

## **Confession & Repentance**

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Good morning! Welcome to the International Buddha Dharma Society for Cosmic Law to listen to today's Dharma talks. As we talked about last week, the Noble Eightfold Path is right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. We say that everything relies on the mind. Everyone has their own world which is closely related to their mind. We say what's in our mind; we see what's in our mind; we think what's in our mind. Similarly, our mind will attract similar persons and similar things. The mind is the basic and cultivation is to cultivate the mind.

The Buddha said there are two kinds of people who are cherishable in this world, those who never make mistakes and those who could confess & repent what they have done wrong. Confessing & Repenting the evil deeds is a very important cultivation method, and it's one of the higher level of cultivation methods. Confession & Repentance is part of the cultivation and it will accompany us until the day we become a Buddha. Today, let's learn about Confession & Repentance.

First, let's see the difference between confession and repentance.

Confession means an individual acknowledges his wrong doings; repentance refers to the feeling of remorse about something. Confession might not involve a change in the individual after he confesses; repentance involves a change in the individual. A person may confess a crime, but he may not repent his actions. Confession could be imposed; repentance comes from the individual himself.

### **So, why Do We Need to Repent?**

First, I would like to share a story with you.

In the past, there was a faithful believer who every day went to the garden to pick flowers and then offered the flowers to the Buddha statue in the temple. She did that all year long without stopping. Master Wu De was very happy, and he said to her, "It's rare that you could faithfully offer flowers to the Buddha every day. According to the classics, those who offer flowers to the Buddha will gain solemn appearance in the next life."

The believer heard this, and she was very happy. She pleaded the Master to continue to expound and she said, "Master, every time I came here to offer flowers, I felt like being cleaned by dew, fresh and peaceful. But once I go home, facing those tedious chores, I feel like stuck in a fire pit, perturbed and anxious. Master, please teach me how to keep a pure heart in the bustling worldly life?"

Master asked, "Do you know how to keep the flowers fresh?"

The believer answered, “Yes, I do. Change the water every day. Cut off the rotten bottom of the stalks, and then the flowers will not wither in short time.”

The Master nodded, “Keeping a pure heart is also like this. The environment we live in is like the water in the vase. We are like the flowers. To keep the body and the mind pure and clean, we need to confess & repent often to get rid of the rotting habits and cultivate pure heart seedlings. This is the true meaning of paying homage to the Buddha.

After hearing this, the believer understood right away, and she joyfully thanked the Master and said that she would like to listen more teachings from him. She wanted to live in the temple for a while, enjoying the evening drum, the morning bell and the peacefulness of the Bodhi Brahma songs in the monastery.

The Master smiled and instructed her, “Your breath is the Bodhi Brahma songs; your pulse is the evening drum; your body is the temple; your two ears are the Bodhi; peacefulness is just in your speech, your actions, your gestures. Why stick to the form of the temple?”

So, when confessing & repenting in front of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, the important thing is to cast aside all the distracting thoughts, be still under the present conditions, abandon the evil karma and purify both the body and the mind.

Before people are able to hear Buddha Dharma, they do not know the Truth and their mind change according to conditions. They take the false as the true. With the mind of greed, anger and ignorance, they pursue fame and wealth, so they created karma of killing, stealing, false speech, evil speech, loose speech... They killed birds and animals; they drank wine and ate meat; they did not take care of their parents filially; they did not show respect to their teachers; they belittled saints; they did not believe in the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma; they did not pay homage to the Buddha; they did not believe the Dharma even if they had the chance to hear it; they did not think high of Sangha; they slandered kind people; they broke other's fast; they did not believe in causes and effects and they created too much evil karma. Therefore, they are often scared.

In the Nirvana Sutra, the Buddha said, “Good men, reveal all you have done wrong, from birth to death, until nothing left. Only in this way, you would be fearless. Just as when the King touring on the road, all robbers would run away. Revealing evil deeds like this will eradicate all the karma.”

For those who have their kind roots cut off, they have done many evil deeds without realizing them. This is due to their pride. The evil karma they created is too heavy and there is no way to get it lessened, so they have blockages to enter Nirvana. Like the monkeys trying to catch the moon in water, it is in vain.

In **the Sutra on the Divination of the Effect of Good & Evil Actions**, Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha said, “Good men, if people in the future would like to pursue liberation from

birth and death, before they start to cultivate Samadhi and the formless Wisdom, they need to observe how much and how heavy evil karma they have created in the past. If the evil karma is a lot and heavy, they would not be able to cultivate Samadhi and Wisdom right away. They would need to confess & repent first. Why? Because their bad habits are too deep, and their mind is not kind, they must have done many evil deeds and broken many prohibitions. Because of this, if they do not confess & repent to purify themselves, when they cultivate Samadhi and Wisdom, they will have many obstacles which they cannot overcome. And so, they might lose their mind and become disintegrated, or they might be annoyed by the exterior evil, or they might accept evil dharma and gain evil views. So, they must repent first. If their precept root is pure and clean, or their karma from past generations is light, they would be away from all the obstacles.

### **How to Confess & Repent?**

The methods to Confess & Repent have been recorded in different sutras. No matter which method, a sincere, grateful and respectful heart is critical.

Confession & Repentance of the karma obstacles is the Forth Vow of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. How did Bodhisattva Samantabhadra repent? In the Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Sutra, it says:

“Again, good men, what is meant by Confessing & Repenting one’s evil deeds and evil karma? A bodhisattva would think this way: all the evil deeds I have committed hitherto during the beginningless past kalpas, because of greed, anger and ignorance leading to bodily, speech, and mental actions, are boundless. If these evil karmas have forms, all the empty space would not be able to accommodate.

I now Confess and Repent them all, by my three purified deeds of the body, the speech, and the mind, and with a sincere heart, pledging myself not to commit any evil deed hereafter. I will always keep myself pure in the prohibitive precepts, and in all active moral deeds.

I will lay this repentance before all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of all worlds and Dharma-circles equal in number to the smallest dust-motes. My repentance will cease when the void of space is ended, when the spheres of beings are ended, when the karmas of beings are ended, when the sorrows of beings are all ended. But as all the things from the void of the space to the sorrows of beings are endless, so also is my repentance endless. Thought succeeding thought without interruption, in bodily, vocal, and mental deeds without weariness.”

Now, we will recite the Chapter Four, Chapter on Confession & Repentance, in the **Sutra of Golden Light**.

## Chapter 4      **Chapter on Confession & Repentance**

One night, without any distraction,  
I dreamed a vivid dream:  
I saw a large beautiful drum  
Permeating golden light everywhere.  
It glowed just like the sun,  
Beaming brightly everywhere  
And seen from all the ten directions.  
Everywhere, buddhas were seated  
On thrones of precious lapis lazuli  
At the foot of jeweled trees,  
In front of an assembly of many hundreds of thousands.  
I saw a form like that  
Of a brahmin beat the drum fiercely.  
As he beat it  
These verses issued forth:  
By the sound of this majestic drum of golden light,  
May all suffering of lower migration, and of Yama,  
Of poverty in the three realms, and  
the triple thousand worlds cease to be.  
By the sound of this majestic drum,  
May the ignorance of the world be dispelled.  
With fears quelled, just as the Vanquishing Lords are fearless,  
May sentient beings also become fearless and without fear.  
Just as the Omniscient Vanquishing Lord in the world  
Is possessed of all qualities of the aryas,  
May multitudes of beings possess oceans of qualities,  
Qualities of concentration, and the wings of enlightenment.  
By the sound of this majestic drum,  
May all beings be endowed with the melody of Brahma.  
May they touch the sublime enlightenment of buddhas.  
May they turn the virtuous wheel of Dharma.  
May they remain for inconceivable eons.  
May they teach Dharma to guide migrating beings.  
Conquering delusion and overcoming affliction,  
May their attachment, hatred, and ignorance be pacified.  
May sentient beings who have fallen to lower migrations,  
Whose bodies of bone are alight with blazing flames,

Hear the speech of this majestic drum.  
May they hear the proclamation, "Homage to the Buddha."  
In the course of hundreds of births,  
And tens of thousands of millions of births,  
May all beings come to remember their former lives,  
Always keep in mind the Vanquishing Lords,  
And hear these teachings at great length.  
By the sound of the majestic drum,  
May beings always find the company of buddhas.  
Thoroughly renouncing all harmful deeds,  
May they engage in actions that are only virtuous.  
Humans, gods, and all creatures,  
Whatever thoughts and wishes they have,  
By the sound of this majestic drum  
May all these be completely fulfilled.  
May the tormenting fires be completely extinguished  
For those beings who have been born in the most terrible hells,  
Whose bodies are alight with blazing fire,  
And who wander aimlessly, grief stricken and without refuge  
By the sound of this majestic drum,  
May all suffering be completely eased  
For hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals,  
And those experiencing unbearable suffering in the human realm.  
For those without base, support, or friend,  
Who have become without refuge,  
May I become their supreme refuge,  
Friend, support, and base.  
The supreme of the bipeds, O Buddhas  
Dwelling in worlds in the ten directions,  
With merciful, compassionate mind,  
May you kindly listen to me.  
O Buddhas possessed of the ten powers  
Whatever terrible wicked actions  
I have committed in the past,  
Before your eyes, I confess them all.  
Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done  
Not taking parents as parents,  
Not taking buddhas as buddhas  
And not upholding what is virtuous

Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done  
Being haughty with the vanity of wealth, youthfulness,  
Class, and affluence;

Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done  
Through negative thought, negative speech  
Harmful actions done,  
Perceiving them not as negative;

Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done  
Acting with a childish mind,  
A mind dark with ignorance,  
Under the sway of a non-virtuous friend,  
Through a mind highly charged with emotion,  
Under the compulsion of frivolous sport,  
The power of depression and sickness,  
Or being discontent with wealth;

Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done:  
Mixing with base personalities of non-aryas,  
Through jealousy and miserliness,  
Through guile, and poverty;

Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done  
When poverty came to me,  
Through fear of losing the desirable,  
And being stricken with material poverty;

Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done  
Under the power of a flighty mind,  
The power of desire and hatred,  
Oppressed by hunger and thirst;

Whatever unwholesome deeds I have done  
When oppressed by affliction,  
For the sake of pursuing women  
For the sake of food, drink, and clothing;  
Through misdeeds of body, speech, and mind,  
I have amassed these three-fold wrong actions.

Whatever actions I have done in this way,  
I confess them all.

Whatever I have done that was disrespectful  
To buddhas and Dharma  
And likewise, to shravakas  
I confess them all.

Deeds I have done without respect  
To pratyekabuddhas  
As well as to bodhisattvas,  
I confess them all.  
Disrespect I have shown  
To all who preach Dharma,  
Likewise disrespect to Dharma itself,  
I confess them all.  
Continually unaware of its benefit,  
I have rejected the sublime Dharma.  
Unwitting disrespect shown to parents,  
I confess them all.  
Veiled by stupidity and childishness,  
Desire, hate, and ignorance,  
Arrogance and haughtiness,  
I confess them all.  
I will worship and honor Those who Possess Ten Powers  
Dwelling in worlds of the ten directions.  
I will deliver sentient beings dwelling  
In the ten directions from all suffering  
I will place inconceivable numbers of beings  
In the ten grounds of bodhisattvas.  
Abiding in the ten grounds,  
May they all become tathagatas.  
I will strive for ten million eons  
For the sake of even one sentient being,  
Until I have the ability to free them all  
From the ocean of suffering,  
I will reveal to these sentient beings  
This sutra called the Sublime Golden Light  
Which rids one of all unwholesome deeds  
And expounds all the profound.  
Those who for a thousand eons  
Have committed deadly unwholesome deeds,  
By confessing them earnestly once  
Through this sutra, all will be purified.  
By making this confession  
Through the Sublime Golden Light,  
Whose virtues rapidly consume

All my karmic obstructions,  
I will abide in the ten bodhisattva grounds —  
The ten supreme mines of precious jewels,  
To shine with the Buddha qualities  
And free beings from the ocean of existence.  
Through buddhas, the ocean of waters  
Their qualities, its profound depth  
And buddhas qualities, just inconceivable,  
I will fully evolve into an omniscient being.  
I will become a buddha possessed of the ten powers,  
hundreds of thousands of concentrations,  
Inconceivable magical incantations,  
And the five powers, forces, and seven wings of enlightenment.  
I request the buddhas, who incessantly look upon  
Sentient beings, to gaze upon me intently.  
With minds brimming with compassion  
May they hold the remorseful close.  
Because of the sinful actions  
I have performed over hundreds of eons,  
I am pierced by a mind stricken with grief  
And wretchedness, sorrow and fear.  
I will solemnly fear unwholesome deeds  
And always render my mind modest.  
Wherever I do anything  
I won't allow frivolous excitement.  
Since buddhas are compassionate  
Dispelling the fear of all beings,  
I entreat them to hold fast the remorseful  
And free me from all fear.  
May the tathagatas keep at bay  
My negative emotions and karma.  
May the buddhas bathe me  
With the waters of their compassion.  
I confess all unwholesome deeds:  
Whatever I have done in the past,  
Whatever I do in the present,  
I confess them all.  
In the future, I will refrain from doing all deeds  
That render me remorseful.



I will not conceal  
Harmful actions that I have done.  
Three-fold with the body,  
Four-fold with the voice,  
And three-fold with the mind,  
I confess them all.  
What I have done with body and speech,  
Clearly prompted by the mind,  
These ten-fold actions I have done.  
I confess them all.  
Renouncing the ten unwholesome deeds,  
And cultivating the ten wholesome ones,  
I will abide in the ten grounds  
And develop the ten supreme powers of a buddha.  
In the presence of the buddhas  
I confess all unwholesome deeds  
I have done  
That lead to unwanted results.  
I rejoice in all those  
Who, in this Jambudvipa  
And other world systems,  
Engage in wholesome virtuous deeds.  
Likewise, whatever merit I have gathered  
Through body, speech, and mind,  
By dint of these merits,  
May I reach the supreme enlightenment.  
In precarious cyclic existence and with a childish mind,  
Whatever deadly unwholesome deeds I have done,  
Approaching the presence of the peerless ten powers,  
I confess all unwholesome deeds individually.  
I confess the mass of evil deeds I have accumulated  
Through feeble birth, feeble existence,  
Feeble world, feeble volatile mind,  
And multitudes of feeble bodily actions.  
Wretched with delusion of the childish and foolish,  
Wretched through association with misleading friends,  
Wretched with existence, wretched with desire,  
Wretched with hatred, wretched with ignorance  
Wretched with fatigue, wretched with time,

Wretched in accomplishing merits,  
Approaching the incomparable conquerors,  
I confess all unwholesome deeds individually.  
I prostrate to the buddhas,  
Oceans of virtue, and golden like Mount Sumeru.  
I go for refuge and bow my head  
In prostration to the golden conquerors  
Golden in color, they glow with the glitter of pure gold;  
Their eyes are fine, like the pure and flawless lapis lazuli.  
Buddhas are suns from which arise blazing glory, splendor, and renown.  
The light of their compassion dispels the two layers of darkness.  
Utterly flawless and perfectly formed, their limbs are exquisitely beautiful.  
Buddhas are like the sun, their flawless limbs radiating golden shafts of light.  
Consumed by the flame of negative passions, sentient beings, blazing like fire,  
Are soothed and refreshed by moon-like light of the buddhas.  
The thirty-two major marks render their senses exquisitely refined;  
The eighty minor marks make their limbs breathtakingly beautiful.  
Full of glory, splendor, and merit, like spinning light beams  
They orbit like the sun amidst the darkness of the triple realms.  
Pure as lapis lazuli with an array of rich color  
Your limbs, like the crimson, silver and crystal of the dawn,  
Are exquisitely adorned with by myriad of light webs;  
Like the sun, O sages, you are enchantingly glorious.  
For those fallen into the great river of cyclic existence,  
Tossed amidst crushing waves of sorrow and death,  
May the numerous immense rays of the tathagata sun  
Dry up the ocean of cyclic existence, violent and cruel.  
Their limbs brightly shine in the color of gold.  
They are the source of wisdom, peerless among the three realms.  
Their limbs are adorned with intensely charming marks.  
To the buddhas, whose bodies sparkle gold, I prostrate.  
Just as water in the ocean is immeasurable,  
Just as dust on the earth is endless,  
Just as Mount Sumeru has matchless stone,  
Just as the edge of space is infinite,  
Likewise, so the virtues of the buddhas are limitless.  
Even if sentient beings measure the virtues of buddhas  
And reflect upon them for countless eons  
The extent of their virtue cannot be known.

If counted for eons, it may be possible to know  
Water droplets at hair ends,  
Particles in rocks, mountains, and oceans of the earth,  
But not the limit of the virtues of buddhas.  
May sentient beings evolve into such buddhas,  
Graced with virtue, color, fame and renown,  
Bodies embellished with the major marks of virtue,  
And the sublime eighty minor marks.  
Through these virtuous actions,  
I will soon become a Buddha in the world.  
I will preach the doctrine to guide the world.  
I will free beings long afflicted by suffering.  
I will triumph over Mara with his might and his army.  
I will turn the wheel of virtuous Dharma.  
I will abide for inconceivable eons.  
I will satisfy sentient beings with the water of Dharma nectar.  
Just as the former conquerors completed the six perfections,  
I too will fully complete the six perfections.  
I will conquer delusion and dispel suffering,  
Pacify desire, hate, and ignorance.  
I will always remember my former births,  
Hundreds of births and ten million of births.  
I will always keep in mind the able sages,  
And listen to their teachings at great length.  
Through these virtuous actions,  
I will always find meeting with buddhas,  
Thoroughly renounce unwholesome actions,  
And undertake virtue, the source of all excellence.  
May all creatures in various realms of existence  
Be at peace without the sufferings of their worlds.  
Beings without sense faculties, or with defective ones,  
May they be endowed with complete faculties.  
Those who are feeble in body, afflicted with disease,  
And who in the ten directions are rendered defenseless,  
May they swiftly be freed from their ailments,  
Become healthy, strong, and obtain perfect senses.  
May those in danger of being threatened and killed by kings or thugs,  
Who are distressed by multitudes of hundreds of sufferings,  
Who are wretched and weak with misery,

Be freed from these hundreds of horrific fears.  
May all those who are beaten, bound, and tortured,  
Caught in a multitude of afflictions,  
Distressed by many thousands of emotions,  
And faced with terrible fear and various sorrows,  
Be freed from the shackles of bondage.  
May those who are beaten be free from beating.  
May those who are being killed be endowed with life.  
May those who are feeble be without fear.  
Beings who are tortured by hunger, craving, and thirst,  
May they find a wealth of food and drink.  
May the blind see an abundance of forms.  
May the deaf hear captivating sounds.  
May the naked find a rich assortment of clothing.  
May the poor find a mine of treasures.  
Through a wealth of riches, grains, and various jewels,  
May all beings be endowed with peace and happiness.  
May no one be afflicted with painful experiences.  
May all beings be good-looking.  
May they have exquisite, beautiful, and auspicious forms.  
May their lives be replete with numerous joys.  
As soon as they wish, for them may there immediately be  
Food, drink, great affluence, and merit,  
Large drums, lutes and piwang,  
Springs, pools, water holes, and ponds  
Imbued with golden and blue lotuses.  
Likewise, food, beverages, clothing, wealth, pearls, jewels,  
Ornaments of gold, and various gems like lapis,  
May these be instantly received.  
May there be no sounds of woe anywhere in the world.  
May not even one being in poor health be seen.  
May they instead have great complexion.  
May they glow in each other's radiance.  
Whatever forms of excellence there are in the human world,  
May these come into being wherever they are wished for.  
The moment they arise, through the ripening of merit,  
May the aspirations of sentient beings come to fruition.  
May perfumed incense, garlands, ointments,  
Clothing, powder and many flowers

Rain down three times from trees.  
May sentient beings receive them and be filled with joy.  
May they venerate inconceivable tathagatas  
In the ten directions,  
Consummating bodhisattvas and shravakas;  
And likewise, the flawless, pristine Dharma.  
May migrating beings avoid the lower realms.  
May they go beyond the eight unfortunate states.  
May they attain the eight auspicious states.  
May they always receive meeting with the buddhas.  
May they always be born in higher classes.  
May they be replete with wealth and grains.  
For numerous eons, may they be endowed  
With renown, fame, great form and complexion.  
May all women become men,  
Strong, heroic, learned, and lucid.  
Applying themselves to the six perfections,  
May they always strive for enlightenment.  
May they come to behold buddhas in the ten directions,  
Seated at ease on the thrones of precious lapis  
Under bejeweled precious stately trees.  
May they hear the buddhas explain the Dharma.  
Unwholesome deeds I have performed.  
Whatever I have created in wretched existences in previous times,  
Whatever undesirable effects I have received from those deeds,  
May these be extinguished without exception.  
May those beings who are tied to existence,  
Tightly bound by the rope of the cyclic round,  
Undo their bondage with a wisdom hand,  
And quickly be freed from their suffering.  
Whatever beings here in Jambudvīpa  
And in other world spheres too  
Perform profound meritorious deeds,  
I rejoice in them all.  
By the merit of actions through body, speech and mind  
And rejoicing in the virtue of others,  
May the fruit of my prayers and practice unfold:  
May I attain the pristine state of peerless enlightenment.  
Those who recite this dedication –

Prostrate and praise with an unsoiled mind  
Always devout and free of stains –  
Will for sixty eons avoid unfortunate migration.  
By reciting these prayers in verses  
Men, women, brahmins, and royals  
Who praise the conquerors with folded hands,  
Will remember their births in all lives.  
They will have bodies adorned with all limbs and senses,  
And be endowed with myriad merits and virtues.  
The lord of humans will always venerate them.  
Such will they be in each place of birth.  
Those into whose ears this confession enters,  
Have performed virtue in the presence of not just one buddha,  
Not two, nor four, nor five, nor ten,  
Nor in the presence of thousand buddhas have they performed virtue.  
This ends the fourth chapter, the Chapter on Confession, from the King of the Glorious  
Sutras, the Sublime Golden Light.

Confess & Repent sincerely, and it is mighty. Repenting according to the Dharma can eradicate all the annoyances. Confession & Repentance is a way to purify our body and mind and elevate our soul. Confession & Repentance is a way to return to our original self and bring back our Dharma joy. Confession & Repentance may liberate ourselves from karma and let the Bodhi Flower bloom. The benefits of Confession & Repentance are limitless and cannot be completely described.

Amitabha! Confession & Repentance is our company on the road of returning. Confession & Repentance helps cut off all our evil parts and take off the burdens from our shoulders. Repent constantly so that we can walk forward continuously. There are many higher level of cultivation methods in the universe. Besides Confession & Repentance, there are also the responsive method, the appreciation method, the bringing out the Bodhicitta method, the making offerings method, the appraising others' merits method, the pleading the Buddha to turn the Dharma Wheel method, the dedicating merits method, and so on...Next time, we will continue to learn some of these methods. Thank you! See you next week!