

中國的一代「讚王」——悼念上旭下朗老和尚（續）

The "King of Buddhist Chanting" in China:

In Remembrance of the Elder Master Xu Lang (Continued)

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旭朗法師教我們的唱腔，是要用丹田的氣來唱；每一個音都要拖得很長，像波濤起伏似的，而且要字正腔圓。他說他是學上海的「海潮音」唱法，他要我們跟著節拍，用手在桌子上打拍子；等我們學得滾瓜爛熟，不會出錯後才可以打法器。他說：「唱讚、念經、打法器，都要莊嚴！因為我們是在讚歎，是以音聲供養諸佛菩薩。如果我們唱念不如法，亂七八糟地打法器，不僅令信眾生厭惡心、煩惱心，對佛菩薩也是不恭敬；本來是功德無量的，也搞得沒有功德了。」他要我們用手用力地打拍子，他說拍得越痛，我們記得也快。沒過幾天，上課的人數越來越少，年紀較長的居士都退學了；到最後，就剩下我們這四、五個年輕的。

回想我們能有因緣跟一代「讚王」學習唱念，這都是師父上人的高瞻遠見！旭朗法師毫無保留地教導我唱讚、打法器，也教我拜懺、通疏、蒙山施食，和一切的拜佛行儀。學習這一切，除了在師父的道場上應用外，最大的成效應該是在三藩市佛教講堂；我和



姐姐設立三藩市佛教講堂之後，這些都全派上用場了。當時的美國華僑

Dharma Master Xu Lang taught us that whenever we vocalize and sing, we must use the qi [energy] coming from our dantian [area below our navel]. Every sound must be extended for a very long time, like the crest of a rising wave; our pronunciation must be accurate and sound round and full. He said that he learned the Shanghai style called “sound of the tides.” He wanted us to follow along with the beat, using our hands to hit the table. We had to wait until we had fully learned and memorized the material before accompanying the singing with Dharma instruments. He said, “Whenever we sing praises, recite sutras, and play Dharma instruments, we must be solemn and dignified. When we chant praises, using our voice and sounds as offerings to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, if we do not sing in accordance with the Dharma or we play the Dharma instruments in a sloppy and disorderly fashion, not only do we cause living beings to give rise to disgust, we also show disrespect to the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas. Originally, the act should generate limitless merits and virtues, but if you mess up, then there is no merit and virtue at all.” He wanted us to use our hands to hit the table hard in time with the musical beat; he said, the harder we hit and feel the pain, the faster we would memorize everything. After only a few days, fewer and fewer people attended the class; all the older students dropped out. Finally, there were only four or five of us young students left.

It was due to the Venerable Master’s foresight that we had the opportunity to take lessons from this “King of Buddhist Chanting.” Without any reservation, Dharma Master Xu Lang taught us how to sing praises, play Dharma instruments, bow in repentance, recite the report of donor’s merits to the Buddha and burn it afterward, perform the Meng Shan Offering ceremony, and other Buddhist ceremonies and rituals. Other than applying these skills in the Venerable Master’s monasteries, their maximum impact was at the San Francisco Buddhist Lecture Hall. After my older sister and I had established the Buddhist Lecture Hall in San Francisco, everything I had learned was immediately applicable. At that time, the local Chinese Americans had never seen or heard this type of Buddhist singing and chanting or observed orthodox Dharma ceremonies. Because of that, hundreds of people were drawn to hear the Dharma and eventually became Buddhists.

I once asked Dharma Master Xu Lang why it was that he sang, chanted, and recited so well. His voice could be described as celestial. Whoever heard it would be filled with joy and happiness. He told me, “For this, I have to thank

從來沒有看過或聽過這般如法的唱念和行儀，由此引領了上百人來信佛聞法。

我曾經問過旭朗法師，為什麼他唱念的聲音這麼好聽？他的聲音真可以說是天籟之音！令人聽了心生歡喜。他告訴我說：「這要感謝觀世音菩薩！我15歲出家做小沙彌，那時候不懂得唱念，聲音很難聽。有一天，在一個法會裡，聽到一位維那師唱念得十分好聽，我非常仰慕他。有一位老法師知道我的心事後，就對我說：『你想要唱念的聲音好，就去求觀世音菩薩！出家人不懂唱念，將來怎麼活呀？』因為東北那時候供養的人少，尤其是我們是個小廟；出家人大多數是靠給人念經拜懺，賺錢過活。這位老法師繼續說：『你去買一個大磬，在佛前先敲三聲，然後念一句觀音菩薩名號，敲一聲磬，拜一拜。求觀音菩薩加持你，給你好聲音，這樣誠心祈求，自然會有感應！』於是，我就照老法師的指導去做，一直拜到我18歲受具足戒。

在一個偶然的機會，我們的小廟做法事，維那師生病不能唱念，怎麼辦呢？住持只好叫我去頂替。因為我平常對唱念都非常注意，念經、唱讚早都背得很熟，所以駕輕就熟地就把法事順利完成；我也是到那個時候，才知道自己的聲音已經開了。法會圓滿後，很多人都稱讚我的聲音如何如何的好，我做維那的威儀如何如何的莊嚴，漸漸的就有人找我去做法事，很多大法會都找我去做維那。那時候舉行大法會，唱念都沒有擴音器；維那師聲音不夠響亮，參加的人就跟不上。我的聲音真是觀音菩薩加被，幾百人的法會不用擴音器，一樣可以聽到我的聲音。」

旭朗法師是東北遼寧省海城人，生於1919年4月27日。他的母親、姐姐，受到他的影響都跟著出家；他的父親最後也出家了，但是很早就往生了。後來他因為時局動盪不安到香港，80

Guan Shi Yin (Avalokiteshvara) Bodhisattva! When I left the home-life at age 15 to become a young shramanera (novice monk), I didn't know anything about singing and chanting, and my voice was horrible. One day, in a Dharma assembly, I heard the cantor chanting very melodiously and I admired him greatly. One elderly Dharma Master knew my thoughts and said to me, 'If you want to sing, chant, and recite with a great voice, then you should ask for help from Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva. How can a monk survive if he doesn't know how to sing and chant?' Because there were few people who could afford to make offerings to monasteries in Dongbei (northeastern China) at the time, especially to a small temple such as ours—most monastics survived on the donations gained from reciting sutras and bowing in repentance for people. Then this elderly monk continued, 'You can buy a large bell, strike it three times in front of the Buddha, then recite the name of Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva once. Then strike the bell again, and then bow. Ask Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva to support, help, and bless you by giving you a great voice. If you are sincere in your appeals, you will naturally get a response.' I followed the instructions of the elderly Dharma Master and continued bowing until I was 18 years old, when I received the full precepts."

"On one occasion, the cantor of our small temple, the one who regularly led the Dharma assemblies, became ill and could neither sing nor chant. What to do then? The abbot asked me to fill in for him. Because I usually paid careful attention to singing, chanting, and reciting, I had already memorized the sutras and the praises, so I nimbly and easily completed the Dharma assembly. It was at that time when I learned that my voice had already achieved fullness. After the Dharma assembly, many people praised me about my voice and said that my deportment as a cantor was so dignified. Gradually, people began to ask me to be the cantor, including major Dharma assemblies. At that time, we did not have microphones and loudspeakers to amplify the cantor's voice in the large Dharma assemblies; if the cantor's voice was not loud and resounding, the rest of the assembly could not follow. My voice had indeed been blessed by Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva; even in Dharma assemblies with hundreds of people, everyone still could hear my voice without loudspeakers."

Dharma Master Xu Lang was from Haicheng, Liaoning Province in northeastern China. He was born on April 27, 1919. His mother and older sister were influenced by him to leave the home-life; his father ultimately left the home-life too, but died at a young age. Later because of the turbulent political and social situation in China, Elder Master Xu went to Hong Kong; in the 1980s, he immigrated to the United States. He also applied for his mother (Chang Xin Shi) and older sister (Long Shan Shi) to come to the United States, so he could attend to their needs.

Throughout his life, Elder Master Xu spared no effort in printing and publishing sutras and repentance books. He also exhaustively searched for and collected ancient sutras, scriptures, and texts for reprint. He would personally be involved in proofreading, editing, selection, and layout design for any texts he printed and published. In addition to printing sutras, he also loved to purchase Buddha statues and have Buddha images made. If there were monasteries in need of Buddha statues, he would do his utmost to offer them the Buddha statues generously and enthusiastically. When his mother was 85

年代移民美國，並接母親(昌心師)和姐姐(隆山師)來美侍奉。

旭老一生對印製經典懺本，不遺餘力；搜尋古籍經典，更是竭盡所能。凡是由他印製的，他都親自校對、選材、設計。除印經之外，他也喜歡請佛像、做佛像；有道場需要佛像，他都義不容辭的奉送。他母親85歲的時候，他替她做了一尊地藏菩薩像，回向母親延年益壽。昌心師92歲往生時，他又做了一尊地藏菩薩像，回向母親早登極樂。據旭老告訴我，他母親是無疾而終，面帶笑容地離開，他曾夢見她往生彌勒內院了。

旭老曾經告訴我，他姐姐隆山師83歲往生的真實故事。隆山師82歲的那年，醫生檢查說她患末期肝癌，非藥石能治，除非做手術換肝。可是以她的年齡做手術，危險性也是極高。隆山師決定不做手術，回道場一心念佛等待時至。她每天躺在床上，疼痛難熬，醫生給她麻醉藥止痛，她堅決忍痛不用。旭朗法師因此發願為姊念誦《地藏經》500部，以此功德回向她業障消除，早日康復。旭老每天用7、8個小時，念誦《地藏經》8部，甚至更多！而隆山師也漸漸不疼痛了，連醫生都覺得很奇怪！

當旭老念誦《地藏經》300多部的時候，隆山師可以坐起來，跟著旭老默默念佛（因為旭老每天晚上都會在她床邊，為她念佛號。）隆山師的生日那天，旭老經過姐姐的同意，把她的全部積蓄請了一尊地藏菩薩像，為她消災免難。有一天的早上，照顧她的一位女居士慌忙的去請旭老；趕去一看，見她在床上結跏趺坐，口中念念有詞。老和尚知道姐姐要走了，就為她誠念「南無阿彌陀佛」聖號。不多時，隆山師在念佛聲中，含笑而逝！

記得在師父(宣公上人)往生的時候，在洛杉磯長堤聖寺，旭老義不容辭地為上人安排後事和指導一切，俾能如法如儀的進行，並在萬佛聖城為上人做了一堂「三時繫念」（為淨土

years old, he had a statue of Earth Treasury Bodhisattva made for her, wishing that it would extend her longevity. When she passed away at age 92, he also had a statue of Earth Treasury Bodhisattva made, wishing that his mother could be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. According to Master Xu, she passed away without suffering any illness, leaving this world with a smile on her face; he dreamed that she was reborn in the inner chamber of Maitreya Buddha.

Master Xu once told me true story of his older sister Long Shan Shi, who passed away at age 83. When she was 82 years old, doctors detected that she was at the last stage of liver cancer, which was not treatable by medications and could only be cured with a liver transplant. But having an operation at that age would have been extremely dangerous and risky for her. She decided not to have the surgery and returned to the monastery, determined to recite the Buddha's name single-mindedly until the day of her passing. Everyday, she lay in bed with unendurable, acute pain. Doctors gave her anesthetic medications to stop the pain, for she was determined to endure the pain and not to use any painkillers. Master Xu then made a vow to recite *the Earth Treasury Sutra* 500 times and transfer all merit and virtue to her hoping her karmic obstacles would be eradicated and that she would achieve full recovery. Every day, he would spend seven to eight hours reciting *the Earth Treasury Sutra* eight times—sometimes even more! Gradually, Long Shan Shi felt that her pains lessened; even the doctors were puzzled by her improvement.

After Master Xu had recited *the Earth Treasury Sutra* some 300 times, Long Shan Shi could sit up on the bed and follow along with him to recite the Buddha's name silently. (Every night, Master Xu would sit by her bedside and recite the Buddha's name for her.) On her birthday, with her permission, Master Xu used all her savings to have an Earth Treasury Bodhisattva statue made and prayed for the eradication of all disasters. One morning, the laywoman who was caring for Long Shan Shi hurriedly went to seek Master Xu; when they returned, they saw that she was already seated in full-lotus position on the bed and was reciting quietly. Master Xu knew that it was time for his older sister to leave, so he mindfully recited the holy name "Namo Amitabha Buddha" for her. Not long after, in the midst of the sounds of the Buddha's name, she passed away with a smile on her face!

I remember that when the Venerable Master entered nirvana at Long Beach Monastery near Los Angeles, Master Xu wholeheartedly came to help direct the rituals for the Venerable Master so the ceremonies could proceed properly. He also conducted a service of "Continuous Mindfulness in the Three Periods" for the Venerable Master. (This is an exceptional and unique ceremony in the Pure Land School.) At the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, he and the Elder Master Ming Yang together helped direct the Cremation Service for our Venerable Master.

The Venerable Master and Master Xu knew each other back in Nanhua Monastery in Guangzhou. Master Xu once told me the conditions of their meeting. "Your master had just resigned from his position in the Vinaya Academy and had been reassigned to take care of the Tripitaka Library. I first met him when I went to borrow sutras at the library. Because he was from the Northeast, and I was also from the Northeast, he took special care of me.

法門殊勝的行持)，他和明暘老和尚一同主持上人的茶毗法事。

上人和旭老是在廣州南華寺相識的，旭老曾對我說過他們認識的因緣。「妳師父那時候剛辭去戒律學院的職務，負責管理藏經樓，而我到藏經樓借經書才認識的。因為他是東北人，我也是東北人，他對我特別照顧，沒想到後來我們在香港東普陀寺又碰見了（當時中國解放，很多出家人從大陸逃離到香港。在香港，只有東普陀寺的方丈茂峰法師發大慈悲，願意接納和收留從中國逃來的出家人，最多的時候有上千名的出家人掛單。師父曾帶我去拜見過這位秀才出身的老和尚，告訴我有關他的義行。）可是，你師父沒住幾天就離開。直到你師父有了西樂園，找我去幫忙做法事，我們才常有往來！」

旭老一生勤儉克己，對佛事念誦絲毫不苟且。尤其他做「瑜伽餞口」法事，感應極多，傳為口碑。我記得有一次大嶼山慈興寺的開光法會，上人曾請旭老來幫忙做佛事。有一個晚上放「瑜伽餞口」，很多人看到和聽到有諸多亡靈和鬼道眾生趕來接受超度。現在旭老走了！再也看不到他結手印熟練柔軟的手法，及他做「瑜伽餞口」和「三時繫念」觀想的專注神情，也聽不到他那圓潤的音聲了！

姐姐（譚果正）、妹妹（譚果岸）、兒子（劉果忱），還有幾位居士和我十月十日同去洛杉磯參加旭老的喪禮。當天的儀式莊嚴，簡樸而隆重。他的弟子們因為遵照旭老的遺囑不登報，不發訃文，更不大事鋪張花費辦理他的後事。但是，那天聞風而至的，還是有好幾百位出家法師和在家眾前去祭拜、吊唁。我們一直跟隨著靈柩送到山上，看著旭老的棺木慢慢地放下墓穴，不禁歎噓！一代「讚王」就這樣的離我們而去了！



Unexpectedly, when we both were at Eastern Potola Monastery in Hong Kong, we met again. [Author's note: At the time of liberation, many monastics from the mainland fled to Hong Kong. Dharma Master Mao Feng, abbot of Eastern Potola Monastery, was compassionate enough to take in all the monks who had come from China. At its height,

there were over thousand monks living in that monastery. The Master once took me to meet this abbot who had been a scholar before he left the home life, and told me about all his virtuous deeds.] But your Master left after staying for only a few days. It was not until he established Western Bliss Garden Monastery and asked me to help with the Dharma assemblies that we resumed communicating with each other."

Throughout his lifetime, Master Xu was hardworking, frugal, disciplined, and selfless. He was thoroughly meticulous in all matters concerning Dharma assemblies, chanting, and recitations. His reputation in conducting the "Yoga Flaming Mouth" ceremony was well known among the monastics because of the positive responses from the spirits. I remember that during the Grand Opening of Cixing Monastery at Lantao Island, Hong Kong, the Venerable Master invited Master Xu to conduct the Dharma assemblies. One night, during the "Yoga Flaming Mouth" ceremony, many people saw and heard numerous deceased spirits, ghosts, and other living beings in the ghost realm coming to be liberated from suffering. Now that Master Xu is gone, we won't be able to see his skillful, flexible "Buddha mudras (hand gestures)" or his sincere and concentrated expression as he performs the "Yoga Flaming Mouth" and "Continuous Mindfulness in the Three Periods" ceremonies, nor will we ever again hear his full, smooth, and mellow voice.

On October 10, my older sister (Tan Guo-Zheng), younger sister (Tan Guo-An), son (Liu Guo-Chen), along with several lay persons and myself went to Los Angeles to attend Master Xu's funeral service. On that day, the ceremony was dignified and solemn, simple yet stately. His disciples followed Master Xu's instructions of not posting the obituary in the newspapers, not sending out funeral notices, and definitely not spending lavishly on his funeral affairs. However, on that day, several hundred people including monastics and laity heard the news through word of mouth and went to pay their final respects and send their condolences. We followed the funeral procession up the mountain and watched Master Xu's casket being lowered slowly into the grave. I couldn't help but sigh quietly. The "King of Buddhist Chanting" had left us just like that!