



開筆吉祥・抄經祈福

First Stroke of Auspiciousness, Sutra Copying for Blessings

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修行有八萬四千種法門，抄經就是其中一門。抄經可以攝心、養性、開慧。無著菩薩曾說過：「抄經有五種法益，一者可以親近如來，二者可以攝取福德，三者讚法亦是修行，四者可以受天人供養，五者可以滅罪。」

清朝皇帝從康熙皇帝開始，選擇每年元旦、萬壽節（皇帝生日）、千秋節（太皇太后、太后、皇后的生日），沐浴熏香，抄經以祈福祝壽。而古來大德虔誠抄經，感應事蹟也不勝枚舉。《阿彌陀經》能廣泛流通始於唐朝善導大師，實因當時善導大師用自己的襯施請人書寫十萬卷《阿彌陀經》。

金佛寺從二〇〇六年開始舉辦「開筆吉祥・抄經祈福」活動，特地選在除夕下午一點至三點半，參加者端然恭敬地抄經。三年來陸續抄過《心經》、《金剛經》、《大勢至菩薩圓通章》、《華嚴經疏序》、《八大人覺經》等。在今年（二〇〇九年一月二十五日）的除夕抄經，特別增加抄寫上人的「楞嚴咒句偈」。

第一年參加抄經的有七十多人，當時有許多人紛紛表示，抄經時法喜充滿，而且由於怕寫錯字，竟能專心致志不打妄想，比起其他法門更能「制心一處，不起妄念」。有位居士甚至表示，抄經時的法喜，竟然持續了好幾個星期，因此迫不及待的希望，有第二次的抄經活動。

除了抄經，從除夕到初七，也讓大眾大筆揮毫心中的吉祥話，取其「

In cultivation, there are 84,000 kinds of dharma practices, and hand-copying sutras is one of them. Sutra copying can help us focus our minds, nurture our character, and open our wisdom. The Bodhisattva Asanga once said: “There are five benefits from handcopying a sutra: (1) One can draw near to the Tathagata; (2) One can gather in and gain blessings and virtues; (3) Praising the Dharma is also cultivating; (4) One can receive offerings from heavenly beings; (5) One can eradicate offenses.

The emperors in the Qing Dynasty, starting from Emperor Kangxi, would select special occasions like New Year’s Day, Long Life Festival (the emperor’s birthday), Thousand Autumns Festival (birthdays of the emperor’s grandmother, the emperor’s mother, the empress) to first bathe and apply perfume, then start copying a sutra to pray for blessings and longevity. Furthermore, the records of responses from the Great Sages who sincerely handcopied sutras can hardly be enumerated. One of the reasons the *Amitabha Sutra* circulated widely was because of Great Master Shandao of the Tang Dynasty. Great Master Shandao used the offerings that he received and hired someone to handcopy 10,000 copies of the *Amitabha Sutra*.

In 2006, Gold Buddha Monastery started this tradition “First Stroke of Auspiciousness, Sutra Copying for Blessings”. This event was conducted on Chinese New Year’s Eve at 1:30 in the afternoon. All those who participated brought forth their earnest sincerity to hand-copy sutras. For three years, they handcopied the *The Heart of Prajna Paramita Sutra*, *Vajra Prajna Paramita Sutra*, “Great Strength Bodhisattva’s Perfect Penetration Chapter”, *The Avatamsaka Sutra Preface*, *The Sutra of the Eight Awakenings of Great Sages*, etc. For this year’s (Jan 25, 2009) sutra copying event, the Shurangama Mantra Verses by Venerable Master Hua, was specially added.

More than 70 people handcopied sutras the first year. At that time, all the participants expressed their dharma-joy at hand-copying sutras; and also, because they were afraid to make a mistake, they were so engrossed in copying that they didn’t have any false thoughts. Compared to other dharma doors, copying sutras is most effective for “focusing the mind in one place, without giving rise to false thoughts.” One lay person was so overjoyed in copying sutras that his dharma joy continued for a few weeks; and he couldn’t wait for the next sutra hand-copying event.

Other than sutra copying, for the past four years, from Chinese New Year’s Eve to the seventh day of first lunar month, Gold Buddha Monastery also invites the assembly to write “Auspicious Words” to their heart’s desire in big calligraphy writing; hence the name “First Stroke of Auspiciousness.”

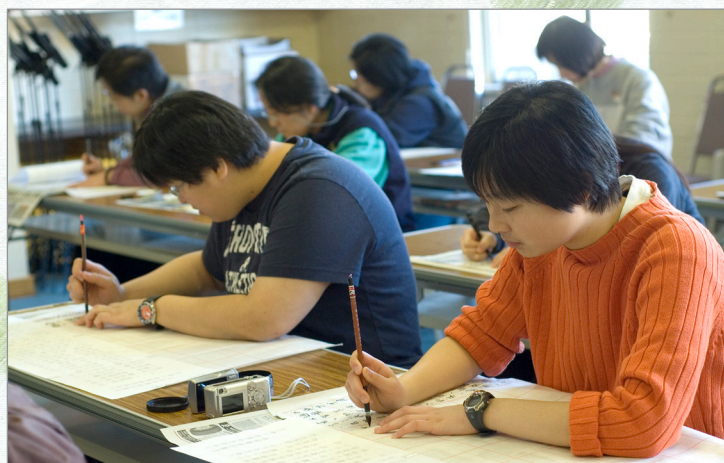
金剛般若波羅蜜經
姚秦三藏法師鳩摩羅什譯
如是我聞、一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園、與大比丘眾千二百五十人俱、爾時世尊、食時、著衣持鉢、入舍衛大城乞食、於其城中、次第乞已、還至本處、飯食訖、收衣鉢

上圖：清朝乾隆皇帝親手抄的金剛經

Above: *Vajra Sutra* handcopied by Emperor Qian Long in the Qing Dynasty

下圖：寫下對新的一年的自我期許，同時也祝福他人。

Below: A disciple writing her hopes for the New Year and sending good wishes to others.



開筆吉祥」。藉著這一開筆，寫下對新的一年的自我期許，同時也彼此祝福，意義深遠。

早在清朝時，每年的舊年、新年之交的子時，皇帝都要特別舉行一個隆重而肅穆的「開筆」典禮，先用朱筆寫「福」字，再用墨筆寫吉祥話，以此祈求一年平安順遂、政通人和。

不論是開筆或抄經這二項活動，讓在西方長大、大多數從未拿過毛筆，寫過正體中國字的人，或者從未來到寺廟的人，除有機會體會一下，有數千年歷史的「中國書法」藝術的個中滋味；也種下親近三寶，熏習正法的菩提種子。願見聞者，發大菩提心，速成佛道。

Through this activity, they wrote down the hopes they have for the New Year, at the same time wishing each other well. Indeed, this is a profoundly meaningful event.

In the Qing Dynasty, every year, during the transition from the old year to the new year, the emperor would specially hold a grand and serene “First Stroke” ceremony. He would first use the red-ink brush to write the word “Fu” (Blessing), then he’d use a writing brush to write auspicious words, praying for a smooth and safe year, and for the state and all people to work in peace and harmony.

Whether it’s the “First Stroke” or “Sutra Copying”, these two activities gave those who grew up in the Western world, most of whom have never held a Chinese brush or written traditional Chinese words, or have never come to the monastery, a chance to experience and taste the history of the art of “Chinese Calligraphy” that has been passed down for many thousands of years. Furthermore, it gave them an opportunity to draw near to the Triple Jewel and plant the seeds of proper Bodhi. I vow that those who hear and see this will bring forth their great Bodhi mind and quickly attain Buddhahood.