

我的祖母

祖母走了。三個月前，一百歲高齡的她竟奇跡般地戰勝了大量內出血和近四十度的酷暑，卻在一禮拜前一個秋高氣爽的日子，悄悄地離開了這個她生活整整一個世紀的凡世間。祖母走得很快，快到沒有留下一句話。祖母的一生雖然物質生活條件很差，但卻很完美，她不會有什麼未了的心願，該說的她平時也都說了，能做的她也都做了，任何遺言也許都是多余的。

祖母一生坎坷，前大半輩子多是在戰亂和饑餓中度過，最後的日子則備受病痛的折磨。祖母是個典型的舊中國農村婦人，裹了一雙小腳，不足三寸，人們甚至不知道她的名字，只呼她八孀或孀婆，說來慚愧，我也是從她的訃告中才知道她的真實姓名。祖母自己沒有生育，卻有諸多兒女、孫輩、曾孫和玄孫送終。她和祖父先後收養了從印尼回國避亂的伯父，從省城逃到鄉下躲避日本鬼子的父親，以及出生在鄰村的姑姑，一家五口各不同姓，祖父祖母含辛茹苦地把他們撫養成人。可憐的祖父是在大躍進後所謂的三年自然災害中活活餓死，祖母她卻頑強地活著。

祖母一生淡如清水，身為一個虔誠的天主教徒，她一生大多的時間都花在念經和禱告。對我來說，祖母就象一本充滿愛的書，時時在教誨著我。她總是熱心為善、樂於助人，從不與左鄰右舍有過不快，也極少生過氣、罵過人，祖母她多是逆來順受，就是有誰跟她過不去或得罪於她，也從不放在心上。在我的記憶中，她唯一的一次生氣是在我孩提時候，當時我與堂兄打得不可開交。我的記憶中的祖母總是在我生病的時候默默地陪著我，坐在床前為我禱告；在我兒時挨揍的時候總是用自己的身體護著我，讓我免受些皮肉之苦；當兒孫們漂泊在異國他鄉，她總是日日夜夜在為我們祈禱。我們雖人在天涯，卻都可以感受到有一個慈祥的祖母天天在祝福著我們，時時在牽掛著我們，她是我們心中的根。

祖母最後的十多年是在病痛中度過，每次回去看到躺在床上被病魔折騰不成樣子的她，我心如刀絞，嘆老天不公、長壽非福。祖母是在默默地代兒孫受過，或為了給子孫有個報恩的機會，她自己卻要忍受莫大的痛苦。祖母從不會說什麼大的道理，但她卻在潛移默化地熏陶著我，她使我懂得這人世間的善與愛，懂得人不能沒有根，不可以忘了本，要時存感恩之心。授不圖報受知恩，得饒人處且饒人。

祖母出殯時，內親外戚、左鄰右舍、還有本村和附近村莊的熱心教友都來為她送上最後一程，隊伍長達數里。當我最後目送祖母火化的時候，我竟絲毫沒有覺得她已經離開了我們，我知道她在天之靈還會時時刻刻在庇佑著她的子孫。在我默默地為她禱告送行的時候，我恍然間覺得死亡並不可怕，等到我走的那一天，我知道我有一個慈祥的祖母在天國里等著我。

祖母，您安息吧！我們會常常為您祈禱。願仁慈的天主父、天主子、天主聖神及童貞聖母瑪麗婭與您同在。

陳本美

2006 年 11 月 2 日於新加坡



祖母何金宗（1907—2006）

親朋好友

今天在中國寫這次的博客，星期四老家來電，家有急事。我記得學校的記事本中似乎說我們這個期間不可以離開新加坡，可是當我記起來時，我的一只腳已經上了飛機。

我的曾祖母星期四去世，享年一百歲，他們要我回老家參加她的葬禮。我曾祖母的一生比我想象的要輝煌的多，星期五一早，就有諸多的親朋好友從四面八方聚集到我們的村莊。值得

慶幸的是文房村並沒有變化太多，只是從西北進村的路口，有一棟不太合時宜的新樓擋住往教堂方向的視線。

我得很坦率地說，我覺得我曾祖母的葬禮不是一件悲傷的事情。文房村的長輩，特別是這些年來一直和她一起生活的親友卻很悲傷。然而，悲傷的情緒都被出殯隊伍中長長的樂隊給沖淡了。曾祖母一生感人眾多，她的葬禮更像在慶祝她的完美的一生。

我和父母及兩個妹妹每年冬天都要回老家看看，一家人圍在曾祖母床邊是我們每次回家必做的事情。他們的對話用的是福清方言，這讓我和妹妹很難插上嘴，當曾祖母直接對著她的曾孫們說話時，爸爸有時會當起翻譯來。

我記得我曾祖母跟我說的最後一句話是牽著我的雙手囑咐我要常常禱告，我會終生記住的。也許對我來說，曾祖母好象並沒有死，就象我們常說的，她得到了永生。

當阿公把蓋在曾祖母臉上的白布揭開時，我的感覺曾祖母是在非常平和地睡覺，雖然看上去有些僵硬。靈床上布滿了鮮花和燈飾，靈床的頭對著大門，另一端向著童貞瑪麗婭和耶穌基督的畫像。畫像和村里的教堂一樣都是西式的，這讓我甚為不解，為什麼中式的天主教藝術在中國得不到發展呢？

沒有神父在場，只有一個弦樂隊，唱著只有福清人才唱得出的旋律。感覺回到家了。

今天，曾祖母出殯了。他們是不是有點瘋了？出殯的隊伍中竟然有諸多的樂隊，彩車和雜技表演。我的遠房親戚變得比我想象中更遠了：有我從沒見過的親戚，有我從來不知道的堂表親，還有我一年沒有見面的堂妹和表妹，長高了許多，都認不出來了。

殯儀館里白得讓我有點不舒服，同樣讓我不舒服的是殯儀館里的工作人員，他們待他們的主顧頗為不敬，也許是因為他們一年到頭見慣了這種場面。當曾祖母被緩緩送入火化爐的時候，長輩們都放聲大哭。九十分鐘後，阿公和其他長輩抱了一個裝著骨灰的紅箱子出來了，一旁有人撐著一把黑雨傘。

他們把骨灰放入棺材，鏟著已經準備好的泥漿將入土的棺材埋上，一旁的弦樂隊還在唱著。好了以後，我們又最後一次回到靈堂，接著吃了一頓飽飽的午餐，同樣的樂隊但唱著是開心的旋律。

陳李閔

2006年10月28日於福建福清文房

陳本美譯

原文：Friends and Kin

Blogging from China this time, because they called on Thursday and it was urgent. I could remember that something on the Project Work booklet said that we weren't allowed to go out from such to such, but by the time it came to me, I was one foot into the plane.

I've been called back to attend my great-grandmother's funeral, who had passed away peacefully at an age of one hundred. My great-grandmother had seen a life more illustrious than I had ever imagined; friends and kin came in from distant corners everywhere to the village on Friday. Wenfang hasn't changed much, thankfully, except for a random misbegotten house that now blocks the view of the church tower from the road coming in from north-west.

I'd have to be frank here, to say that I did not experience as much emotion as Zhengyou did, in my great grandmother's funeral. The older folks in Wenfang did, as the people who were mostly around during her final years or decades. The emotional element, however, must have been diluted by the fanfare that tailed the ceremony; it was more of a celebration of her life than mourning for her passing, for Great Gran has touched the lives of many.

The five of us in my immediate family visited once a year in winter, and a stand-around my great grandmother's bed was a must-have upon each homecoming. The folks spoke almost monolingual Fuqingese, which made me and my sisters sort of left-out. Sometimes, though, Dad would offer a translation, while she talked directly to her great-grandchildren.

The last words I remember coming from my great-grandmother, as she held my hands, was along the lines of "Keep praying." They were valuable words, which I intend to bring to my own grave. Maybe it was why to me, it was as if she had never died; as if she had, like we say, attained everlasting life.

That was the first thing I thought after gramps uncovered her face. She looked as if peacefully asleep, although quite distressingly still. The wake-table was lined with flowers and flashing lights. The head of the table pointed towards the door into the room, and on the other end towards a cloth painting of the Virgin Mary and Christ. The painting was in a western style, and so was the village church. It made me wonder why the idea of Chinese Catholic art never caught on in these parts.

There was no priest present for the ceremony, only a choir, singing hymns like only a Fuqingese could. Smacks of home.

Today we sent Great Gran on her journey via the crematorium. It was crazy the way they did it; five or six brass bands, two or three carriages, and even a stunt troupe called in (did they?) to top it off. The extended family became more extended than I used to think: relatives I've never met, cousins I never knew I had and cousins who'd grown so much in the past year I could hardly recognize them anymore.

The crematorium was deathly white inside, which worried me a bit. And it also worried me the way the personnel handled their client irreverently; they must have been through the same process countless times for years! They cried the loudest as Great Gran inched her way into the cremator. And ninety minutes later, Grandpa and the others were out, with a black umbrella and a red box with the ashes.

They buried the ashes in the coffin, shoveling mud and dust to plaintive beats of the musicians. Thereafter we paid a last visit to the wake house and had a full lunch with the same music band cheering everyone up.

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Wenfang, Fuqing, Fujian, China
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