

Prayer

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Good morning, everyone. Here is a special dharma espresso.

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Today, 01/19/2018, Lê Mỹ Hạnh, a beloved member of the CSS family, will have surgery at 7:30 am in California. I hope that everyone will take the time praying for her. You may recite 7 or 21 times of either the True Words of the Seven Buddhas for Eradicating Offenses or the Great Compassion Mantra.

The time you spend reciting the mantras will be the love you send Hanh. Let's pray that the surgery will go well and she will soon recover. The second person who needs our prayers is Pamela's son, the 30-year-old Akeelah Owens, born in 1988. Pamela has been an active member of CSS Montreal for many years. So, let's recite the mantras and transfer our merit to him as well.

When reciting, close your eyes, first visualize Hanh, then imagine Quan Yin standing above and pouring sweet dew down on her. Let's pray that Hanh will receive Quan Yin's Sweet Dew so that all her illnesses and pain will be gone; the surgery will also get the Sweet Dew and be successful. If you cannot imagine the Sweet Dew, you may visualize Quan Yin radiating light. After envisioning this way, we recite 7 or 21 times of either the True Words of the Seven Buddhas for Eradicating Offenses or the Great Compassion Mantra. Then repeat the same process for Akeelah Owens to help ease his illness and facilitate his surgery.

Only when we take the time to do so can we develop a deep feeling which will be the bridge for Quan Yin to connect with the patients. We can only be the bridge between Quan Yin and the people we are praying for so that Quan Yin can actualize her power to help them. For the bridge to be effective, our praying has to be sincere. If we only pray half-heartedly, the bridge cannot be complete, so let's express our love to the people we are praying for by spending the time to pray wholeheartedly.

I believe that this is one way to practice the Hand Comforting. There are many among our loved ones who suffered, so let's put our hands together and pray for them. There are those whom we might not know like Akeela Owens, but through pictures and mutual connections, we can still build the bridge. That is one of the essential nature of the Bodhisattva path, called "vô duyên đại từ." Meaning that even to the people who we have not met, we can still open our kindness and compassion to be the connection that will bring them comfort, and lessen their illnesses.

As you know, most people have some kinds of illnesses or problems; this would be a good reason for us to cultivate. When we practice, we should spend the time to pray, don't recite once or twice halfheartedly. Someone asked me: "Can I recite 5 or 7 times for a few people while I'm driving?" I texted back: "You should not pray while driving. You should sit in stillness, then your mind can be a more effective bridge." These are practical steps to make our prayers more potent.

A sincere heart is a rarest and most precious thing, follows by love. When we pray for the people we don't know well; our love becomes more crucial. In our family, our CSS community, our groups, or friends there are those we cannot abide, who get on our wrong

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side. These are the people to whom we should show more love by praying and transfer all the merits to them. Sometimes, they are the ones that need our prayers the most. That is the reason we should be the bridge to provide a good condition for Quan Yin to help others. Without this bridge, Quan Yin will not have any way to help others. So, let's be that bridge.

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Someone asked me: "But Thay, doesn't Bodhisattva have superpowers? Don't they already know and can help others on their own?" That's true, but as always, if there is a connection, then help can have better results. If many people come together and pray, asking for help, for sure, the Bodhisattva will respond. Especially if the prayers are sincere, and if we spend the time to do it not only for 5 or 10 minutes in one day, but for many days, months, or years.

Always remember that the members of our group need our love and forgiveness. If we cultivate without bringing care and compassion to people in our web of affinity, then how can we claim that we cultivate loving-kindness? We should make time for and send love to those in need.

Thank you for taking the time to pray for Hanh and Akeelah Owens. If you listen to this talk at a later time, you can still pray and transfer the merits to them whenever you have time.

Thank you, everyone, for listening and may your sincerity touches Quan Yin's heart and causes miracles to happen.

Dharma Master Heng Chang

(Translated and transcribed by Compassionate Service Society)