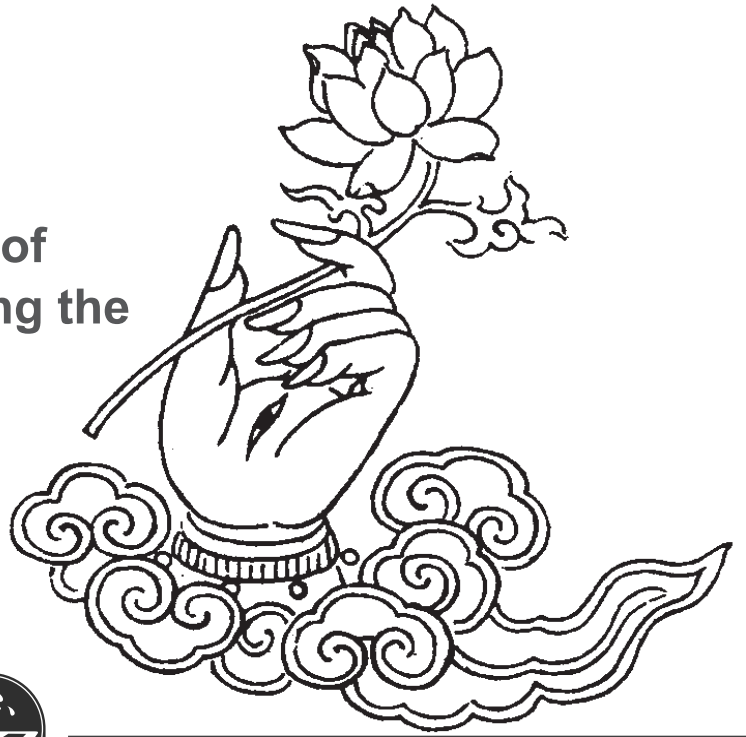


淺談「老實念佛」

An introduction to the practice of “Sincerely and Honestly Reciting the Buddha’s Name”

朱果翔講於2012年12月5日 萬佛城大殿
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BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

有人說這個「老實念佛」，說念佛容易，但是「老實」難；也有的人說「老實」容易，念佛難。不管怎麼樣，這是因人而異；假如能夠做得圓滿就是容易，做不到就是不容易。如何才算做得到「老實念佛」呢？嚴格一點的標準，至少要斷見思二惑，也就是對境不生貪愛，明理不起分別，念佛念到事一心不亂，才能做到初步的「老實念佛」，今天只是很膚淺的介紹這個題目。

首先分享一則簡短的故事，就是唐朝著名的詩人白居易，他那個時候出任杭州太守，聽到有一個鳥窠禪師（也就是鳥窠的意思）的大名，所以就去拜訪他。因為看到那個禪師是住在樹上，就問禪師說：「您住的地方太危險了！」鳥窠禪師回答說：「白太守你比我還更危險！」

白居易心中覺得很奇怪，就忙著問：「弟子官位在身，為國家鎮守山河，有什麼危險呢？」鳥窠禪師回答：「正因為你官位在身，所以終日忙碌，昧了你的靈性，這還不危險嗎？」

People say that in the practice of “sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha’s name,” reciting the Buddha’s name is the easy part, and being “sincere and honest” is the hard part; while others say that being “sincere and honest” is easy, and reciting the Buddha’s name is hard. This varies according to each person. If one can do it, then it is considered easy; if one cannot, then it is difficult. What counts as “sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha’s name”? From a more rigorous perspective, one must at least get rid of two afflictions of views and perceptions. This means not having greed or love to states, understanding the principle and not having any discrimination. Until one reaches the state of single-mindedness at phenomenon level; this is the beginning of “sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha’s name.”

Today we will just give a sketch of the topic. The Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi was the mayor of Hangzhou. When he heard of Chan Master Bird’s Nest, he went and paid a visit. Chan Master Bird’s Nest lived in a tree, and when Bai Juyi saw this, he asked, “Isn’t it too dangerous to live in a tree?” The Master replied, “You are in more danger than I am.”

Mayor Bai found this strange and asked, “I, the disciple, has an official position, governing the area of Hangzhou for the country. Why do you say I am in danger?” The Master replied, “Exactly because you have this official position and are busy day and night, your spiritual nature is covered. Is this not dangerous?”

Mayor Bai knew that the Chan master was referring to a profound teaching of Buddhism and asked, “What is the general meaning of Buddhism?” The Master replied, “Do no evil and do all good, purify your mind, this is the Buddha’s teaching.”

白居易一聽，知道禪師在講佛教的大道理，就問：「那請問禪師，什麼是佛法大意？」禪師回答：「諸惡莫作，眾善奉行；自淨其意，是諸佛教。」白居易覺得這個太簡單了，就說：「三歲孩兒都知道，您為什麼講這麼簡單的佛法大意？」鳥窠禪師回答：「三歲孩兒皆曉得，八旬老翁行不得。」白居易聽了很佩服，就在鳥窠禪師的旁邊建了一棟竹閣，朝夕參訪。這個鳥窠禪師俗姓潘，杭州人，九歲出家，廿一歲受戒，本號叫「道林」法師。

那麼同樣的道理，就是說「老實念佛」四個字，三歲小孩子也會說，八十老翁不會做；那麼一般人不會做的話，我們要怎麼樣下功夫才能「老實念佛」呢？今天大概從三個方向來做報告。

第一個方向就是先要老實做人，把人做好。第二個方向是要從心地上用功，就是從修因上來注意。第三種就不管它修因不修因，不管它怎麼做人，只要真心誠意，恭恭敬敬的，這樣子仰仗阿彌陀佛的願力，念佛久了自然就會老實。

第一個就是說：平時做人就要老實，最好要受持五戒，還有萬佛城的六大宗旨，這是一個標準。真正做好不殺生、不偷盜、不邪淫、不飲酒、不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不打妄語；這些做人的基本修養都做好了，那麼一進入禪堂去參禪，或進入念佛堂念佛就比較容易上路，比較容易「老實念佛」了。那麼相反的情況，假如說連做人的基本修養都沒有做好，又爭、又貪、又求、又自私、又自利、我執很重，凡事都先想到自己的利益；這樣子的話，要「老實念佛」可能是很不容易的。

另外就是古德所說的，要做到「死盡偷心」。「死盡偷心」就是內心沒有非份之念頭，沒有染污的想法，也沒有想要佔便宜之行為；念佛不貪多、不貪快、不貪神通、也不貪便宜；念佛時不懷疑、不夾雜、不間斷，日久功深，自然而然就會老實了。

第二個方面我們可以用功的，就從這

Mayor Bai felt that it is too simple and said, "A three-year-old child knows." The Master replied, "A three-year-old child knows, but even an eighty-year-old cannot practice it." Bai Juyi was full of admiration from this response, and so he built a small house near Master Bird's Nest so that he could visit frequently and learn the Dharma from him. Chan Master Bird's Nest's family name was Pan, he was a native of Hangzhou, and left home as a nine-year-old. He received the full Bhikshu precepts at 21 and was given the name, "Daolin."

Similarly, "sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha's name" is something even a three-year-old could say, but even an eighty-year-old cannot practice. So if this is something most people cannot do, how are we to "sincerely and honestly recite the Buddha's name"? We will take three approaches to this.

First, we should be sincere and honest people. Second, we should cultivate our minds, and pay attention to cultivating the causes. Third, put aside cultivating causes and being sincere and honest people, we just sincerely recite the Buddha's name. By relying on the power of Amitabha Buddha's vow, our recitation will gradually become sincere and honest.

The first approach is to be an honest person. We should live according to the Five Precepts and the Six Great Principles of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas: to not kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct, drink, fight or lie, not being greedy, seeking, being selfish, or pursuing personal advantages. When one has done well in these foundational aspects of being a human being, then cultivating in a meditation hall or Buddha hall, or "sincerely and honestly recite the Buddha's name" will be easier. Conversely, if we cannot even be a good person, if we fight, seek, pursue personal advantages, or are greedy and selfish, then we have strong attachments to our ego. If we always consider our own benefit first, then it can be very difficult to "sincerely and honestly recite the Buddha's name."

The ancient sages said, "People should completely kill off the mind of stealing." This is to get rid of all inappropriate thoughts, get rid of all defiled thoughts or thoughts of gaining personal benefits. One should not be greedy for short-cuts, spiritual powers, or benefits. When one is reciting the Buddha's name one should not be doubtful, distracted, or inconsistent. If one can do this, gradually one's practice will deepen and become sincere and honest.

The second approach is to look at cultivation from the causal ground of practice. Buddhadharma is not separate from the dharma of cause and effect. We reap what we sow. When we plant wholesome causes, there are wholesome results. When we plant unwholesome causes, there are unwholesome results. This is also the case with causes with or without outflows. When we take this approach, we look at what kind of mindset we take when reciting the Buddha's name. We should resolve for awakening, seek the Buddha's path and to help all beings. Someone with a great mind is concerned not just with his or her own liberation, but with all beings' liberation; it is an enduring mind, resolved for awakening, that doesn't just seek to benefit all beings only for a day or two, or for one lifetime or two, but for all lives and times. We can save living beings with a mind that does not dwell anywhere, for without being attached to any kind of form or action, we won't seek for rewards. We can produce a balanced mind, a mind that does not attach to views and is without defilements.

個修因來說，佛法離不開因果法，所謂種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆；種善因得善果，種惡因得惡果；種有漏因得有漏果，種無漏因得無漏果。修因就是我們念佛是本著什麼樣的心來念？假如能夠本著無上的「菩提心」：上求佛道，下化眾生；「廣大心」：不只是真為自己的生死大事，而是真為所有眾生的生死大事；「長遠心」：不只是一天兩天，一輩子兩輩子，發願要生生世世利益眾生、覺悟有情；「無住生心」：離相布施，離相度生，行無所事，歸無所得；還有「平等心」，「無見取心」，「無染著心」。

若能本著這樣的心，當我們的修因來念佛的話，這樣念佛能融入日常生活之中，就好像吃飯、穿衣、睡覺，那麼很自然的，就不會有疲厭，也很容易就老實了。念佛莫求人天福報，假如念佛不願往生西方，而是願意再生人世，享受人間福樂，實為可惜。

在《普賢菩薩行願品》裡頭有這麼幾句：「念念相續，無有間斷，身語意業，無有疲厭」；能夠做到念念相續，無有間斷、無有疲厭的念佛，就是老實。另外《大勢至菩薩念佛圓通章》裡頭所講的也是這樣子，說：「都攝六根，淨念相繼」；淨念相繼了，也自然就老實了，「老實念佛」也就沒有問題。

第三個方面就是說以上這些名相，對我來講都太麻煩了，那麼有一個最方便、也是最究竟的辦法，就是以直心為道場，只要真心誠意，恭恭敬敬地仰仗著阿彌陀佛的願力，所謂「千古是非同短夢，萬德洪名作大舟」，就憑著這一句佛號念到底，久而久之，自然就老實。所謂「清珠投於濁水，濁水不得不清；佛號投於亂心，亂心不得不佛」，只要信願行三資糧具足，就能往生西方淨土，一旦往生淨土，皆不退轉於無上正等正覺，菩提果自成，這就是宣公上人所說「念佛就能成佛」的道理。以上這三個方式可以單獨使用，也可以交互的運用。

還有一點時間，就引用虛老（上虛下雲老和尚）一篇開示，是講到「老實念佛」的。那是在1952年，在印光大師生西十二周年紀念上講的。虛老是禪門大德，但是他對於這個念佛法門，也有真知灼見的開示。

這裏引用兩小段，虛老這麼講：「無論修

If we can develop a mind like this, then when we practice reciting the Buddha's name, we can bring our recitation into our daily lives. It comes naturally as eating, getting dressed or sleeping. We are not tired of this practice, and thus very easily become honest and sincere. Reciting the Buddha's name is not about seeking worldly or celestial blessings. If we seek to be reborn in the human realm to enjoy the pleasures of the world, rather than rebirth in the Western Pure Land, it is really a great waste.

In *the Avatamsaka Sutra*, in the chapter of *Pure Conduct and Vows of Universal Bodhisattva*, it reads: "In thought after thought the recitation is unbroken; the karmas of the body, mouth and mind is never exhausted." If we can reach this state in our recitation of the Buddha's name, then we have reached the state of sincerity and honesty. Also, in *Great Strength Bodhisattva's Essay on the Perfection of Mindfulness of the Buddha*, it echoes a similar idea: "Gather in the six sense faculties through continuous pure mindfulness." When the mind is continually pure, it naturally becomes sincere and honest. Then sincere and honest recitation of the Buddha's name is no problem.

The third perspective is that these things mentioned above are too burdensome. The easiest and also ultimate method is to take the straightforward mind as the ground for practice. The only thing to do is to be sincere and true-hearted, to respectfully rely on the power of Amitabha Buddha's vows. As it is said, "A thousand years of strife and struggle is just a fleeting dream; with Amitabha's great virtuous name we have a great saving ship." When one recites the Buddha's name to the ultimate point, naturally and gradually, one becomes honest and sincere. It is also said, "When a magic pearl is dropped into muddy water, the muddy water clears. When the Buddha's name is placed into a confused mind, the confused mind becomes the Buddha." As long as one is well-equipped with the three provisions of faith, vows, and practice, one can be reborn in the Western Pure Land. Once one is reborn in the Pure Land, one will never retreat on the path to realizing Unsurpassed, Proper, and Equal Enlightenment. One's Buddha-nature naturally realizes its inherent potential. This is what Venerable Master Hsuan Hua referred to in saying that reciting the Buddha can bring one to Buddhahood. These three approaches to practice can be used individually or together.

There is still a bit of time to quote an instructional talk by Elder Master Hsu Yun (Empty Cloud), on the topic of "sincere and honest recitation of the Buddha's name." This was a talk given in 1952, at the 12-year anniversary memorial for Great Master Yin Guang. Elder Master Hsu Yun was a great patriarch of the Chan lineage, and his talk on the practice of reciting the Buddha's name is well worth studying.

Here, I would like to share two small passages. Elder Master Hsu Yun said, "Regardless of what practice you cultivate, you must have unmoving faith or trust. You must be able to persevere and practice deeply. Only then can you fully receive the benefits that come with it. If you have solid faith, then you can uphold mantras, investigate Chan and recite the Buddha's name. It will all be the same. If your faith is not profound and you just rely on your own few roots of goodness or remember a few names and forms, a

何種法門都要信心堅固，把得住、行得深，才能得到圓滿的利益。信心堅固，持咒可成、參禪可成、念佛可成，都是一樣的；若是信根不深，只憑自己的微小善根，或記得幾個名相、幾則公案便胡說亂道、談是論非，只是增長自己的業習，到了生死關頭依舊循業流轉，豈不可悲。」

虛老繼續講，就說：「所以我勸大眾要堅信淨土法門的利益，隨印光老法師學老實念佛。學要立堅固願、堅固志，要發勇猛心，以西方淨土為終身的大事。參禪與念佛在初發心的人看來是兩件事，在久修的人看來是一件事。」

師父宣公上人也有很多開示，是關於「老實念佛」的。在法界佛教總會出版《西方極樂是君家》這本書裡頭，上人這麼講：「我們很不幸生在魔強法弱，去佛很遠的末法時代，在不幸之中又幸遇了念佛法門；念佛法門又省錢，又不費精神，而且很方便，因為念佛就能成佛。為什麼念佛成佛？因為藉著阿彌陀佛在無量劫以前發的四十八大願；在四十八大願中有一願說：『若有眾生稱我名號，若不生極樂世界，我誓不成佛。』」

上人繼續講：「老實念佛就是專一其心在念，不管成佛不成佛，也不管往生不往生，一心只管念佛的工作。念佛念得專一純熟了，一心不亂，等你臨命終的時候，阿彌陀佛一定會來接你去成佛。」

最後作一個總結，就是為什麼要「老實念佛」？「老實念佛」的目標是什麼呢？有什麼總的目標呢？並不是說要逃避現實，不是因為在娑婆世界太多麻煩了，每天要上班工作、到廚房煮飯、到學校教書、翻譯經典、掃地清潔、維修工程……等等，太多工作了，不如到西方淨土那裡躲起來，不是這樣子。「老實念佛」的目標，就是發願到西方極樂世界去做阿彌陀佛的弟子。當他的弟子，也就是見到阿彌陀佛的時候，花開見佛就可以悟無生，證得無生法忍。求生西方淨土也就是為了證得無生法忍之後，要再迴入娑婆世界度化有情眾生，因為我們大部份的人都還不是名副其實的菩薩，而是泥菩薩；泥菩薩自己要自度還有困難，更何況要廣度眾生！

few stories and start to speak rubbish and speculate and gossip, then you are just strengthening your karmic habits. When it is time to die, you will still be following the old paths of your karmic habits. This is truly a pity.”

Elder Master Hsu Yun continued, “So I encourage everyone to have steadfast trust in the Pure Land practice, and follow Elder Master Yin Guang’s teaching of sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha’s name. We must learn to make unwavering vows, have unwavering resolve, and have a vigorous heart. We take rebirth in the Western Pure Land as the great matter of our lives. Those who practice Chan meditation and those who recite the Buddha’s name look different at the beginning of their practice, but long-time practitioners see them as one.”

Our teacher, Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, also had many instructional talks on the practice of “sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha’s name.” In the book *The Western Land of Ultimate Bliss is Your Home*, Master Hua says, “We live in a time when the demons are powerful and the Dharma is weak. We are in the Dharma-ending Age, far removed from the time of the Buddha. But in this difficult time we have had the good fortune of finding the practice of reciting the Buddha’s name. This practice doesn’t cost money and does require our energy; furthermore, it is very convenient and helpful, because when we are mindful of the Buddha we can also become Buddhas. Why does mindfulness of the Buddha help us to realize Buddhahood? It is because of Amitabha Buddha’s forty-eight great vows from countless eons ago. One of the vows says, “If there is a being who calls my name and is not born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, I vow not to realize Buddhahood.”

The Master continued, “Sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha’s name means becoming completely single-minded in your recitation. You aren’t thinking about whether you’re going to become a Buddha or whether you’ll be reborn in the Pure Land. You are only purely focused on the work of reciting the Buddha’s name. When your concentration progresses to a certain point and your mind is no longer scattered, then when it is time for you to die, Amitabha Buddha will certainly come to take you to Buddhahood.”

To conclude, why should we “sincerely and honestly recite the Buddha’s name”? What is the goal of such a practice? What is the end result of it? It is not to escape our mundane reality, it is not because this samsaric world is too burdensome, and we are tired of the work involved in going about our jobs every day, cooking in the kitchen, teaching in the schools, translating the sutras, sweeping and cleaning, maintaining the buildings and grounds – better escape from all of this and go to the Pure Land! It’s not like this. The goal of “sincerely and honestly reciting the Buddha’s name” is to vow to go to the Western Pure Land to be a disciple of Amitabha Buddha. What that means is that when the lotus flower opens and we see Amitabha Buddha, we realize the unproduced. We realize the “patience with the non-arising of dharmas”. We seek to be reborn in the Western Pure Land so that once we realize this truth, we can return to the Saha world to help and teach all beings here. Because most of us are still not veritable Bodhisattvas yet, we are “Bodhisattvas of mud” who not only cannot help living beings cross the river of suffering, but we cannot even save ourselves.

中國明代四大高僧之一，蓮池大師臨終的時候，將他一生對四眾弟子們教導的精華，濃縮再濃縮，在他的遺囑之中諄諄告誡弟子們，大家要「老實念佛」。

今天結法緣的時間到此，最後希望所有見聞者，悉發菩提心，盡此一報身，同生極樂國。阿彌陀佛！

In Ming Dynasty China, the four great Sanghans of the age included Great Master Lian-chi. When he was passing away, he condensed all the teachings from his life for his students into the instruction: "Sincerely and honestly recite the Buddha's name."

Today's time is up. May all those who see and hear this make the resolve for *Bodhi*, and after this life is over, may we all be reborn in the Western Pure Land. Amitabha!

◀◀續第24頁

是說我想什麼就是什麼，要功夫到了；功夫到，你念佛把一切一切的都放下了。

「終日厭煩娑婆苦」：我們每天覺得五濁惡世——劫濁、見濁、煩惱濁、眾生濁、命濁，這麼多東西都是濁惡的，我們厭煩娑婆這個濁惡的苦。

「纔將紅塵心念斷」：所謂紅塵是什麼呢？就是男女的淫欲，把淫欲先要斷了，這可以說是看破紅塵了。

「求生極樂意念重」：你求生極樂世界這個意念把它看重了，注重它。

「放下染念歸淨念」：你染污的念沒有了，就是淨念，就是淨土法門。

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have adequate skill. If your skill is sufficient and you recite the Buddha's name, you let go of absolutely everything.

If all day you detest the sufferings of the Saha world. Everyday we experience the Evil Age of the Five Turbidities —that is, the kalpa turbidity, the view turbidity, the affliction turbidity, the living beings turbidity, and the life turbidity. These are turbid things. We are vexed by these sufferings in the Saha World.

One cuts off thoughts of mundane defilements. Mundane defilements refer to lust between men and women. Once we cut off lust, we can say that we have given up mundane defilements.

Make rebirth in Ultimate Bliss your mind's essential aim. You must regard the wish to be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss as extremely important.

Renounce defiled thoughts and pure thoughts you will find. The absence of defiled thoughts is pure thought. That's the Pure Land practice.



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