

THE ADVANTAGES OF CHANTING THE VIRTUES OF THE BUDDHA

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I have noticed that people like to visit fortune-tellers when they experience bad times. They perform ceremonies to free themselves of their “bad luck.” I have looked into this and sometimes it does indeed seem that our lives are fraught with “bad luck.” I have devised this little chanting booklet, and I tell my followers to chant every day the virtues of the Buddha (Buddhaguna) as many times as their ages plus one, in order to improve their mindfulness. It has proved to be effective. The chanting begins with “Namo,” then going for “reguge to the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha”, followed by the recollection of “the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha”, the “the Bahum and Mahaka” chants. Having done that, one must then come back to chant the virtues of the Buddha (Buddhaguna) for as many times as one’s age plus one. For example, if you are forty years old, you chant the virtues of the Buddha forty one times. If you are thirty-five years old, you chant it thirty-six times.

I want to tell you an example of the advantages of chanting the virtues of the Buddha. There was one Christian lady who was from Lad Prao area in Bangkok. She was a fifty-one years old widow with one son. She was very wealthy, and had a lot of land in Bangkok. Most of the land by klong Saen Saep up to Lad Prao belonged to her husband. It was hundreds of rai! She sold some of it for hundreds of millions Baht. Her son did not apply himself to his studies. He studied for a university degree in the United States of America, but he didn’t do any good with it. All he did was buy himself a car and fool around for three years. He wrote to his mother that he was studying and was almost finished, and asked for 100,000 Baht and then another 500,000 Baht.

The widow was very worried about his behavior and didn’t know whom she could ask for help. The fortune-tellers said she had to pay money for some ceremonies, so that he son would apply himself to his studies. She gave them the money, and they performed their ceremonies, but her son was the same as before. It just so happened there was a man from Singhburi who worked for her. One day they went to Nakornsawan, and on the way, thinking that I may be able to help, he suggested to make a visit to my temple. She didn’t want to go, but he feigned a stomachache. He said he had to use the toilet, so they stopped. The man actually went to the toilet. Then he came to see me and asked me to help. At that time I didn’t know she was a Christian.

“Please help her, she only has one son. She is good to me and helps me when I have financial difficulty,” the man said.

"First, let me see her," I said.

The man brought her to see me, and she told me:

"My son is studying in the United States of America, but he has gotten nowhere. I've just found out that he has not obtained his degree, but took all the Thai students around, getting them into trouble. I am the verge of a nervous breakdown. Is there any way you can help?"

Just looking at her face, I could tell that her son would definitely get a Master degree, and then go on to a doctorate, but why was he failing in his studies?

I told her the method. "Patron, you must chant the virtues of the Buddha fifty-two times a day." At the time she was fifty-one years old.

"I can't chant. I am a Christian," she said.

So that day nothing came of it. She couldn't do it. It was four or five months later that she came back here. I could remember her. This time nobody brought her along. She came of her own accord, with two friends.

"I give up," she said.

"Do it this way, Patron. Go out and get yourself a chanting booklet," I said.

"I don't want to have a chanting book in my house. Can't you please write it down for me?" she said.

So I had to write the chant down. Later, there were many people who want the chanting verses, I got tired of writing the verses, so I had it printed in the leaflet.

"Here, the Buddhagune, Dhammaguna, Sanghaguna, Buhum and Mahaka."

"I don't bow to Buddha statues. Can I chant this?"

"At your bed, just chant there."

"But I don't know how to chant."

"Just read it."

"And how will I know when I've reached fifty two times?"

"Use match sticks. Throw one down each time you complete the entire chant. Just start doing it."

So she made up her mind to give it a try.

“When you finish the chanting, spread thoughts of loving-kindness to your son. Don’t abuse him, nor swear at him. Just wish that he attain all that is good, attain happiness and complete his studies successfully,” I said.

In three months she could chant it all fluently. After a while she didn’t even have to use the sticks. Two results came of this.

First, her nervous disorder disappeared. She could eat and sleep peacefully and was more cheerful. Being able to sleep soundly, her mind was happier. She began to feel that the good results of her action and dedication to her son were getting to him. This is how we know of its effectiveness. Six months after she started chanting, he received her loving-kindness. I noted the date and the event down in my notebook. Her son normally lived extravagantly and spent his mother’s money without so much as a thought of her kindness. That day, he was taking a group of Thai students for a drive when his car crashed into a telephone pole. The car broke down and they had to pay a lot of money for the damage. His friends in the back seat were thrown out of the car. None died nor was seriously injured, except him. He was crushed against the steering wheel and went into a coma. They took him to a hospital. Fortunately, he had a cousin, a medical doctor in the United States of America who visited and helped him. When he first saw him, he was on oxygen. The doctor who was in charge of his case said he was a goner. It seemed that he had little chance of survival.

Somehow he gained consciousness the following day and realized that he had just managed to survive, but was seriously injured. The pain was so terrible that he felt like he was going to die. Tears streamed down his face and he said he missed his mother! People think of their mothers when they are suffering. They do not think of their mothers when they run around having a good time. Even old people who are as old as eighty years old, on their death bed and almost with their last breath go a little delirious and ask for their mothers who have been dead for years.

Secondly, the son thought of his mother with guilty. “If mother knew that I haven’t been studying, how disappointed she would be!” He determined to work hard and finish his studies as soon as he recovered. When his mother received his message of resolution, she was so happy that she came to this temple and made merit by offering a meal.