



Untying the Knots Through Bowing Repentance

通過拜懺打開心結

A Dharma Talk by Bhikshu Jin Xiu during the Ten Thousand Buddhas Jeweled Repentance at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on April 22, 2024

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Everyone here knows that we, as human beings, are not perfect; how can we be expected to keep on living without transgression? Like illness, which everyone has to go through, transgression is also part and parcel of human life. If we were to look at our lives, we would notice that rarely does a day go by when we don't do anything wrong or make mistakes. As mundane people, we almost constantly violate body, speech, or mind precepts. An average person's life consists of lying, stealing, cheating, and other unwholesome deeds. Even if we are said to have achieved some control over our bodies and mouths, we continue to violate the precepts through improper thoughts such as jealousy, anger, envy, resentment, or greed.

This brief statement above is not meant to encourage bad behavior. Its primary purpose is to discuss the facts of human existence. To be human is to make mistakes. When we realize that we have made mistakes, we should try our best to correct ourselves and constantly remind ourselves

我們都聽過，「人非聖賢，孰能無過」。就好像人人都會生病，人人也都會犯錯。如果我們檢視自己的生活，就會發現自己在日常生活中很少不犯錯。我們經常犯身、語、意的戒。凡夫的生活中充滿妄語、偷盜、欺騙和其他種種過失。即使我們認為自己的身業、口業守得不錯，但我們的內心仍然有些犯戒的念頭，像是嫉妒、憤怒、羨慕、怨恨或貪婪等。

以上所說並非鼓勵大家為惡，主要目的是討論人存在的既定事實——生而為人，就會

not to repeat the same mistake. Therefore, we should clarify that transgressions should be understood and corrected rather than fixated on. Chan masters often say that we should never fear any thoughts. What we should fear, instead, is entertaining an evil thought or, worse, acting on it. Constantly watching our thoughts is fundamental to the successful practice of Buddhism. Doing so will prevent us from the tendency to allow untoward thoughts to grow into the demons of evil intentions.

An ancient master said that if our offenses are not heavy, we will not be born in this suffering world that we call home. If we fail to repent of our past offenses at this moment, which we have accumulated over the ages, we can forget about the idea of obtaining liberation; instead, we will constantly be burdened with troubles and worries. Living beings are bogged down by heavy offenses and confused by emotion. We people have different opinions about retribution.

Some people believe that retributions correspond to the evil deeds they have done in the past, with no possibility of escape. Some people think retributions are not fixed and can be repented, but they need to learn how to do so or have someone to advise them. Some people know they should repent for their past offenses, but for unknown reasons, they never do so. They wait until something unfortunate happens to them, and only then will they repent, but it will be too late. Some people clearly understand the importance of repentance and reform, so without delay, they repent daily to take that load off their backs. Having said this, which category do we belong to?

When we wake up in the morning, and after cleaning ourselves, the best thing to do first is to repent sincerely in front of the Buddha or Bodhisattva before we think about what to drink or eat or check our phones to see what is happening in our wild world. Since we have not really seen or heard the outside world yet, it is easier to concentrate on our repentance. Do this daily, and afterward, you may continue your daily practice, such as reciting mantras or the Buddha's name. You may either bow in repentance, recite verses of repentance, the *Repentance Sutra*, or do them all. The Venerable Master encouraged us to recite the following verse of repentance daily and as many times as possible. This verse allows us to repent our offenses, which we have accumulated through limitless eons. The verse says:

*For all the bad karma created in the past,
Based upon beginningless greed, hatred, and stupidity,*

犯錯。當我們意識到自己有過，就應該努力修正，不斷提醒自己「不犯二過」。因此，我們應該清楚，過失應該被檢討、改正，然後放下。禪師常說：「不怕念起，只怕覺遲。」時時觀照自己的念頭，在佛教修行中是很重要的基礎，能止惡念，防惡行。

古德說：「業不重，不生娑婆。」我們卻把這個苦難的世界當成「家」。如果我們現在不去懺悔長久積累的惡業，就無法得到解脫，只會不斷地為煩惱所擾、為業所牽、為情所困。人們對果報的看法不盡相同。

有些人，尤其是非佛教徒，相信果報是不可轉的定業，源自過去自己的不善行。有些則認為，果報並非定業，是可以懺悔的；但卻不知如何懺悔，也缺乏善知識教導。有些明知自己應該反省過去的錯，但不知為何，沒能好好懺悔，直到業報現前，後悔莫及。有些人深知懺悔、改變定業的重要性，每天兢兢業業地拜懺消業。以上四種類型，可以思考一下自己是屬於哪一類。

當我們晨起漱洗後，在我們準備飲食、拿起手機與這個世界接軌前，最好能先在佛菩薩面前真誠懺悔。因為我們還沒看到或聽到外頭的喧擾，更容易專注自省。倘若天天如此，或者懺悔之後接著作每日的功課，例如持咒、稱念佛號、拜懺、誦懺悔偈或《悔過經》，甚至全部都作。上人鼓勵我們每天盡可能多誦懺悔偈，這首偈能幫助我們懺悔無量劫所積累的罪業。偈頌如下：

往昔所造諸惡業，
皆由無始貪瞋癡；
從身語意之所生，
一切我今皆懺悔。

*And born of body, mouth, and mind,
I now repent and reform.*

Someone may doubt the effectiveness of bowing. Besides tiring our legs and aching our bodies, is it true that bowing will eradicate all our offenses created in the past? We are not enlightened sages and cannot see anything beyond our eyes. But we should believe and trust the Venerable Master's words. He says, "There is infinite merit and virtue in bowing to the Buddhas. Bowing before the Buddhas can eradicate offenses as numerous as the Ganges' sands. If you bow to the Buddhas, you can cancel as many offenses as grains of sand in the Ganges River."

We are now living in an age where true principles are seldom spoken and practiced, while demonic principles are widely and easily spread and practiced. Human values are slowly disappearing, good conditions are challenging to create, and evil deeds are easy to perform. We are also firmly attached to the five pleasures, and they make us lose control of ourselves; they usually end up as our boss. These conditions will make our karmic obstacles grow deeper and deeper, and no one knows when they will stop. If we fail to repent of our offenses, the offenses will follow us and make us fall, and it is not easy to rise again. Human beings are said to be bogged down by karmic obstacles and offenses, and if we fail to make an effort to repent, there is no other direction we can take to free ourselves. To become enlightened and attain the Way, you must repent your karmic offenses. If you fail to repent your offenses, you can't attain the Way and become enlightened.

We are fully aware that for each bad karma we create, we have to undergo the corresponding retribution when the condition has ripened. It is only a matter of time. There is a verse that says:

*Even in a hundred thousand eons,
The karma you create does not perish.
When the conditions come together,
It would help if you still underwent the retribution yourself.*

These verses remind us not to forget to repent of all our offenses in front of the Buddha daily. No matter how minor the offense is, as long as it is following you, you must undergo appropriate retribution when the condition is suitable. This matter should not be taken lightly, as it is excruciating when our karmic obstacles strike at us.

A renowned Chinese monk from the Tang Dynasty, Master Cheng Guan, explained that bowing reduces pride, teaches us respect, and increases our goodness. Bowing awakens these qualities within, affecting

有人可能會對拜懺的效果有所懷疑——拜懺除了勞腿痠身之外，真能消除我們過去所造的罪障嗎？我們不是開悟的聖人，我們的眼睛看不見實體以外的因果。但我們應該相信上人，他說，「佛前頂禮，罪滅河沙，你在佛前拜拜，你的罪業消滅有恒河沙那麼多。這是拜佛的無量功德。」

我們生在一個真理少人宣講、實踐，但邪法卻非常盛行的年代。人性的價值逐漸衰微，善因難聚，惡緣易成。我們無法把持，沉溺於五欲，認其為主。惡緣使我們造的罪越積越深，不知何時才能停止。如果我們不懺悔這些過錯，業就會跟著我們，讓我們墮落，就不容易出離。我們很容易被業障所擾，除了努力懺悔，沒有其他方法能得到解脫。因此，要想開悟證果，先懺前愆。前愆不懺，道不可得。

我們深知，自己犯的每個過失，當因緣成熟時，都會受到相應的果報，只是時間早晚而已。有首偈頌就說：

假使百千劫，所作業不亡。
因緣會遇時，果報還自受。

這些偈頌提醒我們不要忘記每天在佛菩薩面前懺悔我們所有的過失。無論過失有多小，只要跟著你，當因緣成熟時，你都不得不接受相應的果報。這種情況不該被我們輕視，因為當我們的業障襲來時，會令我們感到非常痛苦。

中國唐代高僧澄觀大師認

our conscious state and view of ourselves and our places in the world. This ancient description precisely describes the effects of bowing. Master Cheng Guan considers bowing a medicine, an antidote for pride. It also teaches respect because when we bow, we are physically down on the ground, which allows a feeling of reverence to emerge in our hearts. Bowing increases goodness because the self shrinks. Things we do with a reduced sense of self (and we are not talking about low self-esteem but things we do without our big egos in the middle) tend to turn out better. Bowing is the first of the ten practices recommended by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

We should vow to repent all our offenses, which will lighten the loads on our backs. Since these things are no longer nagging at us, our minds will be peaceful and feel lighter. When we bow to the Buddha in repentance, we are essentially apologizing for the mistakes we have made in the past, and we vow not to make those mistakes again. The karma of killing is not easy to repent; only through the Buddha's assistance can it be sorted out. We can avoid strange illnesses that hurt us badly only if we repent.

With our sincere repentance, we wish that the kind and compassionate Buddhas will shine their pure light upon our bodies. And in doing so, it will remove all our karmic obstacles and reveal our pure nature. ❀

為，禮佛可以折服我慢，起恭敬心，增長善根。拜佛可以喚醒我們的自性，意識到自己和法界同為一體。他的論點精準地描述拜佛法門。澄觀大師認為禮佛是一帖良藥，能治慢心。同時，讓我們起敬心。因為當我們禮拜時，五體投地，能讓人生出恭敬心。拜佛能長養善根，減少我執。

降低我相並非自貶，而是不看重「自我」，居於中道。因此，「禮敬諸佛」在普賢菩薩十大行願中列居第一。

我們各位都應該發願，要懺悔自己的罪障，如此可以減輕我們心中的負擔。當我們不再被業力所纏，心就能趨於平靜，也能感到比較輕鬆。我們在佛前拜懺，就是為過去所犯的錯道歉，並發願不再犯。殺業是很不容易懺悔的，只有透過佛力加持才能解決。唯有懺悔，才能免於怪病找上門。

祈願我們真心懺悔後，佛光普照我們，讓我們業障消除，現出清淨的自性。❀

「跏趺坐」又叫「金剛坐」，又叫「須彌坐」，又叫「蓮花坐」。那麼這一跏趺坐能生一切的正定，能生一切的正受；從這個跏趺坐，能產生百千萬億那麼多的三昧門。怎麼叫「金剛坐」呢？因為它堅固，能降魔；所謂「降服天魔，制諸外道。」它以靜勝動，以定勝亂，這種定力超過一切魔王的法術。你能結上跏趺坐，常常如如不動、了了常明，自然就會生出一種楞嚴大定來；這種大定是從金剛心生出來的，所以叫「金剛坐」。為什麼叫「蓮花坐」？因為你結這個跏趺坐，猶如蓮花一樣的，也是常常能坐在蓮花上面，所以叫「蓮花坐」。為什麼叫「須彌坐」呢？因為這個坐是最高的，大而無外，小而無內，盡虛空、法界充滿這種光明。你看看！每一位佛那雙腿都是常常結跏趺坐的，那些個菩薩也是常常結跏趺坐；你看觀世音菩薩現大丈夫像，也都是結跏趺坐的。

——摘自宣公上人《華嚴經淺釋》十定品第二十七

The full-lotus posture is called the Vajra, the Sumeru, or the Lotus posture. The full-lotus posture gives rise to proper concentration and can produce all proper receptions. Hundreds of thousands of ten thousand kotis of doors of samadhi come forth from the full lotus posture. Why is it called the Vajra posture? Because it is solid. It can subdue the demons. It can subdue the heavenly demons and those of the heterodox paths. If you are able to sit in full lotus very naturally, you will be able to give rise to the Great Shurangama Samadhi. This great samadhi comes forth from the Vajra mind. So, a full lotus is also called a Vajra jeweled posture. Why is it called lotus posture? Because when you sit in full lotus, it is as though you have entered a lotus flower. It is as though you are sitting on top of a lotus flower. That's lotus posture. It is also called the Sumeru posture. This posture is the most lofty.

—An Excerpt from Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's Commentary on Chapter Twenty-Seven, "The Ten Samadhis," of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*