



爸爸皈依記

AN ACCOUNT OF MY FATHER'S TAKING REFUGE

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78歲的爸爸，正在無可避免地飽受衰老之苦。且不說眼睛耳朵之不靈便了

，還帶著因遭車禍傷腿的後遺症——走路微跛。近幾年，他的臉上更不時流露出空茫憂悵的神情，彷彿身心正處于一種無以名狀的巨大苦惱中。顯然，爸爸一輩子雖然嗜書如命，可是臨到晚年，這些所讀的書，竟無從為他的心靈積澱出一個足以支撐的高度！我和妹妹深知解決的靈丹妙藥，惟有佛法，但得使爸爸樂意心服才算成功，所以若以「人之一生，任你人情閱歷多麼通達，腹笥飽裝多少詩書，若不解佛法，則一切全屬空華浮泡！」這樣的說法，對從無宗教信仰的爸爸作「勸進」，可能收效不大

。「信為道源功德母」，我們只能冀求先使爸爸皈依，再談其他了。

皈依之事，以前不是沒跟爸爸提過，或許是因緣還沒成熟吧，每逢我們一「勸進」，他就大打「太極拳」：「基督教教堂我也去過，還差點受洗呢！其實，對於勸人為善的宗教，不管佛教也好，天主教、基督教也好，我都是非常尊敬的。不過，自己可是一直沒準備好。我想，我還是待在門外，『瞻仰瞻仰』算了。」對於這樣「老而彌堅」的爸爸，你說我們能拿他怎麼辦！

今年十月間，媽媽來電告以爸爸右眼需開白內障一事，令我想起四年前，當時爸爸先作了左眼白內障手術，手術後散光過高，以致視力幾無改善。爸爸一直自怨自艾，怪自己運氣不佳，白挨一刀。可想

My seventy-eight year-old father is now experiencing the inevitable suffering of old age; not to mention his failing eyesight and hearing, and his limping, which is the result of a car accident. In recent years, his facial expression frequently shows signs of emptiness and melancholy, as if he were experiencing some form of inexpressible great misery. Even though my father had in his life obviously been well read, yet, in his old age, all those books which he had read are unable to lift his spirits or support him psychologically.

Both my sister and I were deeply aware that the Buddhadharma would be a wonderful antidote, but we would only succeed if we could get him to willingly accept this belief.

As the saying goes “In one’s lifetime, no matter how extensive one’s experience is and how many books one reads, if one doesn’t understand the Buddhadharma, then all of one’s learning is merely illusory flowers and bubbles.”

To my father who is not religious, this kind of “exhortation” may not have much effect. As “faith is the source of the Way; faith is the mother of merit and virtue,” we can only hope to inspire him to take refuge first and to discuss other issues later.

Regarding the issue of taking refuge, we had spoken to our father before, but maybe the conditions were not ripe yet. Each time we exhorted him, he would gently change the topic, saying, “I have been to church and was almost baptized. Actually, any religion, be it Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam, encourages people to be good, and I am always very respectful. However, I am not ready yet, so I think I will just observe from a distance.” What could I do with this old and stubborn father of mine?

In October this year, my mother called to inform me that my father had to have surgery on a cataract in his right eye, which reminded me of how he had an operation on his left eye four years ago. After the operation, his astigmatism had worsened and his eyesight did not improve. My father had grumbled and complained about his poor luck, saying that he had undergone the operation for nothing. As you can imagine, he would not have much confidence in the operation this time. On the surface, taking refuge and the operation seemed like two separate matters, but just before the operation, my faith soared and I thought that perhaps

而知，他對這次手術簡直不抱任何希望。

從表相上看，皈依和白內障手術，似乎是兩碼事，但趕在爸爸開刀前，信心飄搖之際，或許二者間蘊含著某種奇妙的契機。因之，舉家移民加拿大六年多了，我第一次無可遏抑地渴望立刻回臺灣去。

才踏進家門不久，沉不住氣的我，就迫不及待地跟爸爸「攤牌」了。慈父愛憐地看著這剛遠道回來的女兒，覺得有點兒為難，可又不忍拂逆我的好意，就輕輕地以一句「再說罷」帶過。正在無可如何之時，法界的一位法師適時為我打氣：「你就跟你爸爸說：皈依于你是一點損失也沒有，反而有護法神保護，何樂不為呢？」

第二天一早，我又鼓起餘勇，再去向爸爸開口。這一回，爸爸靜靜地聽完（身上不帶一絲排拒的氣息），他沉吟半晌，問了我幾個問題，便應允了。此時，我心頭一鬆，眼睛反而熱了起來。

過了三天，六龜「法界聖寺」的榮法師來電告知，說爸爸的皈依訂在十一月二十三日（二〇〇二年）舉行。因為知道爸爸的眼睛行將開刀，法師不僅慈悲地給取了「親平」的法名，還特別告訴爸爸：「是平平安安的平。」皈依之後，懷著這份來自三寶的祝福，我清楚地見到，爸爸臉上的線條，竟變得柔和多了。

後記：爸爸的眼睛手術結果，一如法師所預示：平安而順利。現在的爸爸，連心也順服了，每天會持手珠稱唸「南無阿彌陀佛」，不曾一日中輟。

對於來自十方幫助成就，我們無以為報，除了這首迴向偈：

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

between the two, there was some kind of mystical connection. Therefore, for the first time in the six years since I had emigrated to Canada, I had this urge to return to Taiwan immediately.

Stepping into the house, still gasping for breath, I hurriedly discussed the topic of taking refuge with my father. He looked lovingly at his daughter who had just returned from a faraway land and felt a little uneasy, yet was reluctant to reject my good intention. So, he just replied softly, "Let's discuss this later." At that moment, when I wasn't sure what to do, the Chinese physician taking care of my ailing mother who was in the house supported me and said, "Just tell your father: You will not suffer any losses by taking refuge. On the contrary, you will be protected by the Dharma Protectors, so why shouldn't you take refuge?"

The next day, I again mustered my courage and talked to my father. This time, he listened silently until I finished with no indication of resistance. He asked me a few questions and then agreed. At that moment, I felt so relieved that I almost cried.

Three days later, the Dharma Master from Dharma Realm Sagely Monastery in Liu Gui called to say that my father's Taking Refuge ceremony was scheduled on November 23, 2002. Knowing that father was about to have an eye operation, she compassionately gave him the Dharma name "Qing Ping" and told him "Ping" means safe. After the refuge ceremony, I clearly saw that the wrinkles on my father's face were softer and gentler due to his being blessed by the Triple Jewel.

Epilogue: As the Dharma Master had predicted, my father's operation went safely and smoothly. At this moment, his mind is at peace and each day he holds recitation beads and chants 'Namo Amitabha Buddha,' without skipping a day.

We have nothing with which to requite the help received from the ten directions, except this Verse of Transference:

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

