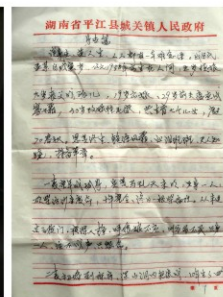


给儿女们的信 Letter to my children



Talk with each other; do not make a decision alone.
Share with each other; provide what the others lack.
Help each other; cherish your happiness in your daily life.
This is what I expect of you, my children.

家里有什么事情，大家一起商量，不要一人包办。家里没事的时候，大家多多来往，彼此多谈心交往，互通有无是人性所在，不计前嫌，就是一个好人。
孩子们，这就是我对你们的期望。





第一次和特里去见她，是在08年2月，她住在山顶的老房子里，她的儿女们都在深圳，做大生意，赚了钱给她做一幢别墅，第二次见她，是在09年5月，新房子已经做好了。

当我们问她更喜欢哪所房子里，她说，“我真的更喜欢住我的老屋。”当我们问她是否还记得她小时候的事情，她的笑容突然凝住了，接着她告诉我们，她的母亲在她五岁的时候就去去世了。



Big Grandma

Peng's grandma's cousin. The first year we met her, she lived in a small, neat house on a hillside. A big house was being built next door. We talked about her life, and Terry asked her to tell us a story from when she was a little girl. Her face clouded over as she told us her mother starved to death when she was five.

The next year, the huge new house her successful businessmen children had built was finished. Terry asked her if she would move into the new house. She said, "I really like the old house better!"



Letter to my children

To talk about one's life, to talk about what happened before... well, we know that everybody had some hard luck, we have shared the same difficult experiences sometimes.

My name is Zhou Meng'mei, I was born in 1938. My mother died when I was five years old. Then I was orphaned when my father died when I was nine years old. I got married when I was nineteen. I had four children in ten years, two girls, and two boys. And then my husband died after a short and painful illness.

I married again with my second husband, Mao, when I was thirty. Then we had three children in all, two girls, one boy. In my life time, I had seven children, and I am now seventy years old.

It is difficult to me to look back, or talk about my life, but I am afraid that my children know nothing about it. So, I have asked someone to write down the story for me, as an oral letter to my children. The first thing is, I don't know why did fate make such fun of me. Why did it leave me an orphan when I was small, at the time that the whole country was in a state of ferment? (Japanese aggression and Chinese Civil War)

I got up so early every morning, found some firewood and sold it, and wove cloth to make a living. This was my lifestyle for more than ten years. Carried a shoulder pole and went out to work in the morning, and sat down to weave cloth with an oil lamp until midnight. I didn't go to school and study there for even one day. I cried in the silent night in a cold, empty room. I didn't complain for anything, but my poor fate.

I got married to Chen, my first husband. We built a house in a mountain cave. We had four kids. I carried one on my back, leading two by my hands, and with the biggest one following behind, we climbed the mountain in search of wild vegetables and fruit for food. Chen and I both worked hard to feed the family. But we were still starving, so later we had to move to Jiangxi Province to live and work with his older sister. Life was so difficult, but what worse was, my husband got sick on the journey and died several weeks later. I was left behind with four children.. how could we survive? His aunt (my husband's older sister) and I agreed to leave the oldest boy with her. Then I walked back to my old hometown, carrying the two small girls in bamboo baskets on a shoulder pole, with my small son following behind. It took us four days, and we finally came back to our old home in the mountain cave.

I suffered much when I married my second husband, Mao. We had three kids later, and then there were eight together in the family. We worked the whole day in the farm fields, but it was still hard to feed the family. I kept bees, planted vegetables myself and sold some of these things in the town, to be able to buy rice. Because I sold something and did not only work with the Help Each Other Group, I was denounced as a capitalist during the Cultural Revolution. My life improved when Deng Xiao'ping opened China, and now my six children are grown up.

It's difficult for me to remember all my life:

When my children got sick, I prayed for them.

When my children went to school, I cooked breakfast for them.

When my children made mistakes and their father lost his temper, I interceded for them.

When my children left the school to the bigger society, I worried about what kind of job they could get, and their future.

When my children got married, I ran around to make preparations.

I worked so hard and suffered so much in exchange for the happiness and success of my children. My two Sons and four Daughters have now grown up and have their own families and their own business. With age and several kinds of illness, I fall into decline from day to day, just like the sun goes down behind the mountain and the light fades. I don't want my children to make a lot of money; I just wish them to be living in honesty and happiness. I only hope they will always stay together as a family, all live in peace, and don't quarrel and hurt each other for trifling things, such as money.

Talk with each other; do not make a decision alone. Share with each other; provide what the others lack. Help each other; cherish your happiness in your daily life. This is what I expect of you, my children.

This letter is for my children at the day I die.
28th, May, 2007

给儿女们的信

说说身世，讲讲人生事，每个人都有一本难念的经。我生于1938年，五岁时，我的母亲死了，九岁时，我的父亲死了，我成了一个孤儿。我在19岁出嫁，29岁时前夫病死，成了寡妇。30岁改嫁到毛家，一共生育了7个儿女，现在我已经70岁了。回想我的人生，饱经风霜，过往的事情不堪回首，没有人知道，所以我请人帮忙写了这封给儿女们的信。

第一，我慨叹命运，幼年就成了孤儿，兵荒马乱的年代，天还没亮，就一个人早早起床，砍柴纺纱来度日，这样的日子过了10年。整天一根柴扁担，从来没有进过学校的门，夜深人静的时候，叫娘娘不应，叫爹爹不灵，孤身一人，泣不成声，只怨自己命苦。

第二，我嫁到陈家，在深山洞里成了家，10年生了4个小孩。我拉着大的，背着小的，满山遍野找野菜，和孩子们相依为命，苦度年华。偏偏碰上了苦日子，我跟着前夫流落到江西他姐姐那里，沿途吃尽苦头就不说了，我的前夫染病，一卧不起最后死了。我一个人带着4个小孩，怎么来度日子呀？

第三，再婚嫁进毛家，刚开始受了很多苦难，接着又生了三个小孩，全家一共八口人，整天劳动，养家糊口很艰难，我养蜂种菜，却被当作资本主义，遭到批斗。往事不堪回首，还好遇上邓小平改革开放，生活才有了改善，6个子女，2房人，都已经成长成人。

往事不堪回首：

儿女们病了，我就很着急，为他们祈求，只愿病痛快点好，感谢老天爷。

儿女们到了上学的时候，我为他们操碎了心，早早地起床为他们做早餐，只希望他们能有个好成绩，学到些真本事。

儿女们做错了事，父亲脾气急要打人，我只得上前去恳求，错误都由自己来承担。

儿女们长大成人，我还是不放心，如果没有职业怎么谋生，为了他们都有一个好前途，我操碎了心。

儿女们成家的时候，我又为他们忙里忙外，奔波操劳。

做娘的吃尽了苦头，换来了儿女们的幸福，2个儿子，4个女儿，都已经成家立业，不希望他们光宗耀祖，只希望我没有白费心机。

我现在已经是年近古稀，疾病缠身，就好比太阳要落山了。我别无他求，只希望我的儿女们精诚团结，不要为了一些小事伤了和气。不管是哪家生的，哪家养的，都是有缘才能相聚，长大成人，成家立业，得来不易，希望你们都要珍惜。

家里有什么事情，大家一起商量，不要一人包办。家里没事的时候，大家多多来往，彼此多谈心交往，互通有无是人性所在，不计前嫌，就是一个好人。

如果哪一天我死了，这封信就是我对你们的嘱托。

2007年5月28日。