

## Lotus Sutra Preface (4)

靜思晨語-靜思妙蓮華第005集  
靜思妙蓮華-法華經序(四)

A slight discrepancy determines whether we go in the right or wrong direction. Boundless desires originate from insatiability. Time passes as we remain indecisive on which course to take. When our true nature is lost, we transmigrate through cyclic existence.

We vow to repent. We disciples and all sentient beings, since Beginningless Time, have lost our true nature and transmigrate through cyclic existence.

The transgressions of the Six Roots are boundless and hinder us from understanding the perfect and wondrous Buddha-vehicle. All that we hope for will not come to be.

Today we pay respect to the Wondrous Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra. With these roots of goodness, we openly confess our dark evils, so the boundless, grave transgressions created with the Threefold Karma in the past, present and future will all be eliminated.

Our bodies and mind will be pure; we will eliminate delusions and obstacles, be dignified by blessings and wisdom, and seeds of purity will increase.

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◎志心懺悔，弟子眾等與一切眾生，從無始以來，迷失真心，流轉生死。

◎六根罪障無量無邊，圓妙佛乘無以開解，一切所願不得現前。

◎我今禮敬妙法蓮華經，以此善根，發露黑惡，過現未來，三業所造，無邊重罪皆得消滅。

◎身心清淨，惑障蠲除，福智莊嚴，淨因增長。

Every day we talk about repenting and making vows. Indeed, to repent is to constantly self-reflect. After we have acted, do we sincerely confess all that we have done in the past? After confessing everything, have we reformed our mental and physical behavior? If we can correct everything, in addition to our physical behavior, won't our minds then often give rise to good thoughts without any deviant, evil thoughts? Have we reached this level of repentance and purification?

我們每天都在說，懺悔發願。是的，懺悔就是要時時反省自己，過去做了之後，是不是我們有很虔誠地把過去所做的一切全都發露？是不是發露之後，我們的身心行為都已改過了沒？我們若全都能改過，除了身體的行為以外，心理是不是時時都是起善念，沒有偏差的惡念，我們是不是有這樣呢？到這樣的程度就是叫做懺悔清淨。

After we have repented and purified ourselves, we can then make vows. As we make vows, we need to understand that a slight discrepancy makes the difference between

going in the right or wrong direction. We make endless vows. We may pray that if a certain good thing happens to a family member, we will then vow to be vegetarian on his behalf, or vow to do good deeds, or we will vow to.... These are conditional vows, vows for desires, vows for something in return. These kinds of vows are misguided. We have to give unconditionally for it to be a vow.

懺悔清淨之後，我們就要發願了。「發願」這兩個字，我們也要很清楚，毫釐之差，善惡分途。願是無窮，祈求——我家裡的某某人、某某人若能如何，我就發願為他素食，我就發願要做好事，我就發願.....。這都是有所求的願、有所欲的願、有所回報的願，這種的願實在是錯誤的願。我們要付出而無所求，才是叫做願。

We need to be selective in the vows we make. We have many wants, so we have endless expectations and will never be satisfied. The suffering in our lives comes from wanting something more, wanting something better. These kinds of pursuits can be described by an old saying, "Mountains are not as tall as our list of wishes." This is like asking, "Is this enough? Not yet. Here's more. Is this enough? Not yet." This goes on and on. Our minds never feel that anything high is ever high enough, or anything deep is ever deep enough. Therefore, this mind is a bottomless pit of greed.

要求的願，要懂得好好選擇。我們有很多所求，所以求願無窮，永不滿足。我們人生的苦，就是苦在多還要再多、好還要更好，這種的求。所以從前的人一句話說：「山高未是高，人心節節高。」意思就是說，這樣夠了嗎？還不夠。來，再這樣夠了嗎？還不夠。不斷不斷這個心真的是高不夠高，永遠都不夠高；深不夠深，永遠都不夠深。所以這個心是一個很無底洞的貪念。

Thus we live in indecision. Which direction should we take in our lives? How do we walk the path we have vowed to take? We are at a loss. Is this the correct path for me to choose? Is it beneficial for me? We keep standing there indecisively. However, time keeps passing by. Isn't this a waste of time?

所以因為這樣，無從選擇的人生，我們的人生到底方向要往哪裡去呢？我發願的道路要怎麼走呢？無所適從。想著我要選擇這條路，對不對？對我有沒有利益？一直在那裡無所適從。不過，光陰不斷消逝，這是不是浪費時間呢？

Before the Buddha expounded this Dharma, He had already realized the true principles of the universe. So He began by speaking the True Dharma, the Avatamasaka teachings, which described His spiritual state. But sentient beings did not have the capacity to understand it. Why? Their minds were full of greed, afflictions and discursive thoughts, so they were unable to realize this state. Thus, the Buddha had to guide them gently and patiently for over 40 years.

同樣佛陀說法，其實佛陀說法，他一覺悟了天地宇宙真理，開始就已經說真實法。因為他講《華嚴》，《華嚴》就是佛的心靈世界。不過，眾生就是根鈍，聽不懂。為什麼會根鈍呢？就是這個心貪求、煩惱、雜念很多，所以他無法去體會那個境界，所以就讓佛陀用四十多年的時間循循善誘。

Consider this span of 40-plus years. Can every person last for 40-plus years? Time keeps passing by. When we come in contact with the Buddha, can we reach him directly and comprehend the Buddha-mind? If so, then seeing the Buddha and hearing

the Dharma is not in vain, because we immediately comprehend it. However, we ordinary beings are such that we have to go through these skillful means. Yet can such skillful means really allow us realize the Dharma? How much time must be wasted in this way?

你們想，這四十幾年的時間，是不是人人都能等到四十多年呢？這時光不斷地過，能夠接觸到佛陀，是不是能夠直接就是接到佛陀，能夠體會佛心？若能體會，這樣見佛聞法就不枉然了，他就馬上能得到。不過，我們人就是這樣，要經過這種的方便法。到底這個方便法是不是能體會到？浪費了多少的光陰。

So, during this time, the Buddha began to give the Lotus teachings, which is beyond speech. To expound the Lotus Sutra without speech, He sat down and entered the state of the Samadhi of Infinite Meanings and returned to His Buddha-mind. At that moment, He wanted to eliminate the provisional, the skillful. He wanted to take back these skillful means and replace them with the True Path, so in that place, He radiated light. When He taught the Lotus Sutra without speech, it was not expressed in words, but through a spiritual state.

就是佛陀在世時，他這樣開始，「離言法華」開始說的時候。所說的「離言法華」，就是佛陀在那裡坐下來，進入他的無量義三昧的境界，回歸他的佛心，這當中要如何把「權」，就是「方便法」去除，趕快回收回來變成真實道，所以在那裡發光。其實，那時就是在「離言法華」——不是用言語說的，是心靈世界。

[At the assembly], everyone stared at each other, not knowing what was going on. Then, as the Buddha began speaking the True Dharma, 5000 people left their seats. This happened while Buddha was still there. He saw these people leave. 5000 people actually left as He began speaking about the True Path. The Buddha felt very sad. However, it was good that they left because their capacities were not yet mature, so they were not ready to accept this teaching. So, it was good that they left, and those who remained could accept these teachings.

大家在那裡面面相覷。一直到佛陀真的要講真實法時，五千人退座了。想想看，是佛在世時哦。所以佛陀看到這些人，竟然才開始要講真實道，五千人退席。佛陀心也很難過，不過，退亦佳矣。既然根機還沒成熟，還無法接受，好吧，這樣退去也好。留下來的就是能接受的人。

But could they really? Consider what the Buddha saw after all these people heard His Dharma. How many people were willing to walk the Bodhisattva-path in this world and be responsible for saving others? No one dared to stand out and say, "I will bravely take on this burden." This indecisiveness is not limited to people of the present time. Even when the Buddha was alive, when He expounded Dharma Himself, was He able to truly awaken people's minds, lead them to realize the Buddha-mind and devote themselves to humankind? Indeed, it is not very easy.

是不是就能接受了呢？我們再想到，佛陀看大家聽法之後，這個人間菩薩道，來負責拯救世間，到底有多少人呢？也是沒有人敢出來說：「我勇敢承擔。」這種無從選擇，不只是在現在的凡夫，即使佛世的時代，佛陀親自說法，是不是真正能啟發人人的心，能體會佛心，能投入人群？真的也是很簡單。

Now, let us speak of modern people and their indecisiveness. If one wants to learn Buddhism, one must choose between Hinayana and Mahayana. Does one practice to solely benefit oneself or does one seek to benefit others? People also feel indecisive about methods of spiritual practice. This is how we lose our true nature and transmigrate through cyclic existence in the Six Realms.

我們現在就說我們現在的人，就是因為無從選擇。哪怕你是學佛，是要小乘呢？或是要大乘呢？是要獨善其身，或是要兼利他人呢？同樣在修行，也是同樣無從選擇。這就是我們所以會「迷失真心，流轉六道」，在生死中流轉生死。

A slight discrepancy determines whether we go in the right or wrong direction. Boundless desires originate from insatiability. Time passes as we remain indecisive on which course to take. When our true nature is lost, we transmigrate through cyclic existence.

◎毫釐之差善惡分途，求願無窮因不滿足，無從選擇光陰消逝，迷失真心流轉生死。

This [indecision] is what we need to repent. Actually, it is not that difficult to nurture a loving heart. We do not need to make vows in a specific way; we just need to have a loving heart, which is by itself a vow to purify our minds. We did not know we were wrong. We were wrong in the past, but now we will begin to cleanse and reform ourselves and quickly change our attitude toward living. This is the right way. This is how we make a great vow.

這就是我們應該懺悔的地方。其實，沒有什麼困難，培養我們一念的愛心。我們不用如何發願，我們一念的愛心，這個願就是我們的心要清淨。錯的，不知道，過去就已經錯了，現在開始要洗心革面，要趕緊換一個人生的心態。我們人生的心態趕快換過來，這樣就是對，這就是發大願。

In our daily living, if we can nourish a loving heart, then we will make no mistakes. In Master Lian-Chi's Essay on Not Killing, there is a story called "Receive Blessings After Rebirth."

單單說在日常生活中，我們若能培養這念愛心，你時時日常生活就沒有錯誤。在蓮池大師的「戒殺文」裡，它就有這段「再生受福」的文章。

He wrote that in Suzhou City, there was a man named Wang Da-lin. He was very charitable, especially in releasing captured creatures [as an act of merit]. He greatly cherished living creatures. Sometimes, he saw children playing at capturing crickets by pouring water on the ground, or catching bugs, etc. If Wang Da-lin saw children playing with these tiny living creatures, he would kindly gather the children and explain his beliefs to them because he wanted the children to treasure all beings. He would even use money, candies, etc. to create good relationships with them so he could persuade them to not hurt other living creatures.

他說，在蘇州城有一位叫做王大林，他平時樂善好施，尤其是放生，非常地保護生靈。有時候看到孩子在玩，灌蟋蟀、抓蟲……，很多種。哪怕這麼小的生靈，孩子在玩時，這位王大林如果看到，他就很慈祥把這些孩子召來，說道理給這些孩子聽，要孩子能懂得疼惜這些生靈。甚至也會用錢，或是用糖果……種種，跟這些孩子結好緣，跟孩子們勸說，不要傷害生靈。

This is like applied education. All the children in the village liked him. All the parents and the elders were grateful to him because he was teaching their children for them. When children feel compassion and love, they naturally know to be filial. Everyone respected him.

這種像田野教育一樣，整個村莊裡的孩子都很歡喜他，所有村裡的家長、長輩等等也很感恩他，感恩他替他們教孩子，人人有慈悲、有愛心，自然就懂得孝順。這是人人所尊重的一位（善人）。

When he was 61 years old, he suddenly became gravely ill. The doctors had already told him to make his funeral preparations. At this time, he suddenly heard a voice. This very clear voice said, "Because you often released captured creatures and cherished all living beings with great loving-kindness and compassion, because you constantly persuaded others to release living creatures, the intangible merits you have accumulated will now extend your lifespan and blessings." So Wang Da-lin lived to be 97 years old, with five generations of his lineage in the same household. He passed away peacefully.

到了他六十一歲那一年，忽然間一場大病，已經醫師看了都說：「你應該要準備後事了。」在這期間，忽然間聽到一個聲音，很清楚的聲音這麼說：「因為你平時放生，大慈悲心，疼惜所有的生靈，時時勸人放生，這種慈悲無形中累積下來的功德，能讓你這輩子再延壽、延福。」所以這位王大林到了九十七歲那一年，五代同堂，無疾而終。

Remember, he was not seeking any reward. He just had those thoughts, those loving and compassionate thoughts to cherish living beings. Furthermore, he did not only do it himself, he taught everyone, from the children to the whole village. So his blessings and lifespan were prolonged. We must always consider the importance of our mindset. Therefore, we say we need to make vows and dedicate merits. We mentioned previously, "We vow to repent. We disciples and all sentient beings, since Beginningless Time, have lost our true nature and transmigrate through cyclic existence."

想想，他都不求什麼，只是那念心，那念愛心、慈悲心、疼惜生靈的心。所以他不只是自己做，他能教大家做，從孩子開始到整個村莊。所以他能得到延福、延壽。看，我們的心態多麼重要。所以我們說要發願回向，發願回向，我們前面已經說過：「志心懺悔，弟子眾等與一切眾生，從無始以來，迷失真心，流轉生死」。

We vow to repent. We disciples and all sentient beings, since Beginningless Time, have lost our true nature and transmigrate through cyclic existence.

◎志心懺悔，弟子眾等與一切眾生，從無始以來，迷失真心，流轉生死。

We have all lost our true nature and are only willing to make vows in return for things. But our mind was originally loving. Our mind was originally filled with unlimited and tremendous vows. It was filled with kindness and Great Love, which are great vows. But we have lost that state of mind, so we now transmigrate through cyclic existence. 我們都迷失了真心了，只要求、發願。其實本來的心就是愛，本來的心就是無窮盡的弘願，有愛心、大愛，那就是大願了。不過，我們的心迷失了，所以流轉生死。

The transgressions of the Six Roots are boundless and hinder us from understanding the perfect and wondrous Buddha-vehicle. All that we hope for will not come to be.

◎六根罪障無量無邊，圓妙佛乘無以開解，一切所願不得現前。

The transgressions of the Six Roots arise when greedy thoughts come in contact with the Six Dusts. Our Six Roots give rise to the Six Consciousnesses. This leads to many greedy thoughts. These greedy desires are endless, "boundless" and "hinder us from understanding the perfect and wondrous Buddha-vehicle." This vehicle points the mind to its true nature. With this perfect and wondrous Dharma, we could return to our true nature, but "we are hindered from understanding" and "all that we hope for will not come to be." We only know to seek things, and not all of these pursuits will be successful. There is an old saying, "Of 10 things, 8 or 9 will be unsatisfactory." This is because we are lost, we really ask for too much. Therefore, "all that we hope for will not come to be."

「六根罪障」就是貪心、貪念緣著六塵，所以我們的六根緣六塵起六識，所以會有很多貪念。貪的願就很多，「無量無邊」。「圓妙佛乘無以開解」，這麼直指人心見性，如此圓妙能回歸本性，這個法我們一直「無以開解」。「一切所願不得現前」，只曉得要求願，要求的願都不能事事如意。本來就說了，不如意事十有八九，因為我們迷失，我們所求的實在是太多了，所以就是「一切所願不得現前」。

Today we pay respect to the Wondrous Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra. With these roots of goodness, we openly confess our dark evils, so the boundless, grave transgressions created with the Threefold Karma in the past, present and future will all be eliminated.

◎我今禮敬妙法蓮華經，以此善根，發露黑惡，過現未來，三業所造，無邊重罪皆得消滅。

"Today we pay respect to the Wondrous Dharma Lotus Sutra." Now we have begun to receive the Wondrous Dharma Lotus Sutra. The Buddha has pointed out the True Path to seeing our true nature. This True Path is the Bodhisattva-path, so we must cherish it. When we are chanting the Lotus Sutra Preface, we bow to every word. Every word is a treasure, so we must sincerely and mindfully understand the Buddha's mindset. We cannot just recite the sutras, we need to realize whether or not we have applied it. Have we attained the state of the Buddha-mind?

「我今禮敬妙法蓮華經」。我們現在開始能得到《妙法蓮華經》，佛陀已經開始直指人心見性的真實道，這真實道無非也就是菩薩道，所以我們要很珍惜。所以我們若是拜〈法華經序〉，一字一拜，每字是寶。所以我們要很虔誠，用心深入佛陀心靈的境界。不只是誦，要去體會，體會我們做到了沒有，佛心的境界我們有沒有做到。

Therefore, whether we bow and chant the Sutra of Infinite Meanings or the Lotus Sutra, "with these roots of goodness, we openly confess our dark evils." If we really study the sutras, we will gradually nourish our roots of goodness. As the roots of goodness grow, our wisdom-life will grow. As the roots of goodness continuously grow, we will "openly confess our dark evils." This is repentance. Out of ignorance, we constantly make mistakes. These mistakes are what we need to openly repent. Once we make a mistake, we need to quickly correct it. Once we have corrected it, we do not need to be afraid of other people knowing about our mistake. This is how we can be cleansed. This

is open repentance. We dare not make the same mistakes. This is repenting what was "created in the past."

所以我們禮拜、誦持《無量義經》也好，《法華經》也好，「以此善根，發露黑惡」。我們若深入經藏裡，慢慢培養我們的善根，善根一直一直成長，這就是叫做「慧命成長」。善根不斷地成長，這樣我們就會「發露黑惡」，這叫做「懺悔」。時時，我們的無明所做、成就的錯誤，我們要不斷發露懺悔。錯都錯了，我們要趕快改過來；改過來，我們不怕人家知道我們以前的錯誤，這樣我們才能乾淨，所以叫做「發露懺悔」。已經過去了，我再也不敢犯了，所以這就是懺悔。

"Past, present and future by the Threefold Karma." This refers to the past, to what we have done, or to the incorrect, deviant or evil thoughts that arise now because we are not taking good care of our minds. Once a thought arises in the mind, we must quickly repent. So "past, present" means that the past has already happened, so whatever mistakes we make now, must be quickly terminated. As for the future, we need to quickly change the direction of our Threefold Karma. We must always speak good words with our mouths, do good deeds with our bodies, and think good thoughts with our minds. The past has already happened, so now we cannot allow our Threefold Karma to create more evil. If we commit evils again, we commit "boundless, grave transgressions." Those transgressions will be very severe. If we have reformed, then "boundless, grave transgressions will all be eliminated."

「過現未來，三業所造」。這就是都過去了，過去所做的，或是現在我們的心又沒顧好，起了一念不正確的念，或是邪念，或是惡念，只要心一起念，我們就要趕快懺悔。所以「過現」，過去就已經過去，現在有錯誤，我們要趕快終止。尤其是未來，我們的三業，我們要趕快改變方向，口要常常說好話，身要行好行，心要念好事。所以過去的就已經過去，現在我們的三業不能再造惡。我們若再造了惡，「無邊重罪」，罪就很重。所以我們若改過了，那就是「無邊重罪，皆得消滅」。

Our bodies and mind will be pure; we will eliminate delusions and obstacles, be dignified by blessings and wisdom, and seeds of purity will increase.

◎身心清淨，惑障蠲除，福智莊嚴，淨因增長。

"Our bodies and mind will be pure." Our minds will be free. Even though we have committed wrongdoings, we have admitted them all. Then no matter what others say, we will still be very free and at ease. We are not afraid of being criticized because we have admitted our mistakes. We have now corrected them all, so "our bodies and mind will be pure." Defilements and ignorance will never return, so the mind is purified and "we will eliminate delusions and obstacles." When we have completely eliminated ignorance, we are naturally "dignified by blessings and wisdom and seeds of purity will increase." Good causes and conditions will keep appearing. Good people are drawn together and will help each other succeed. Therefore, seeds of purity will increase.

「身心清淨 惑障蠲除」。我們的心很自在，雖然我過去曾做錯事，不過，我都說出來了，說過了。人家再怎麼說，我也同樣很自在，我不怕人批評我，因為我自己發露過，我現在已經都改好了，所以「身心清淨」。再也不會有污染、無明再回來，所以已經心都清淨

。「惑障蠲除」，我們的無明都完全掃除了，自然就「福智莊嚴，淨因增長」，好的因緣不斷一直來，好人與好人一起，彼此成就，所以清淨的淨因增長。

What we see will not defile our minds. Everything we hear will be good words. All the people we are with will be good people. Even if someone wants to harm or tempt us, we will be surrounded by beneficial friends. Perhaps with this greater strength we can transform those without right views and bring them in to join us. So, in our daily living, we vow to thoroughly nourish all good thoughts and actions, and purify our minds.

我們所看的，沒有什麼會污染我們的心，所聽的都是好話，所與大家一起的都是好人。即使有對我們不軌，或是要來誘引我們，我們周圍也有很多的善知識，說不定我們的力量更大，也能轉變了另外不正見的人，也會讓我們度進來。所以，我們發願就是要徹底，在日常生活中培養好我們的心念，舉止動作一切，我們都要把我們的心淨化。

Once we purify our minds, we can attain even what we do not seek. This natural way of living benefits humankind and can also be used to educate others. This is a "natural and uncontrived vow, which is a great vow." Everyone, please always be mindful.

淨化了我們的心，就是不求的願同樣也自得。因為，自然的生活就是利益人群，自然的生活就是在教育人群，所以這就是「願而無願，就是弘願」。所以人人要多用心。