



菩提田
BODHI FIELD

An Essay in Support of Rebuilding Nanxun Ultimate Bliss Temple's Liberating Life Pond

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戒殺放生之事，淺而易見。戒殺放生之理，深而難明。

若不明其理，縱能行其事，其心決不能至誠惻怛。其福田利益，亦隨其心量而致成微淺。

倘遇不知者阻誹，遂可被彼所轉，而一腔善心，隨即消滅者有之。

While it is not difficult to cherish life and release captive animals, the principles behind are profound and esoteric.

If we do not understand the principles, then even though we may superficially perform the action, we will never embody the required sincerity, dedication, and compassion. Such shallow mindedness weakens our merit and prevents us from deriving the full benefits of liberating life.

Moreover, without understanding the reasons for liberating life, we may become doubtful or retreat from our initial virtuous resolve whenever ignorant people criticize or slander the practice. Unfortunately such is often the case.



以故不避繁詞，用申其義。俾物類同沐慈恩，人倫各培福祉。

以懇到之深仁，滅自他之殺報。同臻壽域，共樂天年。尚祈以此功德，迴向西方。則永出輪迴，高超三界，為彌陀之弟子，作海眾之良朋矣。閱者幸注意焉。

原夫水陸眾生，一念心性，直下與三世諸佛，無二無別。但以宿惡業力，障蔽妙明，不能顯現，淪於異類。遂致知識陋劣，除求食避死之外，了無所知。

譬如大寶銅鏡，經劫蒙塵。不唯毫無光明，即彼銅體，亦不顯現，直同廢物。忽遇智人，知是寶鏡，具有照天照地無邊光明。遂日事磨礱，初則略露鏡體，次則漸發光明。

及乎磨之至極，則照天照地之光，全體顯現。無智之人，方始貴重，視為至寶。須知此光，鏡本自具，非從磨得。雖復自具，倘無磨礱之緣，從劫至劫，亦無發光之日。一切人天六道眾生心性，悉皆如是。

由無始來，惑業障蔽，不能顯發本具妙明，迷背真性，造生死業。

merits toward Pure Land rebirth — transcendence beyond the three realms of *samsara* — to become disciples of Amitabha immersed in the virtuous fellowship of the Lotus Sea Assembly. May all readers take heed of what I say here.

The myriad beings of land and sea fundamentally share the same nature of the Buddhas of past, present and future—there is no difference. However, such beings' accumulated evil karma from past lifetimes shrouds their innate brightness and wisdom from admitting so they inhabit animal forms. They are forced into a life of ignorance, concerned only with survival and feeding themselves, unable to do anything else like a bejeweled bronze mirror encased in centuries of grime and dust which neither appears to be valuable nor gleams even under a bright sun. Only when a wise person, seeing its true value, polishes and restores it, will it once again shine brightly.

At the beginning, perhaps only the mirror's physical form may be revealed, but once thoroughly polished, it will shine boundlessly again. Then regular people will recognize it as treasure.

We must understand that the mirror's inherent ability to shine is not because it was polished, but without doing so, it would never emit light again. The inherent natures of sentient beings, from the human to heavenly realms, are similar. Their innate brightness remains shrouded by past evil karma and ignorance, perpetuating their existence within *samsara*.

Shakyamuni Buddha understood that sentient beings' innate natures do not differ from that of the Buddhas, and spoke Dharma in accordance with the differing inclinations of various beings. He helped all to cultivate the Dharma of *silā*, *samadhi* and *prajna*, allowing them to eventually cease delusion and rediscover their innate blessing and perfect wisdom, and attain the true Dharma-body. He also caused worldly people to make vows of mercy and

Thus, this essay explores in detail the principles behind liberating life to expound this Dharma allowing myriad beings to accrue merit and good fortune and bathe in the Buddha's benevolent compassion, wisdom and grace.

Once profound and sincere compassion dissolves everyone's killing karma, we shall enjoy long and peaceful lives. Moreover, I pray that all will dedicate their

大覺世尊，知諸眾生一念心性，與佛同儔。因茲種種方便，隨機說法。普令修習戒定慧道，以期斷惑業而復本有，圓福慧以證法身。又令世人發慈悲心，戒殺放生。

良以我與一切眾生，皆在輪迴之中。從無始來展轉相生，展轉相殺。彼固各各皆為我之父母，兄弟，姊妹，兒女，我亦各各皆為彼之父母，兄弟，姊妹，兒女。

彼固頻頻由惡業力，或於人中，或於異類，受我殺戮。我亦由惡業力，或於人中，或於異類，受彼殺戮。

久經長劫，相生相殺，了無底止。凡夫不知，如來洞見。不思則已，思之則不勝慚愧悲憫矣。

我今幸承宿世福善，生於人道。固宜解怨釋結，戒殺放生。令彼一切有生命者，各得其所。又為念佛迴向淨土，令得度脫。

縱彼業重，未能即生，我當仗此慈善功德，決祈臨終往生西方。既往生已，即得超凡入聖，了生脫死，永出輪迴，漸證佛果矣。

且愛物放生，古聖先賢，皆行此事。故書有鳥獸魚鱉咸若之文，而文王澤及枯骨，況有知覺之物哉。

至於簡子放鳩，子產畜魚，隨侯濟蛇，楊寶救雀。此固聖賢一視同仁之心，尚不知其蠢動含靈，皆具佛性。

展轉升沈，互為怨親，及將來決定成佛等義。

迨至大教東來，三世因果，及生佛心性平等無二之理，大明於世。凡大聖大賢，無不以戒殺放生，為挽殺劫以培福果，息刀兵而樂天年之基址。

compassion, to cease killing and liberate life.

Living beings have been revolving within *samsara* since immemorial times, begetting but also killing life. Therefore, we have all, at one point or another, been fathers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, and other beings have likewise been our parents, siblings, and children. For eons, we have shared killing karma from slaughtering each other without end in the past whether we were humans or animals.

Common people are ignorant of this fact, but the Buddhas see it clearly. Once we understand, we should be ashamed and feel pity!

Fortunately, our past good karma has granted us human rebirth today. With this advantage, we ought to dissolve grievances, sever the bonds of enmity, abstain from killing, and release life, letting beings thrive in their respective habitats. Furthermore, we ought to recite Amitabha's name for their benefit so they can transcend the suffering of *samsara*.

Even though their heavy evil karma prevents them from quickly attaining Pure Land rebirth, we should resolve to gain rebirth in the Pure Land during our final moments, and rely on our merit to realize this goal. Once reborn there, we will have transcended *samsara* and ascend into the ranks of enlightened Sages, and later become Buddhas.

Moreover, the ancient Sages have all cherished life and liberated animals. For instance, according to the "Instructions of Yi 伊訓" in *the Book of History*, "Birds, beasts, fish and shellfish have their own natures, [so] let them thrive in their own environments." King Wen of Zhou even pitied decaying bones left unburied, not to mention living beings that can feel.

But, the Sagely and Wise are not the only ones who are compassionate, regular people also have merciful hearts. For example, Jian Zi (簡子) set free captive turtledoves, Zi Chan (子產) released fish into a pond, Sui Hou (隨侯) saved snakes, and Yang Bao (楊寶) rescued orioles.

They all knew that sentient beings have the same Buddhature as humans. Even though some beings today they are temporarily revolving within *samsara* as our friends or foes, yet tomorrow they shall become Buddhas.

When the Buddhadharma arrived in the East, the principles of karma, and the fact that all beings are equal and share the Buddhature, were finally understood by the wider public. Therefore, the great sages and wise men are united behind the virtue of cherishing life and liberating animals, for the sake of preventing wars and massacres, creating merit and blessings, and to put an end to violence so that all may enjoy their natural lifespans.

☞ To be continued

☞ 待續