

## An Inspiration from My Maternal Grandmother

Nowadays, people are mostly tempted by wealth, lust, fame, eating, and sleeping, particularly the first two—wealth and lust. Our Shifu expressed this situation in a very humorous way, "Our society is ruled by two wolf-deities." What are these two wolf-deities? One is wealth-wolf, the other is lust-wolf. No one will be exempt from being deprived in front of these two wolf-deities. That is why many corruption cases are related to them.

Nowadays our society is indeed polluted to an extreme. Those who are capable of cultivating pure-sacred-conduct will keep their purity. They will not wallow in the mire with others. They have very little desire and they love purity. At ordinary times, they will not have evil conducts or thoughts, and they like to read sage Classics. Even if they do not encounter Buddhism, their lifestyle is more pure than others.

I remember my grandmother, she was this kind of person, very pure-minded. She got married at eighteen and dwelled patiently and peacefully at home all her life, doing house chores and taking care of children. She never went out to work and did not have curiosity to see the outside world. She was very amiable and very tolerant, seldom throwing a tantrum. She assisted her husband and brought up her children, practicing extremely well with the ethical duty of women's virtues.

These kinds of people were all practitioners in their past lives. With insufficient faith and aspiration, they were not reborn into Sukhāvātī. But we know that they were definitely a Pure Land practitioner in their past life. How can we tell? In this life, when someone introduced the Pure Land Method to them, they would recite Amitabha immediately.

In 1991, at age eighty, my maternal grandma encountered Buddhism and was very willing to learn. At age 84, she was reborn. She only read *The Infinite Life Sutra* one time on her sick bed. She asked my mother, "Is Sukhāvātī really as good as it states here?" At that time, we had not yet encountered Master Chin Kung's teaching and did not understand the Pure Land Method well. We just said, "Yes, yes, of course". Yet she believed it and was willing to seek Sukhāvātī rebirth. At the end of her life, she passed away with a smile while we recited Amitabha for her.

After one night reciting, the next morning when we changed her clothes, her entire body was soft and pliant. This was my first time witnessing a person's death, I was only twenty-one years old at that time and was greatly struck. It was also after this experience of assisting recitation that I affirmed my faith in seeking Sukhāvātī rebirth.

It is particularly good to do assisting recitation for others. Helping others is helping ourselves. Often seeing others' departures, we will not have any fear at all when it is our turn. It is truly called "regarding death as returning home." Where is this home? It is the homeland of our Sukhāvātī. Death is to return home.

## In a Dream My Grandmother Tells Me That She Is Going to Sukhāvātī

Later, my mother led me to use all the money and belongings left by my grandma to do dāna (\*giving, donating) for disaster relief, helping the poor, printing scriptures, producing free distribution materials of Dharma, donating to temples, and liberating animals, etc. Having worked hard for several weeks, we were truly making merits earnestly for her. Since then, we have become vegetarians.

The third week after her departure, in the dorm of my college—Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou—I dreamt of her one night. It was a very clear dream; she was in an old house where we lived in the past. She sat double-cross-legged on her small bed. I felt very strange in the dream because my grandma was injured when she was young. Her legs could not cross, not even single-cross. Yet she sat with her legs double-crossed in my dream. I felt very curious but did not ask.

My grandma said to me, "Now I am going to be reborn into Sukhāvātī, please recite Amitabha to accompany me part of the way!" I felt very happy in my dream and said, "Okay, I will recite Amitabha for you now." I then recited Amitabha loudly for her. At last, the sound of my own recitation woke me up. I looked at my watch, it was 3:00 am. That dream was especially clear, not like a regular dream. A regular dream, I usually do not remember. But now, almost 20 years have passed, this dream is still very clear when I recollect it.

Our Shifu, Master Chin Kung, said, "Often, one would inform you when he is going to be reborn. Or, he would tell you before his departure, saying that 'Amitabha is coming to escort me.'" It is just like what Laity Huang Jinxuan did. He informed others before his departure. This belongs to people with great fortune, his physical body was still okay and still quite full of energy. He told others that "Amitabha is coming to escort me in two days." And he did pass away in two days. This is a real Rebirth. The other situation is that he may be very weak at that time, just like my grandmother who was really weak at the end of her life, only making bowel movements and not being able to eat. These kinds of people, if you implored them to inform you, would usually tell you through a dream to confirm their Rebirth. This kind of Rebirth is also a true Rebirth.

After my grandmother's Rebirth, one time my mother and I met a qigong master who may have obtained somewhat celestial eyes. He saw that there was a very amiable elderly lady above my head. He told us that this elderly lady is in a lotus world and is particularly compassionate. I showed him my grandmother's picture and asked him, "Is this the one you see?" He said, "Yes, she looks exactly like this." Therefore, I knew that my grandma was in the lotus flower of Sukhāvātī, the World of Ultimate Bliss.

In Sukhāvātī, we must know, we can come back any time; we are an avaiartika bodhisattva. Even if we are born into a low grade, low rank, we will have Amitabha's blessing.

When we want to come back, just within one thought, we would be here. Observing any families and friends who need our help, we would be able to help them secretly.

After I finished my undergraduate education, I went abroad to study for my Master and PhD degrees, and then I looked for a job and became a professor. Everything went very smoothly. Later, we had the fortune to encounter Shifu's teaching and more amazingly, I can wholeheartedly go on this route to the point of being ordained. These all rely on fortunes. Without fortune, even wanting to renounce the worldly home, one will encounter many obstacles. So, I believe that these are all my grandma's meritorious blessings.

Ancient virtuous ones said it well, "One person attains Dao, his ancestors of nine generations will all ascend to heaven." And of course, his descendants will receive his blessings as well. If one person in a family is reborn, becoming a Buddha, how enormous the fortune is! That fortune is probably no less than that of Confucius. Think about it, Confucius is a saint, your family has a Buddha! A Buddha is not only a saint but a great saint.

So, if you have children or grandchildren, you must know, in order to truly help them, it is best that you attain *rebirth* first. Only after being reborn into Sukhāvātī and coming back, can you then truly help them. You can, just like my grandmother, always dwell above their heads, letting them be able to turn misfortune into fortune and resolve calamity into auspicious luck. From the other perspective, to fulfill filial piety, the best way is to help our parents and elders be reborn into Sukhāvātī. When you help them, you yourself will also obtain genuine fortune. This is truly phenomenal!

## **Supreme-Sacred-Conduct —Eradicating Lust**

The higher the realm you reach, the lighter your lust will be. We can observe this even in our human realm—if one is very pure, he is respected and honored among people, while those with stronger lust usually are of a relatively lowly position. So, we must lighten our lust-desire as much as possible. This supreme-sacred-conduct mentioned in the 27th Vow specifically refers to observing the precept of eradicating lust. All beings of the six paths of samsara have a very heavy lust-mind. When one's lustful mind gets lighter, his meditative mind will escalate. When one's meditative mind reaches dhyana, he will transcend the desire-realm and enter the form-realm. When his dhyana reaches the level of samadhi, he reaches the formlessness-realm—a spiritual realm. Without a body, of course he has no desire for lust.

When practicing to the level of desire-free, you become an arhat; not only is your lust suppressed but eradicated entirely from its root. You have then transcended The Three Realms of desire, form, and formlessness. Think about it, can we make it on our own? When pondering my own level, I know it is difficult! When encountering a test, my heart will still move and I will still give rise to thoughts. It is not easy!

What can we do? We can rely on the Pure Land Method to transcend The Three Realms *sideways!* With this method, I still have a hope to be saved. I have no clue how much better you are than me? If not much better, you should practice the Pure Land Method with me. Otherwise, to transcend The Three Realms, it is really as an ancient poem described, “more difficult than to ascend to the sky.”

The Pure Land Method relies on Amitabha's compassion and the blessing of His great aspiration to let us have hope to transcend the sea of misery in this life. We must rely on Buddha's power to practice supreme-sacred-conduct as much as possible, minimizing our **lustful thoughts** to the lowest point. In regards to the life enjoyments such as wealth, lust, fame, eating, and sleeping, we must set a low standard. As a practitioner, we should not pay attention to these things. We should be satisfied with our life as long as we have enough to eat, enough to wear, and a small house to shelter us from the wind and rain.

### **The Best Way to Eradicate Desire: Recite Amitabha and Listen to Sutra Teachings**

So “constantly practice supreme-sacred-conduct” refers to reciting Amitabha to seek Sukhāvati rebirth. When giving rise to any thoughts, we should recite Amitabha immediately and regard Amitabha as standing right in front of us. When we recite Amitabha with this kind of sincerity and respect, it is the moment that the Buddha Light shines on us, and every recitation will help us eradicate our karmic habits and obstacles. Our lustful thoughts will then naturally dissipate. Because lustful desire is a delusional thought; it is illusory, not real. If it is real, of course it will be very difficult to get rid of. Since it is illusory, it will be gone as long as we transform our minds to think of Amitabha only.

Plus, listening to the sutra teachings can also help us let go of lustful desires. Many fellow practitioners told me, “A lot of delusional thoughts that I had in the past have disappeared through listening to sutra teachings for a period of time.” We do not need to eradicate them deliberately, they are naturally eradicated. This method is good. Why? Because “Upon hearing my name,” you will obtain Amitabha's blessing, leading you to rejoice, give rise to faith, and cultivate the bodhisattva-conduct with a pure mind.

Thanks everyone for learning with us! Namo Amitabha!