



臨終異香揚

Wondrous Fragrances at the End of Life

蔣迪珍寫於2009年12月20日

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2006年二、三月間，果維師姐告訴我，她的父親快不行了，要我到時候去幫忙助念。到了六月，我們全家剛渡假回來，心想今晚終於可以好好睡一覺了。不料果維師姐打電話來，說她的父親往生了，我匆匆地吃了晚餐，就出門了。

八點多到了果維家，我坐在她父親的身旁，用力地大聲念「南無阿彌陀佛」，希望能夠提醒他念佛。接著陸陸續續來了很多師兄師姐，他們都是受五戒、長期吃素、修行功力很好的人；這些人念佛的定力超強，一坐就不起，沒有輪替，不必起身活動筋骨或是洗臉醒腦，在他們的帶領下，我們不斷念佛。

快十點時，我們轉念四字「阿彌陀佛」，我認真地念阿彌陀佛，觀想阿彌陀佛來了。快十二點的時候，我開始想睡。由於神智已經不清，加上平常不曾練習念佛，竟然念成「阿彌佛陀」，卻渾然不覺；其他居士卻如如不動，不笑也不憂惱，果然是定功深厚。果維的女兒忍不住喚醒我，說：「阿姨，妳念錯了，不是阿彌佛陀，是阿彌陀佛！」看！平常不練習，一打瞌睡就顛倒了，真不知道臨命終時，如何保持清明正念呢？

我想該去洗把臉了，正要起身，突然聞到一股濃郁的花香味，伴隨著森林裡檜木的香味。我左顧右盼，心想果維家有種松樹還是紅檜嗎？窗戶是開著的嗎？為什麼這麼香？正在疑惑，接著是金聖寺平常可以聞到的檀香味。咦，沒看到果維點香呀！我明白了，剛剛是香花請，香花迎，接著

Sometime between February and March, 2006, Dharma sister Guo-Wei confided in me that her father's condition was worsening and asked if I would assist her in reciting Amitabha's name if her father should die. On the June day when my family returned from our vacation, just as I was thinking that I would finally have a good night's sleep at home, I received an unexpected call from Dharma sister Guo-Wei, who announced that her father had just passed away. I quickly finished my dinner and left for her house.

I arrived at her home around 8 p.m., and sat next to her father. I made a great effort to recite "Namo Amitabha Buddha" loudly, hoping to inspire him to recite the Buddha's name during his passage. Soon many other Dharma brothers and sisters arrived, one after another. They followed the Five Precepts and were long-time vegetarians. They were practitioners of great spiritual cultivation and strength, with superb samadhi skill in reciting the Buddha's name. Once they sat down and began reciting, they didn't get up again. They didn't need to take breaks. And nor did they need to get up and stretch or splash their faces with water to stay awake. Under their leadership, we continued reciting the Buddha's name without interruption.

Around 10 p.m., we recited the four syllables "A-Mi-To-Fo." I diligently recited Amitabha Buddha's name and envisioned Amitabha Buddha's arrival. However, I began feeling a bit drowsy near midnight. Since I was losing my mental clarity—firstly as a result of sleepiness, but also because Buddha recitation practice was not part of my daily routine—I mistakenly and without any awareness began chanting "A-Mi-Fo-To." The other reciters were unmoved by my error. My mental muddiness provoked them neither to laughter nor to distress—they surely demonstrated unwavering samadhi strength. Guo-Wei's daughter, however, couldn't resist rousing me, "Auntie," she said, "you recited incorrectly. It is not A-Mi-Fo-To. It's A-Mi-To-Fo!" So you see, my lack of practice in reciting the Buddha's name had caused me to begin reciting upside-down as soon as I became drowsy. This makes me wonder if my mind will remain clear with proper thoughts at the moment when my life is ending.

It's time to rinse my face, I thought. As I was getting up I suddenly noticed a heavy floral fragrance, which was accompanied by the fragrance of cypress trees from the forest. I looked around, wondering whether there were any pine or red cypress trees near Guo-Wei's house. Was the window open? Where could such a strong scent have originated? While I was puzzling over this, the usual smell of sandalwood incense from the Gold Sage Monastery appeared as well. But Guo-Wei did not light any incense! I thought to myself. I then suddenly realized that what just happened was, "inviting with floral fragrance and welcoming with floral fragrance"; and what followed was an "offering of

是供香，我興奮的和果維的女兒對看，顯然她也聞到了；再看看坐在門口的美嬌師姐，她也向我點點頭。至於其他男眾居士，仍然沒有表情，如如不動地繼續念佛，顯然他們已經有過這樣的經驗了。我可是興奮地睡不著了！檀香的氣味持續了大約半個多小時漸漸淡去。

我們持續念佛號，清晨兩點了，開始有些累了。清晨兩點半又出現了花香和供香，精神為之一振。凌晨四點我已經快要不行了，為了進出方便，我改坐到門口，頻頻起身去洗臉經行，努力保持自己的清醒，但似乎不太管用，一坐下來就進入昏沉。半睡半醒的、迷迷糊糊地念著阿彌陀佛，還好有那些功力很強的居士，我們的佛號始終不曾間斷。

清晨五點了，我的念佛聲也變小了，不時還會漏幾句。此時我張大嘴巴，準備打個大哈欠，竟然吃進了一大口香味，嚇了我一跳，這一次我真的醒了。又是和前面一樣，先是濃郁的花香和森林樹香味，接著是供香。印象中三次的供香味不太一樣，美嬌默契的和我相對點點頭。對我而言，像是參加了三場由阿彌陀佛親臨主持，殊勝的念佛法會。

值得一提的有兩件事，一是房門口外是客廳，是長方形連續橫向的空間，而這樣的香味遍滿房間及房門口前三分之一的客廳。其中似乎有一個無形的界限，一跨過那條線，剩下的三分之二客廳，沒有任何味道，冰冷的和平常是一樣的。

第二，果維父親的嘴原先是歪的，呈現三角形，念完佛，嘴也正了而且是微笑。這是我第一次參加助念，感覺上不像在參加喪事，沒有任何的悲傷或哭喊，倒像是參加了一場念佛法會，非常開心，法喜充滿。過去我會把助念的「助」，看成是自己在幫助別人，經過這次的經驗，發現其實是果維的父親在幫助我。

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incense.” Guo-Wei’s daughter and I stared at each other with exhilaration. Apparently, she also noticed the fragrance. I looked at Dharma sister “Mei-Jiou,” who was sitting by the door, and who nodded her head to me in confirmation. As for the male practitioners in the room, they remained expressionless and continued to recite the Buddha’s name steadfastly. Apparently, the appearance of the strong fragrances was not a new phenomenon for them. I was now so exhilarated by this experience that I did not feel sleepy anymore. The smell of the sandalwood lasted about half an hour longer and then gradually dissipated.

We continued to recite the Buddha’s name, and around 2:00 a.m. I began to feel tired. But around 2:30 a.m. the floral fragrance and offering of incense reemerged, and I felt invigorated once again. By 4:00 a.m. I was truly reaching my limit. In order to re-enter the recitation site, I moved to a seat near the door. I got up often to rinse my face and tried hard to keep awake but my efforts seemed to be in vain, because as soon as I would go back and sit down I would become drowsy again. I muddily recited Amitabha Buddha’s name in between the states of “half-asleep and half-awake.” Fortunately, there were strong practitioners with solid spiritual strength who kept the Buddha recitation going the whole time without interruption.

By 5:00 a.m., the volume of my Buddha recitation was also decreasing, and I skipped recitations here and there. At one point, as I opened my mouth widely, ready for a big yawn, I ended up swallowing a large gulp of fragrance through my mouth. I was shocked! This time I was truly awakened. Just like before, it began with a heavy floral fragrance and a fragrance of the forest, followed by an offering of incense. As I remember it, the times during the three periods when the “offering of incense” appeared were not the same as those when the floral and forest fragrances appeared. Dharma sister Mei-Jiou and I nodded at each other again in tacit agreement. The experience of this recitation was like attending three exceptional Buddha recitation Dharma assemblies presided over by Amitabha Buddha himself.

There are two other phenomena worth mentioning. Outside the bedroom was the living room, which was a large rectangular space. The fragrances permeated the bedroom and one-third of the living room. There seemed to be an “invisible boundary division.” As soon as one crossed the boundary line, into the remaining two-thirds of the living room, one was not able to smell the fragrances any longer. Those two-thirds of the living room were cold and plain as usual.

Secondly, the mouth of Guo-Wei’s father was slanted at first, resembling a triangle. After the Buddha recitation, his lips realigned to form a smile. This was my first experience of assisting in recitation. It did not feel like attending a funeral—there was no grieving or wailing. It felt more like attending a Buddha recitation session. I was very happy and filled with Dharma joy. In the past, I looked upon the word “assistance” [in recitation assistance] as “my help to others.” However, after this recitation assistance experience, I realized that it was actually Guo-Wei’s father who was “helping” me.

We were very lucky and were blessed with the rare opportunity to recite the Buddha’s name in the middle of the night. Because of the hours during which it took place, the participants did not have to take meals or breaks to rest—hence there was very little movement on the scene. The recitation site remained stable and tranquil.

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我們很幸運的，也很難得的半夜在念，因此沒有人員的流動，或吃喝休息，現場是穩定而平靜。

面對死亡，就好像是自己這一生修行的畢業大考，其實我已經被「當」了無數次，如今，人身難得我已得，佛法難聞我已聞，現在要好好念佛，好好行持佛法，不要在臨命終時，大意失荊州，後悔就遲了。願與大家共勉之！

Facing death is equivalent to the “graduation exam” of one’s spiritual cultivation/practice. In fact, I have flunked this subject numerous times. Today, [as the verse says] “It is not easy to be reborn in the human body but I have gained it; it is rare to be able to hear the Buddhadharma, but now I have heard it.” Therefore, we should diligently practice reciting Buddha’s name and live our life according to the Buddhadharma. We ought not to carelessly neglect what is most important. It will be too late when death is right in front of us. May we all become more motivated and diligent!



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