

# 我的故事 ~ 19. 我们是主人翁



“ 世间人如此之多，人生轨迹总有相似之处.....”

我不敢和伟人相比，但是就像孙中山、鲁迅，当时都是学医的。医术能给人看病，但是能治的人太少。虽然我的医术能医治他们的病痛，但是不能医治他们心灵的苦闷，所以就想为他们多做点事，大概就是从那个时候开始萌生了从政的念头。

我祖籍浙江杭州，出生在上海，后来去了日本。在日本，由于各方面原因感觉都不方便，父母觉得还是要去个英语国家。我从小就想做医生，80年代底，就从日本来到澳洲学医。那时候美国还是很排斥中国的，而澳洲接受留学生容易一些。但是学医还是很难，费了很多周折进了医学院。在澳洲，学医是最难的科目，尤其是对海外学生来说。刚来时，文化和环境等各方面想要融入也不那么容易。所以我就先学了个生物学，以为成绩好就让我进了医学院。其实没有那么容易。刚开始我拿了学位但是没有身份就不能在医院上班，我就在外面转，哪里请就去哪里试一下。最后墨尔本有一家医院请我这样的医生，给我做担保，我就留了下来。

当时，雇主提名留下来的时候,就发现很多留学生来了以后，过一段时间，家人也过来，特别是老人过来以后非常难受。就是因为所谓的“三不”，“有眼不能看，有耳不能听，有嘴不能说”。经常只能数来往车辆，或者从这条街走到那条街，非常苦闷。所以我一直认为既然来到这个国家，你就必须设法融入这个社会。后来，因为我在这里时间长了，语言和其他方面都比留学生要强。所以很多人，不光是华人，包括很多西方人，都鼓励我去从政。从政的第一步就是地方政府。2002年我参选了市议员，一举就成功了。这可能是澳洲有史以来第一个大陆背景的议员。很多人问我选举难不难？我会问他：你见过敲千家门吗？有的时候你敲门，人家一看你是亚洲人，不感兴趣，还有可能是自由党的选民。你要同他们解释你的施政纲领，他们就会觉得你虽然是亚洲人但是说话跟他们一样，虽然是工党但也很有道理，他们就选你了。最重要的是争取选票。这是民主社会最重要的，本来不选你的，现在选了，这给我很大的成就感。

后来，因为我已经做了几年市议员，就游说其他8位议员，大家一致推举我，我就在2006年当选市长了，成为大陆背景的第一位华人市长。其实，我个人做医生的收入绝对比从政要高，但是为什么要做呢？真的就是要为华人做点事情。那些荣誉，我是要分享的，这是华人的骄傲，特别是澳大利亚华人的骄傲。2006年以后，我连任了3次。

到了2012年我就没再竞选，因为已经10年多了，也想休整一下。

这段路程当然挺长，可以说也挺艰辛的。对于当市长和议员，人们的反应有两种，一种是觉得你总在外面吃饭，参加活动，挺荣耀的。我就半开玩笑地说，我宁肯回家陪老婆孩子吃晚饭，高高兴兴呆在家里。前两天我应邀参加一个活动，人家说你好兴致，我说这不是兴致，这是工作需要。有的人很能理解，知道从政其实挺辛苦。有人会问：做议员、市长每天都做什么？市政府你是可以兼职的，到州联邦你就得全职，不能兼职了。除了自己的工作，你还得做市政府的工作，所有的决策都得投票，市长也就是一票。有意思的是，在我当市长期间，去中国访问，人们都喜欢问，你们市长一年能批多少款项。我说我根本不能批任何款项的，我的市长就是一票。我的职责就是主持会议，其他跟普通议员都一样，但我们几个议员一块，比方说投票5对4，那么就少数服从多数，就这种方法。

很多人问从政有什么好处啊？我说好处没有，坏处多多，我要花费成倍的精力去工作。但我们是为整个全体，澳大利亚整个华人社团，不能光为钱，不能那么狭窄，很多时候你要看到将来。我一直在想，这里的澳华社区，已经入籍的华人应该有主人翁的姿态，做什么事情不要想我是普通老百姓就别管了；或者想我年纪也大了就算了吧，孩子弄好就行了。这是一种错误的姿态，我们一定要有主人翁的心态，我们不去争取，没人会把东西放在碟子上给你送来。我们不是去抢什么东西，我们就是要争取自己应有的权利。

有一次，一个华人意外死亡。平常的庆典华人都愿意做主席台，爱排在第一第二，而碰到这种事情没人出头了。我就说我们去找警察，问到底怎么回事，他们说肯定会给我们一个答案。华人就是为了名誉拼搏，名誉是广义的，或是为了荣耀，是为了华人整体荣耀，没有个人好处，这是事实。

所有的华人社团大多数都很好，同乡会也好，在弘扬华人社团方面都做得非常好，这是毫无疑问的。我们澳华社区这么多年所做的，主要是和主流社区接轨。有不少社区，像墨尔本东北区华人协会，当时也是第一个大陆华人背景协会，我做了十几年会长。我们经常和意大利等社团交流，派人出去演出，他们也经常和我们一起联欢。我们要做的就是这种跨越种族的交流，不能只局限于春节吃个饭，要去和洋人交流，同主流社会交流，让他们了解我们华人是怎么想的，我们期望政府怎么做。澳华社区议会的一个重要职能就是起到桥梁作用。政府有什么决策要听我们的，比如政府要建个养老院，要问你们有什么想法。有些人年轻的时候可能还能说些英语，老了以后就退回到母语了。所以我们就提出来，在语言方面应该有些能讲中文的服务人员，能跟老人沟通；饮食方面应该有些华人的饮食，这些都是很重要的问题。

在同澳洲的主流社区交流时也会出现令人头疼的情况。西方的社会有相当多的人是戴

有色眼镜看人的。他们会问很可笑的问题，你们有没有冰箱？是不是还拖辫子？非常愚蠢的问题。请问，你去过中国没有？你知道中国怎么样？看过中国的高铁没有？他们还停留在中国很落后的概念里，好像中国人仍然缺衣少食。

西方人对中国不了解。有一个中国代表团来谈合作的事情，谈到11点半到12点了，洋人说明天再来，我们签合约。第二天人家等着签约，中国人不来啦。为什么啊，中国人说，你没诚意。12点是什么时间，吃饭时间，你都不请吃个饭，没有诚意。晚上时候唱歌啊、桑拿啊，在中国都是不成文的规定，要不就是没有诚意。据说中国人做生意，10桩生意有9桩半都是在咖啡馆里、舞厅里促成的。我们这边有什么事你来我办公室谈，签约在办公室里签。事实说明，西方人做事和中国人完全不一样，这就是文化的差异。

作为第一个华人市长，我出席活动的时候，华人很高兴，西人也觉得多元文化很好。主人翁的姿态是指我当市长，不仅代表华人，也代表西方人。我们这一代特别是那些40签的学生，至少来了10年20年了和新一代很容易接受我的理念。但是很多人不能接受，主要是老人，他们大半辈子都在中国过的，你要让他们具备澳洲主人翁精神，他们接受不了。一般来说，对于老人不能强求，但还有一批人要让他们尽早接受。像163移民，他们常说老外怎么样，我们怎么样，虽然有些事情确实让人看不惯。有些刚来的新移民，在国内经济条件比较好，初到这里就说这也不好，那也不好。既然选择了在这里生活，就应该以这里为家，入乡随俗。应以主人翁的精神，让自己逐渐融入到这个社会中去。世间人如此之多，人生轨迹总有相似之处。

这次维州工党提名我做上议院的议员，是在西市区，上议院的候选人。我排名第三，就是说有一定希望，但谁也不能保证一定赢，还要争取去努力。要是能当选的话，我就得全职做这个工作。如果没有赢呢，我还是做诊所，投身社区，维持华人社区议会，我会继续做这方面的事情。为了整个华人社区，我还得继续奋斗下去。

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## **My Story ~ 20. A Special Representative**



*“Wherever I go, I would like to try my best to be a special representative, hoping to do what a Chinese should do in Australia in my own way.”*

My hometown is Zhangjiagang, Suzhou. The legend tells the story that it was the battlefield of Mongols during the Yuan dynasty and had been prosperous for a period. After the downturn of the Yuan dynasty, many people stayed here incognito, and some of them changed their surnames to “Miao”. So the Miao are actually descendants of the Mongols, and even the Yan Zhi group of Genghis Khan. When talking about my background, I always thought I was born to do something significant, and the glorious history left by my ancestors should be cherished and respected.

I came to Australia in 1993. The reason I came here can be summarized in the phrase “Saving the country through twisted means”. In 1990, I graduated from a university in Beijing, and then I went to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, studying for a master’s degree. At that time, applying for a family visa to Canada had some problems, and even my wife was not able to visit me. Feeling rather depressed, I angrily applied for skilled migration to Australia, although I had preferred to stay in Canada. However, my application was successful. My family also successfully applied for the migration in 1993. So it was these circumstances that “accidentally” brought me to Australia—now it seems as though I have been here for a lifetime.

In fact, I was not familiar with Australia before coming here, all I knew about it was the famous Sydney Opera House. I came here simply because Canada failed me and I really felt banished from Canada. Even worse, my first impression of Australia was not very amiable and nice.

Under the skilled migration scheme, you can come here and become a permanent resident, but you need to indicate your future plans. For me, more study was the first choice. I had got my master’s degree in Canada and I certainly did not want to stop my studies. Luckily, at Macquarie University in Sydney, I met a former school mate from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She had already graduated and was the vice director of the Marine Academy of the

Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO). She said that she was doing a research project, a joint venture between the Macquarie University and CSIRO. The project provided a generous scholarship and she asked me to join her. I thought it was a professional project and because I had both the help of my former school mate and financial support, why not to have a try? So, I quickly agreed and began to do my doctorate at Macquarie University.

I was doing the subject along with my mate, so when she moved the laboratory to Canberra, I followed her there. In 1996, when I had almost completed my studies, I heard by chance that a local weather bureau was recruiting forecasters. My theoretical studies were all about the weather, so I applied for it without hesitation, and finally I was successful.

From the end of 1996 until now, I have stayed with the weather bureau. From application to job training, to preparing forecasts, I worked for five years at the Canberra Weather Bureau. Presenting the weather forecast, I appeared frequently on television and on the radio, which made me a sort of local celebrity. More importantly, I am the only Chinese who has worked as a forecaster in the Weather Bureau. Although forecasting is an ordinary job, there is still a lot of pressure. Australia's weather bureau is different from that in China. In addition to the daily weather broadcast for the general public, our work concerns many other aspects such as aerospace and national defense. We had a great responsibility. In those five years, I experienced a lot of major weather events such as hail storms, fog and ice storms, I even assisted the Australian Prime Minister. It was inevitable that I made some wrong predictions, major and minor, and experienced ups and downs. Now I am the project director of the National Weather Service of Australia, and I know of the hardships I have experienced along the way.

Perhaps because I am in this position, I am bound to encounter a lot of things in the international arena that cannot happen to ordinary people. Whenever it occurs, I would have a doubt hovering in my mind: which side do I belong to? How do I show my identity?

For example, I once went to participate in a maritime conference hosted by the United Nations to discuss matters related to the tsunamis. This was a very formal biennial meeting and countries from all around the world participated. As the representatives of the Australian National Weather Service, my colleague and I

participated at the meeting with two other representatives from Australia Geoscience Bureau. I was the only Chinese among them. The China Oceanic Administration and the Hong Kong Observatory sent six representatives. The seats for China and Australia were next to each other. Simply by looking at my face, others probably thought I was a member of the Chinese delegation. Only when looking at my name card did others realize that I was on the Australian side. As a result, a strange and awkward scene emerged: a person of Chinese appearance, me, sitting at the Australian side, consulting and negotiating with China on behalf of Australia. At this meeting, New Zealand held the presidency, China and Japan were the deputies, and therefore China's status was very important, while Australia was simply a member of the conference. However, because of its geographical location, Australia presented a strong position on behalf of the South Pacific. It wanted to be the control center for tsunami warnings, which would be helpful to its political development. But in that case, it will inevitably affect the interests of neighboring countries including China. On such an international occasion, I suddenly discovered that your role and position determines everything. No matter which side my heart is partial to, no matter whether I can understand multilateral relations and conflicting interests, as long as I stand behind the name card of Australia, I have to speak on behalf of Australia. Sometimes I wonder whether I can remain neutral. But at that time, my subconscious always reminded me that I worked for the Australian government and must speak for Australia. Maybe I felt frustrated, but I still had to make a clear statement on behalf of Australia.

You may ask me, was there one minute or even a fraction of time when I wanted to sit with the Chinese delegation?

Of course, yes.

But even if I walked over and talked about the weather or chatted with the Chinese delegation in Chinese, I still consciously or unconsciously controlled my own mind not to be too familiar or intimate with them, because I knew that maybe I have to cross thousands of miles to reach just a position.

On another visit to Bali to do the preparatory work related to a tsunami conference, I felt my dilemma again. Indonesia invited Australia to visit their tsunami control center and I went there as the official representative of Australia. When they received us, they were stunned, all four representatives had Asian

faces, and visually, our faces were similar to theirs, but we represented different countries. They joked that the previous visiting Australians did not look like us, so this meeting today was really special. We soon found that our similar skin color did not reduce the seriousness of the meeting. Instead, they paid more attention to the meeting with a warm reception and rigorous discussion, and our hosts were very hospitable. Maybe they soon found that this group of black hair and yellow skin people were Chinese, but they discovered that we were not speaking for China. When you show your position, they will respect and admire you more because you are special. In their eyes, skin color is not the most important thing, the position you take and the official side you represent is the focus of attention. At this kind of international moments, I try to minimize my personal emotions and restrain my personal feelings, so that I can know more clearly what I should do.

Of course, it's not to say that as a Chinese, I must act against the Australian position. In fact, many times when I participated in various activities and meetings on behalf of Australia, I felt very proud, because it showed that I not only had a responsible position in Australia, reflecting my own values, but also brought honor to the Chinese people.

When it comes to "home", I have to admit that my home is Australia. I have my family, my job, my circle of life, and everything is so real and alive. But this is my "little" home. When it comes to China, it is the "big" home, my "root", the land I belong to and the hometown of all my Chinese descendants. No matter where I live, my heart is closely bound up with China. For me, both sides should not be in conflict, because I cannot give up and abandon either side. So wherever I go, I would like to try my best to be a special representative, hoping to do what a Chinese should do in Australia but do it in my own way.

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## 我的故事 ~ 20. 特殊代表





“无论走到哪里，我都愿做一个特殊的代表，也努力做好一个特殊的代表，希望能以我自己的方式，来做一个中国人在澳洲该做的事。”

我的老家，在苏州的张家港，传说是当年元朝时蒙古人打仗到过的地方，盛极一时。破落以后，很多人隐姓埋名留了下来，而有一支人就改姓，成了缪姓家族。所以，我们缪姓人实际是蒙古人的后代，还是成吉思汗阏氏的那一支。每当说起这个，我总觉得，自己与生俱来就该干一番大事，先辈遗下的德泽，该好好珍惜。

我是1993年来的澳大利亚。用四个字来形容我来澳洲的原因，那就是“曲线救国”。1990年我毕业于北京的一所大学，继而就去了加拿大位于温哥华的英属哥伦比亚大学攻读我的硕士学位。碰巧那时，加拿大的家属探亲签证出了点问题，我妻子连去那里看我都去不了。也是机缘巧合，又加有点郁闷为之，本想留在加拿大的我一气之下申请了澳洲这里的技术移民，结果，还真申请上了，紧接着1993年我们全家也都顺利地办好了移民。于是，我就“误打误撞”地和澳大利亚这片土地牵扯上了关系，现在看来，还是一辈子。

其实来之前，我对澳大利亚一点了解都没有。如果说有那么一点点了解，那就是我还知道悉尼有一个非常著名的歌剧院，除此之外，连澳洲的东南西北有哪些个城市都不甚知晓。只是单纯地因为加拿大留不下来，才跑到了这里。说来真有一种被“发配”的感觉。所以，自然而然地，澳洲给我的第一印象，也不是那么地可亲可爱。说是技术移民，只是可以过来，成为这里的永久居民，但来了以后做什么，还是要我自己选择。对于我来说，读书这一条路立马成为了眼前最明朗的选择。既然已经在加拿大拿了我的硕士学位，我当然不想放弃。幸运的是，我在悉尼的Macquarie大学遇到了我在温哥华的英属哥伦比亚大学的师姐，她那时已经毕业，在澳大利亚联邦科学与工业研究组织CSIRO的海洋学院做副院长，她说她手上正好在研究一个课题，是Macquarie大学和CSIRO联合搞得，也能提供比较丰厚的奖学金。我一听，既是专业对口，还有学姐帮衬，也有资金支持，何乐而不为呢？于是，我很快同意了，开始在Macquarie大学攻读我的博士学位。因为跟着师姐做课题，而师姐后来辗转把实验室搬去了堪培拉，于是，我也跟着跑去了堪培拉。在1996年快读完的时候，有一次偶然发现当地的气象局正在招聘预报员。我做得都是跟气象有关系的理论研究，便毫不犹豫地申请了，也成功申请上了。

从1996年底到现在，差不多有十六七年的时间，我就一直待在气象局里。从申请成功到培训上岗，再到主持预报，我在堪培拉气象台做了整整五年。因为主持天气预报，



要上电视，上广播节目，说起来我也成了当地的一个小有名气的人。更重要的是，我算是目前为止我们中国人里头在这气象局唯一做过预报员的。别看预报员小小一职，看似平凡，其实是要担负很多压力的。澳洲的气象局和中国的气象局不同，除了负责播报日常的针对于普通群众的天气状况之外，航空、国防等其他很多方面也在管辖之内，可谓责任重大。在这五年里，我经历了很多重大的天气事件，雹暴，大雾，冰灾，甚至也给澳洲总理导航过，当然这其中也免不了有过很多错误的预测，大大小小，起起伏伏，直到现在做到澳洲国家气象局的项目主管，一路走来，这里面的艰辛，也只有我自己知道。

也许正是因为身处这个位置，很多时候会置身于国际舞台，我必然地会碰到很多常人所碰不到的事情。每当这个时候，就有一个疑惑在我脑海里盘旋。我往往想，我到底该属于哪一边呢？我的身份该怎么表现？譬如，有一次，我去参加联合国的一个海洋会议，讨论有关海啸的事情。这是非常正式的会议，两年一次，全球各国都要派代表参加。我作为澳大利亚国家气象局的代表出席，同次前往的还有澳洲地球科学局的两个代表和我的另一个同事。当然，这里面，只有我是一个是中国人。中国海洋局包括香港天文台共派去了六个代表。在那里，中国和澳大利亚两国的座位是紧挨着的。光看面孔，其他人一定也会认为我是属于中国代表团的，但事实不是，一看我前面的名牌，才发现我是属于澳大利亚这边的。于是，有点奇怪和尴尬的一幕出现了，一个中国面孔坐在澳方的位置上，代表澳方和中国协商和洽谈。在这个会议上，新西兰是主席国，中国和日本是副主席国，所以，中国的地位也是举足轻重的。而澳大利亚，只是一个会议成员。但因为地理位置的关系，澳大利亚想要争取南太平洋的主动权，就这个会议来讲，它想成为海啸的控管中心，这样有利于它的政治发展，这是澳大利亚的立场。但这样一来，必然也会影响到周边各国当然包括中国的利益。在这样的一个国际场合，我突然发现，立场就决定了一切。不论我的心里是倾向哪一边，不论我是否能理解多边关系亲疏和利益纠葛，只要我站在了澳大利亚这个名牌的后面，我就必须代表澳大利亚说话。有时我会想，是不是自己可以保持中立。但往往在那种时候，我已经没有了自己，因为我的潜意识总是提醒自己，我是在为澳洲政府工作，固然必须为澳方说话。也许会有无奈，也许会有抵触，但很多时候，我必须做出一个明确的表态。您若问我，有没有那么一分钟，哪怕几十秒，我想我能做到中国那边的位置上去？当然有。但纵然我走过去，用中文和中国代表团成员交流，聊聊天气拉拉家常，我还是有意无意地控制着自己，不让自己和他们显得那么熟络，表现得也不是那么亲昵，因为我知道，虽然可能只是一个位置的距离，但就足够我要跨越千山万水。而又如另一次去巴厘岛做有关海啸的预备工作的考察，我再次感受到自己的特殊性。印度尼西亚邀请澳方去他们的海啸控制中心做访问，我作为澳方的官方代表前往。而当他们接待我们一行人的时候，他们都惊呆了。因为我们一行四个人，都是亚洲面孔，说得更形象点，那就是长得几乎和他们没有什么差别，却是澳大利亚的代表。他们开玩笑说，以前接待的澳大利亚人可都不是长的这样，今天的这个会议可真有点特殊。但可以发现，

他们并没有肤色的相近，就降低了这个会议的严肃性。相反的，他们比以往更加重视了这个会议，热情地接待，严谨地讨论，一切都做的十分周到。他们也许很快便察觉到这一群黑头发黄皮肤的人是中国人，但并不会因为这一点，而觉得你们是为中国说话。当你表明你的立场，他们会比其他人更加尊重你，敬佩你，因为你是特殊的。他们会认同这种特殊性。在他们眼里，肤色并不是最重要的事情，你代表的立场是哪一边，代表的官方是哪一个，这些才是他们真正关心的事情。在这种国际时刻，我尝试着尽量减少我的个人情绪，尝试着努力克制我的私人情感，这样，我才能更清楚地让自己知道，我该做什么。

当然，并不是说，我身为中国人，就一定要做跟澳大利亚立场不一样的事。其实很多时候，每当我以中国人的面貌代表澳大利亚参加各种活动和会议时，我感到很自豪。因为这说明，我在澳洲也能做到有一个体面的立足之地，这是我自身价值的体现，也是为中国人争光的体现。

如果说到“家”，那么我会说，家当然在澳洲，这里有我的家人，我的工作，我的生活圈子，一切的一切，都是那么真实，那么活生生，我不得不承认。但这是我的小家。说到中国，那是大家，那是我的“根”，是生我养我的土地，是我流淌着炎黄子孙血液的家园，不论我身处哪里，我的心都紧紧系着那里。这两边，不该以一种敌对而又冲突的状态在我的身上呈现，因为哪一边都是我无法割舍和抛弃的。所以，无论走到哪里，我都愿做一个特殊的代表，也努力做好一个特殊的代表，希望能以我自己的方式，来做一个中国人在澳洲该做的事。

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## **My Story ~ 21. Reborn ~ New Family, New Vision And New Career**



*"Attitude and environment are like a double-edged sword, it can kill a person but it can also create a new life. I thank myself for the firmness and persistence in those early years..."*

I was born in Anhui Province and graduated from university in China. I taught at the university after completing my master's degree. My husband came to Australia for further study. To be with my husband, I came to Australia in November 1995.

It seemed to me like a fairy tale when I first arrived here: everything was so short and small; there were only a few high-rise buildings in the city area, the traffic light pillars were made from short wooden piles, which looked so cute and interesting. Australia has a beautiful environment, clean air and bright sunshine – that was my first impression of Australia.

Later on things became more difficult. The first problem was the language. My major back home was Russian; I had no English foundation at all, so it was difficult for me even to go shopping. I did not watch TV at home because I couldn't understand anything, let alone chat with my neighbors. After a while, I decided to learn English, not only for the basic life needs, but also to lay a foundation for future work. So I began an English course in 1996, it was the beginning of a new life.

The second problem was work; it was very difficult for me to find a job at first. No jobs were suitable for me to do due to my limited skills and language ability. I needed work for an income; I have done all sorts of work. I worked in Chinese restaurants as a waitress, washing dishes from noon till nine o'clock in the evening, 7 days a week, there were times when I stood at the sink washing so many dishes, and I felt just like a robot. It was not easy for me as I had never done that type of work before; I was very slow at the beginning. What's worse, I often broke dishes while washing them, and I had to pay for them by a deduction from my already very low wages. In the end, I had very little money left to take home.

My boss got to know that I was living a very hard life with a family to raise, he was kind to me and didn't make me pay for the first few bowls that I broke. However, I kept on breaking dishes while washing them and my boss lost his patience and temper. Once he even shouted at me angrily: "You are so stupid, you don't even know how to wash dishes! Go home if you can't do simple work like this!" I was embarrassed, feeling tired and sad, tears running down my face. I dried my tears with the greasy sleeves and continued washing the endless dishes. Soon I improved a lot, both in quantity and quality. I could continue washing dishes for seven hours and didn't break any dishes for weeks. I have worked in numerous restaurants, Italian or Chinese, nearly every restaurant in Chinatown. I also worked as a household cleaner, even if I didn't know how to keep my own house tidy and clean. I survived those hard days with my firmness and persistence.

The main reason I came to Australia was to reunite with my husband, but after only a short period of time, we separated due to a marriage with no love foundation and our different personalities. That was an important life experience for me, coping with a failed marriage, makes you appreciate the second marriage more.

I met my present husband at the language school in 1996; we were in the same English class. He came from Iraq. He was a trained army bodyguard in Iraq, very tall and strong. He survived the Iraqi war luckily by crossing the border with his mother's help and escaped to Saudi Arabia. After he was captured by the US army, he stayed in a refugee camp for five years. In the camp he mixed with political refugees from other Arabic regions and other countries. He told me that he learned a lot from many people in the camp, including politicians, film directors and actors, etc. who told him stories and lent him books to read. He felt as if he was studying at a comprehensive university and even forgot that he was actually living in a refugee camp. He then came to Australia having been granted political asylum.

His spoken English was much better than mine, he was younger and knew no English before coming here, like a piece of blank paper he learned fast. I was older and I often mixed English with Russian which was my first foreign language. But my reading and writing were better than his, so we could help each other and complement each other's shortcomings. Our knowledge systems and way of thinking seemed to be quite different, probably caused by his self-taught methods

while in the refugee camp whereas I was educated in a formal education system in China. We got married in 2005. It was more for the sake of status, my husband wanted to have both of our names on the property certificate. Actually it didn't matter to me, I never took the paper work of a marriage as the most important part of a relationship. As a matter of fact, I prefer to be more independent and I need my own space. However, I always feel grateful to my husband who played the key role in the turning point of my Australian life. Why? Without him, I could not have achieved all the successes of today – a lawyer, a councilor, a mother and wife.

I remember, we were pretty poor when we started to live together. I had just completed my English course and wanted to go to a university for further study. I was always interested in politics, so I was planning to study law, a course called "Australian government". There were two choices for me at that time, the law course, which was a three year full time course; or a secretarial course which was only six months course. If I chose to be a secretary, I could go to work after six months and earn money for our family. But my interest was law, it was a future goal for me. I was in a difficult situation but I didn't want to ask my husband for his opinion. My husband didn't wait for me to ask but said to me: "I know you are interested in law, I think you should make your decision to pursue the law course. Go for it, don't worry about our current situation. Home is here as long as I'm here. You have my full support". With his caring and loving words, I made up my mind and enrolled in the law course in the Curtin University. From then on, my husband became a carer, taking over all the household chores, while letting me concentrate on my study. The course was hard at the beginning; I couldn't understand what the professors were saying in the lectures. But, with my determination and hardwork I passed all five exams. I became pregnant after the first semester; we had our first son in the second semester. I returned to study only two weeks after giving birth to my baby. My husband played the key role at that time, he looked after the baby while I was studying, even though he also had to work to raise money to support our family. So he should share more than half of my achievements. Without him, or if he had considered money as a priority, I would probably had chosen the secretarial course. It would have been much easier for the financial situation for our family, but I could never have achieved what I have today. I thank my husband for his loving care and his sense of responsibility, his sacrifice and contribution to our marriage. We have never depended on the government's welfare benefits but relied on each other's

support. But talking about cultural differences and understanding, we still have a lot of problems every now and then.

We have been together for over 19 years now, we have two lovely sons, we love each other, but we have not integrated with each other's culture, life style and customs. As a leading member of the Australian Women's Association, I have been planning to hold a forum with "Cross Marriages" as the topic. From my own experience, I would like to tell people, in particular, those Chinese women who plan to go for a cross-cultural marriage, you need to be fully prepared before making the decision, including physically, mentally and culturally. Each nation has its culture, and traditions. There are conflicts in the society, but more obvious are the family dynamics. I'm straight forward in my approach to things, I always say what I think whereas my husband is more like many Australian men, who love women to say nice and sweet things to them, a quality I lack. The other issue is customs and family tradition, his family is so different from our Chinese family, they think a family should share everything, no need to ask before taking things from each other, yours is mine and mine is yours. I understand this to be a cultural difference. I remember, once his younger sister came to Australia for a holiday and stayed in our house, she took all my handbags to her room without asking me. When I asked my husband about it, he treated it very lightly and told me that family should share everything and there were no secrets between family members. Financially, I am the bread winner for our family; I spend as much as I want, sometimes my husband is not so happy about that. I also think I am more open minded than my husband. Yet I don't think this is a cultural difference, it is more personality and part of me. We put our money together but he doesn't know how much we have because most of the money has been earned by me. However, he doesn't like my casual way of spending money. He says even if I am the main income earner, I should consider the whole family. I remember one year there was a policy that the Australian government would subsidize half the cost if you bought a car for business usage. So I bought a BMW without discussing the purchase with my husband because I knew he would disagree. We fight sometimes but we care for each other just like other husbands and wives. Maybe it is more difficult for cross marriage couples as there are more issues between them, just like in our marriage.

My husband is now studying law at TAFE as he is also interested in law and politics. But he will never take it on as a career. He just wants to know more and

see if he can help me with my work. As a professional woman, I know there must be some side effects on the family. The husband complains that the wife spends little time at home, cares less for the children but more for her job, etc. But in a cross marriage, there will be other problems. After being in a cross marriage for so many years, I suggest that if a woman wants to get married, she should try to find a man from her own country first, or at least find a man with the same language.

Next we talk about immigration. To me it is important for every immigrant, including myself, that we should cherish the opportunity that the host country has provided for us, even if we are facing many challenges all the time. You must think independently and don't give up or have doubts about yourself. I always treasure the opportunities that Australia has provided for me. If you can live your life and choose your way according to your own will, no one can stop you from doing the right thing. The real obstacles come from within. Be strong and have faith in yourself, you will achieve your goal. That is my experience since immigrating to Australia. To me, attitude and environment are like a double-edged sword, it can kill a person but it can also create a new life. I thank myself for the firmness and persistence in those years.

Now I'm a lawyer with many other social roles. I am a city councilor and have been in charge of marketing, finance and international relations since 2012. I own a law firm and run an immigration news paper. I am the vice-president of Australian Immigrant Association and the president of Western Australian Immigrant Association. I not only have to care for the interests of our members, but also have to organise training programs. I need to communicate with the Immigration Department and State Government to resolve community and other problems. I have to attend many meetings and take full charge of many issues; I travel in and out of the state many times a year. I understand that people trust me and it is my responsibility to do the right things. Since the 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2013, I have held the position of the president of the National Women's Association of Australia. We hold an activity on the 8<sup>th</sup> March every year, focusing on women's issues. For the next activity, we will arrange for those women who are financially independent to help those women who are not independent but wish to be successful and achieve their own independence. In the coming four to five years, I hope that we can assist women to achieve higher political and social status in Australia. I also hope I can be a representative for all the Chinese women in



Australia to achieve our common goals.

People ask me how I have integrated into the Australian society. Well, it's hard to explain clearly using only a few sentences. But the most important point is that you just have to make your decision, to do the job with your heart, like my own experience, from washing dishes to studying law at the university, to running my own business; to working in the government, to be responsible for myself, for my family and for society. Be yourself and do the right thing, and in the meantime, don't forget that you also represent your own country- the country you came from. As long as you work hard and are willing to use your intelligence and share your wisdom with others, you can get along with any one you meet. I find Australia is a good place to live; it is much easier to deal with Australian people, who live in a simple and direct environment while we Chinese have the habit to compete with each other for success. In terms of social relationships, you will find that you gain respect if you respect other people. Only sincere and open communications can develop into a long term relationship. Yet China has her many great traditions, one tradition is we Chinese always show gratitude and never forget those who have helped us while many foreigners probably do not consider it to be so important, or maybe they do not show their gratitude in an obvious way. For example, Australian people are very happy and easily accept a dinner invitation but they don't usually reciprocate like the Chinese people do. Australian people might think that we find that acceptable but I still think it's polite and good manners to repay with a dinner. If you are nice to a Chinese person, he or she will be nicer to you with a higher level of respect. Chinese people value mutual respect while not every foreigner knows that is the case. So I think we should carry our good traditions forward and help more people within our capability and to the best of our ability. Although not everyone will help you in return, they will look on you as a friend and remember you in their hearts, a good relationship will grow and last for a long time.

I have been living in Australia for over 19 years now. I have a happy family with my husband and our two children. I consider Australia to be my home. But with my parents and sisters back in China, I still treasure China as my home too. So I have two homes. As for cultural identity, I think I'm still Chinese in my blood and I'm Australian from the perspective of law. I will modestly accept Australian culture and try to absorb the excellent features of Australian life.

As a Chinese immigrant, I think the greatest advantage is that we can learn from

our two cultures to improve ourselves and achieve perfection.

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## 我的故事 ~ 21. 脱胎换骨—新家庭、新视野与新事业



*“心态和环境就像一把双刃剑，能磨灭人，同时亦能造就一个人！我感激当年坚定和不懈努力的我.....”*

我出生于安徽，在国内读的大学。研究生毕业后，教过一段时间的书，因为老公在澳洲，为了一家人团聚，我在1995年11月份来到了澳洲。

刚来的时候觉得这里像一个童话世界：什么东西都矮矮的、小小的，高楼大厦也不多，连红绿灯柱子都是矮矮的木头，很有意思。觉得澳大利亚是一个环境优美、空气清新、阳光灿烂的地方，这就是我初来乍到的印象。

艰辛的事情后面才慢慢开始。首先是语言问题，刚刚来澳洲的时候因为自己的专业是俄文，所以一点英文基础都没有。逛街、买东西都不方便，就算是在家看电视也看不懂，想和邻居或者是朋友聊天也无从开口，所以我就下决心要从头开始学习英语，不仅是为了基本的生活，也想为以后的工作打好基础。我1996年开始学习英语，从那一刻开始，就觉得自己需要重新创造自己的生活。其次，刚来澳洲，对工作也不了解，加上语言问题，工作很不好找。因此，我刚来的时候几乎所有的打杂的事情都做过，其中做的比较多的就是中餐馆服务生。那时，每天都要到餐馆里面去洗碗，一般从中午开始到晚上到9点多结束，一直都在机械化地洗碗。刚开始的时候很费力，一个小时洗不了多少碗，还经常把碗摔碎，工资本来就不多，再扣除摔碎碗的费用，能留在手里面的钱所剩无几了。当初老板看我不容易，不懂语言，为了家庭辛苦的赚钱，摔碎的碗不让我赔，但是后来我又一次摔了一擦碗，那次起老板脸色就不太好看了，骂了我一句：“怎么这么笨啊，不会干活就回家！”当时的我本来就感觉很累，再加上老板的这句话，心里很不是滋味，想到我来到澳洲真是不容易。这时眼泪也悄无声息地顺

着眼角默默地流了下来。因害怕被人看到后笑话，赶紧用沾满油渍的衣袖擦干眼泪。到后来我洗碗的质量和数量提高了不少，譬如说在洋人餐馆里面，就在现在唐人街的意大利餐馆，我差不多一次可以连续洗七个小时不停。老公看着我每天回家都是疲惫不堪，他心疼我，虽然他还在上学，他要求自己去洗碗，让我在家休息学习英语。为了保证这个家的经济来源，再辛苦他都不说，都是自己忍着。每次说到这一点，我都是很感动的。此外，我也做过家庭清洁工。但是时间不长，主要是因为我不太会做澳洲这边的家务，因为我们不是经过专业培训的。在以后的学习与工作中，我才意识到：在澳洲几乎所有工作，一定要经过专业的训练才能够做好。经过培训的人员，做工作是比当时的我专业许多。现在回想起来，确实感觉那时的我很不容易。

起初来澳洲为了和丈夫团聚，但是没有多久就和前夫分居了。一是情感基础本身就不是太好，二是两个人的性格都有一些问题，这个算是人生的经验，不是说有意的失败，而是从失败的婚姻中总结出很多，这样你会很珍惜第二次婚姻。现任丈夫他是伊拉克人，以前是在部队，做过指挥官的警卫员，后来又成为铁道兵。在伊拉克革命运动中，他幸运地活了下来。穿过边境去了沙特阿拉伯，搜身后把他当成难民抓了起来，在沙特的难民营里呆了五年。在那一段时间，他读了很多书，读书的范围也很广，所以现在很多跟他聊天的人都会发现他看的书很多，也很有思想。他从沙特来到澳洲，属于政治难民。后来1996年，我们在读语言的时相识。他的口语比我的好，因为他到这里来的时候是一张白纸，一切重新开始。而我年龄比他大，有一些其他的语言障碍，所以我学起来比他困难。说和听都比他差，阅读和写作会比他强一些，直到现在他的语言表达能力都比我好。他的知识体系和我的也不太一样，接触的知识和我有所不同，这和他在难民营里自学看书有很大关系。在难民营里很多人是高级知识分子和艺术家，别人都把书给他看，这样子对他来说其实是受益最大的。到现在为止，他都喜欢和习惯学习。爱好读书的习惯不仅对他自己有利，同时对我们孩子的成长也有很大的帮助。我们是2005年才结婚的，因为房子的问题，他要把我的名字加上，所以我们结婚了。结婚与否其实对我们来说都无所谓。我认为不结婚可能关系会更好一些，因为一般人没结婚的话，随时随地大家可以说再见，也不用承担任何责任。谈及我现在的丈夫，我突然想起在澳洲几十年来，有一件使我终身受益匪浅的事情，这也是我人生重要的转折点。他在其中起了关键的作用。为什么呢？我们俩刚开始在一起生活的时候，生活上面是比较拮据的。那时，我刚刚在政府提供的移民英语学习中心学习完英语，接着去了Curtin大学进一步学习英文。在英语学习完毕之后，读了一年的政治，叫做“澳洲政府”，这也是为什么我现在对澳洲政治很感兴趣。这时候摆在我面前有两个选择：一是学法律专业，二是学做秘书。当时学法律，需要整整三年，而且是全日制的；但是学秘书职业的话，差不多六个月就可以找工作赚钱，减轻家里经济负担。其实，一开始我就喜欢法律，也认为自己能够学以致用，但是，我担心丈夫会劝我选一个能快速毕业的专业好找工作来养家。所以，当时的我是抱着忐忑不安的心去征求他的意见的，我一见他就开口说道：“老公，现在面临选择职业技能学习了，你觉得

我是读很快能够学习完毕马上就能赚钱的专业呢，还是读我一直很喜欢的法律？”他跟我说道：“如果你喜欢法律专业，同时也下定决心我的话，你应该去读法律，千万不要考虑眼前家庭情况，有我在，家就在。你好好读书，我会支持你的。毕竟法律专业可能对你将来的发展会更好，对你的未来也更好。”因此，就因为他这一句鼓励和充满爱意的话，我坚定了信心去学法律。在读法律专业的时候。教授讲的我有些听不懂，很深很难。结果第一学期坚持下来了，五门课都通过了考试。第一学期怀孕了，第二学期放假了就开始生孩子，3个月的假期，然后生完孩子2周后又回学校。在那个时候，他作用很大，他得打工还要看孩子。所以从那以后，我生活中的所有变化和成绩，都有他一份很重要的功劳。如果当时他觉得赶紧赚钱最重要的话，我很可能也只有选择秘书职业六个月后就可以赚钱了，我们也不需要读书期间一直靠拿西澳政府的救济金了。就我个人而言，自己当时真是坚定信心，做出了慎重的决定：从零开始学习英语，到后面排除万难选择三年法律专业进一步深造。这件事对我人生的意义非常重大，现在我之所以能够成为一名律师，不仅仅是自己的努力，更重要的是那个时期，那种生活条件下他对我莫大的鼓励 and 无私的奉献，这些都使我深深地感受到了他对我那份爱和责任。

我们从认识到现在有19年了，在我们之间文化、生活、习惯要非常融洽很困难，例如我们现在在做妇联的活动，也把华人和老外通婚作为过一个主要话题来讨论。我觉得要嫁给异国人的时候需要做好充分的心理和生理准备，因为大家风俗习惯都不相同，很多矛盾都是风俗习惯不相同而产生的。我的性格属于那种大大咧咧型，嘴巴不是很甜。他的性格呢比较像澳洲人特别喜欢女人的甜言蜜语。第二个呢他包括他的家庭成员都认为大家的东西是属于自己的，可以不用说相互使用。中国社会我记得，不会说你的就是我的，我的就是你的，这实际上是文化风俗习惯的不同。我和我老公的性格也差了很远。比如说：他对自己非常的节省，在日常生活当中他也不会像我这样大手大脚。还有我的心眼比他大，我一般生气发一通牢骚就完事了，属于那种很容易生气也很容易解气的人。在经济方面我们钱都放在一起，但是他不知道家里有多少钱，所以他也讲不要以为钱是我赚的我就可以乱花，还得考虑整个家庭。记得有一年当时买车政府会有百分之五十的补贴，当时我就想去买一辆宝马车，我喜欢就买，可他不同意。我说你不同意我就离家出走，后来他就同意了。他目前在读TEF的法律服务，他自身也对法律和政治很感兴趣。但是他不会在这个方面有所追求，只是想了解了解，也想看看能不能帮到我。我觉得作为事业型的女性，肯定会对家庭感情生活有一些副作用，比如说你的丈夫认为你没有更多时间陪他，还认为你对孩子照顾不周。对于孩子我认为最重要的是给他们一个正确的方向和指导。我朋友网比较广，我也会为孩子提供机会，包括金钱和关系方面。我认为他是一个很好的父亲，但可能不是一个好丈夫。婚姻中沟通很重要，所以就我的经验来看，在找配偶方面，如果在本族和异族中有选择的话，最好还是在本族人中找。

其实对每一个移民来说，最重要的是要懂得珍惜这个国家给你提供的机会，而且是要勇敢地去面对挑战，要有独立的思考能力，不要因为别人的看法放弃或怀疑自己，对自己要有自信勇敢地去，排除一切干扰。只要是你认为能胜任你就去尝试认真地做，选择正确了，就需要实际行动。既然澳大利亚给我们提供了自由选择机会这样的机会就要珍惜。你自己完全自由自在的去选择你想要过的生活和你想走的路，没有人能真正阻碍你给你压力，给你压力和阻碍的只能是你自己。自己在这种思想的指导下，性格坚强了许多，同时我的人生也改变了很多。心态和环境就像一把双刃剑，能磨灭人，同时亦能造就一个人！我感激当年坚定和不懈努力的自己！

经过自身多年来不懈的努力和对澳洲社会的不断理解与融入。目前除了做律师工作以外，我还在朋友与家人的帮助下创办了一个移民报刊，同时还承担了多个社会角色。譬如：2012年当选为市政府议员（四年一届），我现在刚刚赴任了两年，还有两年要继续。在市政府做议员主要是担任市场资助与国际关系委员会主席。平均每两周或三周主持一次会议，同时也要参加每三周举行一次的市政府全体会议。此外我于2013年被选为全澳移民代理协会的副会长，同时也是西澳移民代理协会的会长。现在我不仅要照顾我们会员的利益，更要是协助提高他们的技能水平。我需要跟移民部和州政府长期打交道，为移民解决相关问题。作为西澳洲移民代理协会的会长，我就要全面负责这些事情，每年都要去东部开会。我深深地明白这是大家对我的信任，更是一份任重道远的责任。此外我还担任了澳大利亚华人华侨妇女联合会的主席，这是全澳性质的，2013年的3月8号成立。西澳洲的妇女联合会也是我发起的，我也负责这个联合会工作的统筹安排。每年3月8号我们都组织一个活动帮助解决妇女各方面存在的一些共性问题。譬如：我们让那些经济上已经独立的妇女去引导那些希望自己也能在经济上独立的妇女。关于未来的计划，我希望在四、五年以后，争取能够在政治和社会地位上有进一步的提升，也希望能够给我们的华人妇女作出表率，与大家同舟共济共谋发展。很多人问我是怎么融入当地社会的，这个问题确实不是三言两语就可以说明白的，但是有一点我认为是重中之重。正是因为我曾经在各个不同得岗位上从事工作过，我觉得只要你自己真心想融入，不要被自己文化背景所牵绊，你就能够逐渐融入。换句话说，就是你要有足够的自信，因为你也是代表一个民族的文化，你融入当地社会，实际上是当地社会得利了，因为你丰富了当地的文化。所以我认为，跟人交往最重要的是要自然、真诚地展现自己最好的一面，你的所做所为不仅仅是代表个人，而是你来自的国家。如果说每个人都这么想的话，那么在这种移民国家中，整体海外的华人形象就会越来越好。此外，我认为只要你自己不懈努力，能够吃苦耐劳发挥你的聪明才智，就能够很好的与人打交道。这样的话，在澳洲生活实际上不会太难，因为他们是在一个相对单纯的环境下长大的，思维特别的单纯与直接，而我们中国人是在人口众多、具有激烈竞争的社会中生存的，因此，思想方面都比这些澳大利亚人或者西方人要想的多一些。就社会人际关系而言，你会发现你真诚认真地对事对人，大多数情况下也会得到同样的回报。真诚与简单的相处，关系才能长久。但是，和澳洲人相比

我认为中国人很好的一点是我们知道感恩。可能很多外国人没有这个概念，也有可能他们知道，但是他们在日常生活中表现的不是那么明显和到位。譬如：你要请澳洲人吃饭，他们满心欢喜地接受，认为你请客是自己的意愿，大部分人不会回请你。可能是因为他们文化背景下没有一种礼尚往来的概念，因此我也不能勉强他们，但是对于我们的文化来说我觉得这一点很不错。你对一个人中国人好他也会反过来对你好，这就是感恩的具体表现吧。中国人讲究这个，外国人不是每个人都这样认为或这样做。所以我觉得，我们应该发扬我们自身好的传统，多帮助朋友。虽然不是每个我们帮助过的朋友都会反过来帮助你的。但是对于澳洲人来讲，在他们内心深处一定也会觉得你是一位值得交往的朋友。

在澳洲生活到今年已经是第19年了，因为是在这儿遇到了我的丈夫的，两个孩子也都是在这里出生的，所以我认为这儿是我的家。但是在心里面，父母亲和姐妹仍然在中国，所以我心里头认为中国也是我的家，所以我有两个家。提及海外华人文化认同，我实际上骨子里还是中国人，但是法律上是澳洲人。我虚心地接受并尽量地去吸纳澳洲文化比较优秀的一面。

我认为我们作为移民能获得的最大的利益就是我们有两个国家的优点都可以拿来不断地充实和完善自我。然后对于不好的价值观念或行为习惯我们避而远之。能来到澳洲，我认为很幸运，因为在这里可以吸取其他国家的文化精华，同时让自身不断地茁壮成长。

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## My Story ~ 22. Only By Creating Your Own World Can You Create A Real Life



*"While everyone who chooses to go abroad possesses his own dream, one thing is for certain - a brighter future."*

Though having lived in Perth for almost 30 years, life back in China is still clear in

my head. After the opening-up policy was introduced in the 1980s, many people were desperate to go abroad to pursue their dreams, thinking that only in this way could they realize their person goal and create their own happy life. Well, I was the opposite. There were two reasons: on the one hand, my mom was quite conservative and strongly opposed this view. She didn't want her daughter to be away. On the other hand, I majored in traditional Chinese medical science and frankly speaking, I didn't know what I could do in foreign lands.

My husband majored in science and engineering and taught in a college. People were crazy about going abroad when we fell in love. However, my mom didn't agree with our relationship. In her mind, once the couple live separate lives, there is a big possibility that one or either of them will change. Well, the son-in-law of her friend went abroad and this young couple was quite close in the first two years. The phone calls were expensive, dozens of dollars per minute while the total salary was only 50 dollars. The husband would call his wife, but the frequency of calls gradually became less and less and finally totally disappeared. The wife had to raise their child all alone in China and it turned out to be that she had no one to divorce with as her husband was nowhere to be found. Well, she finally had to go to the court and explained that her husband was missing, finally the divorce was granted. This left a deep impression on my parents, so my mom insisted that if he must go abroad, we couldn't get married until he returned back. As a result, we dropped this idea and got married, we no longer thought about going abroad.

After opening up, people began to focus more on schooling and qualifications. My husband was doing a good job at college and was promoted to the position of deputy director, he was considered to be an outstanding young talent. He has got a master's degree and his major was not available at his college, it was impossible to pursue further study. He really wanted to go higher, but without a degree, everything was a daydream. It was at that time that he got an opportunity to study with a government sponsorship. In 1987, he went to University of Melbourne to be a visiting scholar for one and a half years. Later, he wrote me a letter and discussed with me about his idea of applying for a scholarship and doing PhD, this meant I would have to wait for him for another four years. During that period, he couldn't come back and government policy then didn't allow visiting either. It was too hard for me and I just couldn't agree, so he came back.

Our daughter was born after he returned home; we lived our life just like other



common couple. However, he got another chance of studying for a PhD and sponsorship was available due to his position of deputy director and his excellent English. Registration was quite urgent so he made his decision without consulting me. Given my daughter was too young and needed to be cared for, my night shift at hospital, plus my poor health, would definitely put me into a difficult situation without him being around. So he turned down the study opportunity. One year later, another opportunity arose and his supervisor asked about his willingness to apply again. I told him not to give up because many young people had got PhD and if he missed this opportunity; his development would be held back. What's more, I could accompany him with a scholarship. So this time, he made up his mind and we really expected a good development in China afterwards. His scholarship to Australia Sponsoring Third World Countries, actually required that he must go back to work in China after completing his study. So after six years of his staying abroad, in 1993 I went to visit him with my four-year-old daughter.

I studied traditional Chinese medical science in Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. After graduation, I was required to work at the Chinese Medicine Hospital of Jinan, Shandong, as an acupuncturist. I was the first person with a formal five-year education in college after the Cultural Revolution in our department, so I received high praise both from our hospital and our department.

The main reason I refused to go abroad was because of my interest in the position of physician-in-charge. Promotion at that time was quite difficult due to qualification and seniority. It took me about two years from application, approval at various levels, official documents from Health Bureau to final certification. Also, I had been working there for ten years, thus I didn't want to give up, and I would feel desperate at the thought of not coming back. My husband thought the same. Well, visiting and sightseeing could be carried out after my promotion. It would be just a matter of time.

My promotion certificate soon came and I hurried to Australia with my daughter. The memory of my first day in Australia still lingers in my mind. I had never been abroad, never flown, neither could I speak English. I learnt English during my college years but I never got the chance of using the language. So the first flight was a big problem. There was no direct flight from China to Perth and we had to transfer in Singapore. I didn't know English so I couldn't read the signs and didn't know where to go. A friend of my husband came back to Beijing for a meeting and

he accompanied me to Australia.

What I have perceived from TV is that foreign countries are full of high buildings, neon lights and are prosperous, much more prosperous than Beijing. However, the more I walked, the more desolate I became. All I saw was primeval forest and wasted grass land; also there were huge lakes and lots of mosquitoes. Anyway, it looked like a desert with no people around which was totally different from what I had imagined. Even a Chinese village is better than here. Our car finally pulled up before a house which was rented by my husband and his classmates.

After all these years' living, I actually think that the air here is clean and weather is fine, while the biggest advantage is the small population and the pace of life here which is more relaxed. Interpersonal relationships in China are much more complicated, especially for those who were born into an intellectual family like mine which had few chances to see the world. My father was a professor at Shandong Normal University, so I had always been around that area since kindergarten. What I experienced in Australia was much simpler. Relationships in China are always complex and hard to handle, including relationships among workmates. I'm now independent and work three days a week. Basically I do acupuncture at home but I also go to a friend's clinic about two days a week.

It has been 30 years since I came to Australia. I remember, there were hard days to go through, or in other words, I was quite puzzled at that time. There was a great income gap in the first several years after I came here and we had to live on the scholarship. Frankly speaking, his scholarship was quite high compared to other students but we still encountered great pressure. Apart from renting, we had to pay high living expenses. People in China always thought those staying abroad earn big money, so we saved money to save face and gave our relatives presents when we went back to visit them. Another pressure came from the language. I didn't know how to say hello to neighbors, actually I didn't know what they were talking about, and all I could do was smile. I couldn't read labels either so I didn't know the ingredients, let alone know how to communicate with doctors in hospital. I needed my husband to handle my daughter's schooling and banking too. I suddenly felt like a fool. But in order to solve our economic problem, I had to work in a factory, which meant a bigger drop in status. From a doctor-in-charge at a hospital to a worker, I felt awful and aggrieved. I had sacrificed myself for my husband. My mom thought so too. What's worse, I didn't dare to tell anyone about my factory work. I was depressed and didn't know when my life

would improve.

I felt I had an equal position when we were both in China because we both had our own income and salary. So I never had to ask him for his permission and just bought whatever I wanted. However, here in Australia, if we went to a supermarket and I wanted to buy a certain product, he would tell me that maybe it would be on sale the next week, so we should just wait and see. I had to put it back on the shelf, which made me awful. I had no income and had to buy everything with his money. I had no confidence and felt of little value.

I decided to learn English so I could find myself a job. Since I wanted to live here in the long run, English is definitely a must. After three years' hard work at an English Training Centre, my English was better and I could communicate with others without difficulty. I experienced no problems in hospital or in store and I didn't feel isolated any more. Now I can utilize my major, I find myself again.

As life is getting better, we started to consider settling down here for the long term. My husband went on to study postdoc after graduation. As for my daughter, since she is already nine years old, it would be hard for her to fit into the environment in China with a different education system. I once tried to teach her Chinese and math and forced her to study using the text books, exercises and test papers which were sent to us by my mom in China. However, I didn't have enough time to supervise due to the factory work. I was just too tired to care for her study, so this plan was finally dropped.

I had never done any manual work in China and the experience of working in a shrimp factory is really unforgettable, a process I found difficult to accept. The main job was to pack shrimps. My English was very poor at that time and a friend introduced me this job. So I thought I must grasp the opportunity because it paid 10 dollars per hour, much higher than the previous work in an Italian restaurant which paid only five dollars an hour. I was quite satisfied and decided to work hard in case I lost my job. I was like a dumb person because I didn't know English. My manager taught me, I watched him and did as he did. I could not understand his English but worked hard. Finally I surprisingly was recognised as a monthly model worker and was awarded a kilo of shrimp and a bottle of brandy. I put the picture of me receiving the award in the workshop to inspire others to learn from me. Although there's a big smile on the face when I received this award, I felt awful deep in the heart. I didn't know how to express myself, should I

be happy or sad? Isn't it an honorable thing to receive this award? But I thought of my daughter, and decided I would just work harder.

Actually I was desperate and wanted to go back to China at that time and wanted my daughter to attend a local school to improve her Chinese level which was becoming poorer and poorer. Every time before her Chinese lesson, there would be a fight, shouting and crying or even beating, and my daughter would cry to me: "Mother, it's too hard." I felt sorry for her and would think to myself: what am I doing? I'm like a demon forcing her to learn, so I gradually gave up. I thought of going back to China, but at once my husband's career and my daughter came into my mind, I would forget it. She was nine at that time and if we went back, she would be upset to enter the first grade again and I was afraid she would be unable to recover from such a setback. So we started to consider settling down here. I was willing to give up my dream of becoming a professor for the future of my husband and child.

Many people are like me. They don't focus completely on themselves but consider the family or other reasons. It's been over 30 years and am I a Chinese or an Australian? As I have got Australian passport, I'm theoretically Australian but I just feel like a half, after all I lived in China for the first 33 years. I was born there and grew up there. I went abroad at the age of 32 and have lived in Australia for over 30 years. Seeing life as a whole, I will live better here and probably will end my life here.

I felt I was Chinese when I first came here and even when I got the passport. Perhaps it is because the longer we live, the deeper relationships we develop. Wherever you go, people can tell you are Chinese and I feel that as well. What's more, China is my motherland and I have lots of memories there. My family and friends are there with my roots. I'm Chinese forever.

I remember at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games an Australian athlete won a gold medal, I felt like an Australian and was proud of him. But when a Chinese athlete won a medal, I felt like a Chinese and cried for him. Such emotions are complex, shall I keep my left hand or my right hand?

Festivals always remind people of their roots. I will think of Chinese National Day when it's Australia Day holiday and want to go back to China. The time when the Australian flag flies and the national song is sung, everyone joins in. Frankly

speaking, I still can't sing it but I feel I am with them and possess that kind of surging in heart. There's proud and recognition too. Although we have settled here and going back to China is like a holiday, we still perceive it as our home and Australia in turn feels like a holiday. My mom's passing away took my Chinese home away. Maybe this has to do with personal emotions like many other people. From then on, my homesick changed to Perth and being in China like a holiday. There's no sense of home.

There's still a gap living with the mainstream and you can't fit in completely, though my husband teaches in college. People in the upper class have this kind of feeling too, they are not recognized as mainstream. In my mind, as my work is in Chinese medicine, people are more willing to accept Chinese medicine than before but I still can't feel it. There are a lot of Australians in my clinic and half of my patients are Australian. I have no trouble communicating with them but still can't fit in. There were several times when I was in my car and heard someone open his car window and shout at me: "go back to your home!" Well, I haven't heard such rude words in the past ten years. I believe many foreign immigrants might also have come across such a situation. Maybe it's because the society has changed and people are more tolerate and accept foreign things, including Chinese medicine. But I have not truly integrated in the local culture and I know many people are not talking from their heart.

In my mind, those Australian, especially those who have received high education, know they should not come up with racial abuse. But by their actions when they are handling issues you can see, there's a little prejudice in their hearts. During conversation with others, I find many people have the same feeling. In other words, it's hard to get close to Australians, even your friends. Probably it's affected by life style and evaluation which has an affect on your attitude and thoughts. Though I have an Australian passport, I'm still Chinese in heart.

In cultural recognition, the next generation is closer to Australia. According to our Chinese tradition, young people will live and eat at home and feel that is what should be. My daughter has grown up and she moved out when she found a job which made me feel puzzled and worried as a mother. In the Chinese tradition, she should live with us and we can save money for her to buy car and house, but in her mind, either in core values or life style, there's a big difference and she prefers to do what Australian people do. She is quite independent since a kid and thinks it is shame to ask her parents for money. We actually have never taught

her this. She is our only daughter and everything except what we use will belong to her. But in her mind, these things are ours and she will never take them for granted. So she moved out once she found a job.

There's an old saying: "fallen leaves return to the roots". Old friends and classmates ask whether we will return to China after retirement. Well, actually I won't. Each place has its own ways of supporting the elderly. I will continue my Chinese medicine career here till life ends. It's better that as a Chinese medicine doctor, you can continue to work as long as you are healthy. You can understand the emptiness of being old and will not lose your value as a human being if you continue to be active. Probably the working days will be reduced, two or three days a week. But I will continue until there's no choice, not for money, but just for something I have to do and feel as though I am still a useful member of the community. I love my husband and child, share happiness and sorrows with them because it was I who brought them here.