

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

南潯極樂寺重修放生池疏（續）

印光大師 文

鍾佰晟 英譯

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古云，「欲知世上刀兵劫，須聽屠門半夜聲。」又云，「欲得世間無兵劫，除非眾生不食肉。」

是知戒殺放生，乃拔本塞源之濟世良謨也。

故陳智者大師，買臨海

An ancient said, “If you wish to know the cause of wars and conflict, simply listen to the midnight cries of animals in the slaughterhouse.” It is also said, “World peace can only be achieved if all persons abstain from eating meat.”

Thus, we must understand that liberating life and not killing is the ultimate solution to saving the world, for it eliminates the root causes of war.

江簷溪梁六十餘所，互四百餘里為放生池。請敕立碑，禁止漁捕。有偷捕者，動輒得禍。直至唐貞觀中，猶然如是。

唐肅宗乾元二年，詔天下諸州各立放生池，敕顏真卿撰碑文，並書丹。

有云，「我皇舉天下以為池，罄域中而蒙福，承陀羅尼加持之力，竭煩惱海生死之津。揆之前古，曾何彷彿。」

宋真宗天禧元年，詔天下立放生池，而杭州西湖，亦宋之放生池也。

明蓮池大師，立放生池於上方，長壽二處。其戒殺放生文，流通天下。迄今三百餘年以來，景仰高風，慈濟物類之緇素通人，何可勝數。

或曰，鰥寡孤獨，貧窮患難，所在皆有，何不調濟，而乃汲汲於不相關涉之異類。其緩急輕重，不亦倒置乎哉。

答曰，子未知如來教人戒殺放生之所以也。

夫人物雖異，佛性原同。彼以惡業淪於異類，我以善業幸得人身。若不加憫卹，恣情食啖。一旦我福或盡，彼罪或畢，難免從頭償還，充彼口腹。

須知刀兵大劫，皆宿世之殺業所感。若無殺業，縱身遇賊寇，當起善心，不加誅戮。

又況瘟疫水火諸災橫事，戒殺放生者絕少遭逢。是知護生，原屬護自。戒殺可免天殺、鬼神殺、盜賊殺，未來怨怨相報殺。

鰥寡孤獨，貧窮患難，亦當隨分隨力以行調濟。豈戒殺放生之人，絕不作此項功德乎。然鰥寡等雖深可矜憫，尚未至於死

Therefore, Great Dharma Master Zhi Zhě 智者 of the Chen dynasty (557-589) purchased sixty plus locations with fish-capturing devices in Linhai County (Zhejiang Province), spanning across four hundred *li*, to be converted into liberating life ponds. He then convinced the Emperor to issue an edict prohibiting poaching at these locations, and karmic retribution often fell upon those who dared to violate it. Up until the Zhenguan 貞觀 years (627-649) of the Tang 唐 dynasty, it remained thus so.

During the second year of the Qianyuan 乾元 era of the reign of Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (711-762) of Tang, the emperor issued an edict ordering all the provinces to build liberating life ponds, and appointed famed calligrapher Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 to write the stele inscriptions.

Moreover, Yan Zhenqing said, “My Emperor has turned all under heaven into a pond of mercy, to let living beings benefit from the blessings of the Dharma, and through the power of the sacred mantras, transcend this sea of *Samsaric* suffering. There wasn't anything like this before. If we examine the dynastic history, we cannot see another dynasty that matches the above virtue.”

In the first year of the Tianxi 天禧 (1017-1021) era of the reign of Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (968-1022) of Song 宋, he ordered the entire realm to construct liberating life ponds. The famous West Lake of Hangzhou was also converted into a liberating life pond.

Additionally, Great Dharma Master Lian Chi 蓮池 (1535-1615) of the Ming 明 dynasty constructed two liberating life ponds in Shangfang and Changshou. His essay on cherishing life and liberating animals has circulated across the world. Over the last three hundred years, his virtue remains greatly admired, and countless people have been brought upon this path of mercy by his teachings.

There are some who say we should first help the poor, widowed and suffering of this world, and not the animals.

However, I say they are ignorant of the reason the Buddha exhorts cherishing life and saving animals.

Even though animals and humans differ in form, their Buddha-nature is the same. They are animals because of negative karma, and we are humans because of positive karma. If we do not now show pity and compassion, and instead indulge our appetite, then once our good fortune is exhausted, and their retributions have ended, we will switch places with them to repay them with our own flesh.

All strife and conflict are the results of past killing karma. If we are without killing karma, then even if we meet bandits, they would be kindly disposed toward and not harm us.

The same goes for plagues, floods, fires, disasters and accidents. Those



地。物則不行救贖，立見登鼎俎以充口腹矣。

又曰，物類無盡，能放幾何。

答曰，須知放生一事，實為發起同人普護物命之最勝善心。企其體貼放之之意，中心惻然，不忍食啖。既不食啖，則捕者便息。庶水陸空行一切物類，自在飛走游泳於自所行境，則成不放之普放。非所謂以天下而為池乎。

縱不能人各如是，而一人不忍食肉，則無量水陸生命，得免殺戮。況不止一人乎。又為現在未來一切同人，斷鰥寡孤獨貧窮患難之因，作長壽無病，富貴安樂，父子團圓，夫妻偕老之緣。

正所以預行賙濟，令未

who cherish life and free animals rarely meet such misfortunes. To protect life is to protect ourselves, and by abstaining from killing, we will never be killed by heaven, ghosts, bandits or blood feuds.

Of course, we must save the poor, widowed, orphaned and needy whenever we can, and those who liberate and cherish life often give alms generously. However, as pitiable as the poor and suffering are, they are not on the verge of slaughter. On the other hand, if animals are not saved, they would be immediately killed and eaten.

Furthermore, others may question how we could save all the countless animals that exist.

I say that as the purpose of liberating life is chiefly to encourage all to produce the great and compassionate resolve to save animals, and refrain from eating meat; once the demand for meat is gone, activities such as fishing will stop as well. When this is the case, all that which flies, trots and swims will be able to live freely in their respective habitats, and the whole world would be transformed into a liberating life sanctuary.

Not everyone liberates life, but even if just one person cherishes life enough to abstain from meat, then countless land and sea animals will be freed from slaughter, and more will be so if many people abstain from eating meat. We must cherish life and liberate animals to help present and future people neutralize karma that causes them to be widowed, orphaned, impoverished, and afflicted, and to attain health, longevity, nobility, prosperity, peace and happiness, and ensure love between father and son and couples.

Those who do so will be free from the aforementioned misfortunes, and enjoy for the rest of their lives, and in all the lives to come, blessings of longevity and prosperity. This is to cover the nation with blessings. Thus, by saving animals we save humanity as well.

Outside of Nanxun Ultimate Bliss Temple, there is a liberating life pond. But over the years, the pond has silted up, because parts of the temple's sides were not properly built and have partially collapsed. Thus, whenever good people release life, they do so in a small nearby river. Even though they seek to do good, the animals hardly benefit; more than half of the animals released in the morning are recaptured by evening. If we are near a great river, then we should liberate life there, but small rivers are unsuitable.

Dharma Master Yuan Lin, who cannot bear to watch this continue, has resolved to dredge the pond and build up a secure and solid perimeter fence to create a safe sanctuary for all to liberate life. This is a most wonderful initiative. Yet people have yet begun construction. Luckily, senior Dharma



來生生世世永不遭鰥寡等苦，長享受壽富等樂。非所謂罄域中而蒙福乎。何可漠然置之。子審思之，戒殺放生，畢竟是汲汲為人，抑止汲汲為物，而緩急輕重倒置乎。

南潯極樂寺外，向有放生池。以礮未全砌，遂致坍塌。兼復多年未浚，淤泥充滿。每有善士就河放生，雖發善心，生難獲益。其旦蒙放而暮復遭捕者，當居多半。若近大江，則固宜放之江中，小河則斷非所宜。

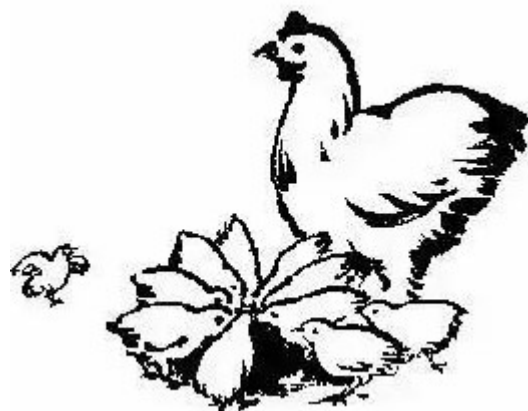
園霖大師心有不忍，擬欲深浚其池，外築圍牆以為防護，俾放生有地，而盜捕無由，其意亦良厚矣。尚未開工，適普陀覺三大師至，一見即志道相契。旋以寺事付託，而已則放下萬緣，專修淨業焉。

覺師繼承舊緒，即欲速成其事。但以工程浩大，獨力難成。擬募闔鎮善信人等，共襄勝事。祈予作序。

予常痛念近世殺劫之慘，欲挽無力，因彼之請，觸動予懷。遂將吾人與物類之本具真心，及隨業升沈，並殺生護生之現未果報，撮略言之。冀諸位檀越，同發善念，同捐淨資，俾此舉速得成功，庶物類悉皆得所，其功德利益，無量無邊。豈特現世萬禍冰消，千祥雲集，而未來世之銜恩報德者，正不知其幾千萬億也。✿

Master Jiao San of Putuo Mountain recently dropped by for a visit, and they both shared the same vision. Dharma Master Yuan Lin has since entrusted Master Jiao San with the running of the temple so he may let go of such matters and focus on attaining rebirth in the Pure Land. Master Jiao San, having taken on this duty, wishes to quickly accomplish the restoration. However, as the project is hard and costly, his own resources are insufficient. He intends to raise money and support from the faithful of the town. He has also asked me to write this introduction.

I am saddened by the wars and violence of our current era, so I always yearned to help, but didn't have the opportunity to do so until now. His request has moved my heart, and so I have discussed herein the shared innate nature between humans and animals, the principles of karma, and the consequences of killing. I hope all the donors will unite behind the vow of kindness, and donate generously to ensure that this virtuous project can be completed as soon as possible, so that countless animals may finally receive sanctuary. The merit and karmic benefits will be boundless and unlimited, able to melt away myriad disasters as towering as a mountain of ice, and gather together the clouds of auspiciousness. Lastly, the beings who will repay the kindness in the future will number in the trillions. ✿



編按：本文圖片選自豐子愷先生1929年《護生集》

Editor's note: Illustrations in this article are collected from Feng Zikai's art work *Protection for Living Beings*, 1929