



念佛的方法

The Method of Buddha Recitation

周果華 文
起飛 英譯

By GuoHua Zhou
English Translation by Taking Flight



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

我們都知道念佛法門好，但是要從中獲得益處，在念佛的方法上也要下一點功夫才能事半功倍。念佛，如能得到念佛三昧，就如同上人說的：「我睡覺也念南無阿彌陀佛，做夢也念南無阿彌陀佛，站著的時候也念南無阿彌陀佛，任何時候，前後左右都被阿彌陀佛佔滿了，因為阿彌陀佛和我合成一個。」這種境地，需要長期日積月累的精進才能得到，所謂「功夫下得深，鐵杵才能磨成針」。除了下這種功夫之外，欲得念佛三昧，還得要有一種「只問耕耘，不問收穫」的豁達才行。畢竟三昧不是你想得到，就能得到的。

說到這兒，那你自然會問，如果我們盡了力來念佛，能够做到幾許的程度？我會說，如果方法拿捏對了，人人都應該都可以做到「口念、心念、念念相續」的程度，所以我今天是在做個「野人獻曝」，把自己的笨方法拿出來，請大家指教。

「口念、心念，念念相續」，這樣一個念佛的方法，我將它分成三個無形的連續動作。

「口念」聲量只要不致傷氣，六字洪名自己聽得到，甚至略動嘴唇的金剛默唸也都可以。

第二部分，就是「心念」，這是一個很重要

We all know that the Dharma Door of Buddha Recitation is very good. But in order to receive its benefits, one must first study and understand this method, and then twice as much will be accomplished with half the effort. In Buddha recitation, when one is able to attain the Samadhi of Buddha Recitation, it will be like what the Venerable Master described: "When I sleep, I recite Namó Amitabha; when I am dreaming, I recite Namó Amitabha; when I stand, I recite Namó Amitabha; at all times, Amitabha Buddha occupies every corner of my mind, because I have become one with Amitabha Buddha." Attaining this level requires vigorous practice over an extended period of time; as they say, "Only with great effort will an iron pestle be ground into a needle." Other than working hard, if one wishes to obtain the Samadhi of Buddha Recitation, one must only put in effort and not ask for an outcome, for ultimately, samadhi is not attained just by wishing for it.

At this point, you may ask: "If we do our best in Buddha recitation, how much will we be able to achieve?" I would say that if you are using the right method, then you should be able to attain the state where "the mouth recites, the mind is mindful, and thought after thought is Amitabha." Today I will present my dull methods and ask for everyone's advice.

"The mouth recites, the mind is mindful, and thought after thought is Amitabha." Such is the method of Buddha recitation. I have divided this method into three consecutive steps. When "the mouth recites," it is fine as long as you are able to hear yourself reciting. Even *Vajra* recitation with lips moving slightly works too.

的門檻，能過了這個檻，你才有可能進入第三個步驟「念念相續」。講到「心念」，就要說到我們的第六心王——「意根」。我們的「意根」，是最不容易駕馭的一個心識，因為它最靈最妙，所以我們才會常說「心猿意馬」，指的就是我們的這位第六心王。如今我們要用它來念佛了，我們要怎樣才能拴住我們的意根，令它保持在念佛上，而不會跑東跑西呢？

到這兒，我們就先說一個公案。在《阿彌陀經》上有一位尊者，名叫周利槃陀伽，他是佛的弟子中，被公認最笨的一個。就連佛吩咐五百位阿羅漢輪流教他一個簡單的偈頌，他卻怎麼背都背不來，不是忘了前面，就是忘了後



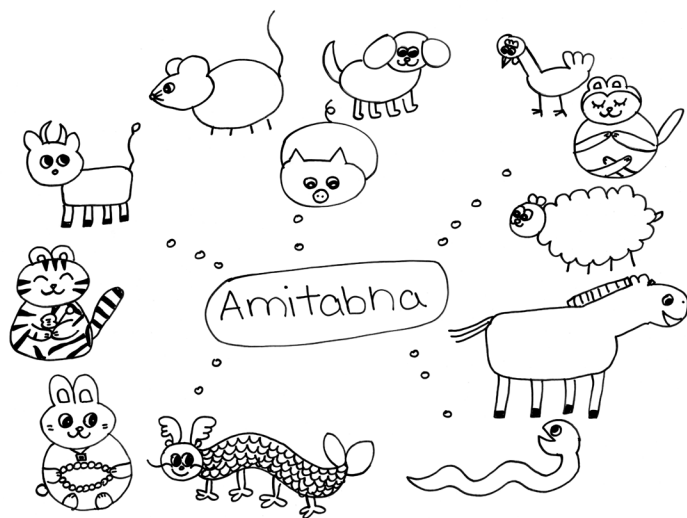
面。連他的哥哥都受不了，要他退出僧團。世尊憐憫他的愚癡，特地教他「數息法」。教他觀想自己出入的鼻息，只算出的或只算入的，從一到十，到了十就打住。然後再從一開始，到十再打住，就這樣連續不斷的練習。大家都沒想到，這個「十數法」居然令周利槃陀伽開了悟，最後還證了四果阿羅漢。

善用這個「十數法」來算鼻息，都能令周利槃陀伽開悟，那用來念佛當然也是妙用無窮。我算過，念十句四字的「阿彌陀佛」聖號，大約要用上八秒鐘，若是加上「南無」兩字，大約就是十秒，如果每十句聖號要憋氣八秒或十秒，時間一久自己可能也會受不了，所以可以將它拆為三部分。一個三，一個四，再一個三。或者兩個三之後再一個四。總之只要加起來是十就可以。如此可以在它們之間的段落處略作換氣。我不主張兩個五，因為它很容易讓

The second step is for the “mind to be mindful.” This part is very important. Only if you are able to cross this threshold will you be able to attain the third step where “thought after thought is Amitabha.” The mind is the king of the six faculties and also the hardest to control because it is most acute and subtle. The Chinese saying “the mind is like a frolicking monkey or a wild horse” refers to the mind. If we are to use it to recite the Buddha’s name, then how should we bind it so that it will stay on the Buddha’s name and not run elsewhere?

Let me tell a story. In the *Amitabha Sutra*, one of the disciples mentioned is the Venerable Chulapanthaka, who was agreed to be one of the dullest disciples. The Buddha once instructed 500 Arhats to take turns to teach him a simple verse. But despite their efforts, he was unable to memorize it. If he remembered the first part, he forgot the second; when he remembered the second part, he forgot the first. Even his elder brother could not stand him and wanted him to leave the Sangha. The Buddha took pity on him and taught him the method of counting the breath, which works by counting only the inhalations or exhalations from one to ten, and starting over at one after reaching ten. No one ever expected that this method of counting the breath was able to help Chulapanthaka become enlightened and achieve the Fourth Fruition of an Arhat.

If the method of counting the breath was able to help Chulapanthaka to become enlightened, then it should have myriad benefits and uses for Buddha recitation as well. I have calculated that reciting “Amitabha” ten



times takes about eight seconds; adding “Namo” takes about ten seconds. But if we had to wait eight to ten seconds between breaths, that might be a little strenuous, so we can divide it into three sections of three, four, and three; or three, three, and four, as long as it adds up to ten. Then we will be able to breathe in between. I do not suggest dividing them into two sections of five, because it is very easy for the mind to take advantage of the monotony and start wandering around.

第六意根在習慣之後鑽空子，有時間去胡思亂想。

有了這個「十數法」，它就像是一個拴繩，就可以管住了我們的第六意識，如果能做好這一部分，配合「念珠」或「記數器」的使用，每十句佛號念完，便撥一粒珠子。這樣大約一萬聲的佛號也要用上二小時又四十五分鐘。

第三個步驟是怎樣做到「念念相續」。其實這在第二步驟的部分加上一個技巧就可以辦到。我們都有經驗，我們的第六意識對已經熟悉的東西就會開始鑽空子，容易鬆懈下來；也就會怠忽職守，會走神。所以針對第六意識這個習性的辦法是，在「十數法」的這個方子上，多採用幾種變通的方式。

例如，你原來採用的是「三、四、三」的方式挺管用的，時間一久，第六意識熟悉適應之後，就會開始鑽空子。一旦警覺到第六意識開始玩忽職守了，就趕緊換另一個十數法，把它改成「三、三、四」，或「四、三、三」，或「四、四、二」，也就是把「十數法」的形式給改了，這樣來令我們的第六意識，不得不隨時保持在「留意」的狀態之下。用這個方法來做為「監督機制」，來管好自己的第六意識，要求它能時時保持著「念念相續」這樣一個重要環節上。

我們的意根好似一隻善於逃跑的老鼠，得要有一隻好的貓來看著它。以上的法子雖然笨些，但只要能令我們在念佛的這一件事情上，做到「口念、心念，念念相續」，那我們的功夫便不會白費，還能在憶佛念佛中，得到十方諸佛的冥中加被。

上人也曾經說過：「平日念佛，就是為臨終時作準備；如果平日沒有做好這種準備，臨終就會不知所措。」《地藏經》上也說：「善男女等，聞健自修，分分已獲。」人還有一口氣的時候，念佛的功德，百分之百都是自己獲得，所以地藏菩薩才會說：「分分已獲。」若由眷屬代你念佛、或做布施、或做其餘種種的功德，往生的人士只能得到其中的七分之一。所以趁著我們身體還行，還有一口氣的時候，就得多念佛，多貯備往生的資糧，不假他手。

圖片選自楊林深《念佛圖》

Illustration is from

Linshen Yang "Buddha Recitation"

This method of counting to ten is like a rope that binds the sixth consciousness and prevents it from running astray. We can perfect this portion of the practice by combining it with the use of recitation beads or a counter, advancing one bead with every ten recitations of the Buddha's name. Reciting the Buddha's name ten thousand times in this way takes about two hours and forty-five minutes.

The third step is how to attain the state where "thoughts of 'Amitabha' follow each other uninterrupted." Actually, practicing the second step with the proper technique will make this final step very easy. I am sure we all have the experience where our sixth consciousness goes on autopilot after it familiarizes itself with a routine, and as we become lax, it will be easily distracted. The way to counter this bad habit of the mind is to implement variations in the method of counting to ten.

For example, if you started out by dividing the ten recitations into sections of three, four, and three, after a while, the mind would become familiar with it and start to wander. As soon as you are aware that your mind is drifting away, you should change course and switch to another division, such as "three, three, four"; "four, three, three"; or "four, four, two." The point is to change the form of your recitation to prevent the sixth consciousness from going on autopilot. Using such preventive methods will confine the mind and force it to maintain this crucial state where "thoughts of 'Amitabha' follow each other uninterrupted."

The mind is like a mouse that likes to run around; therefore, we need a cat to watch over it. This method may be rather dull, but if it can help us attain the state where "the mouth recites, the mind is mindful, and thought after thought is Amitabha," then our hard work will not have been in vain, for the Buddhas of the ten directions will definitely bless us.

The Venerable Master once said: "When you recite the Buddha's name regularly, you are making preparations for the time of death. If you do not make these preparations, then at the time of death, you will not know what to do." The *Earth Store Sutra* says: "Men and women who cultivate while they are strong and healthy will receive every portion of the benefit derived." When one is still alive, one will receive 100% of the merit and virtue accrued from reciting the Buddha's name by oneself. Therefore, Earth Store Bodhisattva said: "[they] will receive every portion of the benefit derived." When a deceased person relies on his or her relatives to recite the Buddha's name, make offerings, and create merit and virtue in various ways, he or she will only receive a seventh of the merit produced. Hence, we should recite the Buddha's name vigorously while our bodies are still in good health, so that when the time comes, we will not have to rely on others.