

she thought she must be joking.

On March 10th, Mrs. Chang paid Mrs. Lu another visit in the morning before she went to work. Mrs. Lu was panting a little more heavily at that time, due to the discomfort of her heart, and told Mrs. Chang: "I will be going tomorrow. After you go to work, could you please tell my daughter that I am a little bit ill and would like to go to hospital and ask her to come back? By the way, this is my last time to talk to you. For you have to go to work soon, I will simply give you a quick wish then. May you be healthy and happy"!

Informed by Mrs. Chang, Lu Yuan, Mrs. Lu's daughter who also worked at the tobacco factory as a cashier, returned home at 07:00 or so that morning. Mrs. Lu then asked her to take her to the Taichung Hospital and said: "I have not seen any doctors recently. After I pass away tomorrow, it is certain that no doctor will issue a death certificate for me. In this case, an inspector will come to our house to carry out a post-mortem examination, which will disturb our neighbors. Our next door neighbor is going to hold a wedding in a few days. They will find it offensive. But if you send me to the hospital, all of these problems will be solved".

On the way to the hospital, Mrs. Lu told her daughter: "After going to the hospital, I will not come back again. Send me to a funeral parlor tomorrow to arrange my funeral". Hearing this, Ms. Lu just tried to reassure her mother about her health and said: "Mom, you have just caught a cold. Don't think too much".

At around 10:00 that morning, many of Mrs. Lu's former colleagues at the tobacco factory went to the hospital to visit her. She was delighted and chatted with them. Although she had not seen them for more than 10 years, she was still familiar with each of their family situations. Seeing that Mrs. Lu was energetic, everyone felt surprised. One of the colleagues, who was a Buddhist as well, advised Mrs. Lu to recite of Buddha Amitabha's name and feel easy about staying in the hospital to convalesce. Mrs. Lu replied to her: "I know. I recite the name of Buddha Amitabha constantly".

After 18:00 that day, Mrs. Lu ate only half a bowl of congee. Even though she did not go to the washroom, her body was very clean. Mr. Lu stayed beside

her to assist with reciting the name of Buddha Amitabha for her. Finally, she passed away at 02:10 am on March 11th, enjoying a lifespan of 68 years. A few minutes before she passed away, Mrs. Lu told her husband, "Husband, I am going first!" At that moment, Mr. Lu was busy with something, so he absent-mindedly replied to her, "Okay, you go ahead!" When he switched his focus back to his wife after a second, he found that she had already passed away.

Mrs. Lu passed away sitting on a hospital bed reciting the name of Buddha Amitabha in the Taichung Hospital. After death, Mrs. Lu looked very peaceful as if she were still alive, and her limbs remained soft as her body was placed in a coffin. That is why her son even tentatively shook the deceased woman and asked: "Mother, did you really pass away?" before placing her in the coffin.²⁸

Case Two

An excerpt from a record written down by the daughter of the main character, Mrs. Tsai-li

My mother is Tsai-li Ju-tzu. After she married my father, they lived in Tungkang (East Harbor) of Pingtung. She was very thrifty and cherished everything. Her life philosophy was that she would rather be at a disadvantage than take advantage of others. She frequently engaged in benevolent acts and did not like to haggle with others. Because she did not like to bother others, she was unwilling to trouble many people to assist her with reciting the name of Buddha Amitabha around the time of her death. She did not even want to see our jobs delayed for her sake. She was dependable and had a clear head. She explained what we should do after she passed away in great detail.

My mother ate a vegetarian diet for about 12 years. For a person who spent most of her lifetime in a fishing village, it was certainly uneasy. She maintained a habit of reciting Buddha Amitabha's name every morning and evening for 6 or 7 years. At first, her purpose was to pray for blessings. After being told that she had lymphatic cancer in October 1993, she began to recite in the hope of gaining rebirth into the Pure Land.

It was pretty late for her to discover her illness, which made her alert to her impending death, although she had not yet experienced any physical suffering.