

我的五姨婆往生的故事

My Fifth Grandaunt's Rebirth

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我的五姨婆是一個很好相處的人，不喜歡講人是非，總找別人的好處。她個性開朗，喜歡幫助人，即使吃虧了也不計較。五姨婆在醫院被查出是胰腺癌晚期。當時家人對她隱瞞病情，僅告訴她是嚴重胰腺炎。但五姨婆入院後一直身體疼痛，且極度虛弱，於是她直接找主治醫師詢問病情。巧的是，這位醫生是個學佛人。她看到我的五姨婆很誠懇的詢問，經過考慮，於是告知實情。當她得知自己僅有三個月不到的壽命時，在醫生辦公室沉默了一晌，對醫生說：「謝謝您告訴我實情，雖然有點難以面對，不過我剛才突然想到所有的人都會死，只不過我先死而已。」

My fifth grandaunt was friendly and was easy going along with. She didn't discuss other people's faults, and easily recognized their good points. She was cheerful, and loved to help others, even when it didn't benefit herself. Late in her life, she was diagnosed with the final stage of pancreatic cancer. When it was discovered, her family members hid the truth of her diagnosis from her, only telling her that she had serious pancreatitis. However, my grandaunt suffered a lot of pain while she was hospitalized, and became very weak. She asked her attending physician about her condition. It so happened that her doctor was a Buddhist. When the doctor saw that my grandaunt

這位女醫師非常開郎，對五姨外婆說：「您住院期間也沒啥事做，與其悶著，不如找個宗教信仰吧。」五姨婆十分好奇問道：「那我信什麼好呢？」主治醫師說：「西方人普遍信基督，咱中國人普遍信佛，您就信佛吧。」五姨婆回答道：「好啊，我可以信佛，我該怎麼做呢？」女醫生微笑說道：「很簡單的，您有兩個選擇。一個是您每天念一千遍南無阿彌陀佛，迴向自己病情好轉甚至痊癒。佛教裡念佛大病痊癒的例子可多著呢，以後我慢慢和您講。還有一個選擇是您每天念一萬遍南無阿彌陀佛，迴給這個世界受苦受難的眾生，祈禱世界和平。」聽完女醫師的話，五姨婆沒花時間思考，告訴醫師：「我反正活不了多久，沒有必要求佛治癒我的病。我選擇每天念一萬遍佛號，祈禱世界和平。」女醫師非常欣慰的笑了，送了五姨外婆一個紅色袈裟阿彌陀佛垂手接引像的小唐卡和一個電子計數器，並且囑咐五姨外婆：「一心念佛！」

就這樣，五姨婆開始每天念一萬遍佛號，祈禱世界和平的修行。當她念到快滿一個月的時候，癌細胞轉移到肝臟，同時出現嚴重肝腹水。當同房其他癌症晚期病友疼得大呼小叫的時候，五姨婆卻毫無疼痛感。她對阿彌陀佛升起了無比堅定的信心，相信真的有阿彌陀佛存在，加持著自己。她堅信阿彌陀佛一定可以救世界，於是不再使用計數器念佛，除了吃飯睡覺之外都在念佛。她看到報紙上有哪個地區發生災難，就念佛請求阿彌陀佛幫助那個地區息災；有哪個地區發生戰爭，就念佛祈求阿彌陀佛保佑世界和平。

earnestly wanted to know more about her condition, she revealed the truth. When my grandaunt heard that she was only expected to have three months to live, she went silent for a moment. After a while, she spoke, "Thank you for letting me know the truth. Although it is difficult to face, I was just thinking, everybody will die one day. I just have to die sooner, that's all."

This doctor was very open-minded. She told my grandaunt, "Since you are staying in the hospital right now, and have nothing much to do, why not focus on developing your faith?" My grandaunt was very curious, and asked, "What kind of religion should I believe in?" The doctor said, "Well, generally Westerners believe in Christ, and we Chinese usually believe in the Buddha. Why not be a Buddhist?" My fifth grandaunt replied, "Sure! I will take faith in the Buddha. What should I do then?" The doctor smiled, "It's simple. You have two choices: One is to recite Amitabha Buddha's name a thousand times per day and transfer merit for your health to be better or even cured. There are so many examples in Buddhism where sick people with serious illnesses recover after reciting the Buddha's name. I can share with you all these stories later. The second choice is to recite Amitabha Buddha's name ten thousand times per day, and dedicate the merit to all suffering beings, and to pray for world peace." Upon hearing what the doctor has said, without any consideration, my grandaunt said, "I will not live for long anyway, so there's no need for me to ask the Buddha for curing my sickness. I choose to recite the Buddha's name ten thousand times and pray for world peace." The doctor joyfully supported in my grandaunt's decision. She gave my grandaunt a card with the image of Amitabha Buddha in red sash on it as well as an electronic counter and told my grandaunt: "Focusing on the recitation of Buddha's name."

Thus, my grandaunt began to recite the Buddha's name ten thousand times a day praying for world peace. After reciting for about a month, her cancer cells metastasized to the liver, causing severe hepatic ascites. While the other patients with terminal cancer in the same ward yelled in pain, my grandaunt did not feel any pain. She had strong confidence in Amitabha Buddha, and believed that the Buddha can save the world and that he would also bless her. She no longer used a counter to recite the Buddha's name, and recited at all times, except while eating or sleeping. When she read about the various disasters in the newspaper, she recited the Buddha's name, asking Amitabha Buddha to help relieve them. Wherever conflicts or war broke out, she too recited

很快地，又過了三個月，五姨婆狀態依然很好，並沒有出現臨終癱狀，於是她選擇出院回家休息和念佛。大概又過了半年左右，突然有一天和五姨婆關係最好的一個朋友聯繫上我母親，告訴我母親，五姨婆要去阿彌陀佛那兒了，委託母親幫忙叫齊所有的親朋好友在一個月後的某日上午9點和她道別。我母親是所有親友裡面唯一學佛人，她非常好奇五姨是怎麼把阿彌陀佛念來的，於是她提前出發去探望五姨婆。母親見到五姨婆時，是在她往生的前一個月。她的狀態極佳，按我母親的話說，很難把她和癌症晚期病人聯繫在一起。她精神抖擻，面部紅潤，坐在她身旁，即使不說話都覺得得安詳。

母親好奇地問五姨婆：「我念了好幾年的佛號，連個阿彌陀佛的影子都沒感覺到，您才念了幾個月，就把阿彌陀佛念來了？您是怎麼念佛的？」五姨婆被母親的直言逗樂了，回答道：「很簡單啊，因為那位學佛的醫師囑咐一定要一心念佛，所以我念佛的時候，會想阿彌陀佛的樣子。我想阿彌陀佛的時候，我就念阿彌陀佛。」接著五姨婆分享了具體心得，她說第一天念佛一萬遍很不容易，她念了十幾個小時才完成。一開始妄念紛飛，時間久了，散亂的心開始變得專注。只有專注的心，才能生出祝福的力量。「這樣念佛時間久了，呼吸裡都會呈現阿彌陀佛，自己和阿彌陀佛融為一體，無二差別。」母親聽完恍然大悟，感覺自己雖念了幾年佛號，並沒有培養專注的心，只是把念佛當作每天的功課完成而已。

五姨婆預定往生的日子很快到

Amitabha Buddha's name to pray for world peace.

Three months swiftly passed by, and my grandaunt recovered some and was in better condition, so she decided to return home and recite the Buddha's name. About half a year later, one day one of my grandaunt's best friends contacted my mother and told her that grandaunt was about to go to Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land. She asked my mother to help gather all her relatives and friends to meet at 9 am one day during the next month to bid farewell. My mother was the only one among her relatives and friends who studied Buddhism. She was very curious about the method my fifth grandaunt used to recite Amitabha Buddha's name; so she paid a visit a month before my grandaunt passed away. According to my mother, my grandaunt was in excellent condition at that time, and it was difficult to tell that she was a terminally ill cancer patient. She was full of energy, and her complexion was good. My mother felt peaceful just by sitting next to her, even when she wasn't speaking.

My mother asked her curiously, "I have recited the Buddha's name for several years, and I haven't even felt the tip of Amitabha Buddha's shadow. But you have only recited for a few months and the Buddha arrives? How do you recite the Buddha's name?" My grandaunt was amused by my mother's blunt question, and replied, "It's really simple. Because the Buddhist doctor told me to recite the Buddha's name single-heartedly, I do it when I recite, so when I recite, I contemplate the Buddha's appearance. When I see Amitabha Buddha in my mind, I recite his name." Then my grandaunt shared her experience in more detail. She told my mother that it was not easy on the first day to recite the Buddha's name ten thousand times, and it took her more than ten hours to finish. In the beginning, she had random thoughts arise, but after a while, she had fewer distracting thoughts, and managed to be more focused. Only with a focused mind can you obtain a response to your prayers. "After chanting for a long while in this way, Amitabha Buddha's name will arise with every breath, and you will become one with Amitabha Buddha — then, there will be no difference between yourself and the Buddha." After hearing this, my mother suddenly realized that although she had recited the Buddha's name for several years, she had not practiced concentration while doing it. Instead, she treated reciting the Buddha's name as a daily homework assignment that she had to accomplish every day.

了，親友們為了讓老太太開心，大家聚在一堂，一起念阿彌陀佛。僅念了幾分鐘佛號之後，五姨外婆和大家揮手道別：「阿彌陀佛來了，我要走了！」據我母親的回憶，當時屋子房間特別透亮，有一股蘭花和檀香混合的香氣。五姨婆那一聲道別非常瀟灑，那一刻大家並沒有經歷生離死別的痛苦，在場的所有人沒有悲傷，反而升起一股歡欣愉悅的心。❀

The day that my grandaunt prepared for her passing soon arrived. In order to bring her happiness, everyone gathered together on her behalf to recite Amitabha Buddha's name. Everyone had only been reciting for just a few minutes, when my grandaunt waved goodbye to everyone and said, "Amitabha Buddha is here. I'm leaving!" According to my mother's memory, the room in the house was especially bright at that time, and filled with the scent of orchids and sandalwood. Grandaunt bid everyone farewell beautifully. At that point, none of them experienced the pain of birth and death. No one present was sad or depressed; instead, they all felt joy and happiness. ❀

我們每逢念〈大悲咒〉的時候，或者誦經的時候，一開始都是合起掌的，好像誦〈楞嚴咒〉也是合起掌，誦〈大悲咒〉也合起掌。

等第一響磬，維那那兒敲一下磬，「兵」這麼地響一下，這要注意。第二次打一下磬，到「怛姪陀·唵」那個地方，就要放下掌來，不可以再合著掌。一早起的時候，念〈楞嚴咒〉，也是「南無楞嚴會上佛菩薩」合起掌，等到「放光如來宣說神咒」，就放掌，不是常常合著掌。

我們這兒為甚麼也要合起掌來？因為那個咒有咒神，我們合掌恭敬咒神。等到放掌的時候，那是大護法和十方諸佛都念完了，所以我們放下掌來。若總合著掌也是可以，不過不太自然，放掌比較自然。

—宣公上人一九七一年二月二十五日開示於三藩市金山寺 • 沙彌尼近本 英譯

Whenever we recite the *Great Compassion Mantra* or whenever we recite sutras, we should put our palms together at the very beginning of the recitation. Just like how we put our palms together when we recite the *Shurangama Mantra*, we put our palms together when we recite the *Great Compassion Mantra*.

When the cantor hits the bell for the first time, it goes "bong," and you should start paying attention. When the bell is hit the second time, when it reaches "Da jr two, nan," you should put down your palms and should not continue to keep them together. When we recite the *Shurangama Mantra* early in the day, we too put our palms together starting from the line "Namo Shurangama Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas." When we reach the line "As, streaming light at the Buddha's invisible crown the transformation Thus Come One proclaimed the spiritual mantra," we put down our palms and no longer keep them together.

Why do we put our palms together to begin with? There are mantra spirits for mantras. When we put our palms together, we are showing our respects for the mantra spirits. When it is time for us to put down our palms, all the lines referring to the great Dharma Protectors and the Buddhas of the ten directions have already been recited—that is why we put down our palms.

It is okay if you would like to keep your palms together throughout the entire recitation, but that is not too natural. It is more natural to put down our palms.

—Instructional Talk Given By Venerable Master Hsuan Hua on February 25, 1971 at Gold Mountain Monastery, San Francisco

• English translated by Shramaneriika Jin Ben