



從容自在赴蓮邦 (六)

Entering the Lotus Land at Ease (PART VI)

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【與父親相處的最後三年】

自2004年一月開始，父親食量漸減，體力也明顯的衰弱；但他仍按照其既訂的功課，一刻也不鬆懈的念佛。他爲了減少不必要的外緣，除了子女與法師外，他不想再見任何人；但他神智卻十分清楚，知道何人送些什麼東西給他。他會要我將某人送他的衣服，拿出來給他穿一兩天；或某人送他的飲料、水果，拿給他吃、喝一兩口。當時的他行動已非常不便，腸胃吸收的功能已逐漸消退；但我了解，他是想滿他們的願，與他們結善緣。

一月十五日晚間，佛友們照常來家中念佛一小時；爸突然告訴我：「今天佛號念得不錯！我還聽到師父的念佛聲。嗯！不錯！」然後又很輕鬆自在的說：「過幾天，會有一個很好的日子、大喜的日子！」當時默不作聲、故作鎮定的我，心中則是五味雜陳：一則是心如刀割，欲哭無淚，深知與父親的緣份將盡了；一則是爲父親感到高興，至少他預知時至，對自己將往生西方淨土，顯然已有十足的把握。

父親自2003年九月發病以來，臉色總是蒼白暗淡，兩眼無神；但到了2004年一月十日之後，父親氣色漸轉爲紅潤，額頭和面頰光亮無比，雙眼炯炯有神。這哪像即將走到人生盡頭的模樣？連護理人員都讚歎父親的自在與勇氣。

西元2004年一月二十一日，正值農曆除

The last three years living with my father

From January of 2004 onward, my father's appetite gradually declined, and his physical strength also significantly diminished. Yet, he still kept up with his set daily practice, reciting the Buddha's name without slacking off for a moment. In order to reduce unnecessary associations with the outside world, he did not want to see anyone other than his children and Dharma Masters. His mind was still very clear; he knew if someone offered him something. He would request me to let him wear for one or two days the clothes someone offered him, and to let him eat or drink one or two mouthfuls of fruit or drink another person offered him. At that time it was extremely difficult for him to move around, and his digestive system had gradually degenerated. But I knew that he wanted to fulfill their wish and tie good affinities with them.

In the evening of January 15th, his Buddhist friends came to our house as usual to recite the Buddha's name for an hour. My father suddenly told me, "Today we recited the Buddha's name quite well! I even heard the voice of the Master reciting the Buddha's name. Mmm! Very good!" Afterwards, he again said in a relaxed manner, "After several days, it will be a very good day, a day to be exalted!" At that time, I just kept silence and remained composed. But in fact, I had mixed feelings in my heart, just like the five flavors intermingled. On the one hand, I felt as if a knife were piercing my heart. I wished to cry, but I had no more tears. I was acutely aware of the fact that my affinity with my father was coming to an end. On the other hand, I was happy for my father because he at least knew in advance the time of his passing. Apparently he had a total assurance of his rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

Since November of 2003 when my father contracted the illness, his complexion had always been pale and dull, and his eyes lifeless.





夕，小弟憶起去年除夕，我們與父親在客廳促膝長談，古往今來的聊到深夜；沒想到今年的除夕，卻是將與父親永訣，令我們唏噓不已！

一月二十三日(大年初二)早上，父親更加衰弱，心跳及血壓已明顯的下降許多。我們兄弟姊妹五人把握機會，向父親做最後的懺悔與感恩。當我跪在床前，正要開口向父親懺悔時，突然悲從中來，痛哭失聲；自覺不妥，於是趕緊站起來，轉身背對著父親，深呼吸，默念著觀世音菩薩的聖號，祈求觀世音菩薩賜給我勇氣，讓我能夠面對這關鍵時刻。慢慢的心情恢復平靜，於是再次俯身跪在父親床前，向其懺悔，並感激他的養育之恩；但是父親對於我情緒的起伏轉折，似乎毫無反應，也未受我不捨之情的影響，仍是平靜緩慢的一呼一吸。

當我們五人個別向父親道別之後，我遵從父親對我說的最後一句話，要我守在他身邊；我就一邊為他量脈搏和體溫，一邊在其耳邊輕聲念佛。突然佛號越念越輕快，也越念越愉悅，生離死別的情緒，竟然一掃而空，心中的雜念與憂傷全消，週遭的人事，頓然隱沒不見；只有那句「阿彌陀佛」聖號存於心中，阿彌陀佛的聖號，竟然變得十分聖潔無染。

下午四點多時，父親突然睜開緊閉的雙眼，以強有力的眼神望著掛在牆上的阿彌陀佛聖像，長達二十幾分鐘，然後又緩緩的閉上雙眼。此時我在父親的耳邊輕聲說道：「爸！我相信您一定能到西方極樂世界，爸請您乘願再來度我們！」

晚間七點半時，有幾位佛友已在法師之先趕來助念。家人聚集父親床前齊聲念佛；此時父親臉色紅潤，面帶笑容，神情自在，平靜、緩慢的一呼一吸，房內的氣氛變得肅穆莊嚴而安詳。於八點五十分，感覺父親的呼吸停止了，他已安詳自在的往生；父親憑藉著對念佛法門的堅定信念，安祥平靜的走完人生旅途。他的一生，在從容自在赴蓮

However, after January 10, 2004, my father's complexion gradually became ruddy. His forehead and cheeks were glowing, and his eyes sparkling. How could he be someone approaching his end? Even the nursing staff expressed admiration for my father's ease and courage.

January 21, 2004 was the lunar New Year's Eve. I remembered that on the lunar New Year's Eve the previous year, we had a lengthy conversation side-by-side with my father in the living room until late at night, chatting away the time. I would never expect that on the lunar New Year's Eve this year, we were about to part with our father forever. We couldn't help but sigh with sorrow.

By the early morning of January 23 (the second day of the lunar New Year), my father had become much feebler; his heartbeat and blood pressure had significantly dropped. Five of us, my siblings and I, seized this opportunity to repent and express our gratitude to our father one last time. As I was kneeling in front of my father's bed and was about to say my repentance to him, I suddenly felt pangs of sorrow. I cried my heart out and was choked with tears. I then realized that it was improper to do so. Thereupon I immediately stood up, turned away from my father, took a few deep breaths, and recited Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva's holy name. I beseeched Guan Yin Bodhisattva to bestow courage on me so that I would be able to face this critical moment. Slowly, my emotions stabilized. Then I again knelt down in front of his bed, repented and expressed my gratitude to him for his kindness in raising and nurturing us. But he seemed irresponsive to the fluctuations of my emotions and unaffected by my attachment to him. Steadily and slowly, he was breathing in and out alternately.

After five of us bade farewell to our father, I complied with my father's last instructions for me to stay next to him. I took measurements of his pulse and body temperature, and at the same time, recited the Buddha's name softly by his ears. As I was reciting the Buddha's name, I suddenly felt increasingly relaxed and joyful. Surprisingly, all the emotions of separation by life and death were swept away. The distracting thoughts and sorrow in my mind all evaporated at once. Only the holy name of "Amitabha Buddha" remained in my mind. The name of Amitabha Buddha became perfectly holy and pure, free of any defilement.

Past four in the afternoon, my father suddenly opened his tightly closed eyes and looked intensely at the holy image of Amitabha Buddha on the wall for more than 20 minutes. After that, he closed his eyes slowly. At this time, I spoke softly by his ears, saying, "Dad! I have faith in you that you definitely will be reborn in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. Dad, please return to this world with your vows to take us across the sea of suffering."

By half past 7 in the evening, a number of Buddhist friends had arrived before the Dharma Masters to support my father in his recita-



邦繼續修行，以滿「乘願再來，度盡無邊眾生」的慈悲大願下，劃上完美的休止符。

想起父親往生時，他那張粉紅色如嬰兒般的臉上，掛著一抹欣悅的微笑，猶如一朵潔淨莊嚴的白蓮花；深信父親已如其所願，往生西方極樂世界。直到這時候，我才深深體會到父親是如何面對死亡！當他一步步走向生命的盡頭時，他的腳步未曾慌亂過，也從未露出一絲害怕的表情；而是以鎮定、勇敢、愉悅的心態，走完人生的旅程。

父親以平常心面對死亡的到來，且保有一貫的精進修行，念念不忘阿彌陀佛；若無大定力，如何能至此呢？此時我終於體悟到，父親經常告誡佛友的一句話：「平時念佛，就是為臨終時剩下的那一口氣念的。」

【後記】

我們兄弟姐妹五人，同心協力照顧父親的這段期間，身體上的疲累，以及內心的沉重與煎熬，實非筆墨所能道盡。慶幸的是有佛菩薩的加持，並得到法師們和佛友們的精神支持，使我們能夠較坦然面對，並接受與親人死別的事實，度過這段哀傷艱苦的歲月。料理父親的後事，因正值過年期間，本來不想驚動親友，更不想麻煩他人；但法師們、佛友們卻主動的前來幫忙，使父親的喪事圓滿完成。

謹以此文感謝幫助過我們的四眾，並與有緣的讀者分享父親的學佛經歷，與念佛的體悟；但願它對於在五濁惡世中浮沉的眾生有所助益！

阿彌陀佛！

tion. Our family members gathered in front of my father's bed, reciting the Buddha's name in unison. At this time, my father's complexion was ruddy; his smiling face was peaceful. Steadily and slowly, he breathed in and out. The atmosphere in the room became solemn and tranquil. At 8.50 P.M., I sensed that my father's breathing had stopped; he had already passed away peacefully. Relying on his resolute faith in the practice of mindfulness of the Buddha, he completed his life journey with ease. With his departure to the lotus country to continue his spiritual cultivation, to fulfill his great vow of compassion to "return to the world to take all the numberless living beings across the sea of suffering", he completed the final period of his life.

I recall that upon my father's passing, he had pink cheeks like those of a baby and a joyous smile like a pure and adorned white lotus flower. I deeply believe that my father was reborn in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss as he wished. Only now do I profoundly understand how my father confronted death! As he was approaching the end of his life, neither flustered nor frightened, he walked to the end with composure, courage and joy.

With equanimity, my father faced the arrival of death, and even maintained his regular practice vigorously, not forgetting Amitabha Buddha for a single thought. If he did not have great concentration power, how could he possibly do that? Now I finally grasped the significance of the advice he constantly gave to his fellow Buddhist practitioners, "To recite the Buddha's name at ordinary times is just to recite for the moment of the last breath."

[Postscript]

During the period when the five of us, my siblings and I, were working with concerted efforts to look after my father, the physical exhaustion, mental burden and tribulations were indescribable. Fortunately we were received support and protection from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as well as emotional support from the Dharma Masters and our Buddhist friends. Accordingly we were able to face our father's passing with composure and courage, accepting the fact that we had to be separated from a close family member in life and death, and endure this mournful and grueling stage of our life. As for taking care of my father's funeral affairs, it was the lunar New Year Festival. Initially we refrained from alarming our relatives and friends, and troubling others; nevertheless, the Dharma Masters and our Buddhist friends took the initiative to help, and thus completed my father's funeral.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the four assemblies who helped us. At the same time, I would like to share with the readers who have affinities with us, our father's experience studying Buddhism and his understanding of mindfulness of the Buddha. Hopefully this article will benefit the living beings drifting along in this evil time of the five turbidities!

Amitabha!

