

金山聖寺淨業社
組織及會務運作程序

Gold Mountain Monastery
Pure Karma Society
Member's Handbook

金山聖寺淨業社
Gold Mountain Monastery
Pure Karma Society Members' Handbook

通訊處及連絡電話：

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目 錄

金山聖寺淨業社組織及會務運作程序.....	1
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(甲)淨業社組織

一. 定名.....	1
二. 社址.....	1
三. 宗旨.....	1
四. 社員資格.....	2
五. 社員操行.....	2
六. 社員利益.....	3
七. 監察委員會.....	3
八. 分組.....	3
九. 學校行政與財務安排.....	3
十. 修正組職之程序.....	4

(乙)運作程序.....4

一. 集會.....	4
二. 贊助費.....	4
三. 財政支出.....	4
四. 職務.....	5
五. 所有社員應知.....	7
六. 助念組員應知.....	8
七. 運作修訂程序.....	9

附錄：

臨 終 三 大 要——印光法師文.....	21
-----------------------	----

人 生 之 最 後——弘一大師文.....	31
-----------------------	----

「申請表格樣本」附后

Contents

A.	THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	
I.	Name.....	11
II.	Address.....	11
III.	Objectives.....	11
IV.	Membership.....	12
V.	Members' Conduct.....	12
VI.	Members' Benefits.....	13
VII.	The Executive Committee.....	13
VIII.	Groups.....	14
IX.	Executive and Financial Arrangements of the Chinese School.....	14
X.	Amendments.....	14
B.	OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES	
I.	Meetings.....	14
II.	Sponsorship.....	15
III.	Expenses.....	15
IV.	Duties	15
V.	Regulations For Members.....	17
VI.	Regulations For Recitation Assistance Service Members.....	19
VII.	Amendment	20

Appendix:

<i>Three Essentials for those close to Death</i> by Dharma Master Yin Guang (1930).....	38
<i>At the End of Life</i> by Shramana Hong Yi	51
<i>Sample Application Forms</i> attached at end.	

金山聖寺

淨業社組織及會務運作程序

甲) 淨業社組織

一．定名：本社由宣公上人賜名為「淨業社」，英文譯名為 Pure Karma Society.

二．社址：800 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94108.
以金山聖寺為集會地點或其他按須要另行公佈之地點。

三．宗旨

1. 本社是金山寺居士團體的組織，以護持三寶，清淨三業為宗旨。
2. 透過有系統性的組織運作，加強佛友間之建設性互助。於護持三寶工作的推展中，增強團體運作的效能及融洽性，並促進居士之個人修持，以期在共修中相輔相成，進一步提升正知正見，達至福慧雙修的目標。

3. 設立互助念佛團，協助病重，臨終或往生的社員及其家屬助念或舉行告別儀式，令其得生淨土。

四．社員資格

1. 凡有志於學佛及護持三寶者，均歡迎加入淨業社為社員。
2. 參加淨業社不需繳付任何費用，可隨緣贊助。只須填寫表格及附照片一張，並遵守金山寺道場規矩及淨業社（請閱讀最後頁《所有社員應知》及《助念組員應知》章程。如不能遵守社員規則者，經監委會議決，可取消其社員資格。
3. 所有社員應努力依照宣公上人訂立之六大宗旨：不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不妄語為學佛標準。
4. 社員若有不良嗜好，如吸毒嗜酒行為不檢等，經監察委員會（監委會）通過後，得取消其資格。

五．社員操行

1. 社員不得擅自以法界佛教總會、金山聖寺或淨業社名義進行任何籌款活動。若有私人經濟問題或其他原因，亦不得私自向其他社員提出捐款或借款。若需要他人作經濟援助時，得向監委會提出申請並詳述原因，由監委會協商如何提出建設性的幫助。如有違犯，監委會有權終止其社籍。
2. 社員於職務責任上，若與其他社員或組員有不合時，應向所屬組長提出，請其協助。必要時，所屬

組長可要求監委會加以處理協調。倘協調無效，影響會務，監委會有權終止有關社員之職務及社籍。

3. 社員若發生妨礙社務之進行推展時，監委會有權提出調查，勸諫或作出其他安排。若溝通無效，監委會有權終止該社員之社籍，以免影響社務。

六. 社員利益

1. 所有社員，得盡心盡力參與護持三寶的活動，並互相共勉，福慧雙修。
2. 年長佛友，常到淨業社念佛，生活充實。
3. 社員臨終，得社友助念，求生極樂。
4. 貧苦社員，可請求淨業社補助，辦理『後事』。

七. 監察委員會 (監委會)：(以下組織章程五月一日召開社員大會重新修正)

監委會由金山寺僧團三人以上組成，負責監督委任淨業社一切事務。

八. 分組

社務分組：服務組 (膳食，法會義工，交通安排)，精進組，助念及關懷組 (探訪長者或老人院)，教育組。各組組長及組員由監委會批准及委派。

九. 學校行政與財務安排

金山寺學校，由監委會督導。但其財政收入及支出是獨立，不歸入淨業社基金。淨業社有需要動用寺內或學校的資源時（如影印機及紙張等），視情況經監委會同意後由淨業社基金撥出補償。

本社社員參與學校教育服務者，應依循監委會學校校規指示及安排。

十．修正組織之程序

以上組織章程由監委會舉行社員大會時可修正之。

（乙）通過運作程序

一．集會

1. 特別會議由監委會隨時召開，並於開會之一星期前通告社員。
2. 助念組念佛法會訂為每星期六上午於金山聖寺進行。

二．贊助費：社員願意贊助淨業社時，可交由監委會處理。

三．財政支出

1. 久病之社員需財物接濟者，本社可酌量資助，令其安心休養念佛。
2. 貧寒無依之社員，本社可幫助部份喪葬費。
3. 孤苦之社員,本社可幫助其設立牌位。
4. 各項需要之印制費用，可由監委會批准支付。

5. 所有支出須由監委會批准進行。

四．職務

1. 服務組

- a. 膳食組：負責廚房工作，包括採購、各種廚務及用膳後之清潔安排（包括洗碗與吸塵）等事宜。
- b. 維修組：負責寺內水、電及其他設施的維護修繕等事宜。
- c. 電腦服務組：協助寺內電腦操作及保安上所出現之問題，並提供維修服務。
- d. 佛殿組：負責協助寺內安排大殿的香燈等工作、維持大殿內的秩序與整潔。同時亦安排服務台工作人員與訓練。
- e. 總務組：協助寺內一切舉行法會及活動時採購等需要。
- f. 交通組：主要負責策劃社務活動中交通的安排，並協助安排寺內常住眾交通的需要。

2. 精進組

主要推廣讀經、念佛，閱讀佛學及有益讀物等活動，鼓勵社員分享學佛心得與要領，並研討社員在日常生活中實踐佛法所面對的困惑與考驗。使社員間能建立有建設性的共勉助緣，在學佛路上不會感到迷惘，能精進往上提昇，淨化人生。

3. 助念及關懷組

- a. 助念組：主要負責安排助念之各項事宜，於接受邀請時，安排社員與申請者（助念或舉行告別儀式時之親眷的協商。並與法師們聯繫策劃訓練助念組之團員，以提昇助念品質效益。
 - b. 關懷組：負責慰問年長身體衰弱或久病無法到寺中拜佛之社員，鼓勵其繼續在家念佛，修持念佛法門。
 - c. 探訪組：探訪老人院，帶給長者們歌唱或歡樂活動，安慰或鼓勵，適當情況下可教導他們念佛。
4. 教育組
- a. 學校：行政獨立，教職員由監委會委派。
 - b. 圖書館服務：主要負責協助寺內圖書館管理及整理圖書等事宜。
5. 公關組
- a. 宣傳組：主要負責策劃宣傳會務活動，並負責刊登公佈稿件等。
 - b. 活動組：主要負責策劃及組織社員活動，增加護持三寶之服務功能、同時亦顧及服務社員於學佛修行中正知正見之培養，以期達到福慧雙修的目標。
 - c. 聯絡組：主要負責聯絡社員助念、參加法會、出席社員大會等之各項活動。
 - d. 金山通訊服務組：主要協助金山通訊的編排、出版工作，包括定稿翻譯、校稿等事宜。

- e. 翻譯服務組：負責協助寺內及社員活動上的翻譯工作。

五．所有社員應知：

1. 助念及告別儀式只提供給社員本人及社員的直系親屬：

本人	配偶
父、母	岳父、岳母（配偶之父、母）
祖父母；外祖父母	
子女	
孫子、孫女	
兄、弟、姊、妹	

2. 若對道場有貢獻而非社員之義工本人及直系親屬，經審查決定後，可申請助念或告別儀式。
3. 社員參加任何法會時，請先到服務台報到，並在出席表內打√。
4. 經常參加念佛法會或其他法事如聽經拜懺等，以為修道助緣。社員每月最少須來寺參加法會三次以上或當義工。年老及有病組員，務必向監委會請假，以便監委會可按時委派關懷組慰問並鼓勵念佛。
5. 社員常應精進，預備往生淨土資糧，每日盡可能最少念佛號一千聲。作早晚課及禮佛拜懺等。年長者（七十歲已上）或不識字者，可只念聖號二千聲以上。每月初交回功課表，回向功德。
6. 社員須參加每月第一個星期日下午的淨業社共修會，每年不能缺席超過四次以上，若不能參加共修

者，必須請假。年老及有病社員，請向監委會請假。

7. 秉承宣公上人的六大宗旨（不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不打妄語），三大條款，（凍死不攀緣，餓死不化緣，窮死不求緣），居士或社員絕對不可以私自向其他居士或社員來化緣、募捐等事項。
8. 病重或在醫院時通知金山寺淨業社（電話：415-421-6117），本社將委派淨業社慰問組與病者家人聯絡，慰問及輔導。
9. 社員可為病者在家念佛迴向，並在金山寺念佛法會時迴向病者。壽未盡者使蒙佛加庇，早日痊愈。
10. 社員自己念佛並應囑咐家人念佛。
11. 社員應於平日與家人協商，說明要怎樣處理後事，並可事先填妥『事前助念指示書』，或囑咐家人於病重或往生前，將邀請助念書交予淨業社，以便安排助念組員為社員助念或舉行告別儀式。
12. 申請助念或告別儀式的社員須與家屬等人溝通，直系親屬如子、女等須四十九日內茹素，並完全依據佛教法事儀式進行。更不能同期舉行其他宗教儀式。若有其他佛教團體參與，不須再聯絡金山寺淨業社。
13. 參加本社已久之社員，或經常參加法會之法友，由於互相認識並經常在金山寺共修，法友們將熱誠參與為其本人或眷屬助念。臨時參加淨業社者，兩個月后才可接受申請其本人或眷屬助念。

六．助念組員應知：

1. 為使往生者真實地獲得助念的效果，參加助念或告別儀式的社員必須吃長素，以三業清淨至誠之心，將念佛功德迴向亡者。
2. 參與助念服務之社員，不得收受任何費用及報酬。社員若欲為自己，病人或亡者祈福，捐款或作佛事，可直接與金山聖寺聯絡。參與助念的社員若不遵守以上規則，私人收取供養，或私相授受，接受酬勞，替人念經拜懺者，經監委會調查屬實後，即取銷其社員資格。

七．運作修訂程序

以上運作程序可由監委會特別會議修訂。

二零一一年五月十日再版。

Organizational Structure and Operational Procedures of Pure Karma Society

The Organizational Structure

Name

The Venerable Master Hua bestowed our Society the name “Pure Karma Society” in December 1994. It will be referred to as “PKS” or the “The Society” hereafter. The Chinese name is pronounced as “Jing Ye She”.

Address

Pure Karma Society
Gold Mountain Monastery
800 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94108

PKS will usually meet at the above address, or at any other specified venue, where appropriate.

Objectives

1. PKS is an Association of the lay people of Gold Mountain Monastery (GMM). Our principal objectives are to protect the Triple Jewels and help our members purify the three karmas.
2. Specifically, PKS intends to strengthen the relationship among the lay people in a constructive way through the systematic organization of activities. In the process of working toward the objective of

protecting the Triple Jewel, PKS also seeks to maximize the effectiveness and harmony of a collective group of lay people who may improve their cultivation over time. It is designed so that in a sharing environment, all PKS members may advance further on the path of right knowledge and right understanding, whereby all members can ultimately reach the goal of attaining the virtues of both blessings and wisdom.

3. Set up a recitation assistance group to serve PKS members or their family members when they are ill, at their dying moment or upon their death, and also assist with farewell ceremonies, with the intended purpose of helping them to gain rebirth in the Pure Land.

Membership

1. Anyone who intends to study the Buddha Dharma as well as to protect the Triple Jewels is welcome to become a PKS member.
2. Whoever wants to be a PKS member does not require to pay, though donations are accepted. The applicant has to fill in a form and bring in a small recent picture. There are regulations required by Gold Mountain Monastery and PKS to follow. Please read "Regulation for All Members" and the "Regulations for Recitation Assistance Service Members" on the last page of this booklet. Membership of those who cannot follow the Society's regulations will be rescinded at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
3. All members should act in accordance with the Six Great Principles as established by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua: no fighting, no greed, no seeking, no selfishness, no self-indulgence, and no lies.
4. Any member who has bad habits, such as addiction to drugs or alcohol, or other unwholesome behavior, may be denied membership by the Executive Committee.

Members' Conduct

1. No member shall, without permission, carry out any fundraising activities in the name of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA), GMM or the Society. No member is allowed to approach other members for donations of money or provision of financial assistance for any reason, be it personal financial matters or otherwise. Any member in need of help may present his/her case to

the Executive Committee. The committee may then consider what appropriate assistance the Society can offer. If any member infringes this rule, the Executive Committee may terminate his/her membership at its discretion.

2. If any member is involved in any dispute related to the Society with other members, s/he must seek the assistance of the Group leader to resolve the dispute. If necessary, the Group leader may request the Executive Committee to resolve the issue. If attempts by the Group leader or the Executive Committee fail to resolve the dispute and will thus affect the Society's activities, the Executive Committee may terminate the membership of those involved at its discretion.
3. If any member has other problems or issues which may impact the smooth operations and development of the Society, the Executive Committee can intervene through investigation, persuasion or other appropriate arrangements. If the intervention fails, in order not to impact the Society's operations, the Executive Committee may terminate the membership of any member involved at its discretion.

Members' Benefits

1. All members should put forth their best efforts to participate in the Society's activities for the protection of the Triple Jewel, and also mutually support each other in cultivation to attain the benefits of both blessings and wisdom.
2. All elder fellow members are always welcome to the Society to recite the Buddha's name and enrich their lives.
3. Members close to death may receive recitation assistance services from the members of the Society so as to gain rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
4. Members in need may receive assistance from the Society for part of their funeral expenses.

The Executive Committee

(the following terms have been revised on May 1, 2011 at Members special meeting).

The Executive Committee consists of three or more Sangha members and is responsible for supervising all operational activities of the Society.

Groups

All duties of the Society are to be carried out by the different groups constituted by PKS members, which consists of the Services Group (culinary, volunteering, transportation), the Intensive Practice Group, the Recitation & Caring Group (visiting elders or senior homes), and the Education Group. Each Group leader and its members are appointed by the Executive Committee.

Executive and Financial Arrangements of the Chinese School

With respect to the Chinese School grouped under the Education Group, its income and expenses will remain independent of the Society. When the Society uses any resources of GMM or the Chinese School (such as photocopier and paper, etc.) the Society will periodically reimburse GMM and the Chinese School upon approval by the Executive Committee.

All members who participate in the Chinese School and Education Group should adhere to the rules and regulations of the School.

Amendments

Amendments to the Organization Structure of the Society may be carried out during special meetings of all members.

Operational Procedures

Meetings

1. Special meetings can be convened by the Executive Committee at anytime, where appropriate. Notice for a special meeting must be communicated to members one week prior to the scheduled meeting date.
2. The Recitation Group Dharma Assembly of Buddha's name recitation will be held every Saturday morning at GMM.

Sponsorship

Contributions from members will be collected by the Executive Committee.

Expenses

1. For any members with prolonged illnesses who need financial assistance, the Society may decide to partially assist them so that they can recite the Buddha's name without worries.
2. For those members in need with no one to rely on, the Society may contribute toward a portion of their funeral expenses.
3. For those members who have passed away and have no relatives to establish merit for them, the Society may help them by establishing memorial tablets and accumulating merit on their behalf.
4. All other expenses, such as postage, paper, and printing etc. may apply for reimbursement from the Executive Committee.
5. All expenses must be pre-approved by the Executive Committee.

Duties

1. Services Group
 - a. Culinary Services: Primarily responsible for scheduling helpers to undertake different tasks, including purchasing food supplies, all kitchen services and clean-up services, such as dishwashing and vacuuming.
 - b. Maintenance Services: Primarily responsible for assisting GMM with water, electricity and other maintenance and repair issues.
 - c. Computer Services: Primarily responsible for assisting GMM with personal computer operational and security issues (e.g. virus protection).
 - d. Buddha Hall Services: Primarily responsible for assisting GMM with altar services, maintaining order and provision of other services inside the Buddha Hall. Also assists GMM with the training and scheduling of receptionists at the front desk.
 - e. General Services: Primarily responsible for assisting GMM and the Society with purchasing general supplies.
 - f. Transportation: Primarily responsible for planning and coordinating transportation arrangements for the Society's activities. Also

assists with coordinating the transportation needs of the Sangha members at GMM.

2. The Intensive Practice Group

Primarily responsible for promoting Sutra recitation, recitation of the Buddha's name, reading Buddhist publications and other beneficial reading materials, and organizing forums for members to share their insights on learning Buddhism and discuss problems encountered in their daily Buddhist practice. Thus, members can establish mutual support to avoid becoming confused or frustrated, and thus all members can advance in their cultivation and purify their lives.

3. The Recitation Assistance & Caring Group

- a. Recitation Assistance: Primarily responsible for coordinating recitation services for members and their immediate families upon invitation. The group also works with the Dharma Masters at GMM to train members of the Recitation Assistance subgroup in order to raise the standard of its recitation assistance services.
- b. Caring: Primarily responsible for sending regards to or visiting PKS members who are unable to come to GMM due to old age or prolonged sickness, and to encourage them to continue reciting the Buddha's name at home, and cultivate the "Recitation Dharma-door".
- c. Visiting: Primarily responsible for visiting senior homes to present songs and fun activities to seniors, provide them with comfort and encouragement, and when appropriate, encourage them to recite the Buddha's name.

4. Education Group

- a. The Chinese School: Operations of the school is independent of the Society with its staff appointed by the Executive Committee.
- b. Library Services: Primarily responsible for assisting GMM with the management and administration of its library.

5. Public Relations Group

- a. Promotion: Primarily responsible for promoting activities of the Society, and writing articles for publication.
- b. Activities: Primarily responsible for planning and improving the quality of activities organized for the protection of the Triple

Jewel. In addition, It also seeks to promote proper knowledge and understanding of the Buddha Dharma among members, with the ultimate goal of helping them cultivate the benefits of both blessings and wisdom over time.

- c. Coordination: Primarily responsible for informing members of upcoming activities, such as recitation assistance services, Dharma Assemblies, and meetings, etc.
- d. GMM Newsletter: Primarily responsible for assisting GMM with newsletter publication, including gathering articles, editing, translation and proofreading, etc.
- e. Translation Services: Provide translation services in connection with activities of GMM and the Society, where appropriate.

Regulations For All Members

1. Recitation assistance and farewell ceremony are provided only to members of the Society and their immediate family:

Self	Spouse
Father, Mother	Father-in-law, Mother-in-law (Parents of spouse)
Paternal Grandparents, Maternal Grandparents	
Sons, Daughters	
Grandsons, Granddaughters	
Brothers, Sisters	

2. Volunteers or those who have been dedicating their time or service to the monastery and who are not members of the Society may apply for recitation assistance and farewell ceremony for themselves or their immediate family, upon approval by the Executive Committee.
3. Members must mark attendance for that day on the attendance sheet at the front desk when they attend Dharma Assemblies.
4. In order to foster conducive conditions for cultivating the Path, it is essential to frequently attend Reciting Buddha's name sessions and other Dharma Assemblies such as Sutra lectures or Repentance Ceremonies. Members must attend Dharma Assemblies or serve as volunteers at the Monastery a minimum of three times per

month. Members who are unable to come to the Monastery due to old age or sickness must apply for a leave of absence from the Executive Committee. This allows the Executive Committee to arrange for the Caring Group to visit and encourage home-bound members to continue reciting the Buddha's name.

5. Members must be diligent in cultivation to accumulate the resources to be reborn in the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. Daily practice should include reciting the Buddha's name at least 1,000 times. One may conduct the Morning and Evening Liturgies, bowing, or performing Repentance Ceremonies, etc. Seniors (> 70 years old of age or older) or illiterate persons may recite the Buddha or Bodhisattva's name 2,000 times or more. Record sheets should be submitted to the Executive Committee at the beginning of each month and the transference of Merit should be made.
6. Members must attend members meeting held every first Sunday afternoon of the month. Members may not be absent for more than four times a year. Anyone who cannot attend must apply for a leave of absence. Members who are old or sick also must apply for a leave of absence from the Executive Committee.
7. Complying with the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's Six Ideals (no fighting, no greed, no seeking, no selfishness, no self-indulgence, and no lies) and The Three Great Principles (Freezing, we do not scheme; Starving, we do not beg; dying of poverty, we ask for nothing), lay people and members are forbidden to solicit donations or money from other lay people or members.
8. Members may inform the Society of their serious illness or hospitalization, (Tel: 415-421-6117). The Society will send the consolation team and make arrangements to contact the patient's family to provide support and counseling.
9. Members may transfer the merit and virtue of their recitation both at home and in Dharma Assemblies at GMM to the sick member. If the sick member's life is not yet due to end, he/she will receive the Buddha's blessings and recover soon.
10. Members may recite the Amitabha Buddha's name themselves and should advise their family to do the same.
11. Members should inform their family members in advance of their

intended funeral service arrangements, and fill out the Recitation Assistance Invitation Letter (see sample at back) . Bring it to PKS at the time of the member's near death. The Recitation Assistance Group will arrange to offer recitation assistance and perform the Farewell Ceremony when requested.

12. Members who ask for recitation assistance or farewell ceremony must clearly communicate the Society's request to their family. Immediate family members (e.g. sons, daughters, etc.) must adopt a vegetarian diet for 49 days and the funeral service must be in accordance with the Buddhist tradition. The funeral service must not be performed in conjunction with other religious traditions. Members need not contact PKS if members from another Buddhist organization are participating in the funeral service.
13. Request for Recitation Assistance or Farewell Ceremony Service will not be accepted for new members who just joined PKS unless is after two months.

VI. Regulations For Recitation Assistance Service Members

1. In order for the deceased to reap the full benefit of recitation assistance, members participating in recitation assistance and farewell ceremony must be full fledged vegetarians. With upmost sincerity and a pure, undefiled mind, they may transfer the merits and virtue from reciting the Buddha's name to the deceased.
2. No members performing recitation assistance are allowed to receive any gratuity. All PKS members who want to earn blessings for the sick or who wish to make donations for any other reasons may directly contact GMM. Any member, who accept personal offerings or who, through their connections with the Society or on their own, make private arrangements to recite for someone and privately accept gratuities, can have their membership terminated by the Executive Committee.

VII. Amendment

Amendments to the Operational Procedures of the Society may be revised by the Executive Committee during special meetings of all members.

Revised and adopted on May 10, 2011

附 錄

臨終三大要

印光大師著 (1930年)

THREE ESSENTIALS FOR THOSE CLOSE TO DEATH

Dharma Master Yin Guang (1930)

人生之最後

弘一演音大師講述

AT THE END OF LIFE

Dharma Master Hong Yi

臨終三大要

印光大師著 (1930年)

世間最可慘者，莫甚於死，而且舉世之人，無一能倖免者，以故有心欲自利利人者，不可不早為之計慮也。實則死之一字，原是假名，以宿生所感一期之報盡，故捨此身軀，復受別種身軀耳。不知佛法者，直是無法可設，只可任彼隨業流轉。今既得聞如來普度眾生之淨土法門，固當信願念佛，預備往生資糧，以期免生死輪迴之幻苦，證涅槃常住之真樂。

其有父母兄弟，及諸眷屬，若得重病，勢難痊癒者，宜發孝順慈悲之心，勸彼念佛求生西方，併為助念，俾病者由此死已，即生淨土，其為利益，何能名焉。

今列三要，以為成就臨終人往生之據。語雖鄙俚，意本佛經；遇此因緣，悉舉行焉。

這三要者：

第一，善巧開導安慰，令生正信。

第二，大家換班念佛，以助淨念。

第三，切戒搬動哭泣，以防誤事。

果能依此三法以行，決定可以消除宿業，增長淨因，蒙佛接引，往生西方。一得往生，則超凡入聖，了生脫死，漸漸進修，必至圓成佛果而後已。如此利益，全仗眷屬助念之力。能如是行，於父母，則為真孝；於兄弟，姐妹，則為真弟；於兒女，則為真慈；於朋友，於朋友，於平人，則為真義，真惠。以此培自己之淨因，吞同人之信嚮，久而之之，何難相習成風乎哉。今為一一條陳，庶不至臨時無所適從耳。

第一：善巧開導安慰，令生正信者。

切勸病人，放下一切，一心念佛。如有應交代事，速令交代。交代後，便置之度外，即作我今將隨佛往生佛國，世間所有富樂，眷屬，種種

臨終三大要 印光大師著

塵境，皆為障礙，致受禍害，以故不應生一念繫戀之心。

須知自己一念真性，本無有死。所言死者，乃捨此身而又受別種之身耳。若不念佛，則隨善、惡業力，復受生於善、惡道中。

若當臨命終時，一心念南無阿彌陀佛，以此志誠念佛之心，必定感佛大發慈悲，親垂接引，令得往生。且莫疑我業力凡夫，何能以少時念佛，便可出離生死，往生西方？當知佛大慈悲，即十惡五逆之極重罪人，臨終地獄之相已現，若有善知識教以念佛，或念十聲，或止一聲，亦得蒙佛接引，往生西方。此種人念此幾句，尚得往生，又何得以業力重，念佛數少，而生疑乎？

須知吾人本具真性，與佛無二，但以惑業深重，不得受用。今既歸命於佛，如子就父，乃是還我本有家鄉，豈是分外之事？又佛昔發願：「若有眾生聞我名號，志心信樂，乃至十念，若不生者，不取正覺。」

以故一切眾生，臨終發至誠心，念佛求生西

方者，無一不垂接引也。千萬不可懷疑，懷疑即是自誤，其禍非小。況離此苦世界，生彼樂世界，是至極快意之事，當生歡喜心。千萬不可怕死，怕死則仍不能不死，反致了無生西之分矣。以自心與佛相違反故，佛雖具大悲慈，亦無奈不依佛教之眾生何。

阿彌陀佛萬德洪名，如大冶洪鑪；吾人多生罪業，如空中片雪。業力凡夫，由念佛故，業便消滅；如片雪近於洪鑪，即便了不可得。又況業力既消，所有善根，自然增長殊勝，又何可疑其不得生，與佛不來接引乎？

如此委曲宛轉開導安慰，病人自可生正信心。此係為病人所開導者。至於自己所應盡孝致誠者，亦唯在此，切不可隨順俗情，求神問醫。大命將盡，鬼神醫藥，豈能令其不死乎？既役情於此種無益之事，則於念佛一事，便紛其誠懇，而莫由感通矣。

許多人於父母臨終，不惜資財，請許多醫生來看，此名賣孝，欲世人稱我於父母為能盡孝，不知其天地鬼神，實鑑其心。故凡於父母喪葬等事，

臨終三大要 印光大師著

過於張羅者，不有天災，必有人禍。為人子者，宜注重於親之神識得所；彼世俗所稱頌，固不值明眼人一哂，況極意邀求，以實罹不孝之大咎乎。

第二：大家換班念佛，以助淨念者。

前已開導病人，令生正信。然彼病人，心力孱弱，勿道平素口不念佛之人，不易相繼長念，即向來以念佛為事者，至此亦全仗他人相助，方能得力。以故家中眷屬，同應發孝順慈悲之心，為其助念佛號。若病尚未至將終，當分班念，應分三班，每班限定幾人。頭班出聲念，二三班默持，念一點鐘，二班接念，頭班，三班默持。若有小事，當於默持時辦，值班時，斷斷不可走去。二班念畢，三班接念，終而復始。念一點鐘，歇兩點鐘，縱經晝夜亦不甚辛苦。

須知肯助人淨念往生，亦得人助念之報。且莫說是為父母盡孝應如是，即為平人，亦培自己福田，長自己善根，實為自利之道，不徒為人而已。成就一人往生淨土，即是成就一眾生作佛，此等功德，何可思議！三班相續，佛聲不斷。病

人力能念，則隨之小聲念；不能念，則攝耳諦聽，心無二念，自可與佛相應矣。念佛聲不可太高，高則傷氣，難以持久；亦不可太低，以致病人聽不明白。不可太快，亦不可太慢。太快則病人不能隨，即聽亦難明了；太慢則氣接不上，亦難得益。須不高不低，不緩不急，字字分明，句句清楚。令病者，字字句句，入耳經心，斯易得力。

念佛法器，唯用引磬，其他一切，概不宜用。引磬聲清，聽之令人心地清淨。木魚聲濁，故不宜用於臨終助念。

又宜念四佛號。初起時，念幾句六字，以後專念「阿彌陀佛」四字，不念「南無」，以字少易念。病人或隨之念，或攝心聽，皆省心力。家中眷屬如此念，外請善友亦如此念，人多人少，均如此念。不可一起念，歇歇又念，致令病人，佛念間斷。若值飯時，當換班喫，勿斷佛聲。若病人將欲斷氣，宜三班同念。直至氣斷以後，又復分班念三點鐘，然後歇氣，以便料理安置等事。

當念佛時，不得令親友來病人前，問訊諭慰。既感情來看，當隨念佛若干時，是為真實情

臨終三大要 印光大師著

愛，有益於病人。若用世間俗情，直是推人下海，其情雖可感，其事甚可痛。全在主事者明道理，預令人說之，免致有礙面情，及貽害病人，由分心而不得往生耳。

第三：切戒搬動哭泣，以防誤事者。

病人將終之時，正是凡、聖、人、鬼分判之際，一髮千鈞，要緊之極。只可以佛號，開導彼之神識，斷斷不可洗澡，換衣，或移寢處。任彼如何坐臥，只可順彼之勢，不可稍有移動。亦不可對之生悲感相，或至哭泣。以此時身不自主，一動則手足身體，均受拗折扭裂之痛，痛則瞋心生，而佛念息；隨瞋心去，多墮毒類，可怖之至。若見悲痛哭泣，則情愛心生，佛念便息矣。隨情愛心去，以致生生世世，不得解脫。此時，所最得益者，莫過於一心念佛；所最貽害者，莫過於妄動哭泣。若或妄動哭泣，致瞋恨，及情愛心，則欲生西方，萬無有一矣。

又人之將死，熱氣自下至上者，為超升相；自上至下者，為墮落相。故有「頂聖，眼天生，人心，餓鬼腹，畜生膝蓋離，地獄腳板出」之

說。果然大家至誠助念，自可直下往生西方。切不可屢屢探之，以致神識未離，因此或有刺激，心生煩痛，致不得往生。此之罪過，實為無量無邊。願諸親友，各各懇切念佛，不須探彼熱氣，後冷於何處也。為人子者，於此留心，乃為真孝。若依世間種種俗情，即是不惜推親以下苦海，為邀一般無知無識者，相稱讚其能盡孝也。此孝與羅刹女之愛正同。經云：「羅刹女食人，曰：我愛汝，故食汝。」彼無知之人之行孝也，令親失樂而得苦，豈不與羅刹女之愛人相同乎？

吾作此語，非不近人情，欲人各於實際上講求，必期亡者往生，存者得福，以遂孝子賢孫親愛之一片血誠，不覺其言之有似激烈也。真愛親者，必能諒之！

頂聖眼天生等者，謂人氣已斷，通身冷透，唯頭頂獨熱者，則必超凡入聖了生脫死也。眼天生者，若眼及額顱處獨熱，則生天道。心處獨熱，則生人道。肚腹獨熱，則生餓鬼道。膝蓋熱，則生畜生道。腳板獨熱，則生地獄道。此由人在生時，所造善惡二業，至此感現如是，非可以勢力假為也。是時若病人能志誠念佛，再加眷

臨終三大要 印光大師著

屬善友助念之力，決定可以帶業往生，超凡入聖耳。不須專事探試徵驗，以致誤事也。至囑至禱！

人生之最後

晉水大開元寺尊勝院

沙門弘一演音講述

歲次壬申十二月，廈門妙釋寺念佛會請余講演，錄寫此稿。於時了識律師臥病不起，日夜愁苦。見此講稿，悲欣交集，遂放下身心，屏棄醫藥，努力念佛。併扶病起，禮大悲懺。吭聲唱誦，長跏經時。勇猛精進，超勝常人。見者聞者，靡不為之驚喜讚歎，謂感動之力有如是劇且大耶。余因念此稿雖僅數紙，而皆撮錄古今嘉言及自所經驗，樂簡略者或有所取。乃為治定，付刊流布焉。

緒言

古詩云：「我見他人死，我心熱如火；不是熱他人，看看輪到我」

人生之最後 弘一演音講述

人生最後一段大事，豈可須臾忘耶今為講述，次分六章，如下所列：

病重時

當病重時，應將一切家事及自己身體，悉皆放下，專意念佛，一心希冀往生西方。能如是者，如壽已盡，決定往生；如壽未盡，雖求往生，而病反能速愈。因心至專誠，故能滅除宿世惡業也。

儻不如是放下一切，專意念佛者，如壽已盡，決定不能往生。因自己專求病愈，不求往生，無由往生故。如壽未盡，因其一心希望病愈，妄生憂怖。不惟不能速愈，反更增加病苦耳。病未重時，亦可服藥。但仍須精進念佛，勿作服藥愈病之想。病既重時，可以不服藥也。

余昔臥病石室，有勸延醫服藥者，說偈謝云：

「阿彌陀佛，無上醫王；捨此不求，是謂癡狂。一句彌陀，阿伽陀藥；捨此不服，是謂大錯」。

平日既信淨土法門，諄諄為人講說。今自患病，何反捨此而求醫藥。可不謂為癡狂大錯耶？

若病重時，痛苦甚劇者，切勿驚惶。因此痛苦，乃宿世業障；或亦是轉未來三途惡道之苦，於今生輕受，以速了償也。

自己所有衣服諸物，宜於病重之時，即施他人，若依地藏菩薩本願經，如來讚歎品所言供養經像等，則彌善矣。

若病重時，神識猶清，應請善知識為之說法，盡力安慰。舉病者今生所修善業，一一詳言而讚歎之。令病者心生歡喜，無有疑慮。自知命終之後，承斯善業，決定生西。

第三章 臨終時

臨終之際，切勿詢問遺囑，亦勿閒談雜話。恐彼牽動愛情，貪戀世間，有礙往生耳。若欲留遺囑者，應於康健時書寫，付人保藏。

儻自言欲沐浴更衣者，則可順其所欲而試為之。若言不欲，或嚤口不能言者，皆不須強為。

人生之最後 弘一演音講述

因常人命終之前，身體不免痛苦。儻強為移動沐浴更衣，則痛苦將更加劇。世有發願生西之人，臨終為眷屬等移動擾亂，破壞其正念，遂致不能往生者，甚多甚多。又有臨終可生善道，乃為他人誤觸，遂起瞋心，而牽入惡道者。如經所載阿耨達王死墮蛇身，豈不可畏？

臨終時，或坐或臥，皆隨其意，未宜勉強。若自覺氣力衰弱者，儘可臥床，勿求好看，勉力坐起。臥時，本應面西右脅側臥。若因身體痛苦，改為仰臥。或面東左脅側臥者，亦任其自然，不可強制。

大眾助念佛時，應請阿彌陀佛接引像供於病人臥室，令彼矚視。助念之人，多少不拘。人多者，宜輪班念，相續不斷。或念六字，或念四字，或快或慢，皆須預問病人，隨其平日習慣及好樂者念之，病人乃能相隨默念。今見助念者，皆隨己意，不問病人。既已違其平日習慣及好樂，何能相隨默念？余願自今以後，凡任助念者，於此一事，切宜留意。

又尋常助念者，皆用引磬小木魚。以余經驗

言之，神經衰弱者，病時甚畏引磬及小木魚聲。因其聲尖銳，刺激神經，反令心神不寧。若依余意，應免除引磬小木魚，僅用音聲助念，最為妥當。或改為大鐘、大磬、大木魚，其聲宏壯，聞者能起肅敬之念，實勝於引磬小木魚也。但人之所好，各有不同。此事必須預先向病人詳細問明，隨其所好而試行之。或有未宜，儘可隨時改變，萬勿固執。

第四章 命終後一日

既已命終，最切要者，不可急忙移動。雖身染便穢，亦勿即為洗滌。必須經過八小時後，乃能浴身更衣。常人皆不注意此事，而最為要緊。惟望廣勸同人，依此謹慎行之。

命終前後，家人萬不可哭。哭有何益？能盡力幫助念佛，乃於亡者有實益耳。若必欲哭者，須俟命終八小時後。

頂門溫煖之說，雖有所據，然亦不可固執。但能平日信願真切，臨終正念分明者，即可證其往生。

人生之最後 弘一演音講述

命終之後，念佛已畢，即鎖房門，深防他人入內，誤觸亡者。必須經過八小時後，乃能浴身更衣（前文已言，今再諄囑，切記，切記）。因八小時內若移動者，亡人雖不能言，亦覺痛苦。

八小時後著衣，若手足關節硬，不能轉動者，應以熱水淋洗。用布攪熱水，圍於臂肘膝灣，不久即可活動，有如生人。

殮衣宜用舊物，不用新者。其新衣應布施他人，能令亡者獲福。不宜用好棺木，亦不宜做大墳。此等奢侈事，皆不利於亡人。

薦亡等事

七七日內，欲延僧眾薦亡，以念佛為主。若誦經、拜懺、焰口、水陸等事，雖有不可思議功德。然現今僧眾視為具文，敷衍了事，不能如法，罕有實益。印光法師文鈔中屢斥誠之，謂其惟屬場面，徒作虛套。

若專念佛，則人人能念，最為切實，能獲莫大之利矣。如請僧眾念佛時，族亦應隨念。但女眾宜在自室，或布帳之內，免生譏議。凡念佛等

一切功德，皆宜迴向普及法界眾生，則其功德乃能廣大，而亡者所獲利益，亦更因之增長。

開弔時，宜用素齋，萬勿用葷，致殺生命，大不利於亡人。出喪儀文，切勿鋪張。毋圖生者好看，應為亡者惜福也。七七以後，亦應常行追薦，以盡孝思。蓮池大師謂年中常須追薦先亡，不得謂已得解脫，遂不舉行耳。

勸請發起臨終助念會

此事最為切要。應於城鄉各地，多多設立。飭終津梁中有詳細章程，宜檢閱之。

結語

殘年將盡，不久即是臘月三十日，為一年最後。若未將錢財預備穩妥，則債主紛來，如何抵擋？吾人臨命終時，乃是一生之臘月三十日，為人生最後。若未將往生資糧預備穩妥，必致手忙腳亂，呼爺叫娘。多生惡業，一齊現前，如何擺脫？臨終雖恃他人助念，諸事如法。但自己亦須平日修持，乃可臨終自在。奉勸諸仁者，總要及早預備才好。

THREE ESSENTIALS

FOR THOSE CLOSE TO DEATH

by Dharma Master Yin Guang (1930)

Death is the greatest tragedy in the world and yet no one on earth can avoid it. Thus if you wish to help both yourself and others, you need to plan and prepare for it in advance. "Death" is nothing more than a conventional designation. At death, as the retribution from consequences from past lives, which brings about this one life-term end, one's consciousness leaves this body and takes on another body. Those who do not know Buddha-dharma have no way to deal with this problem, and must simply endure the process and be re-born according to their karma. Since we have heard about the Thus Come One's Pure Land practice that can save all living beings, we should recite the Amitabha Buddha's name with faith and determination in order to make appropriate provisions for our rebirth in the Pure Land. Then, when the time comes, we will be able to avoid the illusory suffering that comes from revolving cycle of birth and death and to realize the true bliss of eternal Nirvana.

When your father, mother, brothers, sisters, or other family

Three Essentials For Those Close To Death

members contract a serious illness and cannot be cured, you should be filial and compassionate and exhort them to recite Amitabha Buddha's name to seek rebirth in the Western Pure Land. Moreover, you may help them recite with a Recitation Assistance Group. When the sick person dies in this situation, he/she or she can be reborn in the Pure Land. How can we ever fully describe this kind of benefit!

Now I will state three essentials as guidelines for a person near death to gain rebirth in the Pure Land. Although my writing lacks literally elegance, the principles are originated from the Buddha's sutras. Having met these causes and conditions, let us all put them into practice!

The Three Essentials are:

First: Tactfully comfort the critically ill person and lead him/her to right belief.

Second: Recite the Buddha's name in shifts to help the dying one keep pure mindfulness.

Third: Refrain from crying and from moving the body of the dying one, so as not to ruin any chance for rebirth in the Pure Land.

If these three essentials are followed, the dying person can definitely get rid of past karma, increase his/her/her pure causes, be welcomed by Amitabha Buddha, and be reborn in the West . Once you have attained rebirth there, you will transcend the ordinary, enter the state of sage and end the cycle of birth and death with gradual progress in cultivation. Eventually you will accomplish the fruition of Buddhahood. All these benefits come from the effort of your family who assists you in reciting the

Three Essentials For Those Close To Death

Buddha's name. If you can practice, then you are being truly filial to your parents; you are being truly friendly to your brothers and sisters; you are truly kind to your sons and daughters; and you are truly loyal and helpful to your friends or other people. By doing that, you are nurturing your own causes towards the development of your own purity, and aiding other people to develop faith. Gradually, with everybody practicing in this way, it will soon become the accepted custom. Now I will discuss each essential in detail, so that you don't have to worry about what to do at that moment.



The First Essential:

Tactfully comfort the critically ill person and lead him/her to right belief. You should exhort the dying person to renounce everything and recite the Buddha's name. If the dying person has something to say, tell him/her to do it quickly. Once everything is assigned, he/she must not think about those things any more. He/she should simply contemplate: I am now following the Buddha and am going to be reborn in the Buddha's Land. All the states in this mundane world, such as worldly riches, pleasure and one's family are obstacles that brings calamity and harm. For that reason, we should not entertain even one thought that clings to these attachments. One should under-

stand that the mind of one's true nature does not die. What we call death is the renouncing of this body and taking on a different kind of body. If you do not recite the Buddha's name, then you will be reborn in a good or an evil destiny according to the strength of your good or evil karma.

If at the time of death you single-mindedly recite "Namo A Mi Tuo Fo (*Namo Amitabha Buddha*)", then that your recitation of the Buddha's name done with deepest sincerity will certainly move Amitabha Buddha, to show his/her great kindness and compassion. He will personally come and take you to rebirth (in His/her land). Do not have doubts like this, "I'm an ordinary person who must bear the consequences of the power of karma. How can my brief recitation of the Buddha's name transcend birth and death and help me gain rebirth in the West?" You should know that the Buddha has great kindness and compassion. Suppose a serious offender committed the Ten Evils Deeds and Five Rebellious Acts, but when he/she is close to death and the hells have already appeared to him/her, a Good and Wise Advisor teaches him/her to recite the Buddha's name. If he/she recites 'ten times', or even only once, he/she will be welcomed by the Buddha and gain rebirth in the West. If such a person can gain rebirth by reciting even a few phrases, then why should you have doubts about rebirth because of your own karma being heavy, or about the fact that you have recited the Buddha's name only a few times?

You should know that we are all endowed with the true nature, which is no different from the Buddha's. It is only because of heavy delusion and karma that we are unable to make use of it. Now that we have taken refuge with the Buddha, we are like sons going to our father and returning to our native village. How could we not have a share in this matter? Moreover, in the past, Amitabha Buddha made this vow, "There may be

living beings who hear my name, devotedly believe and rejoice in it. If they were to recite it even ten times and yet were not to gain rebirth in my Pure Land, then I will not attain Proper Enlightenment."

Thus, the Buddha will not fail to compassionately welcome any living being who, at the time of death, sincerely recites the Buddha's name and seeks to be reborn in the Western Land. Do not doubt it at all. Doubts will hinder you and the harm will not be slight. Moreover, the happiest thing that can happen is to leave this world of suffering and to be born in that World of Bliss. You should be happy. You really should not fear death. Fear of death does not help you escape it. It just ruins your chances of being reborn in the West. If your mind denies the Buddha, then even though he is compassionate, he will have no way to help those who do not follow the Buddhist teachings.

Amitabha Buddha's great name, endowed with myriad virtues, is like a huge smelting furnace. The many karmic offenses that we, living beings, commit are like snow flakes falling through the air. When ordinary beings laden with karma recite the Buddha's name, their karma melts away without a trace, just like snow flakes near a furnace disappear. Moreover, since the power of karma is melted away, all the good roots naturally flourish. Why doubt that you cannot be reborn there or that the Buddha will not come to welcome you? Skillfully and tactfully, exhort and comfort the dying one like this, so that they will bring forth their proper belief. These are instructions for the sick. However, your duty of filial piety and sincerity will also be fulfilled this way. Don't follow customary practices and seek medicine from the spirits. When a person's life is about to end, how can the medicines of ghosts and spirits help keep him/her from dying? If you put your hopes in such

Three Essentials For Those Close To Death

fruitless things, then the sincerity of your recitation of the Buddha's name will lose its focus, and you will get no response from your efforts.



When the time of death of a parent approaches, many people often will pay any amount in exorbitant fees for medical specialists. This is called buying filial piety. They seek the reputation of being filial to parents. They are unaware that the ghosts and spirits on earth and in heaven can detect their actual intentions. Thus, people who make ostentatious funeral arrangements for their deceased parents may in fact bring on either natural disasters or personal misfortunes. Sons and daughters should be concerned about the destiny of their parents' souls. Those who seek praise from the world will not draw as

Three Essentials For Those Close To Death

much as a smile from the wise. Seeking desperately to be known as a devoted child is actually making the grave mistake of being not filial.



The Second Essential: Recite the Buddha's name in shifts to help the dying one sustain pure mindfulness.

We have already exhorted the patient to bring forth the proper belief, but the dying person's mind may be too weak to maintain concentration. Not to mention someone who ordinarily does not recite the Buddha's name having trouble reciting continuously, even those who constantly take recitation of the Buddha's name as their daily business will need the strength of others' assistance to make things successful. Therefore, family members should exercise filial piety and compassion by reciting the Buddha's name at the side of the dying one. Prior to the event of death, divide the recitation groups into shifts. Make three shifts, and assign certain people to each shift. The first shift should recite aloud while the second and the third shifts should recite silently. After one hour, the second shift should take over, and then the first and the third shifts are reciting silently. If someone has things to take care, he can go during the

periods of silent recitation. When your shift is on duty, you must not leave. When the second shift is over, the third shift should take over the recitation. Thus alternating, from the first shift to the last, everyone recites aloud for one hour, and then silently for two hours. Therefore, everyone can continue day and night and still not feeling tired.

You know that if you can aid a person to obtain rebirth in the West with pure mindfulness, you yourself will also receive the reward of being aided in the future. Do not say that this should be done only when fulfilling one's filial duty to one's parents, for if you help others in this way, you are nurturing your own field of blessings. You are increasing your own good roots as well. This not only benefits others, in fact, it also helps you along. Helping someone to be reborn in the Pure Land ultimately helps one living being to accomplish Buddhahood. Imagine how inexpressibly great this merit and virtue is!

As the three shifts alternate, the Buddha's name is being recited without stopping. If the dying person has enough strength, he/she can join in the recitation with a soft voice. If he/she cannot recite, then he/she should listen attentively and single-mindedly. In that way, he/she will gain a response from the Buddha. Do not make the pitch too high when reciting the Buddha's name. If it is too high, it will hurt people's breathing, and make it difficult to recite for long. On the other hand, if the pitch is too low, then the dying person will not hear it clearly. Make it neither too fast nor too slow. If it is too fast, the dying person will be unable to follow along, and it will be hard for him/her to hear it clearly. If it is too slow, the sound will be broken and it will be hard for the recitation to work. It must be neither too high nor too low, neither too fast, nor too slow. Recite every word distinctly and every phrase clearly, so that the dying person can hear every word and every sentence and take it

Three Essentials For Those Close To Death

through the ears into his/her/their consciousness. Then it is easy for the recitation to be effective.

The hand-bell is the only Dharma-instrument to use when reciting the Buddha's name. Do not play other instruments. The sound of the hand bell is sharp, and when people hear it, their mind-ground becomes pure. The sound of the wooden fish is heavy, and unsuitable for accompanying the recitation at the time of death.

It is more appropriate to recite the four syllables of the Buddha's name. First, start by reciting the six syllables, *Namo A Mi Tuo Fo* several times, and then switch to reciting the four syllables, *A Mi To Fo* (*Amitabha Buddha*), omitting "Namo". The fewer the syllables, the easier the recitation will be. The dying person can either join in the recitation or listen while gathering it into his/her or her mind. In either case, everybody saves energy. Family members should recite like this, and if other good friends are invited, they should also recite in this way. No matter how many or how few people there are, everybody should recite in this way. They must not all recite for a while, and then slack off and then recite again. That will interrupt the dying person's mindfulness of the Buddha.

People should eat in shifts, so that the recitation of the Buddha's name is continuous. When the dying person is just about to take his/her last breath, it is appropriate for everyone in the three shifts to join and recite aloud. After the breathing stops, everyone can again divide into shifts, recite for three more hours and then stop, in order to make funeral arrangements.

While the Buddha name is being recited, tell the relatives and friends not to approach the dying person to offer their regards, to chat with him/her, or to speak words to comfort him/her. If they really want to express their feelings of fondness for

the dying one, they should follow along and recite the Buddha's name for a certain time. That is genuinely offering true affections to the dying person, and it will truly help him/her. If they use the layman's customary sentiments, it is as they were pushing the person into the deep waters. Their emotions may be touching, but such actions cause irrevocable harm. The person in charge of the household should understand this principle and make it clear to everyone beforehand, so that they will not be embarrassed. Thus, they will not cause harm to the dying person by distracting him/her, making him/her unable to gain rebirth in the West.

The Third Essential: Refrain from crying and from disturbing the body of the dying one in order to avoid ruining any chances of rebirth in the Pure Land. .

It is decided at the time near death whether a dying person will become a common person or a sage, a human or a ghost. It is the most critical time: the moment when his/her/his destiny is hanging by a thread. The only thing you should do is to recite the Buddha's name in order to guide that person's consciousness. Do not bathe the person, change his/her/his clothes, or move the bed where he/she is lying. Leave him/her in whatever position he/she is in, sitting or lying down. Do not move him/her, or display grief or weep in his/her/his presence. At this time, he/she is not in control of his/her/his body. If you move him/her, his/her/his hands and his/her/his feet or his/her/his body would experience excruciating pain. The pain will vex his/her/his mind, and mindfulness of the Buddha will cease. If the dying person dies with hatred in heart, he/she may fall into the realm of poisonous creatures upon rebirth. How frightening! If the dying person sees others grieving and weeping over him/her, he/she could become emotional, and his/her/his mindfulness of the Buddha would cease. With emotion and feelings of

Three Essentials For Those Close To Death

love on his/her/her mind, the dying person might not be able to get liberated life after life from continued rebirth. The most beneficial thing to do at this moment is to recite Buddha's name single-mindedly. The most harmful thing to do is to move his/her/her body without reason or to weep. Then the person would not have one chance in a million of gaining rebirth in the West, because of the hatred or passion that arose in his/her/her mind due to your moving him/her or crying over him/her.

Furthermore, when a person dies, if the warmth leaves the lower part of his/her/her body first and the upper part of his/her/her body last, then that is a sign of higher rebirth. If the warmth leaves the head first and the toe last, then that is a sign of rebirth in the lower regions. It is said that if the final warm spot is on the top of the head, the dead person will be reborn as a Sage. If it is on the eyes, that indicates rebirth in the heavens; on the heart indicates rebirth as a human; on the belly indicates rebirth as a hungry ghost; on the knees indicates falling into the path of animals; on the feet indicates falling into the hells. Nevertheless, if everyone sincerely recites to aid the dying person, he/she can straight away be reborn in the West. Therefore, do not keep trying to find the warm spot before the dying person's consciousness has left, for that will only cause him/her to become angry, vexed or hurt and thus prevent him/her from gaining rebirth in the West. The offenses incurred by doing such a thing would be infinite.

Thus I hope all relatives and friends will sincerely recite the Buddha's name and not search for the warm spot or the place on the body that ends up cold last. To pay close attention to this point with regard to one's own parents is to be truly filial. If you follow worldly sentiments, then you are deliberately pushing your parent into the sea of suffering. Such behavior

earns you praise for being filial only from people lacking in knowledge and understanding. Such filial piety is not at all different from the love displayed by *rakshasa* women. The Sutras tell us that while a *rakshasa* woman devouring a person, she will say, "I love you, that's why I have to eat you." Ignorant people who practice filial piety in the above way destroy their parent's chances of attaining bliss and cause them to be destined to suffer instead. Isn't that the same as the *rakshasa* woman's love towards a human being?

I don't want to sound inhumane by saying these things. I only want people to do what is practical, so that the deceased will be reborn in the West and the living will receive blessings. Hoping that the utmost sincerity of the filial children and worthy grandchildren will not be in vain, I may be too unintentionally over exuberant in my speech. People who truly love their parents will surely understand my intent.

The matter about the warm spot on the top of the head or on the eyes or other places to verify rebirth for sages and heavenly beings, etc. is properly employed in this way. Once the breathing has stopped, if the whole body is cold but the top of the head is warm, then the dead has certainly transcended the ordinary and become a Sage who has ended birth and death. Birth in the Heavens is ascertained from the eyes, this means that if his/her/eyes and forehead are the last part of the body to still be warm, then he/she will be reborn in the heavens. If the warm spot is on the heart, then he/she will be reborn in the human destiny. If only the belly is warm, then he/she will be born as a hungry ghost. If only his/her/eyes knees are warm, then he/she will be reborn as an animal. If only the bottom of his/her/feet is warm, then he/she will find himself/herself in the hells. This is a manifestation of good and evil karma that people create during their lives. It is not something that one can fabri-

Three Essentials For Those Close To Death

cate or force. However, sincere mindfulness of the Buddha at the time of death, aided by the recitation of his/her/her relatives and friends, will certainly deliver the dying person to the West, carrying his/her/her karma along with him/her. He/she can transcend the mundane world and enter the realm of Sages. Do not experiment to prove this or you will make mistakes. This is my advice and my wish.

❖ END of *Three Essentials for Those Close to Death* ❖

END OF LIFE

A Lecture Given by Shramana Hong Yi
at the Zun Sheng Institute of
the Great Kai Yuan Monastery in Jin Shui

In the twelfth month of the year Ren Shen (1932), the Buddha Recitation Association of Miao Shi Monastery in Amoy asked me to give a talk, the transcript of which formed the basis of this article. At that time, Vinaya Master Liao Shi was ill in bed. He was miserable day and night. When he saw this article, he suddenly felt a mixture of joy and sorrow. He ignored his/her/her body and mind, forgot about his/her/her medicines, and vigorously recited the Buddha's name. Even though he was sick, he still got out of bed and bowed the Great Compassion Repentance. Singing praises and reciting the Sutras loudly, he knelt for hours. His/her/her perseverance and vigor surpassed that of ordinary people. Those who saw him/her or heard about it were surprised and pleased. They commented on what a great inspiration this article provides. So I thought that although this article is only a few pages long, still it contains the excerpts of the inspired words of the past and present, plus some of my own experi-

ences. Those who are happy with simplified materials might prefer this. That is why I compiled this material so that it can be printed for distribution.

Section 1: Introduction.

To quote the classic poem:

"I watch other people die,
And my mind is ablaze like fire.
It is not burning for them,
It's 'cause I see my own turn coming soon."

How could we forget even for an instant the very last moment of our life that is the most important part? Therefore, I'm going to discuss it in the following six sections:

Section 2: During A Critical Illness.

When you are critically ill, you should put aside all family matters and any concerns of your own body. Single-mindedly recite the Buddha's name. With all your heart, yearn to be reborn in the West. If you can do this, when your time is up, you will be certainly be reborn there. But if your time is not up, although you seek rebirth, your sickness will be cured quicker. Because your mind is so sincere, you can eradicate the evil karma from many lives past

Suppose you fail to put everything down and have not concentrated on reciting the Buddha's name. Then when your time is up, you certainly won't be reborn in the Western Land. Since you only concentrated on trying to recover from your illness, and you didn't seek rebirth in the West, there is no cause for you to be reborn there. If your time is not up, yet you have wholeheartedly wished to recover from your illness, to the point that

you have become deeply worried and frightened; then not only will you not recover quickly, you will also add further misery to your illness. If your illness is not critical, you can take medicine, but you should still vigorously recite the Buddha's name. You shouldn't think of recovering through taking medicine. If your illness becomes terminal, you may stop taking medicine.

When I was sick and lying in a stone hut, some people advised me to see a doctor and take medication. I thanked them with a verse:

Amitabha Buddha is
The Unsurpassed King of Medicine.
To renounce him and not seek from him,
Is being a fool!
One recitation of "Amitabha"
Is an *agada*;
To ignore it and not to take it,
Is making a big mistake.

Although I was sick, why would I forsake the Dharma-door of the Pure Land, which I ordinarily believe in and explain to others, and instead, ask for other medicine? Wouldn't that be a huge foolish mistake? When the sickness becomes fatal, and you are in intense pain and suffering, you should never panic. The illness and suffering may be your karmic obstacles from past lives; or, it could be the future suffering of the Three Evil Paths that you are now encountering in this life in a lighter form. This way the debts get paid off quickly. You should also give away all your clothing and personal belongings when you are terminally ill. It's best if you can offer Sutras and images, such as is mentioned in the "Chapter of the Praise of the Thus Come One" in the *Earth Treasury Bodhisattva Sutra*.

If a person's consciousness is still clear when he/she is terminally ill, someone should invite good and wise advisors to speak the Dharma to him/her. Use your best effort to soothe and pacify the dying person. Enumerate all the good deeds that he/she has done throughout his/her/entire life. Detail and praise each one of them. Make the dying person happy so he/she will have no doubts and worries. Give him/her confidence that through the strength of his/her/entire good deeds, he/she surely will be reborn in the Western Land.

Section 3: At The Time Of Death.

At the moment of death, never ask the dying person for his/her/entire will or indulge in small talk and unnecessary conversations. These could trigger the dying person's passions for loving to stay in this world, and thus hinder his/her/entire rebirth in the Pure Land. Those who wish to leave a will should write it up while they are still healthy and give it to someone for safe-keeping. If the dying person asks to be washed and to have his/her/entire clothing changed, then you can try to comply with his/her/entire wishes and do it. If he/she doesn't want to, or is unable to talk, don't force the issue. If you have to forcefully move a dying person to bathe and change his/her/entire clothes, you will only increase his/her/entire pain, which usually at the time of death is already intense. In the world there have been many, many cases of people who had made vows to be reborn in the West, yet because of the family members' disturbance by moving them at the time of death, their proper mindfulness got broken, so they failed to be reborn in the West. There are also cases where the dying person would have been reborn in a good path, but someone accidentally touched him/her; whereupon the dying person became angry and fell into an evil path instead. A similar story is recorded in the Sutra in which King Agnidatta died and was reborn into a snake's body. Isn't that frightening?

At the time of death, follow the dying person's wishes as to whether they want to sit or lie down. Don't force them. If the dying person feels that his/her strength is failing, he/she can certainly be allowed to lie in bed. It is not necessary to struggle to sit up just for appearance's sake. If the dying person lies down, he/she should lie facing the West on his/her right side. If the dying person is in pain, he/she can lie on his/her back or on his/her left side, facing the East. Everything should be done naturally and without force.

When everyone has gathered to recite the Buddha's name, an image of Amitabha Buddha welcoming beings should be placed in the person's room so the dying person can see it. It doesn't matter how many people are there to recite. If there are many, they can recite in shifts so the recitation never stops. You should find out from the dying person beforehand how he/she usually recites the Buddha's name; with six or four syllables, fast or slow. If you follow the tune that the dying person usually uses, he/she will at this time be more easily able to follow along in his/her mind. Nowadays, I see that those who help recite at the time of death follow their own whims as to what music to use without asking the dying person. How can we expect him/her to follow along since what we do is different from his/her usual habits or taste? I hope that from now on those who assist in reciting will pay attention to this point.

Further, those who help with the recitation sometimes use a hand bell and small wooden fish. From my experience, I have seen that those who are nervous and hysterical find the sound of the hand bell and small wooden fish frightening when they are ill, because the high pitch stimulates their nerves, making their minds unsettled. In my opinion, it is best to use only your voice to help the recitation; forget about the hand bell or the small wooden fish. Or you can use the big bell, the

big gong, and the big wooden fish, since their tones are more sonorous. Those who hear these instruments become more respectful and solemn. That is much better than the small hand bell or the small wooden fish. Everyone's liking is different. You should really ask the dying person in detail beforehand what he/she would prefer and then go ahead and follow that. However, if it turns out to be inappropriate, it can be changed anytime. Don't be obstinate.

Section 4: The Day After The Death.

Once the person has died, the most important thing is not to hastily move the body. Even if it has been soiled with excrement, you shouldn't wash it right away. You must wait for at least eight hours before washing the body or changing the clothes. Although this is very important, often people do not pay attention to it. Please advise others to observe these instructions cautiously.

Before and after death, the family members should not cry. What is the point of crying? The dead person truly benefits if everyone puts his/her/their effort into reciting the Buddha's name. If there are people who really need to cry, they should wait until at least eight hours after the death.

Don't become attached to the idea about the warmth at the crown of the head though it may be evident. If the person usually had true faith and vows and, at the time of death, was properly mindful and clear, then his/her/their rebirth in the Pure Land can be verified with certainty.

After the person has died and after the Buddha's name has been recited, immediately lock the door to the room to avoid someone coming and unintentionally touching the body. You may wash the body and change the clothes no sooner than eight hours after death. Though it has been mentioned before, I want to reaffirm that. Please remember it. If you move the body within this eight-hour

period, then, although the dead person cannot speak, he/she can still feel pain and suffering.

After eight hours, it is permissible to change the clothing. If rigor mortis has set in and the joints are not limber, you may sponge down the body with warm water. Wrap a warm cloth around the elbows and knees to loosen them up. Soon you will be able to move the limbs as though the person were still alive.

Dress the body in old clothes; don't use new ones. Give away the new ones to others, so that the dead person may receive some blessings. Don't use an expensive coffin and don't bother with an outrageous tomb. None of these extravagant expenses are of any benefit to the deceased.

Section 5: Ceremonies For The Deceased.

When the Sangha is invited to perform transcendent ceremonies for the deceased within forty-nine days after death, keep recitation of the Buddha's name as the principal business. Although reciting sutras, bowing repentance, performing the "Flaming Mouth Ceremony", and the "Water and Land Assembly", etc. carry inconceivable merit and virtue, yet because most of today's Sangha regard these as formalities, the ceremonies they perform are done in a very perfunctory manner. There is no actual benefit when ceremonies are not performed in accord with Dharma. In the *Collected Writings of Dharma Master Yin Guang*, several times he comments on this point, saying that if the performance of ceremonies is just to make an impressive show, it's a trick without value.

If you emphasize the recitation of the Buddha's name, then everyone can participate, and it is something concrete with a lot of benefits for all. If you invite the Sangha to recite the Buddha's name, then the whole family should join in the recitation, too. The

women should sit behind a screen or in a separate room to avoid criticism and rumors. All the merit and virtue from the recitation of the Buddha's name should be transferred to all living beings throughout the Dharma Realm. This will enable the merit and virtue to be extensive. The transference will also increase the benefit to the deceased.

If you hold memorial services for the deceased, the meals should be vegetarian and everyone should abstain from eating meat, since the ceremonies should be done in such a way as to preserve the blessings of the deceased. After the forty-nine days are over, you should still often perform ceremonies as an act of filial remembrance. Great Master Lian Chi said that throughout the year we should frequently pray for blessings on behalf of the dead. It is not the case that since they are already liberated, we don't have to do anything for them any longer.

Section 6: Advice Others to Organize Associations To Help Recite At The Time of Death.

This is a very important matter. As many of these associations as possible should be set up in towns and villages everywhere. For detailed regulations, one may read about them in the "Guiding Instructions for the Management of Death."

Section 7: Conclusion.

The year is close to an end; soon it will be the 30th of the twelfth month, which is the last day of the year. If you have not managed your finances well, debt collectors may come knocking at your door. How are you going to shut them out? When our life is close to an end, it is like the thirtieth day of the twelfth lunar month, the last day of our lifetime. If we haven't prepared our provisions

well for the Pure Land, we will be totally disoriented and crying to our parents for help. When the evil karma from many lives past appears all at once, how are we going to get out of it? Although at the point of death, we may rely on others to help recite and carry out everything the right way, yet daily cultivation, practiced during ordinary days, will allow us to be in control at the time of death. I exhort all of you, Virtuous Ones; it is better to be prepared in advance!

Revision made in the tenth month of draft material (A) from a talk in the twelfth month of the year *Ren Shen (October, 1932)*

❖ END of At the End of Life ❖



迴向偈

願以此功德，莊嚴佛淨土
上報四重恩，下濟三途苦
若有見聞者，悉發菩提心
盡此一報身，同生極樂國

Verse of Transference

May the merit and virtue accrued from this work,
Adorn the Buddha's Pure Lands,
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.
May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi,
And, when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.