂禮 盡法華經中 及十方三世 一切諸佛」

經文：「一心頂禮 妙法蓮華經 法華會上佛菩薩 妙一寶」

You may remember a story I have told before. There was an honest county magistrate who was uncorrupted and upright, who treated all the people in the county like his own children. He truly cared for them like a parent, so he was loved and respected by all. When he grew old, he retired and returned to the countryside. But as he had been honest all his life, his family had no savings, and were very poor. He also brought his daughter back to the village with him.

你們可記得，之前曾說過一段故事。一位清廉的縣太爺，平時他就是很清廉，把全縣的人民當作像自己的孩子一樣，真的是父母官呵護子民，所以得到所有縣民的敬愛尊重。等到他年紀大了，要告老還鄉，要回去他住的鄉下了，但是他一生都很清廉，所以家庭沒有儲蓄，就是很窮，還是這麼帶著他一位女兒就回去了。

A few years later, this aging magistrate got sick. What could they do once he got sick? They had no money to see a doctor and they lived in a very rural area; what could they do? His daughter thought of praying to the Buddha, but she had to look after her father and could not go to the temple to pay respect. What could she do? A Dharma-Master told her, "If you are sincere, no matter how far away you are, your reverent thoughts can be heard by all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. So every day at home, set up an incense table by the door that faces the temple. Pay your respects there every day, and pray sincerely. That will do."

不過，這位老太爺幾年後，已經年紀大了，生病了。病了要怎麼辦呢？沒有錢看醫生，尤其是那麼鄉下，該怎麼辦？女兒就覺得要虔誠禮佛，但是父親需要照顧，無法到寺院去禮佛，這要怎麼辦？師父就對她說：「妳一念虔誠，無論妳離得多遠，妳這念虔誠的心，諸佛菩薩都會聽到。所以妳每天在妳家裡，在門口那裡擺上香案，向著寺院這邊，妳可以每天就地禮拜，虔誠祈求，這樣就行了。」

Because she was very mindful, after she heard the Dharma-Master's words, on her way home, she counted her footsteps and kept track of the time. So she knew that going from her home to the temple took this many steps, this much time. Every morning by the incense table, she sincerely [paid respect] in this way: The number of steps to the temple was the number of times she prostrated. Each prostration equaled one step. After that, she circumambulated the Buddha. She was very devout. Perhaps her devotion was felt; her father got better day by day. After he recovered, this young lady kept up this ritual every day, in the hopes that her father would be happy and healthy.

因為她很用心，師父這樣對她說了以後，她要回來的路上就開始算腳步、算時間，所以她知道從這裡要到寺院去，要走幾步路、花多久的時間能到達寺院。她每天早上在香案前，很虔誠，就是需要走幾步路，就禮多少佛，她每一拜就當成走一步，甚至拜了之後，她還在那裡繞佛，很虔誠。是不是女兒的虔誠有了感應？父親的身體一天天強健起來，健康了。這位小姐還是每天繼續這樣在禮拜，希望父親能身心安樂。

In that same year, a young scholar placed first in the National Exams and then returned home to pay respect to his ancestors. The scholar's mother felt that her son had been blessed by the Buddha. Since he had fared so well, when he returned home, she felt he should first pay respect at the temple. So, the scholar's mother sent someone to the temple with this message, "My son, the scholar, will light the first censer of incense." So that morning, nobody else went to light the incense. The scholar arrived very early. But when he showed up, there was already incense in the censer; three sticks of incense were burning. He thought, "My mother clearly said that I will light the first censer of incense. How could this happen? That's ok, I will come earlier tomorrow." 有一回，就是同樣那一年，有一位年輕人考試中了狀元，要回鄉來祭祖。這位狀元的母親，她覺得這都是佛菩薩的庇佑，既然已經風光回鄉來，要祭祖，應該先到寺院禮拜。所以狀元的母親就先派人去這間寺院，說：「我的兒子狀元郎要來燒第一爐香。」所以那天早上大家都沒有去點香。狀元很早就到了，來的時候，香爐已經有香了，三柱香在香爐裡。他覺得明明母親是這樣說，是我要來燒第一爐香，為什麼又會這樣呢？沒關係，明天我會更早來。

He arrived earlier the next day, but again three sticks of incense were already lit. The scholar was very unhappy. The Abbot said, "That is odd. Really, none of us lit that first censer of incense. Why are there 3 sticks of incense every day?" The scholar thought it was strange. Since monastics do not lie, it was impossible that they had done it. Thus he said, "Ok, I will stay here tonight. Tomorrow morning, I will see who lights the incense." So that night he stayed in the temple.

明天更早來，香爐同樣還是三柱香在那裡，狀元就很不高興了。住持就說：「奇怪，沒有啊！我們真的沒有人去燒頭一爐香。為什麼每天都有這三柱香呢？」狀元覺得奇怪，既然出家人不會打妄語，絕對不可能。他就說：「好，我今晚要住在這裡，明天一早，我要看看是誰來燒香。」所以那晚他就住在寺院裡。

In the morning, before dawn, he was watchful. Indeed, there was clearly a girl. He clearly saw the figure of a girl enter the temple before the temple doors were even open. She prostrated sincerely and then walked in a circle around the Buddha. He told this to the Abbot. Then it occurred to the Abbot, "The girl you mentioned actually exists. She is the daughter of a former county magistrate. When he retired, he returned here. Not long ago, the county magistrate fell sick. His daughter was very devoted and watched over him, day and night. She sincerely wanted to pray here, but could not come. Once I told her to set up an incense table by her door and prostrate daily towards the temple. Perhaps her piety is the reason that at this time every day, as she is praying, the power of her sincerity brings her presence here."

一早天未亮，他就很注意，有啊，明明有一位女孩。他就看得很清楚，這個女孩的形態，寺門還沒開，她已經進來了，在那裡虔誠禮拜，還在那裡繞佛。他就告訴了這位住持。這位住持師父他想到了，「你說的這位女孩，有啦，是我們以前縣城裡縣太爺的女兒。不過，他告老還鄉回來了。不久之前，縣太爺他身體欠安，他的女兒很虔誠，日夜守護在父親身邊。不過，她虔誠想要禮拜，卻無法前來。我會這麼告訴她，要她每天在家門前設香案，面向寺院這邊虔誠禮拜。是不是她的虔誠，所以每天的這個時刻她在禮拜，她那念的虔誠力量來到這裡。」

The scholar heard this story and thought it was inconceivable such a thing could happen. So he went to visit the former county magistrate. When he saw the daughter serve tea, he was startled. Undoubtedly, she was the girl who lit incense and prayed early in the temple. The scholar was very moved, and greatly admired the girl's beauty. So, he went home and told his mother. She quickly sent someone to propose marriage. Thus, this wonderful union came to be and the county magistrate had a scholar as his son-in-law. This became a story that people in the village loved to tell. They all enjoyed recounting this tale.

這位狀元聽了，不可思議，有這樣的事情。他就真的去拜訪前任縣太爺，他看到這位女孩端茶出來時，他自己吃了一驚——就是她，沒錯！一早到寺院去燒香禮佛。所以狀元看了很感動，也很喜歡這個女孩長得很美，所以回去就告訴他的母親。母親趕快找人來提親，就此一樁美事，終成眷屬，縣太爺有了狀元女婿。就這樣傳為村裡的美談，大家津津樂道，大家很歡喜，都愛說這個故事。

So, from this we know that if we reverently pay respect to the Buddha, if we are sincere, miraculous things will happen. This is a form of devotion. If we are devout, the thoughts arising through our sincerity will be heard by all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and pervade the 3000 worlds. Depending on the strength of our piety, even heavenly Dharma-protectors will come and protect us forever. So in our spiritual training ground, every day we practice with great sincerity. For the Dharma-protectors who guard this place, we feel a sense of gratitude and respect. Let us give rise to a sense of veneration and reverently invite them to guard us.

由此就知道，虔誠禮佛，心若誠則靈，心誠則靈，所以這是一種虔誠。我們若虔誠，不只是心力，這個虔誠的念，能夠上達諸佛菩薩聽，也能遍三千世界。看我們的心，這種虔誠的力量到什麼程度，何況諸天護法，當然是永

遠都來守護。所以我們的道場，每天、每天都用這麼虔誠的心，守護道場的天龍護法，這就是我們應該要感恩、尊重，所以我們要生起禮敬的心，所以我們要虔敬迎請慈悲護念。

A sincere thought can pervade the 3000 worlds, and reach all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. May all Dharma-protectors forever safeguard us. May we reverently invite them, with their compassion, to guard this Tzu Chi training ground, where the teachings of the Jing-Si Dharma-lineage are practiced.

◎一念虔誠遍三千，上達諸佛菩薩聽，諸天護法恆守護，虔敬迎請慈悲護念，靜思法脈慈濟道場共修法。

This is the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism, the Jing Si Dharma-lineage. In Tzu Chi, the method we use for group practice is to bow to and chant the Lotus Sutra. In Jing Si Halls across Taiwan, and in all our offices, when we practice together, aren't we bowing to and chanting the Lotus Sutra? So, we revere and treasure every word in the Lotus Sutra Preface, thus we bow and chant sincerely. This is a characteristic practice of Tzu Chi. This mental training ground is also called the Jing Si Dharma-lineage, the Tzu Chi School of Buddhism. Usually when we are engaged in group practice, we bow to and chant the Preface of the Lotus Sutra. I hope that when we practice together, when we bow to and chant the Lotus Sutra, we do so with a mindset of utmost sincerity.

「靜思法脈，慈濟宗門」，慈濟人共修的法就是禮拜《法華經》。常常聽到我們全省的靜思堂或是分支會、聯絡處，大家在共修不就是禮拜《法華經》嗎？所以〈法華經序〉，字字我們都很虔誠，字字為寶，所以虔誠禮拜，這是我們慈濟人的特色——心靈的道場；也是「靜思法脈，慈濟宗門」，慈濟人的心靈道場，平時大家在共修，禮拜〈法華經序〉。希望大家若是在共修時禮拜〈法華經序〉，就是要以這樣的心態，最虔誠的心態。

As I mentioned yesterday, in addition to our sincere contemplation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas across the universe, our offerings of incense and flowers likewise pervade all Dharma-realms. That is an expression of our piety, and it dignifies our place of practice. In every moment, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas grace us with their presence and surround this place, so we must be very sincere in the way we bow and prostrate.

所以我們昨天也說過了，除了我們有這樣虔誠的觀想，諸佛菩薩遍滿虛空，我們的供養也是一樣，遍法界供香、花。這就是表示虔誠，也表示莊嚴道場。因為每一個時刻都是諸佛菩薩光臨在我們的道場周圍，所以我們要很虔誠稽首。

We hope to thoroughly understand this Mahayana sutra and the principles of the intrinsic and the manifested, and to thoroughly comprehend the Dharma, the analogies, etc. Whether one aspires to practice the Mahayana-path or only to follow the Hinayana, everyone can understand this Mahayana Dharma, and turn from the Hinayana to the Mahayana. I hope we can all awaken and realize Buddha-Dharma from deep within our hearts. Thus, the Preface states that we need to sincerely take refuge and dedicate our body and life to spiritual practice because we hope we will be able to "transcend the sea of life and death."

期待大乘的經典，無論是「本跡二門」的道理，我們都能很透徹了解。無論是法、譬喻等等，我們都能很通徹。無論是發心修大乘行，或是只發了小乘心，他都能夠了解，了解大乘的法，能轉小為大，希望人人能覺悟，從我們內心透徹佛法的道理。所以，〈序文〉就是這麼說，我們要皈依，我們要很虔誠的皈依，獻身命的皈依，因為期待我們能「願超生死海」。

From the Lotus Sutra: Today we vow to take refuge. May we transcend the sea of life and death.

◎經文：「我今誓皈依 願超生死海」

The sea of life and death is a state of mind. Does everyone die only once in a lifetime? No, our thoughts are constantly arising and ceasing. So let us turn thoughts that arise and cease into something ever-lasting and, with vows as vast as the endless void, remain unwavering. Thus we can "transcend the sea of life and death." So, we are not simply speaking of a lifespan of several decades, or of a century. Definitely not. We are now speaking of the arising and ceasing of every thought.

人生，生死都是一念心。一個人是不是一輩子死一次呢？不只；我們的心心念念都在生生滅滅。所以，我們生滅的念，我們應該變為永恆，「志玄虛漠，守之不動」，如此就能「超生死海」。所以，不只是一輩子幾十歲或是百歲，自然的法則這樣過去，不是。我們現在要說的，是我們的心心念念生滅。

I often tell everybody that these Four States of Existence, arising, abiding, changing and ceasing, all take place in our minds. Good thoughts arise and cease. A good thought arises, but then quickly ceases. So, when we make a vow, we cannot persevere to the end because we cannot maintain our will and tend to quickly change our minds. This is a form of laziness and this is how evil thoughts arise. Evil thoughts also arise and cease. We should remember to first turn our present thoughts into everlasting ones. We can transcend arising and ceasing thoughts. This is what we must thoroughly understand and then practice with perseverance. So, let us sincerely

prostrate.

常常對大家說「心理四相」——生、住、異、滅。這都是在我們的內心，起生好念、滅好念，一個好念生起很快就滅掉。所以我們發願，不能堅持到底，就是因為我們發的好願，很快意志不能堅持下去，很快就轉變掉，那就是懈怠，惡念就生起了，這也是在生滅中。所以我們應該要記得，先把我們現在的心念變成永恆，我們能超越生滅的念頭，這就是我們真的要去透徹了解，要堅持修行的地方。所以我們要頂禮，很虔誠來頂禮。

From the Lotus Sutra: We wholeheartedly prostrate to our Fundamental Teacher, Sakyamuni Buddha. We wholeheartedly prostrate to the Many Treasure Buddha of the past. We wholeheartedly prostrate to the manifestations of Sakyamuni Buddha in all the ten directions. We wholeheartedly prostrate to all Buddhas in the Lotus Sutra and of the ten directions and Three Periods of Time.

◎經文：「一心頂禮 本師釋迦牟尼佛」

「一心頂禮 過去多寶佛」

「一心頂禮 十方分身 釋迦牟尼佛」

「一心頂禮 盡法華經中 及十方三世 一切諸佛」

We bow to our Fundamental Teacher, Sakyamuni. Sakyamuni Buddha is the founder of our religion, the Great Enlightened One of the universe. So, we must prostrate very sincerely, and also "bow to the Many Treasure Buddha of the past." This Buddha came to this world as a witness, to testify at the Lotus Sutra Assembly so that we would more strongly believe that Buddhas of the past, present and future share the same path. The Many Treasure Buddha of the past verified the Dharma expounded by the present Buddha. Therefore, we must bow with gratitude and prostrate to Him.

「頂禮本師釋迦牟尼佛」。釋迦牟尼佛就是我們的教主，就是宇宙的大覺者，所以我們必定要虔誠頂禮。還要「頂禮過去多寶佛」。多寶佛是來人間見證，在法華會上為見證，所以我們會更加相信過去、現在、未來佛佛道同。過去的多寶佛來見證現在的佛所說的法，所以我們也要很感恩來頂禮。

We must also pay respect to "all Buddhas in the Lotus Sutra and of the ten directions and Three Periods of Time." We need to be aware that there are many Buddhas in the Lotus Sutra. In the process of chanting the Lotus Sutra, we need to keep in mind that many, countless worlds exist. How many are there above and below? They cover the universe of the ten directions and Three Periods of Time. There are Buddhas all across the universe. At the Lotus Dharma-assembly, there are many Buddhas from all ten directions.

還要「（頂禮）盡法華經中及十方三世一切諸佛」。我們要知道，《法華經》裡有非常多的佛。你們在誦《法華經》的過程應該都記得，有非常多的無量世界，上下有多少呢！遍虛空十方三世，應該就是遍虛空界的諸佛，在法華會上有很多很多的諸佛，十方來的諸佛。

From the Lotus Sutra: We wholeheartedly prostrate to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the Lotus Sutra Dharma-assembly and the wondrous treasure of 'One'.

◎經文：「一心頂禮 妙法蓮華經 法華會上佛菩薩 妙一寶」

Aside from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the boundless void, there are some who were listening to the Buddha expound the Dharma at the Lotus Dharma-assembly.

再「一心頂禮妙法蓮華經，法華會上佛菩薩」。除了虛空法界諸佛菩薩以外，大家在法華會上聽，聽佛說法的諸佛菩薩，這是在法華會。

When we pay respect, we must bow down and visualize this image, that we are surrounded by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. We must have this devout mindset when we prostrate.

我們應該在禮拜時，拜下去我們就要做這樣的觀想，觀想在我的周圍都是諸佛菩薩，我們應該要有這種虔誠的心來頂禮。

In the past, alone in my small cottage, I prostrated until I was filled with Dharma-joy. One time, as I bowed down, I suddenly felt my surroundings filled with a luminous light, very gentle, like the moon at the Mid-Autumn Festival, so perfectly round and radiant. It was a very gentle and tender light. With great reverence, I felt that that state was filled with a beautiful, perfect and soft light. At the Lotus Dharma-assembly, this kind of state emerged constantly. Though I had not been doing it for a long time, I bowed and chanted with great sincerity, so that state manifested. You know, such Dharma-joy is indescribable. Every time I prostrate, when my head touches the ground, I think of that state.

過去我在自己的小木屋，自己一個人，真的能拜到那分法喜充滿。有一回拜下去時，忽然間好像周圍的境界，很明亮的光，很溫柔，好像八月十五的月亮一樣，那種圓、那種光，很溫柔、溫和的光。這是一個很虔誠的心，感

覺到那個境界實在是很美、很圓滿、很柔的光，法華會上那種境界這樣不斷不斷湧現出來。雖然不是很久的時間，是很虔誠在禮拜，這樣禮拜下去，那個境界現前。你們可知道，那樣的法喜不是能形容的。每一回我若在禮拜時，頭著地，就會想到那時候的境界。

Everyone, this sincere state of mind is absolutely not illusory or unreal, not a visual or auditory hallucination. Absolutely not. We must all train our minds so that when we face any person, matter or condition, we will use a selfless and pure mind to deal with everything. As we chant the Buddha's name and prostrate with a pure and selfless mindset, that is called sincerity. So everyone, if every morning we treat this training ground as the assembly at Vulture Peak, at that moment we will have instantly pervaded the 3000 worlds and also be present at Vulture Peak during the time when the Buddha taught.

各位，這念虔誠的心絕對不是虛妄的，也不是幻覺、幻聽，絕對不是。我們人人就是要訓練好我們這念心，對人、對事、對任何一個境界，我們要用我們無私清淨的心來對待一切。我們在念佛、拜佛，也是清淨無私的心念，這叫做虔誠。所以各位，每天早上的道場，我們若把它當作我們這個道場就是靈山會，我們在現在已經剎那的時間就遍三千界了，現在我們也是在靈山會，佛講經的時代。

So, as long as we are very sincere, a distance of over 2000 years means nothing. With a heart of sincerity, we have already returned to the Buddha's Lotus Dharma-assembly at Vulture Peak. Sincerity in prayer is very crucial, especially when bowing to and chanting the Lotus Sutra. Every word in it is precious, so we must chant every word sincerely. Everyone, please always be mindful.

所以說，只要我們很虔誠，二千多年前算什麼呢？虔誠的心，我們就已經回歸在佛陀法華會靈山會上。所以我們虔誠的禮拜非常重要，何況禮拜《法華經》，字字都是寶，所以字字要虔誠。所以請大家要時時多用心。