

January 18, 2014 6:00 PM Saturday (Pacific)

The Lotus Sutra [Dharma Nature is Everlasting and Endless]

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## Lotus Sutra Episode 9

### Dharma Nature is Everlasting and Endless

時空無終竟  
萬物法性本具延綿  
本來就是  
法本無法可說  
是謂真空妙有

*There is no end to time and space. The Dharma nature of all things is inherent and lasting. It has always been so. There is essentially no Dharma to speak of; this is true emptiness and wondrous existence.*

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宇宙之間，廣無邊際，尤其是天地萬物，有物就有法，有多少的東西，就有多少包含在裡面的法。

The universe is endless and boundless. When it comes to all things in the world, where there is an object, there is Dharma. The number of things that exist equals the amount of Dharma, which is encompassed within them.

所以說起來，「法」，事事物物無不都是法，而且這是無始來今，真的很淵博，源頭無法去測量，可見無始以來，我們佛法一直說「無始」，沒有一個起點的源頭可以去找，其實未來也沒有一個終點的停止，這就是浩瀚無疆界。

So when we speak of "Dharma", we can find Dharma in everything and this has been true from Beginningless Time until now, so this is truly profound and truly understanding its source is impossible. In the Buddha-Dharma, we speak of Beginningless Time because no starting point can be found. As for the future, there is no ending for the future, either. That is the vastness and boundlessness of it.

所以我們要知道，「時空無終竟」，「萬物法本具綿延」，所有的法，它的性本來就是具有，不斷一直延綿下去。

So we need to know, "There is no end to time and space, the Dharma-nature of all things is inherent and lasting." The nature of all things has always existed and will last continuously.

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光是說我們的日常生活，無法缺少的糧食，這麼簡單，那個穀物，就是說米，稻子變稻穀，稻穀變米，米就是人在食用的，其實，這粒稻穀，它有無窮盡的日月，它的法性本具綿延，還是年年月月不斷地，延續下去的生命，這就是五穀雜糧它的法性。

Even in our daily living, in the foods we cannot live without. It is this simple. Take a grain like rice, which came from the seedling, that turned to unmilled rice, to rice. Rice is what people eat. In fact, this grain of rice is derived from endless generations of rice; its Dharma-nature has been passed down month by month, year by year, and its life will continue, everlasting. This is the Dharma-nature of the grains.

只要留下它的種子，「一」生無量，無量從「一」生，這就是它綿延的本性，這個物種的本性，就是不斷綿延，所以，本來就是，本來就是這樣。

As long as there is still a seed, then "one" gives rise to infinite seeds and infinite seeds arise from "one". This is its everlasting nature. The nature of all species is to extend continuously. So this has always been the case.

法，法法相傳，本性綿延，所以，法，本無「法」可說，到底有什麼法可再說呢？一粒穀種難道有法，有，這粒穀種大家都知道，就是要供應給人類，人類沒有五穀雜糧，我們能夠活嗎？不能，無法活下去，就是大地萬物供應給人類，大地萬物更多，要如何去發芽，要如何讓它成就，那當然就會有因、緣，它才能結果，才能夠供應大家，這無不都是妙法。

Dharma has been passed down, so Dharma is beyond description. What more is there to say about Dharma? Is there actually Dharma in a seed? Yes, there is. We all know this seed provides humankind with food. Without grains, can humankind survive? No, we cannot survive. The land provides humans with all things. To increase the number of things, how do we make the seed sprout? How do we help it bear fruit? There has to be causes and conditions for there to be fruit, enough to supply us all. This is all wondrous Dharma.

所以說，「法本無法可說」，在我們的日常生活中，這些東西有含著，那麼深奧的法種在，我們沒有把它當作是什麼法，只是這樣地在生活，就是這樣地在使用，所以哪有什麼可說的？

So it is said, "There is essentially no Dharma to speak of." In our daily living, everything encompasses profound Dharma-seeds. We do not treat them as Dharma, we just use them in our living. So what is there to discuss?

不欠缺的時候，很富有的時候，什麼都不知道，因為這樣地在用，就是在循環，不斷地循環，不斷地供應，不斷人類的富有，所以富有的時候，這些事情每樣都不知道，不用再去說它，那這樣哪有法可談呢？

When we do not feel lacking, when we feel abundant, we are not aware of them because we have been using these things continuously. This is like a cycle. These constant cycles provide a constant supply and a source of constant wealth for men. So when we are rich in resources, we never pay attention and we never discuss them. So what Dharma is there to speak of?

但是，我們學佛者，我們要窮因究果，這個因緣果報怎麼來，我們連這個物種的來源，我們都要知道，何況說人種的來源？人既然來到人間，萬物在供應給人類的生命，人類為什麼在萬物中起煩惱，為了這些萬物起爭端，起了爭端再來造因，又再牽引著那個緣來，這樣「因緣果報、果報因緣」，這樣不斷綿延，這使得人間，變成很複雜。

But we are Buddhist practitioners, we must exhaustively explore cause and effect, explore how these karmic retributions came about. We need to know the origin of all things, especially of humankind. Humans come to this world and all things support our living, so why do we suffer from afflictions? We create conflicts over all things, then conflicts create more causes, which then bring about more conditions. So "causes bring effects, effects create because." this is an endless cycle. This makes the world very complicated.

這麼複雜，眾生就是從起惑造業開始，心中無明，開始起業，我們若無明起惑了，這就是叫做無明，就是因為無明起，從那個惑而開始。

Complications arise when sentient beings become deluded and create karma. Unenlightened thoughts give rise to karma. If we are Unenlightened and become deluded, then we are ignorant. Because ignorance arises from those delusions,

所以道理不分明，互相就有對立，這樣要怎麼辦？所以，兩千多年前，印度的悉達多太子出世了，他的出世，跟我們都是同樣的生活，同樣在萬物法性本具綿延中，同樣有父母，他出生在皇宮，皇宮中有奴隸，就是賤民，所以貴族和賤民，貴賤分別、富貴分別，所以在那之間，這位太子才會起了一念心，所以才會去追求。

the principles are unclear and therefore we antagonize each other. Then what can be done? So over 2000 years ago, prince Siddhartha was born in India. His birth and life were similar to ours, for the dharma-nature of all things. He had parents, too. He was born in the palace. There were slaves in the palace, who were untouchables. Between the nobles and the untouchables, there was a distinction in status and wealth.

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人間為什麼人與人的之間，有這樣的分別呢？加上了生老病死，這種人生無法可避免的苦，這樣的享受，是不是能長期永遠呢？哪怕物資能長期永遠，可是人會生老病死，還是在轉變，何況說萬物，也是短暫無常。

That is the reason a thought occurred to the prince to seek the answer to why such differences exist between humans in this world. He also wondered about inevitable sufferings, such as birth, aging, illness, and death. Would worldly pleasures last forever? Even if an object could last forever, humans still experience birth, aging, illness and death, therefore everything is constantly changing. Moreover, material objects are also temporary and impermanent.

這些很多矛盾中，他才去要如何突破了，內含的那種性，這種到底是綿延不斷的萬物，或者是短暫生滅的物資，這個看得到的相，為什麼會不斷地在變呢？哪怕是一朵花、一枝草。

Therefore, with all these contradictions, he wanted to explore and penetrate their intrinsic nature. Will all things last continuously or do they have a limited existence? Why do their visible forms change constantly? Consider a flower or a blade of grass.

花，本來是不是有呢？還沒有開花之前，它就是含苞，還沒有含苞以前，只是有花草的苗，花草的苗還沒有之前，就只是一粒種子，這粒種子的過去，也是那朵花開花之後，結的籽再留下來的，到底是種子先有呢？或者是這株花的花草先有，到底這個東西的，本性循環怎麼來，所以要去追究，大萬物它原來那個本性。

has the flower always existed? Before it blossomed, it existed as a bud. Before it was a bud, it was only a seeding, but before the seeding existed, it was only a seed. This seed existed because a flower blossomed and then bore this seed. Did the seed come first or did the flower come first? How did this thing's inherent cycle come about? So we need to explore the inherent nature of all things in the world, the dharma of all things and the cycle of Dharma.

萬物的法，法的循環，法有法體，法有法用，這法體，這個真體起用，這種，它就有這個相，所以所有的「現相」開始，它就有無常，就有生滅，有相就有生滅，法的本源是無生無滅，就是無窮極的、無終止的，這叫做「性」。

The Dharma has its embodiment and its uses. When the Dharma-embodiment is put into use, it takes on a form. So from the beginning, Manifested Forms are impermanent; they will arise and cease. Anything with form will arise and cease. The source of the Dharma will not arise or cease. It is ultimately limitless and endless. This is called "nature".

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因為有這個「性」，所以它有「體」，有體就有相，所以有相開始，它就是有生滅，叫做生滅相。

Because there is a "nature", there is an "embodiment". Where there is an embodiment, there is a form. So when a form begins to exist, it will arise and cease. This is the form of arising and ceasing.

其實所有的生滅相，都有具足了它本具的法性，就像我們人，生老病死，如何來出生，常常在說，跟這對父母有緣，緣，結來的，它自然就有那個果，這個果已經成就了，跟這一對的父母有緣，就在這個家庭出生，這是叫做「依報」，依著這一對父母的因緣，我出生，報生在這個家庭，這叫做「依報」。

Indeed, all the stages of arising and ceasing express their inherent Dharma-nature. Consider humans' birth, aging, illness and death. How did we come to be born? We often say that we have an affinity with our parents. Once we created these conditions, there was naturally this effect. When this karmic fruit ripened, our affinity with our parents led us to be born into this family. This is Circumstantial Retribution. Based on the causes and conditions of our parents, we were born into our family as retribution. This is Circumstantial Retribution.

但是我們人人仍還有「正報」，雖然我在貧窮的家庭出生，不過我過去有造福，說不定我會應著其他的緣，還有其他的緣再牽引出去，一輩子我們的人生多變化，所以還沒有一定，不是生下來我在富有的家庭，我永遠永遠就是富有。

But we also experience Direct Retribution. Though we may have been born into a poor family, if we created blessings in the past, perhaps other karmic connections will guide us out of those conditions. In our lifetime we experience many changes, so nothing is definite. Even if we are born into a rich family, we may not remain wealthy forever.

記得很多年前，菲律賓有一對姊妹，她們出生在一個，很貧窮的家庭，這兩個女孩子，連體連在一起，就是因為有緣，她們生命中的貴人出現了，就是慈濟人，這個個案，報給慈濟人，在這個家庭出現，將這一對姊妹牽引來臺灣，臺灣有慈濟的醫院，不管醫院的設備，或是我們的醫師，就這樣大家結合起來的，這個緣，為這一對的姊妹，將她們割開。

I remember many years ago, there was a pair of sisters from the Philippines. They were born to a very poor family. These two girls were conjoined. Because of their affinities, benefactors appeared in their lives. Those were Tzu Chi volunteers. This case was reported to Tzu Chi volunteers, so they went to meet the family. Then they brought the sisters to Taiwan. Tzu Chi has hospitals in Taiwan. Everything from the equipment in the hospital to our doctors was brought together by this karmic connection to help physically separate these sisters.

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她們的肝有相連，心臟幸好有二個，所以用了很多人的力量、精神、智慧、物資，醫院的設備、儀器，許多的因緣來合在一起，為這樣姊妹將她們分割。

Their livers were linked, but luckily they had two hearts. So we used a lot of manpower, attention, wisdom, materials, hospital facilities and devices; many causes and conditions converged so the twins could be surgically separated.

很長的時間照顧她們，幾個月後這兩姊妹，開始能過各人各人的生活，在這裡復健，讓她們兩人能各人走各人的路，各人吃各人的飯，各人玩各人的玩具，直到(出院時)，一個人抱一個孩子，回去菲律賓。

We took care of them for a long time. After several months, these sisters started leading separate lives. After physical rehabilitation here, they could each walk on their own, eat their own meals, and play with their own toys. When they left the hospital, they were carried out separately back to the Philippines.

所以這分緣既牽起來了，慈濟人將他們從深山，搬到菲律賓的都市，同樣和，慈濟人，住在很就近的地方，像慈濟人的家庭，在照顧這個家庭，讓她們的父親有工作可做，有工可作，還有母親也能投入慈濟，這兩個孩子，在慈濟的環境中成長，這誰想得到呢？

Since this karmic connection was created, Tzu Chi volunteers moved them from the mountains to a city in the Philippines. They lived close to the Tzu Chi volunteers, who treated them like family. Volunteers helped their father find a job, and their mother eventually joined Tzu Chi. These two children grew up in the Tzu Chi environment. Who would have ever imagined this?

整個家庭，只有這一樣連體嬰，這樣的因緣，改變了她們的家庭的生活，改變了這一對父母的工作方向，改變了這對的連體嬰，她們未來的命運，這真是不可思議。

There is no history of conjoined twins in the family. These causes and conditions changed their family's lives, affected their parents' jobs, and changed the fate of these conjoined twins. This was truly inconceivable.

所以，這種的法性，真的是綿延不斷，到底這一對姊妹，連體嬰(已分割)，未來她們的人生又是如何？既然因緣誘引來了，既然同時同日生，但是，是不是未來如何，不知道，這個「不知道」是什麼？就是她們過去的劇本。 So this kind of Dharma-nature is indeed everlasting. Now that these conjoined sisters have been separated, what will their lives be in the future? Though causes and conditions brought them here, though they were born on the same day, will their futures be the same? It is unknown. What is unknown? What scripts they wrote in their past lives.

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我常常這樣說，雖然她們連體來生，但是各奔前程，不一定同樣的命運，既然將她們分開，仍有這個緣，來這裡，讓我們幫她們分開，但是未來的人生，就要看她們過去，各人所造的業是什麼。

I often say that though they were born conjoined, they will go their separate ways and may not share the same fate. Since we separated them physically, that meant they had the conditions to come here so we could help them. But as for their future, that depends on their past, the karma they created respectively.

所以有依報，共同來依報，但是還有她們未來的「正報」，這叫做因緣果報。

So there is Circumstantial Retribution, which they shared. But in the future, they will face Direct Retribution. This is known as karmic retribution and this is the Dharma.

這就是法，這種看不到的法，所以是綿延不斷，你們和我，我們過去有緣，所以我們才能每天生活在一起，我們共同的方向，那就是「靜思勤行道」，我們每天早上能靜思清澄，在這個地方，人人的內心要來培養一朵蓮花，妙蓮花，我們要在這個五濁惡世中，「慈濟人群菩薩道」，我們要投入「慈濟人群」中，來行菩薩道，這都是我們過去有緣，我們才能共同一個志願，發這樣的心來，若沒有那個因、緣，我們哪能有今日在這個地方，互相來淨化，互相來面對，產生了無量數的法，沒有你們大家要聽法，哪有我能說法呢？

This kind of intangible Dharma is therefore everlasting. You and I created a karmic connection in the past, so now we live together every day. Our common course is "Jing Si, a path of diligent practice." Every morning we meditate and clear our minds. In this place, we all nurture a wondrous lotus in our heart, a wondrous lotus flower. In the Evil World of Five Turbidities, "Tzu Chi is the Bodhisattva-path in the world." We need to join Tzu Chi and go into the world to walk the Bodhisattva-path. Because we have this past karmic connection, we can make the same vows and develop this aspiration. Without these karmic connections, today we would not have this opportunity here to purify each other, to interact with each other, and create infinite Dharma. If you were not here to hear the Dharma, why would I be teaching it today?

所以也就是互相來鞭策，聽了以後，我們就要來鞭策自己，自己來想「聞、思、修」來想今日師父說的，對啊！這朵花的源頭怎麼來的？是花的種子先有，還是整株花先有？是含苞先有，或者是...？我們去追究，哪怕是一株草、一朵花，你們去出坡去菜(園)，你們撒下的種子，這株菜的種子，若沒有土、沒有水，隔離這些緣，這粒種子它能夠發生什麼，都沒有，就只是一粒種子，所以說起來，法性很奇妙，必定要有很多因緣和合，它這個性不斷都是存在。

So we mutually motivate each other. And after hearing this, we need to motivate ourselves. We need to listen, contemplate, and practice. Reflect on what I said today.

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What is the origin of this flower? Did the seed come first, or did the flower come first? Or did the bud come first? Perhaps we need to explore the blade of grass or the flower. When we work in the vegetables garden, we sow seeds. If a vegetables seed did not have soil and water, if it was isolated from these conditions, what can it produce? Nothing. It remains a seed. So the Dharma-nature is wondrous, it requires the convergence of many causes and conditions. This nature is continuous and everlasting.

所以，法，本無法可說，很多很多的法，因緣果報觀，我們一定要清楚，這都是在法性裡面，人人生下來本具，人都是都有一個本性，與佛同等，為什麼說了這麼多的話，我們還無法成佛呢？就是因為因緣果報讓我們的心，很多煩惱去除不掉，我們這個心還沒有澄清，所以蓮花還沒成長。

So essentially, there is no Dharma to speak of. We must be very clear on all Dharma and the concept of causes, conditions effects and retributions, which are all part of Dharma-nature. We are all born with an intrinsic nature, one equal to the Buddha's. Why have we not attained Buddhahood after the Buddha explained so much? Because karmic retributions prevent our minds from eliminating afflictions. Our mind is not yet clear, so the lotus flower has not manifested.

所以各位，法，本無法可說，是謂真空妙有，真的是真空妙有，這在法性裡，它沒有因緣成就以前，它的法性還是在，只是要等待因緣成熟的時候，法相，這個「相」就會生出來，有了相，形象、萬物，它就會循環不斷。

So everyone, there is essentially no Dharma to speak of and this is true emptiness and wondrous existence. True emptiness and wondrous existence are embedded in Dharma-nature. Before a certain cause and condition manifest, the Dharma-nature already exists. It was waiting for causes and conditions to ripen, then its Dharma-form will appear. Once this form begins to exist its appearance will arise and cease, which is the continuous cycle of all things.

各位，學佛真的是「法」很深，我們若要知道，我們就要多用心。

Everyone, as we learn Buddhism, we see how profound the Dharma is. If we want to understand, we must always be mindful.