

已是蓮邦彼岸人——林賢生居士往生記實

Already a Resident of the Lotus Land on the Other Shore — A True Record of the Rebirth of My Father, Upasaka Xiansheng Lin

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2002年近威師與父親林賢生合照

Bhikshuni Jin Way and her lay father Xiansheng Lin in 2002.

俗家父親——林賢生居士，於二〇二一年七月八日凌晨十二點多，念佛中安詳往生。

二〇二〇年初，當他得知罹患肺腺癌第三期後，很高興的打電話和我說：「近威師，跟妳報告一個好消息，我中了第三號特獎！哈哈……」聽見他爽朗的笑聲，我說：「哇塞！已經第三期了還能笑成這樣喔。」他回答說：「當然啊，我等這一天等很久了，終於可以往生

My lay father's name is Xiansheng Lin. On July 8, 2021, he passed away peacefully at midnight, slightly past 12:00 AM amid others' recitation of the Buddha's name for him.

At the beginning of 2020, when he first heard the news of his contracting the third stage cancer of lung adenocarcinoma, he happily called me and said: "Jin Way Shi, I need to tell you some good news. I have 'won' the 'third prize!' Haha..." Hearing his hearty laugh, I said: "Wow! You are already at the third stage, so how can you laugh like this?" He answered, "For sure I am happy! I have been waiting for a long time for this day to come. I can finally go and be reborn in the Western Pure Land." He also said, "The point of treatment is to keep me alive longer, but I want to recite the Buddha's name to go to the Western Pure Land, rather than a long life." During this time, his body did not have any pain from the disease but he got skinnier, and his physical strength and spirit was weakening day by day.

Despite his illness, my father, who was over 70, holding on to his sick body, still participated in the Amitabha Session at the end of 2020 at Dharma Realm Sagely Monastery, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and the Emperor Liang Repentance at the beginning of 2021. The Dharma Master attempted to persuade him to live in the monastery at Liouguei (Kaohsiung City, Taiwan,) but my father insisted on driving three to four hours a day back and forth, until he finished the whole bowing session. Such perseverance is indeed worthy of respect and admiration.

Two weeks before his passing, both of his legs began to swell. Knowing that there wasn't much time left of him, he became more vigorous in chanting the Buddha's name. Although his legs were swollen, he could still go out and walk every day, and also climb to

極樂世界了！真是太好了！」一直以來，他以往生西方為志，決定放棄治療，一心念佛求生淨土。他說：「治療的目的是為了活久一點，我要念佛求生西方，不求長壽。」這段時間來，他身上沒有大病痛，僅日漸消瘦，體力、精神越來越差。

雖然如此，七十多歲的父親仍撐著病體，參與台灣高雄法界聖寺於2020年底的佛七，和2021年初的梁皇寶懺。法師曾勸他直接住在六龜，但父親仍堅持每天開車往返三、四小時，並拜完全程，如此毅力著實令人佩服。

往生前兩週，雙腿開始浮腫，他知道時日不多，更加精進念佛。雖腿腫如此，尚能每天出門走路運動，亦能爬到自家三樓佛堂念佛，佛力加持真是不可思議！每天去走路時，還帶著經書、念佛機等等，和鄰里們結法緣。路上遇到無論認識、不認識的人，都笑咪咪的合掌跟他們說「阿彌陀佛」，不管他人願不願意聽，他總是誠心地勸人念佛，直至往生前幾天都是如此。他總是不放棄任何一個機會和人介紹佛法，廣結善緣，希望大家都能一同回到極樂世界的故鄉。

往生前兩天，腿腫已不能行走，舉手動足都幾乎喘不過氣，仍堅持穿袍搭衣到佛堂念佛。往生前幾小時，忽冷忽熱，全身出汗，已經講不出話了，仍堅持坐在椅子上，面向西方一心靠禱阿彌陀佛，速速接引往生西方，此時家人也開始為父親助念。父親用盡他生命最後的力氣，念佛直至臨終前五分鐘，在洗手間時突然腿軟傾倒，幸而家兄即時從後面撐住父親腋下，並將他拉回床上，待一躺好後就漸漸斷氣。父親最後身無太大痛苦，心不貪戀，意不顛倒，安詳捨報。助念十二小時後淨身入殮，身體柔軟如棉，每一根手指頭都能任意扳

the third floor of his own Buddha hall to recite the Buddha's name.

Inconceivable indeed was the power of the Buddha's blessing! When he walked every day, he also brought some sutras, chanting machines, and so forth to give to neighbors or other local villagers. When he met people on the road, whether he knew them or not, he would smile and greet them with "Amitabha Buddha" with his palms joined together. Regardless of whether others wanted to listen or not, he always sincerely exhorted others to recite the Buddha's name, and he kept doing so until a few days before his passing. He never gave up any opportunity to introduce the Buddhadharma to others and to vastly create Dharma affinities with them, and wished that everyone could return to the home of the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Two days before his passing, his legs were swollen and he could no longer walk, and he could barely move his hands or feet. Even so, he still wore his robe and went to the Buddha hall to recite the Buddha's name. A few hours before his final breath, he felt cold and hot, sweating all over his body, and could no longer speak. He still insisted on sitting in a chair facing the west, praying to Amitabha Buddha to quickly take him to the Western Pure Land. Starting from then, my family began to chant the Buddha's name for him. My father kept chanting the Buddha's name until five minutes before the end of his life, after having exhausted his last ounce of strength. When he was in the bathroom, he suddenly collapsed; fortunately, my brother immediately supported him from behind by holding him under his two armpits and pulling him back to bed. After he lay down, he gradually expired his last breath. In the final moments of his life, my father did not suffer too much from illness — he was not greedy (for living longer or other things,) his mind was not upside-down, and he passed away in peace. After twelve hours of chanting, the body was cleansed and encoffined. Thereupon, his body was still soft as cotton, and his every finger could be bent at will.

Most people greatly admire and praise his courageous vigor. In fact, in addition to his vigor, he had many other qualities and deeds worthy of our emulation. Here, I will briefly introduce my father's life — how he truly put the Buddhadharma into his everyday practice and what kind of spirit he had — from the perspective of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's Ten Great Vows and the Three Provisions for rebirth in the Pure Land.

My father started studying Buddhadharma from the age of thirty-nine: he accidentally bumped into the monthly publication called *The Source of Wisdom*, by which he got to know Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA) and then he took refuge with the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua. In 1992, he received the Five Precepts. In 2007,

動。

大部分的人對他的勇猛精進非常讚歎，其實除了精進，其一生行誼，點點滴滴有很多值得我們效法之處。在此，以普賢菩薩十大願王和淨業三福，略述父親一生行持，及他對佛法躬行實踐的精神。

父親從三十九歲開始學佛，偶然看見法界月刊《智慧之源》，因而認識法界佛教總會並皈依宣化上人。一九九二年受五戒，二〇〇七年和母親一起到萬佛聖城受菩薩戒。受戒以後，他對每一條戒相認真持守從不怠慢，並於每半個月一定誦戒（受持三皈，具足眾戒，不犯威儀）。

第一「禮敬諸佛」。從事相上來說，他一字一拜，拜完了三大部經，及其他懺法數部。自二〇〇九年專修淨土法門之後，每天禮拜阿彌陀佛和觀世音菩薩各108拜。父母是堂上活佛，父親盡心竭力的侍奉祖父母，直至他們壽終正寢。真正的孝順，是孝養父母的佛性，父親引導祖父母學佛，乃至受菩薩戒，祖父母晚年也是一心念佛直到往生（孝養父母）。

第二「稱讚如來」。和父親一起共修過的佛友，都會聽見他在參加法會時大聲唱誦的聲音。他不僅共修時如此，就連在家作功課，都是大聲念誦的。他的聲音非常宏亮，在三樓作功課，我們在一樓，都可以聽見他念誦的聲音。

第三「廣修供養」。父親一生不遺餘力護持道場，盡力幫助他人解決生活上的困難，這是體力供養。他也樂於勸導大家一起吃素念佛，這是言語供養。說到錢財方面的供養，父親對人非常慷慨，而自己卻很儉樸。我們只是個普通家庭，經濟並不寬裕，父親的捐款，都是自

he and his wife went to CTTB to receive the Bodhisattva Precepts. After taking the precepts, he earnestly observed each of them and was never negligent. He also upheld the bimonthly recitation of the precepts (the First Provision: Take refuge with the Three Refuges, uphold the precepts completely, maintain the deportment concerning the precepts and the rules.)

The first Great Vow of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva is to worship and respect all Buddhas. In terms of his physical practice, he did the one-character-one-bow practice, bowing to the three major sutras, as well as several repentance texts. Ever since 2009 when he devoted himself to the practice of the Pure Land Dharma, he would bow 108 bows to Amitabha Buddha and Guanyin Bodhisattva every day, respectively. Aware that his parents are like living Buddhas at home, my father thus exhaustively served his parents until they all passed away in peace, having lived out their natural years of life. Practicing true filiality is to be filial to the parents' Buddha-nature — that is, my father guided his parents to study the Buddhadharma, and further to take the Bodhisattva Precepts. His parents (my grandpa and grandmother) both single-mindedly recited the Buddha's name until they passed away (the Second Provision: Be filial to the parents and serve them.)

The second Great Vow is to praise the Tathagata. The Buddhist friends who had cultivated together with my father would always hear his sonorous chanting when he joined the Dharma sessions. He chanted loudly not only in the group cultivation but also at home. His voice was deep and sonorous. When he was doing the recitations on the third floor, we could even hear his chanting on the first floor.

The third Great Vow is to vastly cultivate one's offerings. My father spared no effort to support the monastery and tried his best to help others solve their difficulties in life. This is his practice of offering in terms of material wealth and physical strength. He happily exhorted others to go vegetarian in their diet and recite the Buddha's name. This is his practice of offering in terms of speech. When it came to financial support, my father was very generous to others, but he himself was frugal. We are just an ordinary and not a well-off family. My father saved money bit by bit, and then made his donations. Every time when he made donations, he did it in the name of not just himself but others too, including our grandparents, as well as our own family of four — a total of six family members. Whenever he heard of any relative or friend suffering from severe illness or who had passed away, he would take money out of his own savings and write plaques of rebirth or dedication of merit or making offerings on their behalf.

Later, he gave a retirement endowment worth several million (NTD) to DRBA's branch monastery, without leaving any cent for the family.



己省吃儉用一點一滴存下來的。每次布施，都不是只為他自己作，一定會將祖父母及我們一家，共六個人的名字一起用上。當他知道有任何重病、往生的親友，都會自己掏腰包，幫別人寫牌位，或作其他供養。

後來他又將幾百萬的退休金，全部供養道場，完全不留給家用。他說：「兒孫自有兒孫福，莫為兒孫作馬牛。」父親雖然沒有留財給家裡，可是卻留下無邊的福德。錢財總有一天會花完的，而福德是無盡的，更能夠庇蔭子孫，那才是真正的慈悲。

第四「懺悔業障」。當父親知道某一件事作錯了，就會立刻改進。從他小時候就有一個業障一直跟著他，雖然看不見，但卻常聽到一個很大的敲擊聲在干擾他，如藤條打在桌面上的聲音，無時、無處不在，特別是佛桌。這個聲音大家都可以聽到，音量大到常常把我們嚇一跳，因為如此，他一生勤修懺悔法門。

He said, “Children and grandchildren have their own blessings, so there is no need to become enslaved like horses and cattle for them.” Although my father did not leave his family any money, he left behind a boundless legacy of merit for them because money will be spent after all, whereas the merit he left behind is boundless and is more effective in protecting his children and grandchildren — that is true kindness and compassion.

The fourth Great Vow is to repent one's karmic offenses and reform oneself. When my father knew that he had done something wrong, he would immediately change and improve himself. Ever since he was a child, a being who was a karmic creditor (ghost) kept following him. Although he couldn't see this being, he often heard a loud knocking sound that disturbed him, such as the sound of a cane hitting the table. That sound could occur any time at any place, especially at the altar table to the

Buddha. This voice could be heard by everyone, and the volume was so loud that it often shocked us. Because of this, he practiced repenting of his karmic offenses diligently throughout his life.

The fifth Great Vow is to rejoice and follow in merit and virtue. We usually had our group cultivation at the Kaohsiung branch monastery. After the Dharma sessions, my father would always stay at the monastery to help tidy the environment, and would not leave, bidding farewell to the branch manager, until the end. Should he know that there were other Dharma activities at other branch monasteries, he would also always rejoice and follow in merit and virtue by enthusiastically participating and supporting. He was particularly fond of joining the recitation of the Buddha's name for those close to death. Whenever he received a call for the recitation of the Buddha's name, he would immediately put down his work and set off. Even in the wee hours of the morning, he would still untiringly go to help recite the Buddha's name for those on the verge of death. However, when he himself was on the verge, he did not like to bother others to come to help. It has been one of his vows that, at the end of his life, he would be able to pass away with self-mastery — in a full and clear state of proper mindfulness — in the Buddha Hall of his own home, without having to rely on others to come and recite the Buddha's name for him.

The sixth Great Vow is to request the turning of the Dharma Wheel. My father devoted his entire life to supporting the branch monastery, and when it came to his own practice of the Buddhadharma, he would never waste a single second on meaningless things. Because he urgently felt that life was impermanent and ending the rounds of life and

第五「隨喜功德」。我們平時都是在高雄道場共修，法會後父親總是留下協助整理環境，直到最後才向法師告假離開。他若知其他分支道場有法會活動，也會隨喜功德熱心地參與。他特別喜歡參加臨終助念，無論任何時候一接到通知，他都馬上放下手邊的工作，立刻起程，即使在凌晨時刻，他也不辭疲累地去助念。可是在他往生時卻不願意麻煩別人，一直以來，他都發願迴向，能夠在家中佛堂，不需要他人助念的情況下，正念分明，自在往生。

第六「請轉法輪」。父親將畢生精力專注於護持道場，和自己佛法的修持，從不浪費一分一秒去作無意義的事。因為覺得人生無常，生死事大，要把握有限光陰好好用功。自學佛以來，他對觀音大悲法門特別好樂。他每天修四十二手眼，持誦〈大悲咒〉108遍、《地藏經》、念佛等等，功課多得不得了，可是他從不因疲倦，而對功課稍有懈怠。不論他多忙多累一定會把功課作完，數十年如一日。特別在擔任高雄分會會長期間，每週二、四有共修法會，下班以後回家洗個澡，就直奔分會共修。回到家已經十點多，還堅持作完自己的功課，常常作到三更半夜，去小睡一下，又起來作當天的功課。我每次問父親：「為甚麼您要這麼累呢？如果沒空可以不去參加共修啊？」父親總是堅定的告訴我：「參加法會就是在護持道場，如果這個人也沒空去，那個人也有事，那道場誰來護持？」

第七「請佛住世」。更深一層的意思，也就是讓自己本具的佛性常在心中。父親原本脾氣非常暴躁，我們小時候常常不乖挨打，學

death was a greatly important matter, he cherished whatever limited time he had to really work hard. Ever since studying Buddhism, he delighted particularly in Guanyin Bodhisattva's Great Compassion Dharma. Everyday he practiced the Forty-two Hands-and-Eyes, recited the *Great Compassion Mantra* 108 times, recited the *Earth Store Sutra* once, and recited the Buddha's name. He maintained these many personal practices and yet he never slacked off or became fatigued. No matter how busy or tired he was, he would always finish his "homework" and maintain such practices throughout the decades day after day. Especially during the time he was the president of the Kaohsiung branch (the laity group cultivation leader), there was a Dharma practice session every Tuesday and Thursday. After he got off from work, he would briefly take a shower at home and then rush to the branch at Kaohsiung for the group cultivation, and when he returned home, it was usually already 10 PM, but he would still insist on finishing his homework. That is, he would insist on finishing his own daily recitations before going to sleep. When he was done, it was usually midnight. After going to rest for one hour, he would wake up and start a new day's practice. Every time I asked my father, "Why are you so tired? If you don't have time, why can't you just skip the group practice?" My father would always tell me firmly, "Participating in the Dharma sessions is to protect and support the monastery. If this person has an excuse for not going, and that person has one too, then who would be there to protect the monastery?"

The seventh Great Vow is to request Buddhas to dwell in the world. A more profound meaning of this vow is to always "accommodate" or "house" our inherent Buddha nature in our minds. My father used to have a very irascible or even violent temper. As a result, when we were young, we were often beaten by him when we were not behaving. After he studied the Buddhadharma, his temper gradually became much milder and gentler.

The eighth Great Vow is to always follow and study from Buddhas. Great Master Shandao [613-681; the second Patriarch of the Pure Land School] said, "When Buddhas instruct us to renounce, we renounce; when they instruct us to practice, we practice... This is being truly in accord with the Buddhas' teachings... This is called being a true disciple of the Buddha." When hearing one sentence of Buddhadharma, my father would do his best to practice that much share of the Buddhadharma. My father used to be a volunteer at Kaohsiung Medical College (the present KMU — Kaohsiung Medical University) for several years; every time when he went to the College, he would always bring with him in his bag some sutras, Buddha recitation counters, and Great Compassion water. When he met some people with whom he had good affinities, he would advise them with the Buddhadharma, including the principles concerning

佛後，他的脾氣漸漸溫和許多。

第八「常隨佛學」。善導大師說：「佛遣舍者即舍，佛遣行者即行……是名隨順佛教……是名真佛弟子。」他只要聽到一句佛法，就會盡力的去躬行實踐。父親曾在高雄醫學院擔任義工幾年，每次都大包小包去的，袋子裡面裝著佛經、計數器、大悲咒水等等。遇到有緣的人，就跟他們講佛法和因果道理，勸病人和家屬吃素，不要殺生，也給病人喝〈大悲咒〉水。上人說：「你有大悲心，就是念〈大悲咒〉；你没有大悲心，就是没有念〈大悲咒〉。」父親就是一個真持〈大悲咒〉的人，他的心真的很慈悲，心心念念都想要幫助別人，希望沒有聽聞到佛法的人，都能聽聞佛法，已經聽聞佛法的人，都能精進修行（發菩提心，勸進行者）。

第九「恆順眾生」。父親雖然熱衷於引導他人學佛，但大部分的時候卻碰了很多釘子。他總會不厭其煩地講一些感應故事，令他人生信心。如果對方的態度惡劣，父親就不會再繼續說下去，恆順一切眾生。但如果有願意聽的人，他也會很歡喜的再進一步為人解說。

最後「普皆迴向」。父親完成每日功課後，在睡前會將所修的一切功德迴向給眾生，希望大家同生極樂國。若有人生病住院、往生等等，他都會為當事人作個別的迴向。他也迴向給不信佛法的親友，讓他們可以發菩提心，勤學佛法。

他曾經兩次預知時至，但都沒有往生成功。在高雄法會時結法緣，談到自己兩次往生失敗。當時法師慈悲提點他：「你因為功德不夠，業障未消，所以不能去。」如今功德圓滿，往生西方，在這一生留下完美的紀錄，我們用最歡喜感恩的

the Law of Cause and Effect. He would encourage the patients and their families to become vegetarians, to refrain from committing the karma of taking (animals) life, and sometimes he would give some Great Compassion water to the patients. The Venerable Master said, “Having a mind of great compassion, you are actually reciting the *Great Compassion Mantra*; without a mind of great compassion, you are not reciting the *Great Compassion Mantra* [even if you are reciting it].” My father was a true practitioner of the *Great Compassion Mantra*; he had a heart that truly wanted to help others at all times in every single thought. He wished that for anyone who had not heard the Dharma could hear the Dharma; and those who had listened to the Dharma vigorously could cultivate the Dharma (the Third Provision: To exhort others to resolve on Bodhi and encourage them to cultivate the Dharma.)

The ninth Great Vow is to constantly accord with living beings. Although my father was keen on guiding others to learn Buddhism, he was met with an invisible wall [of resistance or rejection] most of the time. He would always patiently tell those people some stories concerning the responses from the Buddhadharma so as to inspire faith in them. If other people’s attitude was negative, my father would not continue to speak, and would constantly be in accord with living beings. But if there were people who were willing to listen, he would be very happy to explain further.

The last [the tenth Great Vow] is to universally dedicate all merit and virtue. After my father finished his daily recitations, before he slept, he would always dedicate all the merit and virtue that he accumulated toward all living beings, hoping that every being could be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. If someone was hospitalized, or had passed away, he would make specific dedication of merit on that person’s behalf. He would even dedicate the merit to those relatives and friends who did not believe in the Buddhadharma, hoping that they could all resolve on Bodhi and diligently cultivate the Buddhadharma.

He had two previous premonitions of his time of passing, but they were unrealized. When he shared his insights at a Dharma session at Kaoshiung, he mentioned these two failures of his rebirth in the Pure Land. The Dharma Master (the Presiding Dharma Host) at that time compassionately reminded him, “Because your merit and virtue has not been perfected, and your karmic hindrance has not been eradicated, you could not attain the rebirth you want.” This time, he had perfected the merit and virtue, and was able to be reborn in the Western Pure Land, leaving behind a perfect record of his life. Thus, we saw him off to the Land of Ultimate Bliss with a most grateful and happy mind.

My father lived a simple life, unconcerned about seeking fame or fortune. He had a firm resolve for the Way and once he had chosen

心，送父親去極樂世界。

父親一生淡泊名利，道心堅定，擇善而固執，對自己要求甚嚴，勇猛精進，不休不息，志求西方淨土。對內敦倫盡分，對外樂善好施，護持正法，默默感化身邊有緣的人。將三寶佛事，利人的事，當作自己的本分事，從不邀功。雖然他此生沒有因緣出家，卻有著超乎常人的意志力和精進力，個人真是自嘆不如。父親往生後，在助念時或四十九日內，家人陸續在夢中或念佛時，見到西方三聖和蓮池海會菩薩聖眾垂手接引，我們相信他已經往生西方極樂世界。

回顧父親一生的修持，以及他待人處事的態度，許多人都說，他早已是蓮邦彼岸人，身雖在娑婆，心早已去了西方。人的一生並不需要活得轟轟烈烈，父親是一個再平凡不過的人，沒有任何高官權位。但他能身體力行佛陀和上人的教誨，以真信切願，老實的專念彌陀名號，在世間上隨緣作佛事。其身教言教皆能作人之楷模，壽盡往生西方極樂世界，得到究竟解脫。這樣的生命不也活得精彩？

最後，用一首徹悟大師的偈語，來和大家共勉：

要作蓮池自在人，
娑婆肯更惹紅塵，
心神早送歸安養，
此地空餘鏡裡身。

這不就是父親一生的寫照嗎？

what he wanted, he held firmly onto what he felt was good. He had a strict requirement of himself, and was courageously vigorous. Untiringly and unflaggingly, he aspired for rebirth in the Pure Land. Internally, he fulfilled his role of what was required of him as a family member; externally, he protected and supported the Proper Dharma and was generous and charitable toward others, invisibly influencing and touching the hearts of those near him or those who had affinities with him. He took the work of the Buddhadharma (the Three Jewels) and deeds that can benefit others as his own duties without ever asking for merit or credit. Although in this lifetime he did not have the conditions to become a monk, he possessed willpower and vigor beyond ordinary people, causing me to sigh and concede that I am not his equal. After my father's passing, during the period of reciting the Buddha's name for him, and during the first 49 days, my family members saw, either in their dreams or while reciting the Buddha's name, that the Three Sages of the West, together with the Sea-vast Lotus-Pool Assembly of Bodhisattvas, extended their arms to welcome him to be reborn in the Pure Land. Thus, we believe that he gained rebirth in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss.

When looking back at my father's lifelong practice, as well as his attitudes of treating others, many people said that he was already a resident in the Lotus Land (the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss). Although physically he was still in the Saha World, his soul or his entire being has long ago been in the Western Pure Land. A person does not need to live a splendid life of riches and glory, full of limelight. My father was so common and inconspicuous, without any high ranks or authority, that none in the world would pay attention to him. But ordinary as he was, he was able to put into practice the Buddha's teachings and the Venerable Master's instructions. In accord with the teachings with full faith and devotedness, he steadfastly and single-mindedly recited the sacred name of Amitabha Buddha, and did the Buddha work according to the conditions in the world. Through his deeds and his speech, he is worthy of being a paragon of virtue for others. When he came to the end of his life, he was reborn in the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss, attaining the ultimate liberation. Isn't this kind of life quite wonderful and admirable as well?

Finally, I may use a verse from Great Master Chewu [1741-1810, the 12th Patriarch of the Pure Land School] to encourage each other:

*Be people at the lotus-assembly, full of ease;
Don't stir up more wearisome dust in this Saha World.
Our minds and souls have gone to Paradise since long ago;
Our bodies are here merely like images within a mirror.*

Isn't this descriptive of my father's life?