

地藏菩薩本願與念佛法門一 略記大安法師訪柏克萊聖寺

The Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva and the Methods of Being Mindful
of the Buddha --
a brief report of Dharma Master Da An's visit to Berkeley Buddhist Monastery



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By Editorial Staff



DHARMA REALM NEWS | 法界音

中國廬山東林寺訪問團一行，方丈大德安法師、德雍法師、于洪波居士，于9月5日拜訪柏克萊聖寺。這是大安法師第二次來到柏克萊聖寺。

午齋時，大安法師與大眾結法緣。法師有鑒於柏克萊聖寺每月一次的精進念佛是採用東林佛號，便扼要地介紹東林佛號的唱念方法—包括念佛心態、佛號格調與節奏、重音與輕音的把握，以及呼吸和腳步。大安法師強調念佛的目的，唯一求往生，不求其它任何目標。

下午二點，法師在佛殿開示「地藏菩薩本願與念佛法門」，提到地藏菩薩四次在因地發大弘誓願，其中三次均直接與念佛法門相關：

1) 長者子見佛相好，千福莊嚴，是屬於觀像念佛。

Dharma Master Da An, the abbot of Dong Lin Monastery, and this delegation including Dharma Master De Yong and layman Yu, Hongpo visited Berkeley Buddhist Monastery on September 5th, 2015. This is Dharma Master Da An's second visit to Berkeley Buddhist Monastery.

During lunch, Dharma Master Da An was invited to speak a few words to the assembly. Knowing that Berkeley Buddhist Monastery holds a monthly vigorous Buddha recitation according to the practice method of Dong Lin Monastery, Dharma Master Da An addressed the essentials of chanting the Buddha's name based on the Dong Lin method. This method includes the mentality, tune, rhythm, varying intonation and tempo, as well as the regulation of breathing and steps of walking during recitation. Dharma Master Da An emphasized that aiming to be reborn in the Pure Land is the only intention of being mindful of the Buddha, there should be no other objectives.

At 2:00 p.m. in the Buddha Hall, Dharma Master Da An gave a talk on "The Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva and the Methods of Being Mindful of the Buddha". He pointed out that among the four past vows made by Earth Store Bodhisattva, three of which are directly related to the methods of being mindful of the Buddha:

1. An elder's son who, upon beholding the Buddha's fine features adorned with the myriad blessings, was mindful of the Buddha through the method of contemplating the Buddha's image.

2) 婆羅門女思念亡母，端坐念覺華定自在王如來名號，是屬於持名念佛。

3) 光目女為墮在惡趣的母親，志誠念清淨蓮華目如來，兼塑畫形像。此外，臨終稱念佛名的重要性，以及「稱佛名號品」，均顯示地藏經與念佛法門的密切關係。

大安法師開示後，大眾踴躍提問，最後在預定時間超過40分鐘後，才不得不結束反應熱烈的問答。今略摘如下：

問：請法師解釋菩提心深意，及如何行菩薩行。

答：地藏菩薩本願與阿彌陀佛48大願，都是因眾生苦而發起的菩提願。菩提心包含般若、慈悲和善巧方便三要素。首先要無我，才能切入實空性層面，才能對眾生的苦難感同身受，以種種化身的善巧方便來救度眾生。

善導大師給初發菩提心的下手方便，就是從厭離世間的苦開始。人生際遇在五濁惡世都有種種的痛苦，先從自身的體驗開始，自己求解脫，然後把心量放大，不僅我有這樣的痛苦，一切有緣的眾生也有這種痛苦；不僅我要念佛求往生，我要令更多的眾生也念佛往生到極樂世界。這個心發起來就是菩提心，以菩提心的功德迴向，都能得到上品中生的品位。

問：婆羅門女念覺華定自在王如來，光目女念清淨蓮華目如來，都是念他們那時期的佛得到感應。現在釋迦牟尼佛的時代，為什麼不念釋迦牟尼佛，要念阿彌陀佛？

答：諸佛如來已經契入無相無念的三昧，站在佛的立場，是沒有名號的，施設名號是為了度眾生的方便。在我們這時代，釋迦牟尼佛沒有說念他的名號，而是介紹淨土法門，要我

2. A Brahman woman, longing for her deceased mother, sat upright and concentrated on the name of Enlightenment Flower Samadhi Self-Mastery King Thus Come One through the method of being mindful of the Buddha's name.

3. A woman named Bright Eyes rescued her mother who had fallen into an evil destiny by being sincerely mindful of Pure Lotus Eyes Thus Come One. She also made carvings and painted images of the Buddha. In addition, the Earth Store Sutra also places particular emphasis on the importance of reciting the Buddha's name at the time of death, as well as dedicating a chapter to "Praising the Names of the Buddhas". This illustrates the close relationship of the Earth Store Sutra with the methods of being mindful of the Buddha.

After the talk, there was an enthusiastic Q & A in which the audience actively asked the Dharma Master questions which extended the talk to over 40 minutes. The following is a brief summary of the Q & As.

Question: Dharma Master, please explain the profound meaning of the Bodhi Resolve, and tell us how to cultivate the Bodhisattva path.

Answer: The past vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva and the forty-eight great vows of Amitabha are Bodhi vows that arose in response to the suffering of living beings. The Bodhi Resolve encompasses three essential elements, prajna, compassion and skillful means. First, one must have no notion of a personal self in order to fully immerse in the level of the True Mark emptiness where one is able to feel the suffering of living beings as it is one's own, thereby manifesting in various forms in order to rescue beings with all kinds of skillful methods.

Dharma Master Shan Dao demonstrated that the Bodhi Resolve can be most effectively generated by first wishing to spurn the suffering of the world. In the world of the five turbidities, human beings are beset with all kinds of sufferings. By first starting from our own realization, we seek liberation for ourselves, and then we expand our minds beyond our own suffering to like-minded living beings who experience the same suffering. Not only we ourselves have the wish to be reborn in the Pure Land by reciting the Buddha's name, we want to enable even more living beings to be mindful of the Buddha and reborn in the Pure Land. When such minds arise, this is the Bodhi mind. When making dedications with this Bodhi Resolve, we are able to be reborn in the middle level of the upper grade [in the Pure Land].

Question: The Brahman woman was mindful of Enlightenment Flower Samadhi Self-Mastery King Thus Come One, and the woman named Bright Eyes was mindful of Pure Lotus Eyes Thus Come One; both of whom were concentrating on the Buddha of their age and received responses. Now we are in the era of Shakyamuni Buddha, why are we mindful of Amitabha Buddha instead of Shakyamuni Buddha?

Answer: All Buddhas have penetrated the Samadhi of No Forms and No Thought; therefore from the perspective of the Buddhas, there need not be names nor titles; the names of the Buddhas were established as an expedient method for the sake of rescuing living beings. In our era, Shakyamuni Buddha did not instruct us to recite his name, but instead introduced the Pure Land Dharma method for us to recite Amitabha's name. In addition, the Buddhas of the ten directions all praise the merit and virtue of Amitabha Buddha's name.

們念阿彌陀佛；十方諸佛也共同讚揚阿彌陀佛的名號功德。所以我們就聽話，不要抬槓。

再者，十方三世諸佛共一法身，所證法身無二無別。阿彌陀佛是萬德洪名，也稱為法界藏身，一法具足一切法；念阿彌陀佛名號的功德，也就等於念十方三世一切諸佛名號的功德。

問：聽別人說我們修持不夠，不要迴向到法界一切眾生，先迴向自己累劫的冤親債主。

答：以福德或功德迴向給眾生的目的是什麼？是令他們都能往生西方極樂世界。其本質就具備了三種迴向：迴向眾生、迴向實際、迴向菩提的全體內涵。所以每天都應該把功德迴向給法界眾生。

我們現前一念心，周遍法界，包裹虛空，一切眾生和我們是同體的。這一念心的放大，功德也就放大不可思議倍。《地藏菩薩本願經》中對校量布施功德的迴向有詳細解釋。

問：瞻禮佛像時，心中要如何思維才比較圓滿？

答：拜佛是體現我們的至誠恭敬心，五體投地的拜下去，口稱佛號，憶想佛的相好莊嚴光明。拜佛存什麼念頭？要有慚愧心，要有感恩心。

阿彌陀佛就是當下我們心中的佛。我在佛的心中拜佛，佛在我的心中接受我的禮拜。如果心念更細的話，「一心頂禮極樂世界三十六萬億一十一萬九千五百同名同號阿彌陀佛」，於是你也有三十六萬億一十一萬九千五百的化身，在一一佛前頂禮，心量就慢慢擴大。

拜佛的時候，同時也觀想父母、六親眷屬跟你一起拜，尤其是看不慣的冤家對頭。這樣拜佛，心量能包含更多的眾生；一切法由心想生，拜佛的功德也隨之呈幾何級數的放大。所有拜佛的功德，都要作為往生極樂的資糧，不求人天福報。❀

Furthermore, all Buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time share the same dharma body; there is no difference nor distinction in the dharma body they realized. "Amitabha" represents a great name endowed with myriad virtues; also called the Treasury Body of the Dharma Realm. Being mindful of Amitabha's name has the same merit and virtue as being mindful of all the names of Buddhas in the ten directions and three periods of time because "one Dharma is replete with all Dharmas."

Question: I've heard others say that when our cultivation is not sufficient, we should not dedicate [the merit and virtue of cultivation] to all living beings; we should first dedicate [the merit and virtue] to our own creditors and close relatives through past cons.

Answer: What is the purpose of dedicating blessings and virtue or merit and virtue to all living beings? The purpose is that they all can be reborn to the western Land of Ultimate Bliss. Such dedication is replete with the essence of all the three kinds of dedication, dedicating to living beings, dedicating to the ultimate truth, and dedicating to Bodhi (awakening). Therefore, we should dedicate our merit and virtue to living beings throughout the Dharma Realm every day.

Our current mind pervades the Dharma Realm, and encompasses all of empty space. We are one with all living beings. With a single thought expanded, the merit and virtue multiplies by inconceivable levels. The Sutra on the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva gives a detailed explanation of the comparative merits and virtues of giving.

Question: When we bow to the Buddha's image, how should we properly reflect within our minds?

Answer: Bowing is a manifestation of our sincere and respectful mind. When we bow with the five parts of the body touching the ground, we recite the Buddha's name and recall the magnificence and radiance of the Buddha's hallmarks. What kind of thought should we have when we bow? We should have a mind of shame and also nurture a mind of gratitude.

Amitabha is the Buddha in our present minds. I am bowing within the Buddha's mind, and the Buddha accepts my bowing within my mind. If our minds are more mindful and attentive: "With one mind we bow to thirty six trillion one hundred nineteen thousand and five hundred Buddhas with the same name as Amitabha in the Land of Ultimate Bliss." In this way, with one bow, we contemplate ourselves as transforming into thirty six trillion one hundred nineteen thousand and five hundred bodies, and bow to each of the Buddhas; our minds will then gradually expand to a greater scope.

When we bow, we contemplate that our parents and the six categories of relatives bow with us, especially our karmic creditors and enemies. In this way, our minds encompass all living beings bowing along with us, then the merit and virtue from bowing to the Buddhas increases by exponential proportions. All dharmas are made from the mind. All the merit and virtue from bowing to the Buddhas should be dedicated as provisions for being reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Do not seek the blessings of gods and humans. ❀