

我的故事 ~ 4. 地地道道的中国人



“我拿着澳洲护照已经十八年了，却从来没把自己当成过澳洲人。”

我的老家在云南曲靖，属于云南滇东。我在中国的时候，曲靖一度管辖着13个县。云南西部少数民族众多，滇东只有彝族、苗族等几个少数民族。在我们云南，有一位著名的少数民族舞蹈家叫杨丽萍，她的孔雀舞让世人称赞不绝。我也是学中国民族舞蹈出身，多年来的职业也一直和舞蹈有关。

我来到澳洲的经历非常特别，一家人旅游着就过来了。1996年的时候，我和我先生还有大儿子都住在非洲，一起来澳大利亚旅游。我们从约翰尼斯堡过来，第一站就到了珀斯。达到珀斯的第一天，我们跟出租车司机说要到城里找个地方住，他就把我们带到城里的假日酒店。每天早上我先生很早就起来吃早餐，我大儿子就在一边翻书看，翻着翻着，忽然说：“哎，这里有办移民的，我们要不要移民来澳洲住？”我考虑了下说：“问问看吧。”然后我先生就打电话给移民公司。接电话的是一个白人老太太，她人很好，马上就开车到我们住的酒店，然后带我们去国王公园，再去天鹅湖边看黑天鹅，沿着那个湖边兜了一圈。当时我的感受就是：哇，这个小城市居然那么漂亮！那时候的珀斯真的很小又很安静，几乎没有什么中国人。我就问这位老太太有没有唐人街，她说没有，附近只有几个越南人开的店，还没有大陆人开的店。

我一下子喜欢上了珀斯这座安静的小城，于是就对先生说：“我们移民吧！”我先生也很赞同，就跟那个太太签了合同。回去以后，我们给她寄了差不多一万美金，然后绕了一圈就回非洲了。可是一回到非洲我们马上就后悔了，心想：哎呀，去澳洲干什么呀，没亲戚又没朋友……而且我发现我又怀孕了，怀了我的小儿子，就更加不想去了。于是我先生打电话给那个老太太说不移民了，她答复道不来澳洲可以，但因为合约已签好，她收的钱只能退给我们百分之几十，剩下的她要全部扣除。无奈之余，我先生只好让她继续办理。那个时候办理移民手续非常快，大概两个月之后她就写信给我们说办好了，叫我们赶紧过去。我的母亲一直和我住在一起，我就让我的母亲和大儿子先过来澳洲，我在非洲把小儿子生下之后，也跟了过来。

在珀斯住下之后，就觉得此地美丽又干净。我喜欢安静，喜欢那种乡村一样的感觉，安安静静没多少人。我之前其实也去过不少地方，例如悉尼、墨尔本，还有伦敦。我觉得很奇怪，我就喜欢珀斯，因为不管你在哪里，当地人都非常友好。给我印象最深

的就是那个办移民的老太太。真的是第一次见面，她就很热情，给我们安排所有的东西，然后带我们去游玩。我儿子来了以后，她还给我儿子安排读书。我母亲不懂英文，她就给我母亲找了一个在这边开餐馆的香港人帮我母亲做翻译。我母亲走路去买菜时，很多当地人也很热情地过来问她要去哪里，然后把她送过去。于是我心里默念着：这里真好！

不过，刚开始生活的时候我也还是遇到了不少困难。最主要的就是语言不通，特别是生活中的琐碎语言。我在非洲四年，并没有去学外语。到了珀斯之后，即使是去华人店，他们要么讲英语要么就讲广东话。为此我都哭了，我打电话给中国那些同学诉苦，我说我现在无法和外界沟通，我不但要学英语还要学广东话。直到现在，我广东话还是不会，只会听一点点。

在珀斯住了好一阵子之后，因为不用工作，我开始在家里闲得有些难受。我之前也没有太多的工作经历，只教过跳舞。那时的珀斯只有三所中文学校，都是属于中华会馆的。我就到中华会馆去，想找一份在中文学校教舞蹈的工作。但当时那些学校都不需要人，我后来问了几个熟人，包括我儿子就读的台湾人开的学校，也都不需要舞蹈老师。我只好作罢。一直到1997年香港回归中国的时候，当地华人要在街上搞游行。不知道听谁说了我会跳舞，当时负责搞游行的人就打电话给我叫我去演出。阔别舞台那么久，有人邀请我跳舞自然很高兴，不过那个演出就是在大街上搭一个台子，没有乐队伴奏，也没有灯光和舞台，连音乐的卡带也没有。所有东西都要自己准备——这一度让我很困惑，包括后来有一次在西澳大学演出，叫我跳独舞、音乐、服装也都是要我自己准备。我只好打电话给我中国的同学，叫他们快递了一件孔雀服过来。

演出了几次之后，中华会馆就来找我了，他们会馆有一个舞蹈团想请我当老师，我欣然答应。接着我就按照自己的要求，让舞蹈团的学生每个星期学习两个小时，一个小时练基本功，另一个小时学舞蹈。起先他们的经理不同意，说他们跳了十几年的舞，从来不练功。我说不练功跳什么舞啊，一定要练，基本功一定要有。他们只好同意了。但是没想到，第一次练习开始之后，就出问题了——因为我的严格。

我在非洲是教苏联儿童舞蹈的，我对他们一向非常严格，练习时必须按芭蕾舞的形体来练，但是中华会馆舞蹈团的学生们表示无法接受。我还记得有一个学生的妈妈打电话给我说：“老师，你不能像这样教，他们的身体会很痛的，你不能用中国的那种教育方法来教育这里的孩子。”但我依旧坚持说，如果他们不练基本功，我就不教了。经过慢慢磨合，最后他们还是接受了每周练一个小时的基本功。就这样，从1997年开始到现在，我在中华会馆教舞蹈教了整整十七年。

我在这边做的所有事都是跟舞蹈有关的。有时候想想，如果不出国，我在中国可能就是舞台编导了，我的同学们现在都是在中国的歌舞团当编导什么的。不过我也没有后

悔，在这里教舞蹈也有很多丰富的经历。其中印象最深的是2008年的时候，我应邀去圣诞岛的一个中文学校教跳舞，他们要搞一个很大的庆典，是澳洲认同该岛五十周年大庆。我在圣诞岛呆了两个星期，那是一个很小很小的岛，但是很漂亮。学校的老师基本都是文莱或者马来西亚的华人，还有位老师是中国政府派去的志愿者，在那边支教两年中文。我当时一下子觉得很感动，在那种偏僻的地方传播中国文化，且不计较任何报酬，我被同胞的这种精神深深打动。我在那里跳了两只独舞，并给学生们编了一些舞蹈，五十周年大庆搞得热热闹闹。

不知不觉，我来澳洲居住已经十八年了。随着中国实力的不断加强，中国越来越多地被世人了解，对此，我是深有体会的。可以说，我是这一变化的见证人。记得刚来珀斯的时候，街上都没有多少中国人，也没人讲中文。虽然看到一些华人面孔，但是他们只说广东话。我不管走到哪里，人们都问我是不是日本人，要不然就问我是不是台湾来的。我回答说：“不是，我是中国大陆来的。”他们都不相信，说：“不可能，中国大陆的人怎么可能会来这里。”我说：“中国大陆的人为什么不能来呢？”然后就费很多口舌去跟他们讲，中国不是他们想象中的那样。可是很多当地人，因为从来没见过中国，都以为中国就是很贫穷、很落后的国家，然后女人都是裹着小脚走路的。这一度让我很气愤也很无语，我只能回应说：“天，那都是几十年甚至一百年以前的事了！你们为什么不自己去中国看看现在的中国是什么样子呢？”如今就真的大不一样了，你跟这些当地人交流的时候，他们都会提到北京、上海是大都市，真的好漂亮，因为很多人都去过了。包括我们家邻居也会拉着我说中国怎么漂亮，吃的东西怎么好。这让我很欣慰，我觉得这几年最大的变化，就是去过中国的澳洲人越来越多了，中国人来澳洲的也越来越多了，这加深了澳洲人对中国的了解和认知。无疑，这种变化跟中国国力的增强有很大关系，中国在国际上的地位提升了是毋庸置疑的事实。我现在走出去，到处都可以遇到讲中文的人。这种感觉让我一下子有些恍惚，好像回到中国了一样。

除了当地社会对中国认识的变化，我自己这十几年来也有了不小变化。除了在中华会馆教舞蹈，我自己也有了一所舞蹈学校。这个学校是我自己筹资建立的，不过我并不靠这个生活，这只是我的一种业余爱好，主要是让几个搞艺术的朋友们可以聚在一起。我一直跟几个从中国来的搞艺术的朋友说，我们应该有一个自己的剧场，这样演出起来就比较方便，去租人家的场地会很贵。至于未来的打算，我就想搞一个正规一点，像样一点的，我们华人自己的歌舞团，把喜欢唱歌的、玩乐器的、跳舞的朋友们凑在一起。我想这个问题想了很长时间，也跟几位唱歌的朋友探讨过。要自己出资建立起来并不容易。每次谈到这些，我就会觉得在中国搞艺术和在澳洲是两码事。在中国你要有什么构想出来了，马上写出来，给政府一交，政府就会批出钱来给你弄。在这里得自己去拉赞助，没有赞助，一分钱也没有。

有人问过我说：在澳大利亚生存难吗？我觉得，只要你愿意，就一定可以生存。就拿

我的学生来说，干各种工作的都有，当护士的，当医生的，当律师的，还有做清洁工的，开餐馆的，做美容的，只要你愿意，找一份工作，或者学一份专业，都能在这边生存下来。我现在有一个学生，90后，也是从中国大陆过来的，他是学矿业的，但是他不愿意去矿上做工，因为他觉得那样太苦了，于是现在他就在Carousel的Myer卖资生堂的护肤品，还在Casino的餐馆打两天工。我问他这样说可以吗？他说挺好的，得到的工资挺高。他就这样在澳洲生存了下来。

除了工作，在与人交流方面，我觉得在这里生存也不难。我一直就是觉得澳洲本身就是个多元文化的国家，它本不属于任何国家，最早是当地土著人的。拿我自己来说，我一般跟商界或者政界没有多少交流，只跟舞蹈家协会这些搞艺术的有往来。舞蹈家协会经常有演出，澳洲多元文化部给了他们一笔研究经费，这个演出就相当于一个文化课题。例如有一次演出，编导找了几个不同国家的人，一个非洲的、一个英国的、一个西班牙的，还有一个我记不得是哪里的，把不同国家、不同文化背景、讲不同语言的人结合在一起，作为一种文化的串通。还有我曾经在2008年代表中国编了一出舞台剧，也是用舞蹈来表现文化的串通。在这些演出过程中，我从来没有感到过歧视或者交流不畅。

还有人问我：你在澳洲生活了这么多年，你觉得自己现在是中国人还是澳洲人？我想这个问题的答案很明确：我还是地地道道的中国人！这或许跟文化有关系，我在中国学的就是中国民族舞蹈，对中国的民族文化了解比较多，我一直觉得我从骨子里边还是中国人。所以不管我是去外边旅游还是做别的什么，我都说我是中国人，从来不会说我是澳洲人。包括我去参加澳洲各种演出，虽然我是西澳舞蹈家协会的会员，但我都是以中国人的身份去参加。每年澳大利亚国庆节和多元文化演出，我也都是代表中国这一块。我有时候也觉得真是很奇怪，毕竟我拿着澳洲护照已经十八年了，却从来没把自己当成过澳洲人。

有时候想想，我会觉得我们这些移民的人其实也有些可怜，都不知道自己到底是属于哪里的。或者换句话说，等老了以后到底是留在这儿还是回中国？有些人说老了肯定要回中国，中国怎么都方便。但也有些人说，可能两边呆呆吧。在归属这种问题上，我从来没有把澳大利亚当成我的家，没有想过老了以后会留在这里。但是如果真的要回去中国，我觉得也不太可能，因为我在中国没有房子，没有房子就没有家的那种感觉。我可以住在我哥那里，尽管他们对我都很好，但始终觉得那不是自己的家，然后还有其他很多东西也好像因为脱离太久，已经融入不进去了。

如今，我的小儿子也上大学了。或许，我可能到处走走吧，环游世界，在能走的时候。我有时候跟我的学生说，我现在年纪大了，如果我像他们这么年轻，一定会去周游世界。在世界各地的街头一边跳中国舞挣费用，一边把整个世界好好游历一圈。

My Story ~ 5. Three Words, One Marriage



“Run-in period requires time; a marriage is much more complicated than test driving a new car.”

I was born in 1963, but I feel much younger, I cannot be called a beauty, but I am rather good-looking and stylishly dressed, some Australians even take me to be high school student. But on personal experiences and mental qualities, I am prematurely aged. Shadows left in my childhood often appear in my dreams, and wounds in my young heart remain unhealed. Due to the historical background of my parents' family, I have gone through many emotions that other people of my age have not experienced.

I am the youngest child, I have five brothers; and I am the only girl. Looking back on my early childhood, I had secretly decided that I would not stay in China, I had to go abroad. The reason was simple, when I was 6, my family was deported to Inner Mongolia, my parents were much wronged and endured much suffering, I didn't want to experience the same life, and I had to find a way out of this country, I did not want to stay in this country, it was all too painful. Seeing how my father and my mother were tortured every day, my young heart was bleeding. Then I did not go to school, but I did know what “torment” “suffering” and “poverty” meant. I remember, my family had a very comfortable and cozy life in the city, then one day we woke up, and found ourselves falling into an abyss in an out-of-the-way place, all of a sudden we became penniless. I knew a family like my parents' should not be so poor, but I was not clear about the reason.

I didn't find any opportunity to go abroad. Nine years passed in a flash, my family returned to the city in 1978, by that time I had grown up a lot... Later I got married, had a baby, and when my child grew up, I put all my hopes on her. There is a saying on WeChat “some people are particularly wise, they do their own things, some people are stupid, they cannot do anything, and they just lay an egg

like a bird, and then send that egg out.” I am among the stupid ones, I was a fool who laid an egg and put all the hopes on this egg.

Perhaps because of the underlying historic reasons and the failure of having very much in common with my ex-husband I became a single mother and struggled through life with my daughter. From the very beginning when my daughter went to school, I simply did not prepare her to take the College Entrance Examination in China. My daughter is just like me in character, she’s very direct and straightforward, and follows her own pathway with no change of direction. She was not good at dealing with people and I didn’t think she was particularly clever. If she had continued to live in China, life would be very difficult for her. I’m not saying that China is not good, but we Chinese always have a network of relationships which is very complex.

During her school years in China, I had been impressing on her mind the idea of studying abroad. In 2008, she graduated from high school, I sent her directly to an Australian college to study nursing without taking the College Entrance Examination.

At that time I was still working in China, so my daughter studied here alone, as a child of a single-parent family, she seemed to grow up particularly fast, and became an adult in an instant. You can imagine how hard it was, my daughter had to study and work part time but she managed to hang on. Two years later, my daughter applied for a visiting visa for me.

It was 16 December, 2010 when I came to Australia for the first time.

My first impression of Australia was profound and deeply moving. I got off the plane, at 11 pm, my daughter picked me up; I could see nothing but darkness all the way. It was very quiet, occasionally there were two beams of white light coming from the opposite direction as they came nearer, I could see it was a car.

The next day after breakfast, my daughter took me out to look around, as I got out, all kinds of feelings welled up in my heart, and the memory box which had been gathering dust for 40 years suddenly opened. What appeared in front of me was a picture of the grassland of Inner Mongolia! My memory of Inner Mongolia is the endless prairie, which is known locally as a large grassy meadow, in summer, the prairie is lush and green. I looked up; I saw the spotless azure blue sky in Zhelimu Inner Mongolia! Wow, the heavens and the earth of these two places were so much alike! And the people of these two places were similar... In

my opinion, China's Mongols and the local aboriginal people of Australia are part of an earlier civilization, years earlier than other ethnic groups. They are simple good-natured, down-to-earth people who don't beat about the bush, compared to some of the so-called civilized people they are easier to get along with.

I got a one -year multiple entry tourist visa for my first visit to Australia, each visit could only let me stay for up to three months in Australia. Within the one year of the visa validity, I made a round trip every three months; the greater part of my hard-earned savings was spent on my daughter's tuition, and the rest on the airlines.

Of course, I wanted that money back; I worked during every three-month stay in Australia, even though I knew it was illegal. As I mentioned earlier, I was well prepared. Before going to Australia I asked about jobs other than restaurant work which required no language. I had never learned English; I knew only Hi, Bye, and Thank You. Later I heard that massage is a relatively easy way to make money. I learned massage to get ready for working in Australia. Also I became mentally prepared, because there was a world of difference between my job in China and a masseuse. A full-time radio host became a masseuse, can you imagine my feelings? But going abroad was my life-long wish, and I could earn Australia dollars. Being determined with a clear goal, although I was only a halfway decent masseuse, it didn't take long before I became a real masseuse.

The second day in Australia, I headed for the massage parlors. I soon discovered massage parlors here which were mostly run by Chinese were mixed, as we Chinese put it: some stores were yellow (porn), there were also regular massage parlors just like the one I worked in.

With my down-to-earth manner and the skills I learned from the crash course books on Chinese medicine anatomy and massage techniques before coming to Australia, I soon created a good impression on the manager and the guests and my monthly income reached over five thousand Australian dollars, of course, I worked Seven days a week, I was very tired, but satisfied.

However, I cannot, say there were no personal problems. Most of the managers I met were Chinese. Chinese people have their unique characteristics; some of them are very difficult to get along with. A typical Chinese attitude is like this: when you did well he doubted you, when you didn't work well he tore you down, besides, I couldn't speak the language then, some young girls from Hong Kong and Taiwan openly bullied me, they knew I did not understand English, they

sweet talked my customers into becoming their guests, although I did not understand English, I knew what they were doing. But a poor man cannot afford to cherish pride or resentment, the famous old Chinese saying is very much to the point, it clearly described my situation at that time. I needed money, so I bowed to others, I could put up with all these difficulties.

During my previous visits to Australia, I went to work almost as soon as I got off the plane; I had no time to look around and no chance to relax. This sudden relaxation felt strange, maybe I had become accustomed to rushing about, After a few days wandering, I felt at a loss, the owners of the massage parlor where I worked were a couple who were very good to me. They knew I was single, and they asked me why not find someone to marry after the one-year stay? They thought I should take the opportunity to find a man to marry in order to solve the problem of my identity. I had never thought about remarrying before. All my hopes were pinned on my daughter. In fact, I heard that a lot of people regained their identity through remarrying. But, I was skeptical of everything, friendship, love, affection, everything in the world.

One evening, at an Italian restaurant, I saw a woman with an Asian face at the door, I said I wanted to eat Italian food, the old lady pointed toward the restaurant without speaking. I walked into the Italian restaurant. I found a place to sit down and waited to be served. There was a man sitting nearby, he saw me come in and sit down, after a little while, he got up, came over to talk to me, he seemed to be asking me "You're by yourself?"? I nodded, in fact I did not understand him, I guessed it was what he meant, and I immediately took out my phone, and found I had just guessed correctly. He asked if I minded him joining me as he was also alone. I said "OK." in Chinese. Actually I still did not understand him. He seemed to understand the whole thing, and sat down. Then we started ordering together, and then he began to chat with me, I knew none of his words. So I took out the phone again, he stopped every time he finished a sentence, and I looked up the words one by one, and then made up the sentence, so I could understand his meaning. Fortunately, I was kind of clever. I carried on with the lively conversation with smiles and laughter, though I did not know what he was saying. This Mr. Foreigner could also be considered smart, maybe he did not understand what I said either, after a while, he called over a Chinese waiter to be the interpreter. The waiter told me his mother was English, and his father was from Hong Kong, and he could speak a little Chinese. The young waiter thought I had known the gentleman for quite a long time, he did not know we had just met.

Mr. Foreign spoke some more the waiter told me that he sold tablecloths. Oh, I then understood why the man had referred to the tablecloth by shaking it; he had wanted to tell me this. However, does selling tablecloths have anything to do with me? Then I began wondering whether this gentleman wanted to sell his tablecloths by eating with me, or wanted to sell his tablecloths in China? Since I was Chinese and Chinese product was cheaper.

Dishes arrived and we were eating and chatting warmly with questions and answers, but most probably they were all irrelevant. Because I was no longer translating word for word, I was too tired, and the cell phone was running out of power, the waiter had gone to greet the other diners, but he came by once, told me in broken Chinese that it did not matter, and soon we would slowly understand each other.

After dinner, I said I was going to check out, because this was my first time alone with a foreigner eating and talking, I felt very happy, understood or not understood we communicated well with sign languages and body language. According to the Chinese custom, I was the host of the table so I stood up and went to pay the bill without thinking of going Dutch. I was glad to pay the bill and it was a natural thing to do. But that gentleman immediately stopped me, saying firmly that he would not let me pay, and he would pay instead. I said no, it's my treat, thinking that we didn't know each other, and I didn't want to owe him a favor, though I didn't have much money, I didn't want the psychological burden. We didn't agree with each other at the front desk in a deadlock. Then the waiter came over, he told me, "You're embarrassing him by doing this, how can a gentleman let a lady pay his dinner? It's the first time I have seen a Chinese woman rushing to pay the bill " He added, "This time you let him pay, the next time you can invite him to dinner."

I let the waiter tell the foreigner that the next time would be my turn. I remembered very clearly it was a Thursday, I said I would invite him on Sunday. The man accepted at once. I was faced with a dilemma because I knew few restaurants, I had only heard of a Chinese tea house named "Dragon", I planned to take him there for tea with my daughter thinking that I needn't speak English in the Chinese restaurant. He took my phone number and left me his phone number, and asked me where I worked, I told him through the waiter.

The massage parlor that I worked in was close to the Italian restaurant. On Saturday, the gentleman came to the massage parlor. He knew I did not

understand English, so he said directly to the manager that he would take me to Li Jung Xian in the Royal Casino for tea on Sunday.

I said, well, we could go to Li Jung Xian in the Royal Casino for tea, but I would pay.

He agreed to the idea. Next morning, he came and picked me up, but we did not go to the big casino. He said Li Jung Xian needed a reservation and we couldn't get in without a booking a seat. He took me to a small restaurant which didn't need any reservation. We just wanted a snack. I thought to myself, he's a good guy, knowing I'm a migrant worker with little money; he didn't want it to be too expressive. When we finished, he was going to pay the bill, I stopped him with one hand, my other hand picked up the phone, and I asked my sister to tell him that I wanted to pay the bill. He no longer insisted. That little something cost me 70 Australian dollars equal to over 400RMB, my wage of one day. I had made myself appear generous by slapping my own face.

At dinner, he told me that his home was in Melbourne, he was alone in Perth, I understood the two names, and looked up the other words. He told me he would leave at one o'clock, and asked me if I would join him on the "farm", I took "farm" as "mum", I knew the English word "mum", Immediately I thought of his mother in Melbourne, and I knew it would take quite a few hours to fly from Perth to Melbourne. Besides, why should I go with him to Melbourne to see his mother? It's too ridiculous! I rang my daughter at once, and then I put the man on the phone, let him speak with my daughter. She had just woken up, did not give it too much thought, She exchanged a few words with him, and then told me, "Mom, he invited you to his mum's, he wanted me to ask you if you would go with him?" She told me that the man had a farm somewhere, and he wanted to show me around. At once I began to calculate, first, I was a stranger who could not speak English, if he sold me, I wouldn't be aware of it. Second, we were both single, a man and a woman, he had never married and I am single for many years, I couldn't go for an outing with him and stay overnight on his farm after we had just met twice, I could not do anything which would make me cheap especially in front of my daughter.

I was quite conservative, and I was a little scared. But it was really a good opportunity. I'd love to see what it was like on an Australian farm, and how it was different from the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. I asked my daughter for advice; she said she wanted to meet this person. We arranged to meet at the massage

parlor.

He took out his driver's license as soon as he saw my daughter, and told her to take a picture of it. He said my daughter could find him anytime, anywhere with this license. My daughter took the picture immediately. I felt very embarrassed, because it seemed we did not trust him, and if I didn't trust him, why didn't I stop going out with him? However, I went to the farm with him and returned two days later.

The farm house was big, there were five rooms. From that day on, he came to the massage parlor and asked for a massage from me every day. After the massage, he would stay and wait till I got off work, he would invited me to go out for dinner with him, and it went on like that for a whole week. One day after the massage and I had finished work, we went to dinner, he said to me: "Will you marry me?" I looked up the word "marry", and burst out laughing. This guy had played a really big joke. This might be the Australian culture and customs, right? He said "I am serious". I checked the meaning of "serious", I thought you couldn't be so shocked even if you were serious, right? Only a week, after only a week, even a flash marriage couldn't be so amazingly quick. I thought this was too ridiculous and didn't take it this "proposal" seriously. But to tell the truth, I was still a little touched. Unexpectedly, the next day he went to the parlor and said he would marry me, but not right away, in six months. It was only four weeks before I went back to China. He asked me about my flight and the departure time, the next day he bought a ticket on the same flight. He wanted to go to China with me. In China, he made a formal proposal and we had a small engagement ceremony. He stayed in China for two weeks, and then returned alone to Australia. We of course often kept in contact by phone or text message, through translating, quite often we misunderstood each other, and so he suggested that I learn English all day. From that day on, every day I learned English at home, I also went to school to study English. He applied for a spouse visa and one year later we got married, and I went back to Australia. Although he is now 65 years old, he's very diligent and simple. He is running his own farm while doing trade business with China. He's very good to my daughter and me. We have been married for almost two years. There, of course, have been lots of bumpy times with us, mostly due to cultural differences and language barriers. I am now a full-time housewife. I have been learning English except when doing housework. As for my husband, perhaps it is because of his age as well as being busy he refuses to learn Chinese. He knows only three Chinese sentences. The first is "Xifu", which means "wife"; the

second is “Xiexie”, which means “thank you”, the third “Ganbei.” which mean “cheers”.

My husband respects Chinese culture very much, although he is a native Australian, he wants to “do as the Romans do”; he drinks Chinese tea, eats Chinese food, and can use chopsticks well. Maybe it’s because of the long time he spent doing business with Chinese, he has learned a lot of Chinese people’s bad habits, For example, he won’t talk straightforward, but “beat around the bush,” Although he can’t speak Chinese I think he’s becoming more like a Chinese person. He likes to say “It’s all right”, “its okay”, which is not in line with my personality. I always call a spade a spade and I go straight to the point when dealing with things. Sometimes I get confused. But our relationship is very equal. He is the eldest of his family, his brothers and sisters are all older than me, but they all respect me very much.

I am now living a life of triple influence, I have been in this country for over three years, even though Chinese culture is an important part of me, I have changed a lot, however I still feel deeply rooted in Chinese culture. Since coming to Australia, I have been trying to change bit by bit, and I have changed a lot since I left China. Now that I am one half of a cross-cultural marriage and native Australians are totally different from us, it all adds up to the cultural change in my life, I am discovering, new things changing, analyzing and adapting. The so-called “adapting” is to adapt to the custom of foreigners, because we are a family, I want to fit in and be accepted. And I began to meet with those Chinese who have been in Australia a long time, before I rarely met and I was unwilling to deal with Chinese people. I have made rational analysis as to why I behave like that? Isn’t it good that we all become friends? I want to open my arms to embrace everyone, and I want to see myself in front of a large mirror, I will dance before the mirror and, I will correct any action myself which is not in place, or incorrect. In addition, I also analyzed those Chinese who have spent a long time in Australia, I must pay attention to avoid their character defects, and I must not make the same mistakes. So far, I feel I am much better than before, and our married life is rather happy. We never argue, maybe the language barrier also has its merits, right?

We have lived together for more than two years, every Christmas or July, we go to Melbourne, for the family reunion, I’ll cook some Chinese dishes, rice, dumplings and it’s a time when we want to talk about Chinese culture. A year after we got

married, his mother passed away. His mother's house has a history of nearly 100 years, my husband and his brothers and sisters all grew up there. Later, his sister told me, an elder brother, my husband had bought their mother's house in order to keep the childhood memories and have a place for brothers and sisters to get together. The move was quite Chinese way of doing things. He did not tell me what he had done, and I didn't say anything to him, for I couldn't make myself understood in English but more importantly, I won't ask him anything he isn't willing to tell.

We often hear that some couples break up because they had no common language, just like my first marriage. Even now, my present Australian husband only knows three Chinese words, but we seem to have a common language on many things. And my English has improved a lot. I can speak English for three minutes between "Hi" and "bye", of course, with I Phone on my hand all the time. There have been some bumps in our two-year-long marriage, but it's a normal married life. We are still in the run-in period, it will take time, committing to a marriage are much more complicated than taking a test drive. Now we are kind of on the track, we manage to find time to chat. He is interested in listening to my family story, he said, he could understand 95% of my words when we chat; I think it's because my English has improved a lot. With the help of my I phone, I'm able to understand half of his words. I'm hoping one day we will understand each other 100%. Bless me!

我的故事 ~ 5. 三字成婚



“磨合期需要时间，试婚比试车要复杂得多。”

我是63年出生的，自我感觉也就30来岁，虽称不上貌美如花，但还够得上俊秀靓丽，加之穿着有范儿，澳洲人还以为我是高中生呢!但就个人经历和心理素质来说，可以说未老先衰。少年时代留下的阴影还时常出现在梦里，幼小心灵所受的创伤至今尚未痊愈。由于父母的历史背景问题，还有家族背景的原因，同龄人没经历过的，我可能

全部都经历过了。

我在家排行老小，5个哥哥，就我一个女孩。从儿时有了记忆开始，就已暗自决定，我一定不要在中国呆着，一定要出国。理由很简单，在我6岁时，全家人被遣送到内蒙，眼看着父母受到那么大的委屈，遭了那么多非人的罪，我不要重蹈他们的覆辙，我一定要想办法离开这个国家，我不想在这个国家呆着，太痛苦了。看见我父亲母亲每天受的那些折磨，遭的那些罪，我幼小的心灵在淌血。那时我还没有上学，但我知道“折磨”、“遭罪”和“贫穷”的含义。我记得，本来全家人在城市里生活得很舒适安逸，一觉醒来，啪的一声就跌进深渊僻壤了，刹那之间，变得一穷二白、一贫如洗。从中产阶级降至牛鬼蛇神。我只知道像我父母的家庭不应该这么穷，究竟是什么原因所致就不清楚了。没有人给我解释，但我似乎明白这是国家和历史的原因。所以我从小就想一定要出去，离开这个不讲道理的地方。但是因为时间段没有好的契合点，一晃9年就过去了，到了78年全家人返回城里，直到我长大成人了，也没有出得去。后来结婚，生孩子，再后来，孩子也长大了，我就把希望寄托在了孩子身上。就像“微信”上说的：“一种人特别聪明，他自己要去做事情。还有一种人特别笨，什么都做不了，她就下了个蛋，就像鸟一样，然后派这个蛋出去。”我就属于这后一种人，我就是个笨人，下个蛋，把自己所有的希望都寄托在这个蛋上了。可能由于潜在的历史原因，加之跟前夫没有共同语言，很快我就成了单身母亲。一个人带着孩子苟且偷生。等女儿上学的时候，我压根儿就没准备让她在中国参加高考。从性格上分析，女儿跟我极像，直，一条道能跑到黑，不带拐弯的。但是从待人处事方面，她就显出太弱势了。如果她要是在咱们中国继续生活的话，我不是说中国不好，咱们中国历来这个人际关系网太复杂。加之我这孩子又不是特别灵透，在中国生活会很艰难。孩子上学期间，我一直往她的脑子里灌输要出国留学的想法。到了2008年，女儿高中毕业以后，没有参加高考，我直接把她送到澳大利亚的大学来读书了，读护士专业。那时候我在国内还得上班，女儿一个人在这边读书，由于生长在单亲家庭，孩子似乎成长得特别快，瞬间就长大成人了。虽说初到澳洲时，女儿一个人生活学习还要打工，那种艰难可想而知，但是她坚持了下来。两年后，女儿就给我申请到了探亲签证。

我第一次来到澳洲是2010年的12月16日。来到了澳洲，第一印象特别的深，当我下飞机的时候，是夜里十一点多，孩子在机场接我，一路上什么都看不见，只有漆黑一片。静悄悄的，偶尔有两道白光从对面照过来，近处才知道是汽车。第二天吃过早饭，女儿带我出去走走遛遛，到了外面，可以说我是百感交集，那陈封了40多年的记忆匣子顿时打开了。出现在我面前的酷似内蒙古大草原！记忆中的内蒙古，是一望无际的草原，被当地人称之为大草甸子，到了夏天大草原绿油油一片。抬头望去，那湛蓝湛蓝的一尘不染的天空，酷似内蒙古哲里木盟！哇，这两个地方的天和地实在是太像了！另外，还有一样更相似的，那就是人。在我看来，中国的蒙古人和澳洲的原著居民应该是最早开化的，文明程度比其他民族要早好多年。他们自然朴实，心地善良，不绕

弯子，比起某些所谓的文明人士要更好相处。我第一次来澳洲拿的是探亲旅游签证，一年期限，多次往返，每次在澳最长只能呆三个月。我就在一年的签证有效期内，每三个月往返一次，做了十五个月的空中飞人。辛辛苦苦积攒的那点钱，多半给孩子交了学费，其余的就交给航空公司了。当然了，我要把这钱挣回来。在澳洲的每三个月，我都去打工，明知道这是不合法的。另外前面我讲过了，我是有备而来的，在国内时我就四处询问在澳洲除了打餐馆工以外，还有什么其他工作，不需要语言，又能挣钱，因为我没学过英语，最多知道三个字“Hi”“Bye”和“thanks”后来听说做按摩比较容易，又能挣钱。我就在国内学按摩做好赴澳工作的准备，同时也做好了心理准备，因为我当时在国内的工作跟做按摩可算得上是天壤之别。一个全职播音主持，改行给人做按摩，您可以想象的出来那种感受吗？但出国是自己终生心愿，且挣的又是澳元。决心已定，目标明确，虽然是半路出家，没有多久，便可以自行操作了。到澳洲的第二天，我就奔着按摩店去了。很快发现，这里的按摩店良莠不齐，大多数是中国人开的，用中国人的话说，有的店是黄色的，也有做正牌的，我做的那个按摩店就是一个正牌正规的按摩店。凭着自己脚踏实地的工作精神，加上来澳前临阵磨枪地读了些中医解剖学、按摩技巧书，很快被店主和客人认可，每个月的收入能达到五千多澳元，当然是每周7天都工作很累，但很自在。不过，在澳洲也不能说是没有任何人际间的问题。我遇到的店老板，多数都是中国人。中国人有中国人的特色嘛，有些人也是蛮难相处的。中国人的那种典型的曹操的心理，你做得好他怀疑你，你做的不好他诋毁你，外加上自己不会外语，有些港台来的年轻打工妹，明目张胆地欺负你，知道你听不懂英语，故意跟客人套熟给她们自己拉客，我虽然听不懂，可心里明镜似的。但是人穷志短嘛，这句中国古语说得太到位了，特别适合我当时的处境。我需要钱，所以我低头做人，什么事情我都能忍。

前几次来澳洲基本是下了飞机就上班，没有空闲观察环境，没用机会放松心情。这次一下子太relax了！反而有点不适应了，也许自己已经习惯了奔波劳碌，“日理万机”。闲逛几日之后觉得无所适从，我打工的按摩店是一个夫妻店，他们对我很好，知道我是单身，就说你都来了一年多了，为什么没有找个人嫁了？他们觉得我应该利用单身的机会找一个人嫁了，把身份问题先解决了。在此之前，我从来没有想过再婚。一直以来，我是把一切希望都寄托在我女儿身上的。其实我早就听说过，好多人到了国外都以再婚的方式解决身份。可自己觉得这是一种交换，对于我来讲，说真的，我对世界的一切一切都持怀疑态度，包括友谊、爱情、亲情，我都怀疑，甚至怀疑自己是不是穷过头了，穷的只剩下情感和我的宝贝女儿。一天傍晚，我看见一个意大利餐馆门口有个亚洲面孔的老太太，我说我要吃意大利餐，老太太没开口，随手一指，我走进那个意大利餐馆。然后我就找了个位子坐下，自己一个人等服务生。桌子旁边也有个人，也是一个人坐在那儿，他看见我进来，坐下，过了一小会儿，他站起身，走过来，跟我说话，好像是问我“就你一个人吗”？我点了下头，其实我没听懂，我猜就是这个意思，我马上拿出手机，一查是这个意思。他又问我介不介意他坐在这，他也是一

个人。我用中文说“行”，其实我还是没听懂。他好像懂了似的，就坐下了。然后我们开始一起点菜，然后他就开始跟我聊，我什么都听不懂。就拿着手机，他每说完一句话，就停下，我就一个字或两个字，挨着个查，然后拼成句，然后我就大概明白他说的是什么意思。还好我这个人还挺聪明的，连说带笑谈得有声有色，虽然我不知道他到底说了些什么。那个外国先生也算聪明，可能他也听不懂我说的什么，过了一会儿，他把一个华人模样的服务生叫了过来，让他当翻译。他的妈妈是英国人，爸爸是香港人。会讲一点中文。小伙子还以为我和那位先生相识很长时间了，他不知道我俩实际上是刚刚认识。外国先生讲了一串英语，服务生告诉我说先生是卖台布的。噢，我这才明白老先生刚才为什么一直冲着我抖拢桌布，他原来是想告诉我这个呀。可是，卖台布跟我有什么关系呢？接着我就琢磨开了，这位先生是借来吃饭的机会到这来卖桌布呢，还是想跟我谈到中国买台布呢？难道因为我是中国人，中国东西比较便宜？这时候菜上来了，我俩边吃边聊，你一句，我一句，似有问有答，但多半可能是驴唇不对马嘴。因为我没有再继续逐字逐句翻译，太累了，手机也快没电了，那位服务生要去招呼其他食客，不过他又过来了一次，用蹩脚的华语跟我说，没关系的，很快你们慢慢就会相互懂得了。

吃完饭了，我说我要去结账，因为我这是第一次独自跟一个外国人吃饭聊天，觉得挺开心，甭管听得懂听不懂，手语加肢体，聊得满融洽的。凭着中国人的习惯，我是主桌主人，我站起来就去结账，也没想什么AA制，因为我高兴，付这个账理所当然。可那个人马上拦住我，表示坚决不让我付，他要付帐。我说不行，这顿饭我请。我心想咱俩也不认识，吃人嘴短，我才不欠这个情，我是没有多少钱，但是我不愿意给自己增添心理负担。我们就在前台推来让去，相持不下。那个混血服务生这时就过来了，他跟我说，“你这样做叫他非常下不来台，哪有先生让女士付饭钱的道理？我还是头一次看见一个中国女人主动结账。而且还跟老外抢着付帐”。他还说，“这次你就让他付，下一次你请他就是了”。我当时就让服务生告诉那个外国人说下次我请。我记得特别清楚那天是星期四，我说周日我就请他。老先生当时就接受了。我根本没有心理准备，也不认识几个饭馆，就听说过有个叫“龙门”的中国早茶馆，心想中国餐馆不用英语，周日带着女儿跟他一起吃顿早茶了事。他把我的电话号码要走了，把他的电话号码留给了我，还问我哪里工作，我告诉了他，都是通过那个服务生。我工作的那个按摩店离那个意大利餐馆很近。到了周六那位老先生就来按摩店找我了。他知道我听不懂英语，就直接跟店主说星期日要带我去皇家大赌场的酃晶轩吃早茶。我说，好吧，我们可以去皇家大赌场的酃晶轩吃早茶，但是饭钱由我付。他满口答应了。转天早上，他来店里接上我，我俩就去了，但是没有去大赌场。他说酃晶轩需要预约，我们没有位子进不去。他就带我去了一个不需要预约的小餐馆，我们随便要了点东西。当时我就在心里想，他人还是不错，知道我是个打工妹，没什么钱，不想让我太破费吧。吃完了，他还是要去付账，我一手拦住他，另一手打通电话，让女儿告诉他，这个账我要付。他没有再执意。就那点东西花了我70澳元，合成人民币400多块。我一天

的工钱没了。谁让咱打肿脸充胖子呢？在吃饭的时候，他跟我说，他家在墨尔本，他一个人在珀斯，我听懂了两地名，其他的字是查的。他跟我说他一点要走，问我要不要跟他一起去“farm”当时我听成了“mum”我知道妈妈这个英文字。立刻联想到他妈妈在墨尔本，我也知道从珀斯到墨尔本要飞好几个小时呢。再说了，我为什么要跟他去墨尔本看他妈。太离谱了！我立刻给我的女儿打通电话，然后把电话交给老先生，让他跟女儿讲。女儿刚刚睡醒，也没太在意，跟老先生说了几句话，然后告诉我说：“妈妈，他叫你跟他去他妈妈那，问你去不去。”她告诉我说，老先生在某地有个农场，想带我去看看。我立刻在脑子里就开始分析了，第一我是人生地不熟，又不会英语，他把我转手卖了，自己都不晓得。第二这一男一女两个成人，他没结过婚，我多年单身，这才刚见了两次面，就外出郊游，还住在他的农场，我可不能做叫女儿看不起的事儿。我的思想还是比较保守的，心里也有点害怕。但这确是个好机会。我很想去看一看澳洲农场是什么样子，跟咱内蒙古大草原有什么不同。我征求女儿的意见，女儿说要见见这个人，我们就一同来到了按摩店。他一见到我女儿，马上拿出他的驾照，让女儿拍下照来，他说假如有什么事情，用这个随时随地都能找到他。女儿拿过他的驾照立刻拍了下来。我当时觉得挺不好意思，这显得咱们不信任人家，你不信任人家你就别去呗。然后我就和他去了农场。在那住了两天，才返回来。他的农场挺大的，有5个房间。之后呢，他每天都去店里找我做按摩，开始先让我给他做按摩，做完按摩，就在那等我，等到我下班，然后让我跟他一起出去吃饭，整整一个礼拜的时间。一天按摩后，我下班，我们又去吃饭，这时候他跟我说“Will you marry me?”我刚查完“marry”一字，噗哧一声笑了出来。这大爷开得玩笑真够国际水平了。这可能是澳洲文化风俗吧？他说“I am serious”我查完“serious”的意思，心想你认真也不能这么震撼吧？这才一周的时间，百来个小时，闪婚也没有这么神速啊。我觉得这也太离谱了，就没把这个“求婚”当成真事。不过说实在的，当时心里还是有点感动。没想到，转天他又去店里，说他要跟我结婚，但不是马上，是半年以后。我还只有4周的时间就要回中国了。他问明我的航班和时间，转天就买了一张跟我同班的机票，他要跟我一块去中国。在中国，他又正式求了一次婚，我们也办了一个很小的订婚仪式。他在中国住了两周，就先一个人回澳洲了。之后我们经常通过电话短信联系，当然是通过翻译，出过很多错误。后来他就建议我全日学习英语。从那天起我天天在家学英语，也到外面学校去学。他在澳洲这边开始给我申请配偶签证。一年以后我们结婚了，我又回到了澳洲。虽然他已经65岁了，但人很勤奋也很朴实。他一边经营自己的农场，还跟中国做些贸易生意，对我和女儿都很好。结婚快两年了，当然这其中也发生了很多磕磕绊绊，多半是文化差异和语言障碍。我现在是全职太太，除去家务事，我一直都在学习英语。而我先生呢，也许是工作太忙加上年龄太大了，拒绝学习中文，从始至终就会三句中国话，第一句是：“媳妇”，第二句是“谢谢”，第三句：“干杯”。不过他很尊重中国文化，虽说一土生土长的澳洲人，反成了他要“入乡随俗”，喝中国茶，吃中国饭，筷子用的很好。可能是跟中国人做生意太久了，也学了很多中国人的坏毛病，例如说话不会直截了当，左顾言他，我觉得他更像个中国人，尽管不会说

中国话。他很喜欢说“可以吧”、“还行吧”，这很不符合我的性格。我一向是有一说一，做事是落地砸坑。有时候我会感到困惑。不过我们的关系很平等。他在他的家排行老大，他的弟弟妹妹都比我大，但是他们对我都很尊重。

我现在生存是三重的，我从国内过来，三年多了，中国的东西对我来讲是根深蒂固，尽管我知道好多东西是我们要摒弃和改变的，我到澳洲以后，一直在努力逐步地改变着，跟在国内时的自己相比已经改变了很多。现在又选择了跨国婚姻，又多了一重文化生活的变更。因为本土的澳洲人，他们跟咱是截然不同的，所以我就生活在这三种状态下。在这三种状态下，我在发现着，改变着，分析着，适应着。所谓的“适应着”，就是适应他外国人的习惯，因为我们是一个家庭，我要包容，融入，要接纳。在澳洲呆的太久的中国人呢，我也慢慢地跟他们接触，以前我很少也不愿意跟中国人打交道。我也理性的分析过，为什么要这样做呢？大家都成为朋友不是很好吗？我要敞开自己的胸怀，容纳每一个人，并放一面大镜子在自己的面前，随时随地站在镜子前舞蹈，哪一个动作不到位，或者动作不对，就随时纠正自己。另外我还分析着那些在澳洲呆久了的中国人，他们性格上有什么缺陷，我一定注意避免重蹈覆辙。到目前为止，自己感觉比以前好多了，夫妻生活也算融洽。我们从来不吵架。也许语言障碍也有其可取之处吧？

我们在一起生活两年多了，每到圣诞节或者是7月份的时候，我们都要回墨尔本，回到墨尔本的时候呢，一家人团聚在一起，我就给他们做一些中国菜啊，饭啊，包包饺子什么的，这时候我们要聊的都是中国文化。在我们结婚一年以后，他的老母亲过世了。母亲的房子跟她人一样的老，近100年历史的一栋老宅子。我先生和他的弟弟妹妹们都是在这个房子里长大的。后来他的妹妹告诉我，大哥把妈妈的房子给买下来了，为的是留住儿时的回忆，以后兄弟姐妹们还能聚在一起。这个举动倒是有点像中国人。他没有跟我讲此事，我也没有跟他说什么，用英语表达不清楚，但更主要的，他不愿意说的事情，我不要问。相互之间留些空间，可能更好。

大家经常听到说夫妻没有共同语言，过不到一起，恰似我的第一次婚姻。而这次呢，我的现任澳洲老公，中国字就知道三个，而我的英文虽然进步了很多，在“Hi”和“Bye”中间能说上3分多种的英语，当然手不能离开iPhone，但是我们似乎挺有共同语言的。我们在一起生活这两年多以来，也有一些磕磕碰碰，正常夫妻生活嘛，但我们还是处在磨合期，磨合期需要时间，试婚比试车要复杂得多。现在我俩是有点入槽了，不是说在外面鼓着了，他尽量抽时间跟我聊，我也抽空跟他聊，他似乎特爱听我讲我们家的故事，他说我俩要是聊闲天的话，他能听得懂95%，我怀疑，但没有直说，因为我的英语大有长进，借助手机翻译，也就能听懂一半。盼着吧，希望有一天我们相互懂得100%。祝福我吧！

My Story ~ 6. From “Falling Leaves Settling On The Roots” To “Falling Leaves Growing From The Roots”



“I think we should change the traditional Chinese thought that ‘falling leaves will settle on the roots’. We can let falling leaves grow from the roots in Australia. Work hard and struggle to make a living—my major life decision.”

It was on the 5th June, 1990 that I arrived in Australia. At that time, the reform and opening-up policy was taking place in China. So I wanted to widen my knowledge and see a brilliant and colorful world outside China and experience the difference between capitalist countries and China. However, when I set foot in Australia for the first time, I did suffer a lot from being unfamiliar with a new country and the language barrier.

Nevertheless, Australians were friendly to me. After a lot of arduous effort, I accumulated some savings and I settled here in Australia.

When I first lived in Australia, I worked hard although I didn’t master many technical abilities. I took several part-time jobs, from cutting vegetables on a farm to picking fruits. Washing dishes occupied most of my working time. Now I can’t remember how many odd jobs I have done. I was always changing my jobs. Others work for eight hours a day while I had to work twelve hours, sixteen hours or even eighteen hours a day.

Later on, I took a part-time job in a restaurant. The boss was a kind man and now we have become close friends. He was an Austrian while the landlady was Dutch. In those days, my wife was still in China with our children so you can imagine my loneliness and hardship in a foreign country. Two years later, several companions

who came with me couldn't bear the suffering and loneliness anymore and intended to go back to China. The boss asked why. I answered: "We can't get ID here, so we want to go back." He asked again: "Do you like it here?" I answered: "Of course, but we can't get our ID here." He told me seriously: "Australia belongs to everyone. As long as you step on this land, it must belong to you! You ought to stay here! If you like it here, you should keep trying for your ID. Then you are sure to settle in this country." Many years later, when Australia News interviewed me, I told this story to the reporter. Those 457 workers were moved by my words. They say that if they had not known my story, they would have gone back to China.

Then I started to learn electro-welding and shipbuilding; later I started my own business, manufacturing ships. At first, there was not much profit. What's worse, on account of switching to this business, an area that I had never been trained for, I had to keep on exploring and studying professional skills. Yet, generally speaking, if you make great efforts, you will be rewarded. Just as we do hourly manual work, the longer and the harder you work, the more the boss will like you, the more you will earn. Therefore, in my opinion, Australia, where we don't have to follow hidden rules or depend on relationships, is a place for us to make a life; it's a suitable country for industrious and diligent people to live here.

About "English"—my ironic past

Soon after I came to Australia, I made a lot of stupid mistakes because I didn't understand English. Now when I recall those memories, I describe them as: "I have forgotten all my past difficulties, but I have kept my ironic English in mind."

At that time, other workmates and I almost knew nothing about English. Fortunately we knew the word "tomorrow". Our supervisor was an understanding person. Each Monday, when he was assigning working tasks, he always pulled his fingers and pronounced "the day after tomorrow" as "tomorrow and tomorrow", thus "three days from now" as "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" and so forth.....So we were thinking to ourselves: "Thanks to the seven days in a week because he can count them with his fingers; otherwise all of us will have problems."

One of my fellow workers, who knew only several English letters, once lost his way in Fremantle. He rang up his friend anxiously. As there was no Global Positioning System then, we would take a map with us when we went out. But

that day he happened to forget it. A friend comforted him: "Don't worry! You only need to read out one of the signs nearby and I will be aware of where you are." So the friend read out one with great difficulty: S-T-O-P..... As a result, he was guided back home by the police.

Another time, I went to a restaurant to have a job interview. The boss asked me to start work at twelve o'clock. But I couldn't understand the word "twelve" so I was confused when he asked me to start. Then he took out a sheet of paper and drew a clock on it, from one, two up to twelve. I said to myself: "My God! Since I have learned from one to eleven, why don't I keep 'twelve' in my mind? "

This restaurant was booming and often was crowded with customers. One day, the boss asked me anxiously: "Any more fish?" I knew the word fish but not "more fish?", so I mistook it as the name of a certain kind of fish and opened the fridge quickly. Seeing all the frozen fish in the fridge, I cried at the top of my voice: "No More fish!" The boss had to come to search for "more fish" in person. Seeing those frozen fish, he stared at me in desperation, looking odd and annoyed.

Although I made a lot of stupid mistakes, I was still young so I never gave up improving my English. I thought English was not that hard—it was just a language. Believing that I was bound to master it as long as I kept learning and practising, I marked all places which could be seen with English word notes, including my washroom, ceiling, kitchen, bedroom and so on in order to see them the moment I woke up; I would switch on the radio to train my ears while driving, whether I could understand or not. I would turn on TV the moment I got home. At the beginning, I listened to radio as if a book from heaven. But as one of the old Chinese proverbs goes: "With patience and time, the mulberry-leaf becomes a silk gown", by keeping practising while doing my work, gradually, I became more and more skilful at English.

Eight years of lovesickness—like a war

In those years, I came to wander and make a living in Australia alone. It was eight years since I had parted from her, during which time I never went back. There it was more than I could bear describing the hardship and lovesickness we had experienced during those years. My wife and I jokingly called the eight years "an eight-year war". We were classmates from primary school to senior middle school and were considered to be childhood sweethearts. My wife is a lady of great intelligence and virtue. Originally, my family was totally against it when I planned

to go abroad to enrich my experience and seek development. She was the only one who supported me. As a result, I secretly came to Australia, leaving her to carry a heavy burden on her shoulders.

In those days, in Australia, telephone fees charged more than three Australian dollars per minute, later the fee was reduced to one dollar per minute. It was hard to earn money then but I would try to set aside 50 dollars to make phone calls to my wife. On getting through, my wife would weep at the other end. People around her all urged her: "Speak quickly, otherwise the telephone fee will run out!" But nothing could be done about that as each time she couldn't stop crying. Eight years had passed, when I finally got a visa for her, the immigration officer asked me in surprise: "You have been apart for so long, how can you demonstrate to me that she is your wife?" (It was because we had been moving our houses and changed our houses many times. Our telephone numbers had been changed frequently. Neither had we kept our telephone bills. As a result, when the Immigration Office asked for those bills as evidence, we couldn't provide them.) Afterwards, someone came up with one way —going to the telephone company and to put out all the numbers labeled with name through spending over 100 dollars. As a result, we found out that our telephone fees were enough to buy a house. Sometimes, my wife played a joke on me: "Hey! Did no woman want you while you lived and worked in Australia?" I replied with a smile: "It wasn't like that. Working women ran into my room, but I escaped each time. That's because I am a determined man."

"A drop of water & Sunshine" —Joined in the association

For so many years, we experienced a lot of sufferings and hardships before we settled down here. Australia has relatively loose policies nowadays. Quite a few 457 skilled workers have come to work here. They were not used to the language and culture when they first arrived. Some of them are my fellow-townsmen of Fujian Province. As an old Chinese saying goes: "When townsmen see townsmen, tears well up in their eyes." Each time this happened, I would do my best to help them to apply for loans and then we decided to form an association, called the Fujian Association. The association has played a very positive role in Australia. It was after the association formed that the overseas Chinese in Australia began to unite. When someone meets with difficulties, others will lend him or her hand.

It is more than ten years since I formally joined the association. In 2008, I founded the Fujian Association. At that time, I thought that I was so weak and my economic situation was not good. Therefore, it occurred to me to set up an association. There was no doubt that I had to become the first chairman. When the association constituted its regulations, I stipulated that the chairman of this association shall not serve for another term, because I am a little introverted and not an eloquent speaker. So new members should be offered chances to give play to their talents. It is thought to be a wise decision at present. I retired from the position three years later. But I am still participating in major association work. I think it is where my duties lie.

There are also some people asking me: "Is Taiwan a part of the PRC?" Each time I am asked, I always answer resolutely: "Yes, of course it is." This question totally differs from so-called general democracy issues. The territorial integrity of China is a topic of principle. At the establishing conference of the Western Australian Branch of the world association of Guangdong province, I spoke out: "We Fujianese and Taiwanese are originally of the same blood, we are brothers, we share the same ancestors and there aren't too many discrepancies or cultural barriers between us. So I hold the belief that in terms of major issues of principle most Taiwanese must have the same unwavering stand as mine." It was in 2010 that I joined the Western Australian Peaceful unification Promotion Agency aiming to associate with Taiwanese compatriots. As Chinese, we do hope that we will enjoy a peacefully reunified China.

Our Peaceful Unification Promotion Agency has carried on a charitable educational foundation, which is called "Waterdrop & Sunshine Charitable Educational foundation of the Chinese in Australia". Waterdrop & Sunshine means that even a drop of water can reflect the brilliance of sunshine. Although China is becoming more powerful, it is still a country with a large population and the remote areas are still underdeveloped. We have designed a plan to help the children living in poverty-stricken areas to return to their schools—each person saves one dollar each day in order to help those children return to school. I believe that everyone is glad to change those children's destiny by giving away one dollar each day. Up to now, we have been able to give financial aid to 100 children.

Consequently, I choose several places—Guizhou, Yunnan and Ningxia. We have contacted with government institutes. We don't operate on a large scale, but I believe that on this basis, more and more people will be encouraged, moved and

inspired to join us .This will reflect splendid sunshine and aid more students, who without this assistance would drop out of school.

Currently, I am making a one-to-one self-service project to popularize programs for public good. In my opinion, public welfare should not only be carried out when we possess money. As Chinese, we are content and proud that we have gained acknowledgment from the local community of Australia. It is because we have inherited many cultural essences of our country. I am willing to offer help with a grateful heart to people in need.

From “falling leaves settling on the roots” to “falling leaves growing from the roots”

With further Sino-Australian communication, Australian people have learnt more about China. Some Australian friends once told me that they had originally imagined China to be poor and backward with carriages running along the roads and no buildings at all. These years, many Australian friends have even gone to China and had their impressions of China changed. There is no doubt that the economic and trade ties between the two countries have brought great level of understand to Australian people.

A number of Chinese have been puzzled with the fact that it is hard for them to integrate into Australian society. Personally speaking, whether in China or in Australia, one needs to contribute his sincerity and effort if he wants to integrate. Only in this way will he be respected by society and obtain others' friendship. I believe that the Australian government is of great intelligence. They can accept and acknowledge other cultures including Chinese culture. Sometimes I feel depressed that even Australians regard me as an Australian. I still feel I am different from them, because I am still a Chinese in my heart. Nevertheless, when I return to China, I feel that I don't belong in China any more. Therefore, in my opinion, since I am living in Australia, I should not only learn more western thinking modes but also their values and try to blend into Australian society as much as possible. I think that Chinese people should change their traditional thought of “falling leaves settling on the earth” to “falling leaves growing from the roots”, to take root and sprout in Australia. Meanwhile , we should remember the essence of excellent Chinese culture, making our due contribution to carry forward our national culture.

I can remember what an old overseas Chinese once said to me: “Our shoulders are designed to be stepped on by you.” I always intend to inform those young men: our shoulders are also ready for their steps. I have been supporting young Chinese people to participate in government and political affairs –either in spirit or in finance and enter the upper class of Australia entirely. The reason is that only if our next generation goes into government circles are they likely to maintain a foothold in the society of western countries. China will blend into the mainstream society.

I do hope that all Chinese in Australia will unite to pass on Chinese culture, to teach our next generation to inherit and carry Chinese culture forward together.

我的故事 ~ 6. 落叶生根



我觉得中国人要改变传统的“落叶归根”的思维方式，做到“落叶生根”，在澳洲生根发芽。”

辛苦打拼——人生的重大决定

我是1990年6月5日来到澳洲的。当时因为国内刚改革开放，想见识一下外面精彩的世界，看看资本主义国家跟我们中国到底有什么不同。刚来澳洲的时候人生地不熟，语言又不通，显然是很辛苦的。当然澳洲人特别友好，经过努力奋斗，我慢慢有了点积蓄，就在这里居住下来。刚来澳洲的时候，虽然没什么技能，但比较能吃苦，我一个人打了好几份零工——去农场砍菜、摘水果，干的最多的是洗碗。具体做了多少份零工，自己都记不清了，就是在不断地换工作，人家做8个小时，我做12个小时、16个小时、18个小时。后来我在一家餐馆打工，老板人很好，现在我们成为了特别亲密的朋友，像家人一样。老板是奥地利人，老板娘是荷兰人。那个时候我的老婆孩子都在中国，一个人在异国他乡的孤单与艰难可想而知。过了两年，和我一起来的几个朋友熬不住了，就想回国。老板就问原因。我说：“我们身份都拿不到，当然要回去了。”他又问：“你喜欢这个地方吗？”我回答：“当然喜欢，但是拿不到身份。”他就很严

肃地告诉我：“澳洲是属于大家的，你只要踏上这块土地，它就是属于你的！你应该可以在这里，只要喜欢，你就要坚持，就继续努力地去申请，你肯定可以在这里居住。”后来，澳大利亚时报采访我的时候，我讲了这个故事，那些457的工人都被我的故事深深地打动了，说如果不是看到我的故事，他们都想回去了。后来我就在澳洲学了电焊和造船，自己出来做造船的生意。建造船厂最初等于是给自己打工，根本赚不到钱，而且由于是半路出家，只能不断地摸索、学习。但总体来说，澳洲有一个比较公平的环境，你如果付出了努力，就有所回报。就像我们去做工，因为是小时工作制，时间做长一点，吃苦一点，人家喜欢你，你就可以多赚点钱。所以，我认为，澳洲比较适合生存，也不需要我们开后门、走关系，这样比较勤劳刻苦的人很适合在这里生活。

关于“英语”——令人啼笑皆非的往事

刚来澳洲时由于不懂英语，我们闹出过好多笑话。现在回忆起来真可谓“辛酸往事俱忘却，啼笑英语记心间。”当时我和其他中国工友的英语基础几乎是零，但幸好我们还知道“tomorrow”这个词。工头是一个很通情达理的人，每周一在分配工作任务时就扳着手指，把后天说成“tomorrow and tomorrow”，当然大后天就是“tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow”□依此类推……我们都在心里嘀咕：幸亏一周只有七天，扳手指还能数得过来，要是数天数就麻烦了！有一个工友，只会几个英文字母，在Fremantle迷路了，焦急地给朋友打电话。当时根本就没有谷歌搜索之类的卫星定位系统，大家出行时都随身带着一本地图。偏偏他那天忘记了带地图。朋友安慰他说：“别急！你只要把你附近的一个路标牌念出来，我就能知道你在哪儿！”于是我那位“可爱”的工友就一个字母一个字母地艰难地读起来□“S-T-O-P……”，后来他被警察送回了家。还有一次，我去一家餐馆面试，老板让我十二点去上班。我当时还不懂得十二这个单词，始终听不懂他叫我什么时间上班，后来他就拿了一张纸张，画了一个钟，从一点、两点最后一直数到十二点。我就想：我的天呐，我一到十一都学会了，怎么不早点学十二呢！这家餐馆生意很红火，常常顾客爆满。有一天，老板着急地问我□“Any more fish?”我知道fish这个词，但不知道什么是“more fish”□还以为是一种鱼的名字，于是迅速打开冰箱，看着满冰箱的速冻鱼，扯着嗓子回答□“No More fish□”老板只得自己过来找，看着那些鱼，又无奈地看看我，哭笑不得……尽管闹出了不少笑话，但当时年轻，有股不服输的劲头，觉得英文也没什么了不起的，就是一种语言，多学多练就一定能学会。于是我把厕所、天花板、厨房、卧室等凡是眼睛能看到的地方全贴上英文单词，早上一睁开眼睛就能看到；开车的时候，不管听得懂听不懂，都把收音机打开，不停地磨耳朵；回家就打开电视看新闻。刚开始，我听广播如同听天书。但中国古话说得好“只要功夫深，铁杵磨成针”，我一边打工，一边学习，我的英语也渐渐熟练起来。

八年“抗战”——相思之苦

当年只身来澳洲闯荡，与妻儿一别就是八年，中间没有回去过。这八年的艰辛与思念真是一言难尽。后来我和妻子戏称这八年为“八年抗战”。我和妻子从小学到高中都是同学，也算是青梅竹马。我的妻子是个睿智而贤惠的女人，当初我想出国见世面，求发展，家里人都反对，只有妻子支持我。我偷偷从家里跑到澳洲，而她独自在国内扛起了生活的重担。当时澳洲一分钟的电话费是三块多澳元，后来降到一块多。那个时候赚钱不容易，但我每周都预留出50块钱给家里打电话。电话一打过去，妻子就在电话里一直哭。旁边人都劝她：快讲快讲！电话费都哭没了！但是没办法，每次她都止不住眼泪。熬了八年之后，我给她办签证的时候，移民局的人就问我：“你分居了这么久，怎么能证明她是你的老婆呢？”但是因为我们总搬家，经常要换房子，电话号码也经常换，也没有留着所有的电话账单没有去留，移民局让我们拿这个证据，我们也拿不出来。后来有人给我们想办法说，可以去电话公司花一百多块钱，把所有标有名字的电话号码输出来。结果发现我们的电话费都可以买一栋房子了。妻子有时候跟他开玩笑：“哎！你在那边八年就没有一个女的要你？”我也笑着答：“不是人家女的不要我，有一打工女的跑到我房间过，每次我都跑出来，咱定力强！”

“滴水阳光”——参与社团

这么多年来，我们经历了很多艰难才在这里居留下来。现在澳洲的政策相对宽松，不少中国457技术工人来澳洲工作。他们初来乍到，语言和文化等方面都不是很习惯。其中有很多都是我的福建老乡。俗话说得好，“老乡见老乡，两眼泪汪汪”。我就全心全意帮助他们去贷款，后来就形成了社团。社团在澳洲起到了非常积极的作用，因为有了社团之后，中国人抱团，有人遇到一些困难的时候大家也可以帮助他。我真正介入社团也有十几年时间了。2008年我创立了福建同乡会。当时我也想一个人毕竟势单力薄，能力有限，经济条件也有限，于是萌生了创建同乡会的想法。当然，我是第一任会长。同乡会制定章程的时候，我就规定会长不得连任，因为我觉得自己性格有点内向，口才也不是那么好，应该充分给新人发挥个人才能的机会。现在想来觉得是很明智的。三年后我退了下来，但也在参与重要的社团工作，因为我认为这也是我的责任所在。也有很多人问我：台湾是中国的领土吗？每次我都斩钉截铁地回答：“当然是！”这个问题与一般的所谓的民主问题是截然不同的。中国领土完整是原则性的话题。在世界广东同乡会西澳分会成立大会上我就说：“我们福建人与台湾人本来就是‘同根生’，我们同祖同宗，没有大的文化隔阂与差异。我相信，在大是大非面前，大多数台湾人也跟我一样立场坚定！”我2010年加入了旨在增进与台湾同胞联谊的西澳和平统一促进会。作为一个中国人，我们希望祖国能够和平统一。我们‘和统会’搞了一个慈善教育基金会，把它叫做“澳洲华人滴水阳光慈善教育基金会”。滴水阳光取意于：“一滴水也能映出太阳的光辉”。中国现在虽然强大了，但毕竟人口众多，偏远地区发展还很缓慢。我们制订了让中国贫困地区的儿童重返校园的计划——每人每天存一块钱，让孩子重返校园。每天只需要一块钱就可以改变一个人的命运，何乐

而不为呢？现在我们已经可以资助一百名儿童。我随后又选了几个地方—贵州、云南和宁夏。我们现在正与中国的一些政府机构取得联系。我们的规模虽然不大，但我相信，以此为基点，鼓舞和感召更多的人参与进来，就会折射出太阳的光辉，救助更多的失学儿童。目前我在做一对一自助项目，进一步推广公益事业。我个人认为，公益事业并不是等有了钱才做的。我们作为中国人在澳大利亚得到了当地社会的认可，也感到很骄傲和满足，因为我们传承了很多祖国的文化精髓。我要怀着一颗感恩的心去帮助一些需要帮助的人。

“落叶归根”与“落叶生根”

随着中澳交流的深入，现在澳洲人对中国有了更多的了解。澳洲的一些朋友曾经很坦诚地告诉我，他们最初想象中的中国就是一个贫穷落后的国家，路上跑的都是马车，根本没有楼房。这些年有很多澳洲朋友也去了中国，慢慢地转变了对中国的印象。当然，中国跟澳洲的经济贸易往来也给澳洲人民带来了许多实惠。很多中国人都有一种困惑，觉得很难融入澳洲社会。我个人认为，无论在中国还是澳大利亚，要融入一个社会，自己首先要付出真诚和努力。这样才会赢得社会的尊重和别人的友谊。我认为澳大利亚政府是很有智慧的。澳洲整个的政策就是多元文化政策，它对包括中国文化在内的其他文化能够接受、认可。有时候我也比较郁闷，觉得哪怕澳洲人把我当做澳洲人，我还是感觉跟他们不一样，我骨子里还是中国人。但是回到中国之后，我又觉得又不属于中国了。所以我还是觉得既然在澳洲生活，就要多学习西方的思维方式和价值观念，尽量融入到澳洲社会。我觉得中国人要改变传统的“落叶归根”的思维方式，做到“落叶生根”，在澳洲生根发芽，同时不忘中国的优秀文化精髓，为祖国文化发扬光大做出应有的贡献。我记得一位老华侨当初跟我说过一句话：“我的肩膀是让你们踩的。”我也一直想告诉那些年轻人：我的肩膀也是让他们踩的。中国的年轻人去参政议政，我都支持——精神上或者经济上的支持，让他们整个进入澳洲的上层社会。因为只有下一代中国人进入政界，中国在西方国家才更有希望站住脚，中国在海外才是真正步入主流社会。我真心希望所有的澳洲华人都能够团结起来，共同传承中国文化，并让我们的下一代能够继承中国文化，发扬光大。

My Story ~ 7. I Will Repay My

Motherland For Nurturing Me



“Australia is my father, and China is my mother. If you ask me whom I tend to love more, then you are actually asking whether I tend to love my mother more than my father. This is a really tough question.”

My hometown is Shanxi. In October, 1990, I came to Australia as a visiting scholar sent by the State Education Commission. Three months later, I received an Australian scholarship, after which I transferred my study to a self-financed model and started my PhD program. After graduation, I found a job. My major was chemical engineering and I focused on the consultation work for the device of this field. Later on, I had my own shares and earned a lot. At present, we bid for the projects as partners, and choose the one which won the bidding. Then we subcontract and manufacture the products. Generally, there are four to five countries responsible for the same number of parts. The products are made in different countries, there are so many products to make, but only when the selected country has the expertise and ability to produce the product. Therefore, several countries combine to make the products. I am satisfied with my job. Through all the hardships over the years, my partner and I have reached a tacit agreement and things are going well between my subordinates and me. Now, I live in Perth, Western Australia with two kids and a happy family.

Actually, I planned to go to America as a visiting scholar in the first place. But due to many reasons, my visa was cancelled and was transferred to any other English-speaking country except for America. Via the reassignment by the State Education Commission, I came to Australia. My settlement in Australia was not without difficulties, because the State Education Commission disapproved of me staying in Australia and demanded that I return to China after graduation, even if the Australian government granted me a scholarship. Fortunately, the policy at home was soon relaxed. At the time, Deng Xiaoping delivered a speech, saying that the country should give the overseas students freedom to come and go as they wish, since they were rooted in China. As a result, I paid 800 Yuan as the national training expense, after which the Education Commission agreed to let me stay in Australia.

Australian people are patient and greatly assisted me when I arrived in Australia. They helped me with such things as cultural background, rules and regulations. Bit by bit, I gained a favorable impression of this country. However, during the first six months, I felt kind of lonely. After all, there were cultural differences, especially when I spoke with a strong accent—my colleagues could hardly understand me. But gradually, they became used to it. I have to say, Australians have a high level of tolerance towards these kind of difficulties. Now my family is here, and we have already blended into the Australian society. But up to now, my mind still boggles when it comes to the Australian Aboriginal language because I really cannot understand it. However, the Aboriginal language is part of the Australian culture. So I have to give it my best effort and become used to it, since I chose Australia and she accepted me.

From the moment I placed my feet on Australian soil, I could feel the peace the kindness of Australia. I was introduced to my supervisor who was just like my parents for his kindness and tolerance I am forever grateful. On my arrival in Australia, he came to the airport in person to pick me up. He even helped me find a student dormitory. My supervisor has been retired for many years. A while ago, he was diagnosed with cancer but the cancer is now under control and we even had dinner together last year. The overseas student union also cared for me at that time.

I observed this unfamiliar country with curiosity, the country that was drawn on a map or appeared briefly on the TV news. I witnessed the advancement and affluence of this country. In those years, there was free tea and coffee in public places, and people could even use a micro-wave oven to cook meals in Australia.....I was so curious about so many things that I strongly felt that China really should learn from the outside world after so many years of isolation. I found out that the science and technology here were truly more advanced than that in China.

Australians are conscientious, dedicated and have a strong sense of responsibility. They never take shortcuts. They will finish a project complying strictly with the required procedures. So there are never any quality problems on their projects, which I really appreciate and I learn a lot from them. They might have a dispute over some issues, but once they sign the agreement, they will do their job with due diligence. Another feeling when I came to Australia is that the Australians have a stronger ability to use their own initiative than that of Chinese people. In

Australia when we do some research, the lab manager will give you a manual. Then you read it, and figure out how to operate the device, with no additional explanation. If you cannot tackle the problem by yourself, you can find an engineer to explain it in general, but he will not teach you the basics. On the contrary, in China, the instruments and equipment are put in the lab and are managed by specially-assigned operators. You fetch the sample and the person will test it for you, in case that you accidentally break it. I think this is reasonable, since we have different national conditions. The instruments and equipment are very expensive to China. But the labor cost is not very high, so appointing the specially-assigned operators to supervise the devices can prolong their working life, while the labor cost is very high in Australia where the salary of an engineer could buy a device.

The Australians are also romantic. One of the directors of our company is an Australian. His wife is an Australian painter. Once for her birthday, he wanted to give her a surprise and sent her paintings to Xi'an, China, planning to hold an art exhibition. His wife's mother was 84 years old. It was the first time that she had left Australia for China to attend her daughter's exhibition as a celebration of her birthday. All of the organization and planning were done in secret. On the D-day, he invited many top-notch painters in Australia and in Xi'an and also invited the head of Xi'an Agency for Cultural Affairs to preside over the exhibition ceremony in a five-star hotel. In the evening when the exhibition was on view, his wife asked: "Do you know that today is my birthday?" He answered: "I know. So tonight we can have our meal in this hotel." At last, when the exhibition hall gate was opened, his wife was really astonished: "These are all my paintings!" Over one hundred guests started to applaud. Tears were running down her cheeks. It was a very emotional occasion.

After so many years living in Australia, I have noticed great changes. The biggest change is the environment in Australia, which is different from that of China. Another change is that our quality of life has developed a lot. But since we were rooted in China, we need to actively make a contribution to our motherland. We bid for projects from Baosteel and bought their steel products and equipment. Sometimes a single order was worth more than 100 million dollars. When I had dinner with Baosteel executives, they asked: "You won't go back to China? Actually, China cultivated you....." And I replied: "Of course I will repay my motherland." If conditions are on the same in both China and Australia, I will

definitely consider my own country. Nowadays, Chinese products have better quality with competitive pricing, which is an important thing.

Many people say that although I became a naturalized Australian, I am still a Chinese inside. One day, my partner and I were watching a cricket final between Australia and Britain. He asked me: "If tonight's game were between China and Australia, which side would you support?" This is what I told him: "The question you've asked is the same as the one that you ask to your children whether they like their mother more or father more. That's a really tough question." Since we are living in Australia, we should obey the Australian law. I feel like I have basically got accustomed to the life in Australia and I find myself at ease with my life, so to speak. I think I have come into a carefree status. As a citizen of Australia, I'm concerned about the economic trend of the country. For example, the Australian mining industry slumped recently, yet the petroleum and natural gas industries are not too bad, but do not have long term strength. The agriculture and forestry industry of Australia are prosperous, so the Australian currency maintains its stability. As for government, my principle tends to be: this government is industrious and can withstand pressure. On the issue of government welfare payments, I suggest people work hard because receiving welfare all the time, especially for young people who don't have jobs, will cause them to become lazy. Therefore, the government should not give them relief funds so easily.

I tend to pay more attention to the multi-culture aspect of Australia. The Australians have a social identity and are aware their multi-culture society, though when people talk about politics, they always say that you are a foreigner or Chinese and seem to be confused in their thinking. Australia is a multicultural country which can tolerate different elements. It is close to Asia and can accept multi-culturalism as a part of the country without question. If I admit that multi-culturalism is part of Australian culture, I mean that I accept its culture. If I discard multi-culturalism, that means I cannot accept its culture. Since I am Chinese, multi-culture is especially important to me. I strive to envisage the differences between the West and China. Anyhow, there has always been differences and prejudice between them because these differences are fundamental. I have argued and discussed matters with foreigners, but was unable to reach an agreement because of our different way of thinking. Eventually, I had to give up trying.

Sometimes, both parties come to a compromise. For instance, when there is an order or change in regulation made in China, the foreigners have to change their thinking mode since they cannot make a deal with Chinese people if they don't obey the Chinese system. Things are the same if a similar situation occurs in Europe. As a result, we should make it clear which system brings us greater benefits. After all, trading is based on common interests. Nevertheless, respect matters most. Actually, with the opening up and reform of Chinese policy, the cultures between China and the West are getting closer but are still different. Many cultures in China are subtle and need to be felt deeply in the mind, while the western ones are more direct and obvious.

In fact, I now recognise both cultural identities. China is now more powerful than before. Accordingly, our Chinese identity has become an advantage rather than a disadvantage as in the past. Nowadays, more Australian children are starting to learn Chinese, because they think if you don't communicate with Chinese people, it will be a disadvantage. China's economy is developing rapidly, with great competitiveness, so I realize the importance of encouraging my children to learn Chinese. Tracing the source, we are Chinese after all. China is my motherland, the place where my ancestors live. The development of my motherland concerns me at all times.

Australia is my father, and China is my mother. When I stay in Australia, I will do something useful for Australia, because I am Australian citizen. But at the same time, I am rooted in China, so I treat Australia and China as my parents, for they are both important to me.

Many relatives and friends ask me as well whether I thought Australia or China was my home or China and which country I would choose to live in when I'm old. It is probably because I'm older now and miss home very much, that I often go back to visit my friends and relatives. But when my life is coming to an end, I will stay in Australia. The longer I stay here, the more I can blend into her culture. After I die, my ashes will stay here.

No matter how hard I try, there are still differences between my children and me. These differences are caused by our different experiences while growing up and our living backgrounds. Social education has a huge influence on people, especially during childhood. I was almost 30 when I came to Australia. But I have to admit that until now, my thinking mode is still influenced by my motherland. But my children grew up in Australia. Their recognition of cultural identity is

much different from that of my generation. Australian culture is deeply rooted in their minds. For some of the views on China, we sometimes have different opinions. For example, on the issues of Chinese reform and opening up policy and some of the governmental measures and strategies, they disagree with my opinion, for they think that China should try harder on its personal freedom. But I know Chinese culture very well that in China, excessive freedom means abuse and misuse of freedom. However, I never compel my children to do anything. I told my daughter that her generation represents the future and our generation represents the past. So they can exist, and so do we. She can have her own views and so do I. We can retain our own opinions.

I never regret choosing Australia. I feel that every step I've taken in my life is well-planned and well-prepared. I feel enriched and fortunate.