

# 信願必生

## With Faith and Vows, One Will Be Reborn in the Pure Land

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me that even just turning her body to pick up something was enough to make her faint. The doctor examined her and told her that there was no way to treat her condition, and that she had one or two months left. She chose to stay in the hospice and would no longer accept any medical treatment, hoping to leave from a warm and peaceful environment.

2018年年底，我去金佛寺參加佛七。一位師姐問我：「妳還記得果清老居士嗎」？我說：「記得啊！老居士今年該有九十八高壽了吧。」她說：「老居士現在住到臨終安寧病房去了。」我一聽心裡明白了。我想：佛七完畢，我一定會去看她，希望她可以等我。

安寧病房在卑詩大學附近，離我家不遠，佛七之後，我幾乎每天都去看她。她的兒子和媳婦也從香港趕回來，打算陪伴老人家走完人生最後之旅。

這次再見老居士，發現她的頸部有一個腫瘤，但精神不錯，只是體力虛弱，只能躺在床上跟我們談話。她告訴我：

Near the end of 2018, I went to Gold Buddha Monastery to attend the Amitabha Session. A Dharma sister asked me, “Do you still remember the elder laywoman Guo Qing?” I said, “Of course! She must be 98 years old this year.” She said, “She is now living in the hospice ward.” When I heard this news I understood. I thought, “When the Amitabha session is over. I definitely should go see her. Hopefully, she will wait for me.”

The hospice ward is at the University of British Columbia, which is not far from my home. After the session, I went to visit her almost every day. Her son and daughter-in-law also rushed back from Hong Kong to accompany her in her final stage of life.

When I saw the elderly laywoman, I learned that she had a tumor on her neck. Despite this, she was in good spirits, but she was weak and could only talk to us while lying on her bed. She told

只是轉一個身，想要去拿點東西，就暈倒了。醫生檢查之後，告訴她說：已經沒有什麼方法可以治療了，大概剩下一、兩個月的時間吧。老居士選擇住到安寧病房，不再接受任何的醫療手段急救，希望可以在一個溫馨安靜的氛圍中自然離去。

臨終病人的狀況，每天都是一個新的局面。有一天，我走進病房的時候，看到老人家眼睛紅紅的。她的媳婦告訴我，老人家想孫子了。我坐下來，用佛法的道理跟她講一會，老居士點點頭，哀傷的情緒很快就過去了。我心裡暗暗讚嘆老居士平常的學佛功夫，一轉念可以放下煩惱。

又有一次，去看她的時候，發現老居士正在生氣，病房裡瀰漫著一種緊繃的氣氛。原來是老居士不想吃東西，但是兒子卻一直勸她要吃要喝，讓她生氣。

這種場面，在我母親臨終之前也出現過。父親每天兩餐準時送來他親自煮好，但是母親卻沒胃口，吃不下。父親在那邊又勸又逼，一口一口的餵，我站在旁邊，不知道應該勸父親還是勸母親，含著眼淚走出病房，這種令人心酸的情景，我實在是看不下去了。我把我的經驗跟他兒子分享，請他隨順病人。但對於一個對生死情況全無經驗的人，眼睜睜看著摯愛的親人，每天不吃不喝，越來越虛弱，那份掙扎和不捨，我是深深了解的。

還好，第二天我再去的時候，日本護士看到我，叫我幫她做翻譯。然後就拉著老居士的兒子，要我轉告他：「一個人臨終的時候，身體的各種機能都不太能運作了，吃下去的東西，甚至是喝下去的水，不能運化，對身體就是一種負擔。」兒子終於聽懂了，我也上了一珍貴的一課。

有一天，我忽然想問老居士一個問題：「老居士，妳今年98歲，身體一直

For patients nearing the end of their lives, every day is a different situation. One day, when I walked into the ward, I saw that her eyes were red. Her daughter-in-law told me that she missed her grandchildren. I sat down and talked to her about the teachings of the Buddha. The elderly woman nodded, and her sadness quickly passed. I silently admired the laywoman's skillful practice of the Buddhadharmā, as she could change her mind and let go of afflictions.

Once, when I visited her, she was angry, and the atmosphere in the ward was very tense. It turned out that she didn't want to eat, but her son insisted that she eat and drink, which made her angry.

This situation also occurred when my mother was about to pass away. My father would cook two meals a day and bring them to her on time. But my mother had no appetite and could not eat. My father remonstrated and forced her to eat, one spoon at a time, and I would stand beside them, unsure of which side I should help, and so I left the ward with tears in my eyes. I couldn't stand such a sorrowful scene. I shared my experience with her son, asking him to follow along with the patient's wishes. But I also completely understand how difficult it was for him to watch his mother slowly get weaker without nourishment.

Luckily, the next day when I visited again a Japanese nurse saw me and asked me to help her translate. She wanted me to tell the son that when someone is about to pass away, many of their bodily functions will cease. They may not be able to digest what they eat and drink, and all nourishment becomes a burden. The son finally understood, and I also learned a valuable lesson.

One day, I suddenly wanted to ask the elderly laywoman a question: "You're 98 years old, and you were always physically quite healthy. Is there some secret for living a long, healthy life?" She did not hesitate, and answered, "Every month I took \$100 (Canadian dollars) to the monastery and used \$50 for liberating life and \$50 to offer to the Three Jewels.

That's wonderful! What could bring more and concrete merit than making offerings to the Three Jewels and liberating life? Nowadays, I follow her example and try to attend the monthly liberating life ceremonies at the monastery and make offerings to the Three Jewels.

The elderly laywoman also brought her image of Amitabha Buddha from home and had a recitation audio-player near her bed. Her son said, "This audio-player has played around the clock for over 30 years."

One day, I asked her, "What do you do for your morning and

不錯，也算是健康長壽了，有什麼秘訣嗎？」老居士想都不用想，直接回答：「我每個月拿\$100加元（加拿大元）到廟上，\$50放生，\$50供養三寶。」

太好了！有什麼比供養三寶和放生的功德更實際更大呢！現在我效法老居士，盡量參加廟上每月一次的放生，並供養三寶。

老居士把她在家供奉的阿彌陀佛立像掛在病房，床頭放了一台佛號機，她兒子說：「這台佛號機，每天24小時不停播放，已經放了30多年了。」

一天，我就問老居士說：「老居士，妳早晚功課是做什麼的？」

她回答：「我誦《八大人覺經》。」

我恍然大悟！難怪她那麼輕而易舉的，就能放下情緒和煩惱！《八大人覺經》的第一覺，就是要覺悟：世間無常，國土危脆……生滅變異，虛偽無主……真是日子有功，因果不差！

我於是再問：「那妳怎樣迴向呢？」

老居士回答：「我就迴向給我的祖先。我再迴向給我的兒子孫子，希望他們一家人身體健康，事事順利。」

「還有呢？」

「沒有了。」

「妳沒有迴向給妳自己嗎？」

「沒有。」

我說：「這樣不行啊！妳迴向給祖先和兒孫，當然很好。但妳也應該迴向給妳自己才對呀！妳不是要求生西方極樂世界嗎？去到西方極樂世界，妳就有能力再來幫忙妳的家人了。」

然後我就把慈雲懺主的〈西方發願文〉，用白話把它講出來：請佛用您的光明照耀我，請佛秉承您的大願攝受我，把我接到西方極樂世界去……等等。

發願完畢，老居士情緒激動，非常興奮，臉都透紅了。我也非常高興，知道應該怎麼做了。

回到家裡，我就把《八大人覺經》跟〈西方發願文〉打印出來，一面是《八大人覺經》，另一面是〈西方發願文〉。打算之後

evening recitation?»

She answered, “I recite the *Sutra of the Eight Awakenings of Great People*.”

I had a sudden realization! No wonder she was able to let go of her emotions and afflictions so easily. The first awakening in the *Sutra of the Eight Awakenings of Great People* is to understand that “**The world is impermanent. Countries are perilous and fragile... Life and Death is nothing but a series of transformations-hallucinatory, unreal, uncontrollable.**” She was truly accomplished in her practice, and her efforts were rewarded.

I then asked, “How do you transfer the merit?”

She answered, “I transfer the merit to my ancestors. I also transfer to my children and grandchildren, hoping that their families will be healthy and that everything will go well.

“Anything else?”

“No, that’s it.”

“You didn’t transfer the merit to yourself?”

“No.”

I said, “This won’t do. It’s great that you transfer the merit to your ancestors, children and grandchildren. But you should also transfer the merit to yourself. Don’t you want to be reborn in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss? Once you are there, you will be able to return to help your family members. Then I explained the “vows to be reborn in the Western Land” by the Host of the Cloud of Compassion Repentance to her using plain language, “Buddha—please shine your light on me, and with your great vows bring me to the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss.

After making the vows, the “elderly Bodhisattva’s” face was flushed with excitement and emotion. I was also very happy because I knew what I had to do next.

When I returned home, I printed out the *Sutra of the Eight Awakenings of Great People* and the text on the “vows to be reborn in the Western Land.” On one side was the *Sutra of the Eight Awakenings of Great People* and on the other were the vows. I planned to only explain the Pure Land teaching and teach her to make a vow every day. I gave the sutra text to her son and asked him to recite and make vows with her whenever he had a chance.

The second day, when I showed her the printed sutra texts she was very excited, and told her son, “When you go back to Hong Kong help me print 1,000 copies to give to



每天專講淨土，教她每天發願。經文就交給她兒子，請他有空的時候，帶著老菩薩一起誦經發願。

第二天，我把經文打印拿出來給她看的時候，老居士非常興奮，跟兒子說：「你回到香港，幫我印1000份，到處送給人家！」

就在我信心滿滿，意氣高昂，要同老居士一起重溫彌陀大願，淨土殊勝的時候，老居士的病情急速下滑。隔天我再去的時候，她顯得疲憊想睡，無法溝通。第三天我去病房看到她的時候，她已經陷入半昏迷的狀態。

我心情沮喪無奈，回到廟上，向一位有經驗的師姐請教。她教我：「幫老居士念經！」

對！我記得聽法師講過，一個人臨終的時候，你不要以為他昏迷了，就什麼都不知道，其實他的神識有可能更清明更有智慧，接收到的信息更清晰更全面。

於是我從佛堂請了三本《無量壽經》，再去病房，請老居士的兒子和媳婦，跟著讀經。我們三個人就在老居士的床邊，恭誦了一部《無量壽經》。讀經過程順暢，氣氛非常好，越讀越有法喜，讀完之後，我們心情之愉悅輕鬆，無法形容。

誦經完畢，我回家吃完晚飯，就收到電話，說老居士已經往生了。照我們之前的約定，我回去幫老居士助念。去到病院，金佛寺的佛友已經到了，老居士的三個至親：兒子、媳婦、和長期關懷幫助她的甥女也到了。老居士的面容很平靜，就像睡著一樣。我們一群人從晚上九點多，助念到第二天早上七點結束。

助念時候，有一段時間，我看到她兒子幾次走到病床旁邊，把臉貼近到老居士的頭，好像要看清楚一些什麼似的。這個動作重複了三、四次。後來才知道，他們三個人坐在病床尾端

people.”

I was feeling optimistic and in good spirits about the prospect of reviewing Amitabha's great vows and the merits of the Pure Land with her. But then her condition rapidly deteriorated. The next day when I visited her again, she was weary and nearly unconscious, and there was no way to communicate with her. On the third day she had already fallen into a semi-comatose state.

I felt frustrated and helpless, and when I returned to the monastery I went to an experienced Dharma sister for advice. She said, "Recite the sutras for her." Yes, I remember that a Dharma Master once said that we shouldn't think that someone who is unconscious and at their life's end is unaware of their surroundings. In actuality, their consciousness might be even clearer, discerning, and able to receive information.

So I requested three copies of the *Limitless Life Sutra* from the Buddha Hall and returned to the hospice. I asked her son and daughter-in-law to recite together. The three of us read the entire sutra. The recitation went smoothly and the atmosphere was very good. The more we read the more we were filled with Dharma joy. After completing the recitation, we felt at ease and happy beyond words.

After reciting the sutra, I went home and ate dinner. Then I received a phone call. The elderly laywoman had passed away. As previously arranged, I returned to the hospital to help her recite the Buddha's name. When I arrived at the hospice, the Dharma friends from Gold Buddha Monastery had already arrived. The elder laywoman's three close relatives—the son, daughter-in-law, and niece who also served as her long-time caretaker—had also arrived. Her face looked very peaceful, as though she were sleeping. Our group recited from 9 p.m. that night until 7 a.m. the next day.

When reciting, I saw that her son walked to her bedside several times to look closely at her face, as though he were trying to discern something. This happened three to four times. It was only until later that I learned that the three relatives, who were seated on a sofa at the foot of the bed, and as they recited, each saw a ray of light shining from her head. The three had different accounts of the location and color of the light, but they all said that the light came out and disappeared.

This recitation lasted about ten days, and the things that happened each day taught and inspired me. Was she reborn in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss? That I don't know. But based on what we have learned from the sutras we can assume that it was highly likely.

的沙發上念佛，各自分別看到老居士的頭部有一道光，從頭頂方向發射出去。發射的部位和光色，三個人的講法有點不同，但看到有光從頭頂發射後消失，這一點是一致的。

這次助念，前後大概十天，每天發生的事情，對我都是意想不到的啟發和學習。老居士是否往生到西方極樂世界？我不能確定。但我們可以從理論來推測，她往生的機率是很高的。滿益大師說：「往生與否，全憑信願之有無。」

老居士應該是很想往生淨土的，看她供奉的是阿彌陀佛，念佛機的佛號幾十年長期播放，就是端倪。但她不知道要發願，我的感覺是她在那邊等，等阿彌陀佛來接。

我記得過去聽法師講過幾句話，很觸動我：「往生是動詞，是需要take action（行動）的，一定要發願！眾生有感，佛菩薩才可以來應啊！」這也是讓我深深警惕的一點，覺得要細細反問自己，佛號的內涵是否正確和足夠？

念佛時一定時刻要把心態校正，目標是跟佛的大願相應，往生才有望。我們是否可以控制自己往生的時刻？我覺得在小範圍之內，又有佛力加持，好像是可行的。我們不是經常聽說有病人一直久延殘喘，等到親人回來才瞑目的事嗎？老居士一發願，病情就急轉直下，我覺得這不是巧合。

另外，誦經的功德無量無邊。我們讀誦經典的時候，當然是感受到安定身心，契佛法義的好處。但這一次在臨終人的床邊誦經，那種體驗，讓我確實感受到誦經的功德。我們那一次誦經的法喜，一定是跟老居士的法喜共鳴，所以特別強烈，特別殊勝。現在回想起來，仍是很開心。

此外，家屬也是需要幫助的人。跟家屬坦白溝通，解除他們心中的掛礙和執著，也無形中消除了臨終者的障礙。所以我們在為自己善終往生鋪路的時候，也要在家屬方面多下功夫。

感恩老居士和她的家人，給我們這麼好的學習機會。感恩阿彌陀佛冥冥加持護佑。祈願見者聞者同歸極樂。❀

The elderly laywoman very much wished to go to the Pure Land. She worshipped Amitabha Buddha and had been reciting along with her audio-player for decades. These were the signs. However, she did not know about making vows. My impression was that she was waiting for Amitabha to bring her over. Great Master Ouyi said, **Being reborn in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss, depends on if you have faiths and vows...**

I remember that a Dharma Master once said the following, which moved me very much, “Rebirth is a verb. It requires that we take action. We must make vows! It is only after living beings bring forth an intention that Buddhas and Bodhisattvas can respond!”

This also served as a powerful warning for me. It caused me to reflect seriously: Is the essence of my recitation correct? And is it enough?

When we recite the Buddha’s name we have to constantly rectify our intentions. Our goal is to be in line with the Buddha’s great vows. Only then can we hope for rebirth. Can we decide when we are reborn?

I think that to a limited extent, with the Buddha’s blessing, it is possible. Don’t we frequently hear about patients who linger at death’s door, and only close their eyes after they see their beloved ones? Once the elderly laywoman made the vow, her condition worsened rapidly. I don’t think that was a coincidence.

In addition, the merit and virtue accrued from reciting sutras is limitless. When we recite sutras, we feel at peace in body and mind and understand the benefits of Buddhism. But this experience of reciting the sutra at someone’s deathbed allowed me to really experience its merit and virtue. The Dharma joy we felt during that recitation must have also been the elder laywoman’s Dharma joy. That’s why it felt so powerful and wonderful. Even now, it makes me very happy to recount it.

But, family members of the deceased also need help [in these situations.] Clear communication with her family helped ease their concerns and attachments, while also imperceptibly clearing away obstacles for the dying. Thus, while we pave the way for a good ending to our life, we should also work on and with our family.

I’m grateful to the elderly Bodhisattva and her family for offering us such a great learning opportunity, and to Amitabha Buddha for his subtle and inconceivable blessings. I hope that all those who see or hear this are reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. ❀