

# 愛、傳、城

## Love Is All Around

# 第一屆 全港 得獎 作品 集 中文 英文 徵文 比賽

The 1<sup>st</sup> Hong Kong  
Chinese & English  
Essay-Writing Competition

A COLLECTION OF  
AWARD-WINNING WORKS



主辦機構  
Organized by



贊助機構  
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啟悟慈善基金  
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民政事務局 教育局

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# 前言 PROLOGUE

為了給本港中小學生、青年人以及寫作愛好者提供一個展示平台，培養寫作興趣及提高語文水準，由香港新聞工作者聯會主辦、香港特區政府教育局、香港特區政府民政事務局、中聯辦宣傳文體部及中聯辦教育科技部支持、啟悟慈善基金贊助的「愛、傳、城 Love Is All Around」第一屆全港中英文徵文比賽於今年二月份舉行，並以「孝」為題目。

「百善孝為先」，「孝」是中華民族傳統美德的基本元素，是關於關愛父母長輩、尊老敬老的一種傳統文化。孝道是中國古代社會的基本道德規範，指社會要求子女對父母應盡的義務，包括敬養父母、尊敬、關愛、贍養老人，為父母長輩養老送終等等。「孝」亦有其更深層次的意義，對個人、對家庭、社會以至國家和世界，都有著非常深厚和微妙的影響力。

是次比賽分小學組、中學組、公開組三個組別，反應熱烈，作品數目超過2000份，最年輕參與同學只得9歲，而公開組最年長的參加者是89歲。評審以主題內容、體裁結構、語言表達及創新構思作為標準。

'Love is All Around' The 1<sup>st</sup> Hong Kong Chinese & English Essay-Writing Competition, organized by the Hong Kong Federation of Journalists and sponsored by Lu and Marisa Charitable Foundation, provide a platform to showcase the talent of budding writers among primary and secondary school students, and young people in Hong Kong. It also aims to promote interest in writing and improve language standards in the city. The theme of the inaugural competition is 'Xiao', or 'Filial love and respect'.

The Chinese saying goes, 'Xiao' is the most important of all virtues. Filial love and respect for one's parents, elders, and the elderly in general is the fundamental bedrock of traditional Chinese morality. It was and continues to be the most basic principle governing Chinese society. A filial person loves and respects his or her parents and elderly relatives, and provides for them in their dotage, right until the end of their lives and beyond. The virtue of Xiao also encapsulates a deeper significance, exerting a profound and fascination influence on the individual, the family, society, the nation, and even the whole world.

This competition is separated into the Primary, Secondary and Open divisions. We have received an overwhelming response with over 2000 entries in total. The youngest participant is only 9-year-old, while the eldest is 89. Adjudication was done based on theme and content, structure and form, articulation and originality.





# 架構 STRUCTURE

**主辦機構** 香港新聞工作者聯會  
**Organized by** Hong Kong Federation of Journalists

**支持機構** 香港特別行政區政府教育局  
**Co-organized by** Education Bureau, the Government of the HKSAR  
香港特別行政區政府民政事務局  
Home Affairs Bureau, the Government of the HKSAR  
中央政府駐港聯絡辦宣傳文體部  
Department of Publicity, Cultural and Sports Affairs, Liaison  
Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR  
中央政府駐港聯絡辦教育科技部  
Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological  
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the HKSAR

**協辦機構** 新福港集團  
**Supported by** Sun Fook Kong Group  
香港各界文化促進會  
Hong Kong Culture Association  
香港傳媒藝術文化交流協會  
The Hong Kong Media Art and Cultural Exchange Association  
青年議會  
Youth Council  
NOW 財經台  
NOW BNC  
鳳凰衛視  
Phoenix TV  
星島日報  
Sing Tao Daily  
南華早報  
South China Morning Post

**贊助機構** 啟悟慈善基金  
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(以上排名不分先後)  
(All the above in no particular order)

## 香港新聞工作者聯會簡介

### Introduction of The Hong Kong Federation of Journalists

香港新聞工作者聯會（以下簡稱「本會」）成立於1996年，至今逾20年。本會會員來自30多家媒體，包括平面媒體、電子媒體、網站、傳媒教育院校，以及大企業傳訊部門主管等，人數近1000人，現已成為本港會員涵蓋面最廣和人數最多的新聞團體之一。

本會六項宗旨：

1. 維護言論自由和新聞自由，承擔社會責任；
2. 維護新聞從業人員權益及尊嚴；
3. 維護香港繁榮穩定；
4. 推動香港新聞同業與內地、台灣、澳門及國際新聞同業交流合作；
5. 加強與本港新聞團體、同業機構溝通、交流和合作；
6. 提升專業水平和操守，加強業界培訓工作。

20多年來，本會遵循上述宗旨，著重開展香港業界培訓工作，先後與北京大學、清華大學、國家行政學院、復旦大學、浦東幹部學院、廣州暨南大學、汕頭大學合辦國情班和業務培訓班，組織本港新聞界中高層人士參加，迄今參加人數累計已達900多人次。20多年來，共舉行國情研修班15次。同時，本會組織本港傳媒到內地採訪，報道內地社會和經濟最新發展，深獲業界和社會好評。數年來，本會共組織香港媒體前往內地參觀訪問共50多次，所到省市區，包括北京市、上海市、天津市、重慶市、黑龍江省、遼寧省、廣東省、湖南省、山東省、山西省、河北省、青海省、陝西省、寧夏回族自治區、內蒙古自治區，以及澳門、橫琴、前海等，足跡遍大江南北，長城內外。

The Hong Kong Federation of Journalists (The Federation) was established in 1996 - over two decades ago. The Federation has members from over 30 media organizations, including print and digital media, websites, media schools and communications managers from esteemed corporates. With close to 1000 members, The Federation is one of the largest news organizations with a strong reach.

The six founding objectives of The Federation are:

1. To defend speech and press freedom and fulfill social responsibility;
2. To defend the rights and dignity of media professionals;
3. To preserve the well-being of Hong Kong;
4. To facilitate exchange and collaboration between Hong Kong media professionals and their mainland, Taiwan, Macau and international counterparts;
5. To promote communications, exchange and collaboration within local media organizations and practitioners;
6. To improve training for practitioners, thereby enhancing the industry's professional standards and level of work ethics.

In the past 20 years, The Federation has followed the above objectives and has focused on providing training for Hong Kong media practitioners. It has organized national training classes and business training courses with Peking University, Tsinghua University, National School of Administration, Fudan University, Pudong Cadre College, Jinan University, and Shantou University. Senior members of Hong Kong media organizations have been encouraged to participate in the classes, totally more than 900 participants over the years. In the past 20 years, a total of 15 national seminars have been held. At the same time, The Federation facilitated local media to conduct journalistic visits to the mainland, covering their latest social and economic developments. These initiatives were well received by the industry and the society. In the past two years, the Federation has organized more than 50 visits to the Mainland for Hong Kong media practitioners. At the provincial and municipal levels, destinations include Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Heilongjiang, Liaopi, Guangdong, Hunan, Shandong Province, Shanxi Province, Hebei Province, Qinghai Province, Shaanxi Province, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, as well as Macao, Hengqin, Qianhai, etc.. The group was well travelled across China.





小學組  
(中文組)

**Primary School  
(Chinese Division)**

## 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 冠軍

姓名：何俊良 學校：華德學校 班級：4C

# 用「心」行「孝」

最近新出了幾款遊戲機，但我怎麼能說服媽媽買呢？有了，待會我好好孝敬媽媽，她一開心就好辦了。

這麼想著，媽媽就進了家門。我立刻衝到媽媽面前，大聲嚷道：「媽媽，今天我幫您拔白頭髮！」媽媽吃了一驚，隨即露出一個燦爛的笑容，連衣服都沒換就趕緊坐到我面前，話裏洋溢著滿滿的幸福：「今天怎麼想起來孝敬媽媽了？」

我趕緊答道：「平時看您自己拔白頭髮那麼辛苦，作為兒子我當然要孝敬您了。」媽媽又咯咯地笑了起來，連眼角的皺紋都好像在笑。我也笑了起來，心裏卻盤算著選什麼型號的遊戲機。

我在媽媽背後坐下，拿起小夾子在她的頭髮間尋找著銀絲，然後迅猛拔下。媽媽的眉毛皺了一下，似乎感到疼痛，笑容卻依舊不改。一根、兩根、三根……媽媽是什麼時候長出這麼多白頭髮的呀？是平時輔導我溫習時？是在外工作勞累時？還是為我在學校闖的禍煩惱時？我的心裏突然很不是滋味。媽媽為我付出了這麼多，我平時卻沒有想過要孝敬她。

白頭髮拔完了，媽媽滿意地照了好幾遍鏡子，甚至還摟著我自拍了幾張上載到社交媒體上，比我得到最新款的遊戲機時還要高興。原來做一件小小的孝事，已經能讓她這麼開心了呀！可慚愧的是，我卻不是真心盡孝。如果讓媽媽知道我幫她拔頭髮別有目的，她一定會很傷心吧？這麼一想，買遊戲機的請求怎麼也說不出口了。

媽媽，您放心，我以後一定會用「心」行孝，讓您頭上的白髮越來越少！



## 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 亞軍

姓名：譚智仁 學校：秀明小學 班級：5D

一月一聚的家庭聚會如期進行，整個家族三代同堂來到我家開大餐，好不熱鬧。

吃飯期間，電視播出一個小女孩奶聲奶氣地說：「媽咪，我會努力讀書，長大了賺許多錢，把你送到最好的老人院去享福……」那位媽媽可樂開了懷，說道：「你真孝順，真孝順……」家人們激烈地討論著甚麼是孝順？難道孝就是送父母去高級老人院，三五個月都不打一次電話給他？是買許多昂貴的物品給父母，卻不捨得用五分鐘和他們聊一會兒天？

孝，是中華民族的傳統美德。百善孝為先，這是民族歷史的佳句。要做一個好人，一個善良的人，一個成功的人，首先就要做到孝。失去孝，就好比人已失去了心臟，只有一具軀殼立世上，已失去生命的價值，更何談頂天立地，闖出一番天地。生我者父母，養我者父母。父母的眼睛時刻關注著我們，父母對我們是無微不至，勞而無怨的。父母給予我們一切。沒有父母偉大無私的愛，我們很難健康地成長。所以孝順父母是天經地義、義不容辭的！

我認為孝是惦記，是為父母送上一份安心；孝是體貼，是父母進門時遞上的一雙拖鞋；孝是報答，是父母病床前的送湯餵藥；孝是耐心，是父母不理解時的耐心說服，孝是寬容，是寬容父母叮嚀時的嘮嘮叨叨……

是啊！孝並不是一件甚麼驚天動地的大事，它只是出現於生活中的點點滴滴，它需要的是一顆真誠的心。



## 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 季軍

姓名：關凱傑 學校：海壩街官立小學 班級：6E

古語有云：「百行以孝為先」，由此可見古人對「孝」的推崇。

今天我在放學回家的途中，看見一個中年婦人和老婆婆。我想那個老人應該就是婦人的母親吧！只見那婦人推著坐在輪椅上的母親，一步一步地走著。那輪椅加上老婆婆，應該也有六十多公斤重。那婦人推得很吃力，她的臉紅了，一滴一滴的汗滴在地上。

她更對她的母親照顧得無微不至。正值炎炎夏日，那婦人看到她母親出汗，就立即從口袋裡面拿出手帕，一邊為她擦汗，一邊問：「熱嗎？」她母親搖頭說：「不熱，不熱。」我可以看到老婆婆的臉上流露出幸福和喜悅的表情。這時，天突然下起了大雨。那婦人就撐起傘，為母親擋雨。我看到，她的身體濕透了。千萬把傘同時綻放，彷如一片花海，把那場面點綴得更溫馨。

我這時才發現，孝順不一定要是物質上的；那是超越物質上的對父母的尊敬。其實，一件微不足道的事情也可表現我們的孝心，例如：我們可以幫父母做家務、聽他們的教導、用心學習……

正當我想著想著，傳來妹妹背誦詩句的聲音：「……思爾為雛日，高飛背母時。當時父母念，今日爾應知！」噢！是《燕詩》，一首責怪不孝順的人的詩歌。真巧啊！

我下定決心，一定要以那婦人為榜樣，孝順父母，不會學燕子啊！

# 孝



### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：施彤彤 學校：天主教領島學校 班級：5D

那天，南山的雨下得好大好大，人群中好像有個人一直在唱著歌……

我的公公在二零一六年十一月份已經去世了，他的離開令我無法原諒自己……公公走的那天呀，我在視頻面前，吶喊著，哭吼著，他終究還是沒留下來。「彤彤長大後會孝順公公嗎？會不會嫌棄公公老？」當時的我，是那麼不懂事的回答了一句：「看情況吧！」就因為一句不經意的答覆，我和您冷戰了半年。我是多麼地後悔。小時候您經常騎著摩托車，說去世後就都把您的儲蓄給我去環遊世界，增廣見識。您也經常說您自己不中用，希望我以後還記得您，我卻總是不上心。

外公，我最近考試成績的可好了，我最近認識了很多新朋友，我還被老師表揚……外公？外公？「您的電話暫時無人接通。」沒人接通？對哦！外公已經不在了。我沒有好好的對您，我都沒有孝順您……眼淚總是不爭氣地流下來。

我多希望當時的我說一句：「我呀！以後一定會孝順公公的！」

我的床頭一直放著一本《弟子規》，現在才知道什麼叫「首孝悌」。如果時間能後退，我一定好好的給您一個擁抱，好好的給您捶捶背，好好的陪你，看那夕陽西下……我多希望您再給我唱一次童謠《天黑黑》。現在這首歌也沒人給我唱啦！這一切就像一場夢一樣，有時真，有時假。

「天黑黑要落雨……」曲調很古老，節拍很緩慢，可時間卻一直在飛逝。時間不會等爺爺奶奶爸爸媽媽變老，也不會等你變得懂事，懂得孝順。

坦蕩蕩的曠野上緩慢地爬行著公公的歌聲，我才知道，「孝」是多麼重要。

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### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：鄭伊婷 學校：樂善堂楊仲明學校 班級：4A

孔子說過：「今之孝者，是謂能養，至於犬馬，皆能有養，不敬，何以別乎？」

你知道孝的定義是甚麼嗎？每個人對孝的解釋都不同，但我對孝的定義是「笑」，只要讓父母「放心、開心」，就是孝的定義。

我是一位小學生，回到家我會自動自發寫功課，做完功課後，我會幫父母做家務，這時父母的臉龐已經充滿了開心的微笑。假如我是一位中學生，我的思想與行為會更成熟，我會照顧弟妹、煮飯並陪父母聊天、談心事，這時父母的臉龐已經充滿了滿意的微笑。假如我是一位上班族，我會負擔起家裡的生活開銷，也會關心父母的身體健康，這時父母的臉龐已經充滿了驕傲的微笑。

讓父母「笑」，其實很簡單，只要做到不讓父母擔心、傷心，讓父母很放心，很開心，就是「孝」。所以只要大家願意付出行動去做，我相信世界也會隨著改變，充滿關懷。

### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：陶陶 學校：嗇色園主辦可銘學校 班級：4C

周末，我在家看《弟子規》「入則孝」：「父母呼，應勿緩，父母命，行勿懶，父母教，須敬聽，父母責，須順承。」

我想了又想，然後，我問爺爺孝順是甚麼。爺爺說孝順是爸爸每周打電話的噓寒問暖；孝順是爸爸陪爺爺喝茶、聊天、到處走走。

我問奶奶孝順是甚麼。奶奶說孝順是媽媽給奶奶買的漂亮衣服和鞋子；孝順是姑姑每一年生日給她寄的鮮花。

我問爸爸孝順是甚麼。爸爸說孝順是下班後我為爸爸倒的熱水；孝順是我努力學習，刻苦練習小提琴。

原來，孝順有你有我有他，一代一代地傳承下來，將我們緊密地聯繫在一起。孝順是太陽，給人溫暖；孝順是大山，給人依靠；孝順是美德，給人希望。

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### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：陳晨 學校：英皇書院同學會小學 班級：6C

為什麼要孝順父母，聽從父母的指令？年輕人不是應該無拘無束的嗎？這些疑問一直存在於現今年輕人的思想中，也包括以前的我。

老師總是教導我們百善孝為先，孝順是中國傳統的美德，可是我們就因此必須無條件服從父母嗎？直到遇到那件事，我終於切切實實地找到答案。

小學四年級的我漸漸長大，開始膽敢違抗父母的話，一直和他們唱反調。某一天，我上完補習課回家感到很疲累，打算不練習鋼琴。可是爸爸強要我繼續練習，說：「你馬上要比賽了，再不練習就來不及了。」我反駁道：「你憑什麼命令我做事情？我有自由權利。」爸爸聽到這句話後七竅生煙，氣沖沖地對我說：「任何事情都需要堅持，哪怕一天偷懶，站在台上的你就會心虛。」雖然不情願，可是我還是練起來了。

一個月後，我成功站在頒獎台上，看到台下父母欣慰又驕傲的笑容，腦海中不斷泛起之前練琴的風波，內心一陣羞愧。直到現在，我仍對兩年前的這件事記憶猶新。

現時，年輕人往往以叛逆為風尚，打着「平等自由」的旗號，時常與父母起爭執，似乎這就是前衛，有思想、不愚孝的標誌。然而有多少次我們能與父母平心靜氣地交流呢？大多時候無非是為自己的懶惰和任性找藉口罷了吧！孝順父母，是作為子女最基本的禮貌，他們含辛茹苦地養育我們，也只盼望我們能生活得健康，生活得快樂。

父母，謝謝您們！

### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：林祉恩 學校：聖公會基榮小學 班級：6A

「你這個廢人白吃白住還不止，現在還偷錢，你信不信我報警把你關進監牢。」隔離陳師奶又在破口大罵笑婆婆了！不過大家請勿誤會這是一宗婆媳糾紛，因為陳師奶口中的廢人可是她的親媽媽呢！

陳師奶的媽媽笑婆婆不但性格和藹，而且樂於助人，但為甚麼一位慈祥老人會成為女兒口中的廢人呢？原來笑婆婆很早便喪偶，她們生活雖不富裕，但笑婆婆卻視獨生女如掌上明珠，不過過分的愛卻變成縱容。

笑婆婆一向自食其力，可是自從她的東家移民後，笑婆婆便只得投靠女兒，但她萬料不到這個決定卻令她掉進一個萬劫不復的深淵。

笑婆婆把所有退休金交給女兒做生活費，而且更替她帶孩子和做家務，可惜笑婆婆年紀漸大，再沒法幫助陳師奶，於是勢利的陳師奶便把笑婆婆視為眼中釘，她不但常用粗言穢語責罵媽媽，而且更曾經動手把笑婆婆推倒地上，可憐的笑婆婆為了不想流落街頭，只得繼續忍氣吞聲。

昨天陳師奶一家去了拜年，笑婆婆因為太肚餓，所以逼不得已拿了陳師奶十塊錢去買麵包吃，結果卻換來一番羞辱，看著笑婆婆坐在門口欲哭無淚的樣子，我終於按捺不住跑到附近的社區中心，把笑婆婆的苦況告訴社工，可是社工卻跟我說，像笑婆婆這樣的個案著實太多，她們也無能為力！

中國人向來重視孝道，但為甚麼現在像笑婆婆的孤苦老人卻越來越多呢！為了喚起社會人士對長者的關懷，我雖然自知文筆不好，也努力完成拙作，目的就是希望讓更多老年人能得到應有的尊重。

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### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：車穎茵 學校：拔萃女小學 年級：三年級

「養兒一百歲，長憂九十九。」這句中國名言我已經聽過很多遍了。它說出父母對子女付出無限的愛和奉獻，所以我們中國人對「孝」十分重視。

在中國，孝的觀念源遠流長，甲骨文中早就出現了「孝」字。漢代「以孝治天下」，規定《孝經》為必讀的課本，可見在這種思想的巨大影響力下，包括父子、君臣、師徒都以「孝」為先。

我是一個在傳統家庭長大的孩子。爸媽很孝順父母，我的爺爺奶奶就更加孝順了。看著他們的榜樣，我覺得我也有責任尊重和愛護我所有的長輩。

在剛過去的清明節，我跟爸媽前往掃墓，拜祭太公和太婆。我看到很多家庭都拖男帶女，扶老攜幼來拜山。他們攜着鮮花，食物有點心、鴨、蛋糕等，還有香燭和紙紮祭品，一行人高高興興地乘搭巴士，然後步行上山去到墓前，向祖先恭敬叩頭拜祭。那裏人山人海，川流不息，我看見很多孝子賢孫前來拜祭，這個情境令我深深體會到我們中國人的傳統禮儀。

雖然我年紀很小，但我也懂得孝順父母。每年的父親節和母親節，我都會花上幾天，設計一張獨一無二的心意卡，寫上我的感謝和祝福字句，畫上很多心形圖案和印上我的唇印送給他們。每天爸爸下班回家，我會給他準備一杯冰凍的飲品，讓他舒服地躺在軟綿綿的沙發上休息。媽媽生病的時候，我會不停地給她喝暖水，又餵她吃藥和給她量體溫。

我長大後，一定會報答爸媽，因為他們給了我無限的愛。現在我要好好學習，將來要做個成功人士，並要努力賺錢供養他們和付出所有時間去陪伴他們，以盡「孝道」。

### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：姚思睿 學校：粉嶺官立小學 班級：5A

「百善孝為先」，孝子賢孫，求忠出孝。孝，永遠在善事裏是排第一位的。

小時候，我還不知道孝有多重要，甚至連孝的真正含義都不太理解，經常會因為一些小事而和父母爭吵。

直到有一天，爺爺生病了，看到爸爸媽媽每天給爺爺端茶送水，擦背洗腳。這才讓我慢慢理解到「孝」的含義。當爺爺的病情加重需要住院時，爸爸媽媽更是每天輪流到醫院陪伴照顧爺爺，關心慰問爺爺想吃什麼，哪裏會痛？當爺爺自己不能進食時，他們一口一口地餵爺爺進食，爺爺總是露出幸福滿足的笑容。我當時被父母的言傳身教而感動得流淚，心想：以後不要再和爸爸媽媽吵架了。因為我要上學而不能多陪伴爺爺，所以就畫了一張自畫像放在爺爺身邊，代表我陪伴著他，爺爺把畫抓在手裏，雖然說不出話來，但眼角還是流出了幸福的眼淚。

在爺爺生病時，我終於明白孝是多麼的重要，是多麼的偉大。孝是有愛的，是誠懇的。我們要關愛父母，關愛老人。

我含著淚寫下這篇文章，因為我還沒來得及真正孝敬我的爺爺，他就走了。當我抱著媽媽痛哭的時候，也終於明白了媽媽以前為什麼要我們把好吃的都先給爺爺和奶奶，叮囑我們要聽爺爺奶奶的話，多陪伴他們。

樹欲靜而風不止，子欲養而親不在。孝，要從點滴做起，從現在做起。

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### 小學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：鄭穎采 學校：黃埔宣道小學 班級：6A

翻開報紙，映入眼簾的是一項社會調查——「基層老人反映子女不孝」。我心想：「對呀！如果成年子女不提供穩定收入給退休父母，他們的父母靠甚麼維生呢？」細看文章，竟有移居外地的成年子女的父母靠撿紙皮來維持生計！我又開始懊惱起來：「有經濟能力、學歷又高的子女，竟然都不關心父母！真是不孝！」

然而，我又是不是一位「孝女」呢？由於功課繁忙，居住地方又相距很遠，除了過時過節外，我鮮有與祖父祖母共聚一堂，而就算探望他們，我也是抱著被迫的態度強顏歡笑。

還記得有一次，我們一班親友一起吃晚飯，慶祝爺爺的生日。坐在我身旁的爺爺夾起一件叉燒，溫柔地對我說：「采采，吃不吃？」我心想：「自從小學一年級，我就不再喜歡吃叉燒了，但爺爺還夾給我吃，真不瞭解我這個乖孫女！」於是，我便裝作聽不到，繼續埋頭吃自己碗裡的食物。怎料那塊叉燒卻又「自動」出現在我的碗裡，我氣壞了，仰頭大喊：「煩死人啦！」接著，我要求旁邊的姊姊跟我更換座位，我說：「我不想與這個『食古不化』的老頭子一起坐。」

當時爺爺只是目瞪口呆地望著我，這一頓飯，他沒有再與親友說半句話，他的內心一定不是味兒，心如刀割。

晚飯過後，爺爺為我遞上一杯水，我用雙手捧著這杯水，溫暖的水雖然握在手中，卻是暖在中心。「爺爺，對不起！」我哽咽地說。爺爺沒有說話，只是用溫暖的手輕輕地拍拍我的肩膀。我真是不孝！

此時，我眼角看到報紙有一個廣告：「踏實現在，把握未來，別讓老了才後悔！」對！父母和祖父母就好比花，而「孝」是澆花的水，就讓我們用孝心澆花，讓這朵花開得燦爛，讓父母和祖父母也笑得燦爛。



### 小學組(中文組)優異獎

姓名：邵綺悠 學校：大埔浸信會公立學校 班級：六恩

俗語說：「百善孝為先。」此句話為何意？古人認為許多的善行之中，「孝」是最重要的。

父母，是我此生最應孝敬的人。自從我來到這世上，父母就開始無微不至的關心、照顧我。自我記事起，就深深體會到父母對自己的愛。記得我五歲時，在鄉下的親戚家被小狗咬了一下，當時我被嚇哭了，同時媽媽也被嚇壞了，立馬帶我去鎮上的醫院打針，那時媽媽看似比我還緊張，我明白到「傷在你身，痛在我心」這句話的真正含義。

在我的成長過程中，父母一直盡心盡力地扶養和教導著我。我們的家庭並不富裕，但他們都會盡力為我提供良好的生活和優質的教育。

隨著我的成長，父母開始慢慢衰老，而我應如何才能讓他們不為我操勞呢？首先，我要照顧好自己，不要受傷，做到身體健康，不讓父母擔心。其次，我要努力學習，爭取取得好成績，讓父母感到欣慰。最後，我要多幫父母做家務，以減輕他們的負責。

「慈烏尚反哺，羔羊猶跪足。人不孝其親，不如草與木。」——《勸孝歌》

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### 小學組(中文組)優異獎

姓名：王梓駿 學校：聖公會仁立小學 班級：4A

每當聽到花木蘭「代父從軍」和王祥「臥冰求鯉」的故事，都會令我想起一句古語——「百善孝為先」。「孝」是做人的根本，也是中華民族千古不變的傳統美德。俗語又說：「羊有跪乳之恩，鴉有反哺之義。」更何況身為萬物之靈的我們！

從我們呱呱落地、嗷嗷待哺的那一天起，父母就含辛茹苦地撫養我們，孜孜不倦地照顧我們，循循善誘地教導我們，使我們在愉快的環境下茁壯成長，成為一個有用的人，將來能貢獻社會。所謂「誰言寸草心，報得三春暉」，父母恩情深似海，我們應該盡孝、守本份，敬養父母，為父母長輩養老送終，發揚中華民族的傳統美德。

又有言「滴水之恩，當以湧泉相報。」父母給我們如此浩大恩德，我們又怎能不銘記於心，感恩圖報呢？孝，其實是從身邊小事做起：在學校裡，我們勤奮好學，爭取良好的成績，做個品學兼優的好學生，以報答父母的苦心；在家裡，我們要勤做家務，保持家居整潔，做個貼心的好孩子，以減輕父母的負擔。「樹欲靜而風不息，子欲養而親不在」，我們要常常關心、體諒和孝順父母，以免後悔一生。

古往今來，孝道是中國社會的基本道德規範。孝敬父母長輩，對維繫家庭和睦，增強民族團結，穩定社會安寧，振興國家繁盛等方面都能起重要的作用。中華文化強調「千經萬典，孝悌為先」，我們應該把「孝」傳承，發揚光大，並引以自豪，共同努力我國的文化寶典。



中學組  
(中文組)

**Secondary School  
(Chinese Division)**

## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 冠軍

姓名：潘海怡 學校：梁式芝書院 班級：中六乙

記憶的梗，立著盛滿思念的花，清風拂過，抖落一地歲月的遺物，前事傾流而出。

自總角之年，我便端坐几案操習大字，晨昏定省般，不可有怠，所習內容必有「永言孝思」一句。起初抓不穩筆，得由祖父手把手教，祖父一把白鬍鬚不時掃過額頭，惹來一陣瘙癢，我總難忍笑意。這時，祖父沉厚的聲音便在頭上響起：「看，孝是會意字，上老下小，承上啓下。」小腦袋瓜又怎裝得下晦澀的話，可祖父日日與我講述孝的至德要道，終在認知的土壤種下苗子，但僅止於模糊的概念。

除去祖父，最與我親近的可數母親。母親予我最深的印象是每晚將我脖子後的被子塞緊，使不透風，我倍感溫暖，怡然入睡。除此，便是她親操刀砧，為祖父調製藥膳，更備好送至書房，絕不假手於人。半晌，母親折回，若膳食紋絲未動，便知祖父又鎮日價在書堆里而廢寢忘餐，她必端走加熱。我躲在一隅窺探，想到祖父嘮叨的孝，以及書上的子曰，原本模糊的概念因摻上生活實例而生動不少。

輕狂年歲又怎會被子曰馴服，騷動的心在《三國演義》、《封神榜》等趣史中馳騁，當中數《封神榜》最捕獲我心。那不可一世的哪吒吸引著我，他斷臂剖腹、剝腸剔骨還於父母，他的敢作敢為引發深思——我屬於自己抑或是父母？孝是為何？但一想到每日所習之「永言孝思」立把疑問嚇跑，可我深知那遐想仍存於心，不敢與人說。

年歲漸長稜角日益尖銳，作為獨立個體極想從集體主義中逃脫，對於「自我」的萬千思緒在家中無處安放。雖行為上不敢反叛，但心中的嘶吼像翻江倒海的哪吒，在孝的牢籠中益發竭斯底里。初始，爭執始於芝麻小事，後來越漸頻繁、激烈。摔門聲、怒吼聲、巴掌聲伴隨家常便飯，一日三餐，永無休止。

要來的終會來，且來勢洶洶。那次，母親絮絮叨叨，我起初當耳邊風，但內心自是上演另一齣戲，許是相由心生，終流露出不耐煩。後來母親說了一句越大越不孝將我點燃，啪一聲放下碗，咻一下站起身，脫口而出：「你這是情感勒索！」母親一臉蒼白，我衝回房間，隔絕可惡的臉，那刻我成了哪吒。

我蜷縮角落，沒有眼淚，有的是暢叫揚疾的思想鬥爭。好一會兒，思緒沉澱，四周靜謐無聲，驟然所有的情感赤裸地暴露，我感受到憤怒與不甘，但亦捕捉到一絲微弱的情感，是我一直逃避。當忍不住觸碰時，我如一聽開罐的汽水放聲大哭，原來那是心疼。此刻，母親予我的溫暖記憶傾注而出：夜晚撫弄我的頭髮直至入睡、冬日為我溫上一碗碗紅棗湯……方知這女人拒絕了山川湖海，甘願囿於廚房與愛。

夜晚，我爬上母親的床，抱著她的腰，貼著她的背，心中堆積的千山化成聲聲嗚咽，母親回抱我，下巴貼著我額頭。原來愛，就是沒有理由的心疼和不設前提的寬容。好比殷十娘對哪吒的愛與原諒，哪吒因十娘離世而痛心疾首。

當孝卸下教條式的外殼，那裏藏至深的便是愛。孝不應只是行動及言語，更應是由心的愛，正如子曰：「不敬，何以別乎？」。

因為愛，所以孝。



## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 亞軍

姓名：黎美珊 學校：元朗公立中學 班級：5C

我媽是個愛突如其來的人。她出現在我面前時，總伴隨著壞天氣和無數的行李。

她冒暴雨來到上海，背後一個大包，左右肩膀各持一個小的，雙手還提一個，活像——一個被各種包包劫持的人。

剛碰面，顧不上別的，她先從所有大包小包的綁架中拚命逃出。氣兒還沒有喘順，使催著我和她去拿剩下的東西。我跟著她走到屋外走廊，走廊竟還有兩倍之多的行李。

我非但沒有體諒我媽，還向她嗔道：「媽，你幹嘛帶這麼多東西來。你看這是甚麼？連水餃也帶來了，我這兒又不是沒有吃的。」

「傻孩子，我是怕著你在這吃不習慣，偶爾也想嚐嚐家鄉的味道。」我媽強壓下喘息，邊用手袖擦掉額角分不清的雨水和汗水，微笑地對我說。

我蹲下看看我媽給我帶來五花八門的行李：辣椒醬、水餃皮、紅酒糟。其中最值得一提的是兩根竹竿，目測約有兩米，真好奇她是怎樣把這倆玩意兒帶上公交車的，在我記憶中，從老家來這裡至少倒三趟車。

她把兩根竹竿掛在我的小陽台上方，讓我晾曬衣服。她驕傲地說：「看！細吧！又細又長又直，真不容易找到。」她獨個兒笑著，讚嘆這倆玩意兒才配得上上海這等大城市，不知城裏人隨便搭兩條鐵線也能晾衣服。

後來，我搬家了，在收拾行李時，兩根竹竿實在帶不動，便把它拐到街頭的垃圾場扔了。正當原途折返時，走著走著，頭頂紅彤彤的烈日被突如其來的驟雨所取替，我竄進平房瓦礫下避雨，小巷裡瀰漫著一層薄薄的雨霧，一聲聲吆喝聲漸近。

定眼看到一個中年男子腳踏泥濘，手推著一輛獨輪木車向路口駛來，車上撐著一把大雨傘，我不經意瞥見車上還有位已過耄耋之年的老人。此刻，路旁水果攤的老板向男子打招呼，笑道：「今天又推老奶奶出來曬太陽啊。」「是的，讓她多出來走動，免得她憋壞了。卻不知為何下起這場驟雨來，我便趕緊把她推回去，免她著涼……」中年男子枯乾的臉頰露出淺淺的笑容，如此甜蜜又溫暖，他隨意用手拭去額上豆大的汗珠，或許是雨水，繼續趕路。

這動作很眼熟，一瞬間，我仿佛被甚麼所觸動，雙眼緊緊凝望著遠方的男子，直到雨霧迷茫了他的身影。我心頭一緊，淚珠不自覺地流下。這是情，是兒子對母親的深情；這是愛，是兒子回饋母親春暉之恩；這是孝，是作為普通人應盡的孝。「孝」不僅只停留在一副油嘴上，它更應存著在生活的點滴間。有時候並不是偉人才能觸動我們的心靈，平凡人加上真摯的成情也使平凡人變得不平凡！

現在我知道驟雨的原因了，我趕緊掏出手電打電話給我媽，訴說掛念之情及報備一下我要搬家了。「你要是搬家的話，一定記得把我的竹竿帶去。」那時，我才突然感到內疚。

我告訴她沒了。她傷心地說：「那麼好的竹竿，你怎麼捨得扔了？」卻絲毫不提她當年把它們帶來上海的艱辛——

想到這裡，掛線後我隨即轉身，跑去拾回那兩根竹竿，並改變主意，放下手頭的工作，決意做一回突如其來的人……

雖然天仍陰陰地下看雨，但在「回家」的路上我的心卻是暖暖的，身邊還有給老媽的大包小包呢！一笑。



## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 季軍

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# 年糕

堆疊如碉堡的行李，渾濁的汗臭充斥整個春運高峰期客運車站，螻蟻般的民工要返回老穴了，擁擠得令人窒息。

我望著亮著票務處售罄的燈號，喟嘆一聲轉身踏出車站，在寒冽的北風下鑽進一暗巷中尚未打烊的小店。

一盤熱氣騰騰的年糕給端了上來。然而，我竟一口也吃不下去。也許，人在外省打工，舌頭少不免變得挑剔；也許，經過多日趕路折騰，身體也累得無心下嚥。

看著眼前這盤工場追求量產的年糕，在向上散發的裊裊蒸氣中，我想起了家鄉年糕的味道。

那是一種出自母親之手，一種鄉土而不嘩眾的甘甜。記憶中依稀殘存的那股濃稠米糕的淳香，自老家裏的柴爐裊裊升起，送進冬至的北風裏。

在小時候的懵懂時光裏，每近歲暮，母親總會堅持親手磨制年糕的米漿。在鴨青色的熹微晨光裏，她蹲坐在白磚灰瓦老胡同前的空地，用一雙佈滿皺紋和肉繭的手，默默，不斷地磨，磨掉了一整天，甚若彷彿磨掉了半生的青春。我看著她夾水帶米放入石磨，一推一拉，轉動着沉重的手柄。她說，用石磨磨米漿，才能保留米味；而且要磨上百幾圈，把糯米慢慢磨細，年糕才會細滑。

她接著把手磨成的新鮮米漿，用布袋隔去水分，再加入片糖，以木棍攪拌。小時候實是不懂她為何要如此費盡力氣和心血，折騰一大番工夫做年糕，禁不住的問：

「媽，為什麼要耗費工夫做年糕呢？去市場買現成的，不是挺便捷嗎？」

她沒好氣的道：「小孩子懂什麼！做年糕是做給祖先神明吃的，是我們後代的誠意。用買的怎安好心！」

當時的我還小，聽罷，瞧著貼在門上的一對猙獰的門神，深怕用現買的年糕真的會惹他們來討自己債，啞啞舌就再沒提起過此事。

後來長大了，我才醒悟這其中也蘊含著母親對子女的盼望：年年高升。

爐裏的乾柴興致熱熾地劈啪燃燒著，狹小的廚房煙霧瀰漫，燻得人雙眼流淚。母親一直伴在灶旁看火，寸步不離。苦等了四個小時，打開鑊蓋，一底黃澄澄，以瓦鉢盛着的年糕呈上飯桌。柔韌不糊，滿口米香，甜味恰好，有獨特的嚼勁兒，咬上一口，回味無窮。那時家裏貧困，孩子沒有錢買甜食，所以能在新年吃到母親的年糕，已是童年裏的一大幸福。一家人圍坐吃年糕，無須山珍海味，已是樂滋滋的精神饗宴。

那種甜膩的黏，把我們一家人黏在了一起。

自從離鄉別井到外省打工後，便再也沒有吃過母親做的年糕。一直以為拼命地賺錢供養兩老便是盡孝，殊不知卻忘掉了他們最渴望得到的，是子女在春節回家時吃到自己的年糕時所展露的滿足和笑容。去年返鄉過節臨別時，母親還硬塞一盆年糕叮囑我帶走，並緊握著我的手，緩緩的道：「下年也要回來啊！」

巴士緩緩啟動。望著她佝僂的身影兀自站在小巷中，漸次縮小至最後消失，我的眼眶蒙上了一層蒸氣。

在蒸氣氤氳中，啖在嘴裏的年糕怎麼變酸了？我擱下筷子，再次迎著寒冽的北風朝車站走去，碰碰運氣。

## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：莫楚茵 學校：嶺南中學 班級：中五

# 孝要及時

我飛快地翻動書本，準備明天的中文科考試。屋內一片死寂，冰冷的空氣颳過我的皮膚。驀然，我翻到一頁書，當中提及很多孝的故事，甚麼「臥冰求鯉」、「哭竹生筍」、「扇枕溫衾」等，這令我的思緒逐漸飄向了遠方……

十二歲那年，我頑強得很，從不聽父母的循循善誘，經常觸怒他們。我不懂「孝」，認為「孝」只是一個約束、一種關係。某天，我記不起幹了甚麼好事，母親對我動怒了。她攥住我其中一條手臂，然後高舉藤條往我身上甩。藤條揮動時所發出的聲音，以及皮膚上傳來的火辣感，過了這麼久依然令人毛骨悚然。「我沒有你這種兒子！」話音剛落，她就把我趕出門外，再用盡畢生力氣關上門。

我坐在家門外，用臂膀使勁地環抱着小腿，眼淚撲簌簌地掉下來了。過了不知多久，突然，鄰居的門打開了，我立刻用手袖在臉上亂抹一通，不想讓人看到自己的狼狽模樣。「進來坐坐吧。」探出頭來的是一位華髮蒼顏的老人。他的臉上盡是縱橫交錯的皺紋，但一抹滄桑沒有遮掩他那炯炯有神的雙眼。此刻，我才得知這個神秘鄰居的身分。「進來吃頓飯吧。」飯菜的畫面頓時縈繞着我的腦海，我點了點頭。

我打量屋內的環境：兩房一廳的格局，傢俬不多，只有一張正方形飯桌和一部電視機。他指了指僅剩的圓木椅，示意我坐。隨後，他轉身一拐一拐地進了房間，拿出另一張圓椅，坐在飯桌的對面。「小伙子，趁熱吃！」老伯彎起衰老的嘴角說。我盯着雞塊，嚥了嚥口水，便開始狼吞虎嚥起來。突然，老人哈哈大笑起來，我狐疑了。「你跟我兒子小時候長得一個模樣。」他笑顏逐開說。「怎麼不見你兒子呢？」我好奇地問道。

屋內的空氣凝住了，老人放下筷子，撫着一個封塵的相框，良久才吐出話來：「人家有妻兒要養，又賺了大錢，得瑟了。想把我這副老骨頭扔進護老院？我才不要呢！可惜妳去得早，不然我就有個伴……」他長歎了一聲，抬頭對我說：「孝真的很複雜、很難做到嗎？其實不需要做些甚麼偉大的事，簡單如一句問候、一頓飯、一個電話，對父母來說，已是最大的安慰了。」聽到了這番話後，我不禁潸然淚下，想起自己過往對家人的態度，我慚愧得連耳根都紅透了。這頓飯的其他細節已在記憶深處中沉睡了，只知道從那天起，我與家人的關係有了改變。

叩門聲驟起，我的思緒一下子回到現實。母親雙手端着一個木托盤走進來說：「餓了嗎？先吃點東西吧。」話畢，她彎着腰放下木托盤。倏然，一撮銀絲落下，我才驚覺她已不再是當年那個使盡力氣打我的母親了。

原來老伯說的話是真的，光陰荏苒，孝要及時。

## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：黃雅彤 學校：聖公會聖馬利亞堂莫慶堯中學 班級：中五

這恩我大概是報不完的，我深知。她奉獻了一切給我，這恩，我又怎能夠報得完。

廚房傳來炒菜的聲音，鑊與鍋的碰撞迴盪家中，我知道，是時候了。我放下手上的一切工作，打開抽屜，從抽屜中拿出一卷墊桌子的餐布，墊上。然後到廚房拿起一把筷子還有幾個碗到桌上，盛好湯，等待媽媽的餸菜端出。

吃飯的時候，總是這樣。媽媽總怕我吃得太少、怕我餓壞肚子、怕我不夠營養長不大，所以總往我的碗中夾菜，把我的碗塞得滿滿，盡是餸菜都快不見飯了。其實我也怕她不夠，但她總是只在飯碗裏扒上兩口就放下碗筷。

她原在印刷房工作，每天為出版社執字粒，拼湊出一本本厚厚薄薄的書。後來，再沒有笨拙的活字印刷，電子化的便捷虜獲了時代，曾經以為的安份恆久，化成往事如煙。縫衣、侍應、醫院雜工她都做過，在都市流轉中，演繹一個勤懇堅毅的母親。呆板沉重的工作掙來每月萬餘的生活，和勞損的關節。吃飯仍只吃那兩小口。在她專注於電視劇可笑的紛爭時，我便往她碗裏夾菜，盛飯時也給她多盛一些。

以前，她牽著我的小手，帶著我走。現在，她也牽著我的手，我們一起走。

她說家務她做便好了，叫我專心做自己的事，好好讀書。我知道她工作辛苦，但她從來不說，也沒有半句怨言。我讀書不比工作辛苦，我早了回家便做點簡單的家務，掃掃地、吸吸塵、摺摺衣服，也把米給洗了，然後再做自己的功課，等媽媽回家煮飯。

這些年，她老了。其實也是必然的老了，不是什麼突如其來的事，卻沒法輕易的接受，黑髮中悄悄冒出幾條白頭髮，想要拔掉卻又多冒出幾條，眼尾的細紋像魚尾般輕擺，在歲月中越游越遠。

她不會用智能手機，我教她。我知道她教我走路也是這樣的不厭其煩。教了一次，很快，她忘了。我又教了她一次，不過很快她又忘了。年輕的她，是個輕易記下數萬字粒位置的女子。後來，終於學會了使用通訊軟件。我給她發信息，報平安，而她則回發簡單字句，讓我知道她看見了。

我牽起她的手，比以往粗糙得多了。帶她外出走走，她走得很慢，我跟隨著她的步伐，一步、兩步，歇一歇再走。她喜歡帶著我到公園，喜歡觀看世界，揮揮雙手，吸吸新鮮空氣，看看花。

現在，她仍喜歡，只是關節痛，一走路便痛，只有待不太痛的日子，她才外出。母親的影子被夕陽拖得長長，彷彿帶著淡淡的油墨味道，默默在闖曠人間中拼砌另一個悠長的故事。

## 中學組(中文組)優異獎

姓名：楊梓 學校：中華基金中學 班級：中二戊

# 轉角處，仍有孝

很小很小的時候，媽媽就教我背「首孝悌，次謹信」、「百善孝為先」……稚氣未脫的我並不大明白它們的意思。就這樣，在一知半解的讀書聲中，媽媽牽著我的手，走過了好多個春夏秋冬……後來，我慢慢理解了它們的意思。更在機緣巧合下，我目睹了那麼的一幕，聽到了那麼的一個故事。從此，孝，便在我心底刻下了不可磨滅的印記。

記得那是幾年前的一天。暮色還未褪去，大街上依舊喧鬧。我漫不經心地踢著石子前行。在街道的一個轉角處，有著熟悉的情景，幾個乞丐在行乞。可是，今天似乎有點不同：那位男乞丐，似乎帶來了他的一家三口。我不經意地瞥過那位女乞丐的身上。她，應該是位母親。她站了起來，往垃圾桶旁走去。「先生，你這個……不要了吧？」原來她是在請求一位路人，將沒喝完卻要扔掉的礦泉水給她。等她順利拿到那瓶水後，她便立即遞給孩子。這時，出乎意料的事情出現了：孩子將瓶蓋打開，先遞給了母親。此刻，那位母親笑了，笑得那麼的美、那麼的甜。那一刻，我有著一種莫名的觸動。

是啊！那是愛，那是孝。身處如此困頓的環境，乞丐的孩子尚且知道要行孝，反觀我呢？我從沒想過，在這被人忽略的轉角處，孝，可以如此燦爛地綻放。這孝的小花，正正開在小童的手尖上，同樣開在母親暖暖的心坎裡。

猶記得，老舍說「失去了慈母便像花插在瓶子裡，雖然還有色有香，卻失去了根」。是的，子欲養而親不在，這是生命中最大的悲哀。有父母在的日子裡，一定得竭盡所能行孝。君不知感動中國的獎項獲得者陳斌強的故事嗎？母親因操勞過度，早早患上老年癡呆症。陳斌強想起姐姐無意中提起，媽媽最大的願望，就是跟孩子在一起。那一刻，他明白了，這輩子，他是不會丟下她了！之後的幾年，為了更好地照顧母親，他每週都會將母親帶去自己上班的地方，騎著摩托車，拐過一個又一個的轉角。到了週五，又將母親接回家中照料。夏天，火辣辣的陽光照在身上，他的臉上滾下豆大的汗珠，他只是隨意地擦拭一下，然後在某個轉角處停下，將傘往後移，盡可能多的遮到母親，繼續駛向前方。冬天，寒風刺骨，他便在那個轉角處脫下棉襖，給母親穿上。這一個個轉角處，承載著一個孝子的悠悠寸草心。這是愛，是兒子回饋母親養育之恩的愛；更是孝，是作為一個孩子天經地義的責任！

其實，孝，是人類最高貴的感情。我慶幸能在一個提倡孝道的社會生活，但我想，我們也是有使命的——一定要讓孝道之花璀璨地綻放，綻放在社會的每一個轉角處！



## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：余秋蓉 學校：香港國際學校 班級：Grade 9

我生長在重視中國傳統文化教育的家庭，孔賢之道，弟子規，二十四孝中驚天地泣鬼神的故事，耳熟能詳。「百善孝為先」更是我們的家訓。

可矛盾之處在於：我從四歲至今，一直就讀美國國際學校，全美式教育使我跟中國文化脫節。久而久之，兩種截然不同的文化教育，使我內心蕩起了漣漪，產生了沖突。身為國際學校大家口中常說的 teenager 年紀的女孩，跟父母頂個嘴，發個脾氣，小叛逆一下，都是很平常的。每次被父母糾正時，我要麼將房門反鎖，要麼聳聳肩，回：So? Who cares? 每於此時，父母都搖頭嘆息，自責沒有將我留在台灣接受教育。我對於孝，只停留在對故事和古語的了解上。

直至年初，一場突如其來的大病，使我高燒三日三夜，當時只感覺身體滾燙，疼痛昏睡，連呻吟的力氣都沒有，內心充滿恐懼。迷糊中，不斷地被扶起身喝水，耳邊想著母親唸誦觀音菩薩的祈禱聲。如同我小時候發燒一樣，父母輪流守在床邊不斷為我更換冷毛巾放在額頭上。

煎熬中，我仿佛躺了很久，終於在一個朦朧透亮的早晨，翻身醒來，感覺輕鬆了很多。剛要爬起床，卻發現父親耷拉著頭，斜倚在床邊，身旁放著一個泡毛巾的水盆。微弱的光線下，他的臉充滿了疲倦，下巴上很明顯是幾天沒剃過的短茬鬍鬚，他肥厚的大手搭在我被角上。瞬間，我眼淚盈滿了眼眶，百感交集。注視著睡著的父親，我第一次意識到：他的臉龐不再年輕，體力不再如從前，身體不再強壯，他在一天天老去，直至有一天我會失去他。一陣錐心的痛湧上心頭，我不忍驚醒他，任由思緒飛馳：父親五十多歲才有了我這個女兒，母親說，從我出世後，他毅然放棄了打拼大半輩子的事業，為的是全心陪伴照顧我。六年前，他被醫院宣告只剩兩星期壽命時，那時的我，十歲。懵懵懂懂不知害怕，天真地以為：愛護自己的父親永遠都不會離開。挺過大難的父親，靠每日服藥維持器官運作，他常開玩笑，說他要堅強地活著，陪伴女兒。此時此刻，想起這句不經意的玩笑話，我被深深地戳痛，戳醒：我是一個多麼不孝的女兒，以為父母愛我是天經地義的，父母的愛是取之不盡的。剎那間，我頓悟了父母的教誨，對孝有了新的認知。

羊有跪乳之恩，烏鴉有反哺之義。孝是一種感恩，我們要感恩父母的養育之恩，教導之情。孝是一種陪伴，花時間陪父母聊天，牽他們的手散步，曬太陽，多給他們溫暖的擁抱……這些都是我們能做到的。原來盡孝是那麼的簡單，不用做轟轟烈烈的事，只要像父母愛我們一樣去愛父母，平淡，卻意義重大。如孟子言：「大孝，終身慕父母」。孔子言：「孝，德之本也。」現在我對聖人之言有所感悟。

這時，我的腦海中跳出了父母常引用的一句話：樹欲靜而風不止，子欲養而親不待。凝視著父親，我心中暗自許下承諾：以後我再也不會頂撞您，我會照顧好自己，不讓您操心，我會修正自己的行為，從小事做起盡孝道。

孝，我會從現在做起。

## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：余瑞琦 學校：拔萃女書院 班級：中一

我清洗著您粗糙的腳，兩行淚水無聲地流下來。我上次到老人院探望您，已是數個月前的事了。您粗糙的肌膚，甚麼時候開始在我手中變得柔滑；您乾涸的聲音，甚麼時候開始在我耳邊變得親切……

兩星期前，我看到這樣的情境：有一位同學忘了帶手提電話上學，便叫她的母親把它帶到學校。那天下著牛毛般的微雨，但她的母親仍然飛快地趕到學校，怎料，那位母親一不小心在學校門口摔倒了。雖然她只是受了輕傷，但那位同學的電話卻掉在一灘泥水中。同學一句道謝也沒有，只在埋怨她的母親：「你怎麼這麼不小心！你把電話摔壞了！」然後便一言不發地掉頭走了，奔向同學去。那時，我心中非常憤怒，心想：她怎麼這麼不孝？難道她不知道「百善孝為先」嗎？我真想走上前大罵她一頓。這時，一段回憶浮現在我眼前，這件事被流水般的歲月洗禮著，不知您還記得嗎？

那年，我剛升上中學，當時您還沒進老人院。在一個下雨天，我忘記帶數學功課，勞煩您幫我把功課帶回學校。我等了差不多二十分鐘，您久久未到，令我非常擔心您的安全。這時，您從街口一拐一拐地走過來，右腳腳跟腫了起來。我十分驚訝，立刻上前扶著您，緩慢地走到學校，想向老師求助。我那時後悔莫及，我明明知道您年紀老邁，行動不方便，但我為了避免自己被老師責罵，自私地叫您替我拿功課，才令您不小心地扭傷。之後的數星期，您都要以輪椅代步，我經常推著您到附近的公園散步，又帶您到商場閒逛，在家裡又會幫您洗腳、抹身和按摩。有時候，我會陪您去醫院做檢查，在別人眼中，我是一個「孝順」祖母的「好孫女」，但我心中知道您的腳傷是因我而起的，即使我如何服侍您，也彌補不了我良心的責備，我真是後悔莫及。你身上的瘀傷，都成為了我心中無數的傷痕。過了幾年，爸媽把您送到老人院去，無論我那時多忙碌，我也抽時間探望您。雖然您的身體狀況越來越差，您的肌膚變得粗糙，聲音變得乾涸，但我更珍惜每次和您相敘的時間。

古人曾說過：「今之孝者，是謂能養。」幾百年前，中國人已經很重視「孝」，認為要奉養長輩才算是「孝」。我現在雖然沒有能力奉養您，但我也會盡力做好身為孫女的責任，陪伴和探望您。現今社會中的「孝」已經比古時的「孝」少許多限制，但很多人仍然沒有孝順長輩，那位同學也是其中一個。其實，「孝」不只是指尊敬和奉養長輩，還是個人道德的修養。「孝」對我們的社會亦有相當大的影響力。孟子曾說：「孝子之至，莫大乎尊親。」如果大家都孝順父母，難道這個社會不會變得更和諧、更美好嗎？

## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：許文靜 學校：香港布廠商會朱石麟中學 班級：中二

# 給父親的信

爸爸：

其實，我心裏知道你是很疼愛我和姐姐的。雖然我們一起吃飯的時間很少，我和你的說話也不多，但是我很開心能生於這個家中。有很多話，我不會說，但是透過文字，我才敢跟你吐納我的真情。

爸爸，你要早起，每天五時多就要起床。因為你為了生計，每天乘車進屯門上班。可是，你總是不開燈，摸黑去梳洗換衣。有一次，我醒來了，你對我說：「回去睡睡，現在才六點多。」你的語氣很陽剛，因此讓我深生敬畏。我頓時回到被窩中，悄悄地窺望你。你彎著腰子，拿著一大袋工具，吃了一個小麥包就走了。那時，我以為你最喜歡吃麥包。可是有一次你放假時，你跟我們到下面的茶餐廳吃早餐，你竟然選了我和姐姐最愛吃的吞拿魚包。我和姐姐頓時感到驚訝，你就解釋說：「麥包最便宜，平時當然選麥包，放假就要選回我的最愛。」此後，我每天吃早餐，看見兩個吞拿魚包，也會想起你。

長大後，我才知道原來你的工作是多麼危險。你每天要吊在半空中，好像「蜘蛛俠」一樣。當你回到地面後，你又要搬起十多公斤的鐵枝。說真的，我寧願你留在家裏。可是，我也知道家裏的開支很緊張，你不能停。我能做的，就是每夜注意著門口，直到看見你平安的回來，緊蹙的眉頭才稍稍放鬆。

可是，剛下眉頭，卻上心頭。這一蹙一舒的狀態，不知道甚麼時候才能結束？

有時候，我心裏想：我是不是沒用。我不會為你分擔工作，我更不會像姐姐一樣幫你做飯和整理衣服。我只會每晚等你吃完飯，沏一杯綠茶給你。我每天在想，甚麼時候我可以工作，為你分擔一下家庭開支。我希望我能去銀行做兼職，發了工資後，我就可以把資金轉到你戶口，讓你減輕開支壓力。

爸爸，我知道關愛是甚麼。關愛就像你一樣，不惜一切來為我們付出。無論我們是否明白你的辛苦，你也會像樹根一樣，默默支撐整個家，卻深藏泥下，從不張揚，不喧鬧。在此，我希望借此信表達對你的感激。爸爸，少點吸煙，你會愛惜我們，我和姐姐也希望你可以愛惜自己。我愛你。

祝  
工作平安

女兒 文靜上  
二零一八年二月十八日

## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：何泳琪 學校：明愛馬鞍山中學 班級：3A

「媽媽，為什麼清明要去掃墓？」

「因為外公一個人會很孤獨，所以我們要去看他。」

「那媽媽你為什麼要哭？」

「媽媽在想，要是當年能夠多孝敬你外公一點就好了。」

孝，是什麼？

「孝，善事父母者，以從老省，子承老也。」孝，由「老」字和「子」字組成，取子能承其親之意；孝是傳統美德，歷代以來備受推崇。古有臥冰求鯉，賣身葬父，替父從軍；今有背母求學，割肝救父和還鄉奉母，這些事蹟無一不顯孝道。可在這背後，也有不少人未能盡孝子賢孫之份，或未懂感恩「高飛背母」，或人在江湖身不由己，或後知後覺追悔莫及。

媽媽告訴我，她十八歲那年，為了謀取出路，不得不隻身離開家鄉，到城市闖蕩打拼。離家千里，孤苦伶仃，她無一天不思念家鄉。她希望做出令家人驕傲的成績，奮力工作，但與家人卻聚少離多，有時幾年也不回去一趟。後來建立了家庭，有了孩子，更難以回鄉。「我最痛苦的事便是父親病重之時我不在他的身邊。」母親說，子欲養而親不在，大概是人生最痛苦的事。

從我們出生的那刻，與父母相處的時間就進入了倒計時。我們心安理得地享受父母的愛，卻只有很少人能夠真正用行動回報父母。父母作為我們第一個老師，教我們走路、吃飯、過馬路，把我們由一張白紙變成一副絢爛多彩的油畫。他們盡力為我們提供物質生活，整天擔心我們沒有吃好、睡好。哪怕是我們上了學，也會天天想著我們學會了知識沒有，有沒有交到好朋友，有沒有被欺負等等，自己卻在無情的歲月中不知不覺變老了。

也許父母從來沒有講過「我愛你」，也許你不知道他們心中對你的纍纍愛意早已塞滿了心臟，化為在勞累時堅持下去的動力。他們不會跟你談工作遇到了什麼困難，不會告訴你放工之後有多麼疲憊，只是為著孩子咬緊牙關過日子；他們不會奢求你大富大貴，只希望你平安健康，考上大學，找到好工作，找個愛你的人；他們沒有考慮自己的未來，沒有問過你以後會不會贍養他們，只是默默把你撫養成人。你有什麼理由不孝？不去報答他們？

孝，沒有那麼複雜，就以我們學生為例，做做家務，聽父母的話，一句溫馨的問候，一個溫暖的擁抱已經可以將愛傳遞給他們，洗去他們身上的勞累，溫暖他們冰冷的雙手，給予他們力量。他們想要的，不過是你的陪伴罷了。

人生無常，你永遠不知道還剩下多少時間。不要到了子欲養而親不在才追悔。時間不會等人，願你抓緊每一分每一秒，這樣才不會在未來喟然長歎，抱憾終身。



## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：劉灝天 學校：可立中學 ( 晉色園主辦 ) 班級：4A

媽媽背我！

好吧，就這一會兒。

在我前面散步的一對年輕母子說著。一步，一步，慢慢地走。看到那孩子幸福的表情，自己也不自覺地微笑。可惜，自己和母親的關係並沒有如此的融洽。

你去哪兒了？電話不接，信息不回……

打開家裏大門，迎接我的，是一輪轟炸。

我一言不發，放好鞋履，走進自己的房間，掛起外套，繼續沉醉於自己的世界。

我在自己的電繪板上隨意地畫起了草圖，一名年輕的母親，背著自己的兒子，在海濱散步。大概就是剛才的情景吧。

吃飯了！再不吃菜都要涼了！

知道了。我敷衍地回應。

結果，我到夜深也沒有走出房間。

當我打開房門，母親立刻問：有湯，要嗎？給你裝一碗吧！

你還沒睡嗎？不用管我了。

沒關係，頭有點痛，睡不著。湯給你裝一碗吧！可別餓壞肚子！

好吧……

我到洗手間洗臉，突然從廚房傳來玻璃碎掉的聲音。我立刻跑到廚房，看見母親倒在地上。

你怎麼了！？

胸口好悶……

我不知所措，背起了母親。跑下樓，往醫院一直跑。

經過了下午走過的海濱，讓我想起那對母子的情景，不過那對母子，並不是下午的他們，而是我們，小時候的我，年輕的母親。那時候的我十分喜歡母親，母慈子孝，是當時我認為自己長大後的日子。如今的我，可以說不孝也不過份了。但在這個時刻，才想到自己想好好的照顧母親，害怕子欲養而親不在的景況會發生在自己身上。想著想著，淚水溢出眼眸了。

求你不要有事，不要丟下我一人！我還沒有好好的孝順你！多撐一會，快到醫院了！

只要看見你，我就會高興了！多點回來吃飯吧！回來了也不要躲起來，說起來，我們很久沒有一起吃飯呢！

剛才的我，還在想自己沒有照顧過母親，很不孝。然而，母親想要的，只是一起吃一頓飯。在香港，又有多少母親在等候自己的子女呢？

回去記得喝湯知道沒有？

不要，等你回來再一起喝。

跑了半句鐘，到了醫院。

母親立即被送往急症室。

我則在外等著。

醫生告訴我母親過勞病倒，需住院觀察數天。我雖然放下心頭大石，但依然感到很擔心，每天都跑去醫院照顧她。

母親後來病情好轉，能出院散步了。

我跟母親在海濱散步。

陪著母親，一步，一步，慢慢地走。

回想起先前背著母親跑去醫院，心裡想著：昔日母親背我，今天我背母親，或許，這正是孝的傳承。



## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：李碧琪 學校：荔景天主教中學 班級：4A

# 行孝當及時—原來山也會老

很久沒有好好坐下來跟父親聊天了。我每天開門而出，敲門而歸，匆忙地做完功課，就結束了這忙碌的一天。而父親在家裡的一舉一動，我似乎不是特別關注。

小時候，我跟父親總是無話不談，任何的小秘密或者煩惱都會跟他傾訴。長大後，我開始出現叛逆心理，遇到問題，自己解決，也不向父親提起，免得再去麻煩他。再後來，跟父親的關係已經越來越疏遠……

那是一個週末，我剛剛走到書桌前。猛一抬頭，望見了父親因整日操勞而略有些駝的背，我的心徒然一陣酸楚。我放下筆，走到父親身旁坐著，突然有點不知所措，不知道要跟他說甚麼，然後我就提議像小時候一樣幫他拔白頭髮，我似乎隱約看到父親嘴角掠過一絲掩飾不住的驚喜，表面上卻仍顯得很平靜，只是淡淡的說：「好。」當我用手梳理父親頭上的亂髮時，一大堆的白髮就出現在我眼前。這時我才知道父親已經不再年輕，可父親不是才剛過四十嗎？咦，好像不對！原來我已經不記得父親的年齡，想想真有點不孝呢，父親每年都為我慶生，可很長一段時間以來，我卻沒有為父親做過甚麼，甚至之前還萬般推脫不幫他拔白頭髮。頓時，我的內心充滿了愧疚。

目光所及，我看到父親的眼睛，眼瞼下垂，眼神卻清亮，只是不知何時多了些魚尾紋。我兩手在他太陽穴輕輕地揉著。我想把他的皺紋撫平，雖然我知道幾下按摩並不能讓父親重新換上青春的容顏……我輕輕地說：「爸，人說父親是一座不老的山，可……」父親接過話來：「不老的山也會老的。」我沉默了，心情異常沉重。

我們總以為時間很長，有一輩子的時間能報答父母親，孝順他們，可殊不知歲月不會等我們，何不趁現在多去關心他們，哪怕只是一句問候。現在的我或許不習慣直白地表白我的內心：「爸爸，謝謝你」，可是我會以行動告訴他的，以後無論多忙，我都會抽空跟父親聊會兒，說說自己的近況，讓我們的關係回到從前那般親密。最後，我願父親永遠是一座不老的山，更願為自己能早日成材，讓您——我飽嘗艱辛的父親，我最愛的人，早日過上輕鬆的日子！

## 中學組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：陳俊偉 學校：長沙灣天主教英文中學 班級：五乙

「我要出門了。」

「還有涼茶啊！」

「來不及了。」

接著母親塞給我的涼茶，思緒也邁開了步伐，打開了回憶的大門。

還記得外婆的身子底弱，只能依靠涼茶調理身體。不知誰說用炭火的餘溫煎涼茶效果更佳，家中便出現了煤爐。童年的一天清晨，淅淅索索的聲響把我吵醒，睜開惺忪的雙眼，外婆還在酣睡，映入眼簾的是母親單薄的身影。她正藉點點燭光，一點一點地清洗著藥材。而後，母親蹲在煤爐前，輕搖蒲扇。汗珠在額頭上滾動著，她不時停下來擦拭，嗆鼻的黑煙令母親連連咳嗽。見我正在起床，連忙示意我噤聲。走到床前，為外婆挽好被角。當煤爐里只剩下暗紅的炭火時，母親也沒休息過，她正為外婆套上嶄新的衣物。燭光搖曳，照亮了她洗得發白的衣角。

想起母親寂寥的眼神，我下定了決心。

翌日早餐后，餐桌上擺放著的，仍是熟悉的涼茶。我抿了一口。「怎麼那麼咸？」「我試試。」母親顛顛巍巍地拿過涼茶，緩緩地喝了一口，嘴旁的皺紋像在跳舞般舞動著身姿。「不會啊，一點也不咸啊！」我凝視著母親的面容，不知何時，歲月已經在母親的面頰上刻下了痕跡，銀絲也爬上了鬢角，口舌也無法嘗辨鹹酸苦辣。不知何時，鏽跡斑駁的煤爐早已換成了煤氣爐，或許是歲月讓她再也無法忍受嗆鼻的濃煙吧？卻不知何時，歲月能讓母親日夜操勞的雙手休息片刻？但是，歲月拔高了我的身姿，讓我挺直了腰板，讓我長成了翩翩少年，卻沒能讓我如母親般孝敬雙親。

走進廚房，熬煮記憶中的涼茶。拆開包裝，裡面是清洗乾淨的藥材。撫著中藥凹凸不平的表面，清洗中藥上的灰塵肯定需要不少時間和精力！點開煤氣爐，火舌便竄上來了。兒時用煤爐煲一盅涼茶，可是要一直蹲在通風口前輕搖蒲扇，還要忍受著撲面而來的熱浪和嗆鼻的濃煙。現在，煲涼茶只需按一個按鈕就行了。而我卻一直沒有為母親煲過一盅涼茶。慚愧內疚在我的心房中蔓延。一次二次，不是沒看到火候就是忘記添水。即使是如此方便的煤氣爐，也讓我在煎涼茶時連連失敗，更何況是舊時的煤爐？終於，在母親的絮語中，我終於煮出了人生的第一盅涼茶。我凝視著眼前的涼茶，為人子弟，竟連五倫八德之首的孝也沒有實踐、好好孝敬母親，又怎能更好地待人接物呢？又怎能更好的為人處世呢？

「好像也沒有那麼鹹了。」母親的魚角紋微微翹起。原來，母親在不知不覺中老去，味覺也早已退化。父母之年，不可不知也。而我卻以忙碌為藉口，連母親一絲絲蒼老的跡象，也無法捕捉。看著眼前為兒子傾盡半生的母親，我不禁為之慚愧，也為之庆幸，至少還不晚。



公開組  
(中文組)

**Open Section  
(Chinese Division)**

## 公開組 (中文組) 冠軍

姓名：楊友恭

從小，我都以我的名字為傲。

我名叫友恭，從小時候，大部份同學都會稱呼我「阿公」，可能這樣的稱呼很有趣，又易記，所以甚至老師們都這樣稱呼我。

還記得當年上中文課，老師講述有關孔孟思想時，便從我的名字道出孟子的五倫，即是「君惠臣忠、父慈子孝、兄友弟恭、夫義婦順、朋友有信。」

原來家父從五倫中「兄友弟恭」取「友」和「恭」二字作為我的名，提醒我要與兄弟姊妹和睦相處。

從此，「父慈子孝、兄友弟恭」便留在我的腦海中。

家父是位中醫師，在屋村開了一間藥房。他工作十分勤奮，每天工作十二小時，只有每逢農曆年初一至初三，藥房才關門休息。其實家父並非想為賺更多的錢，而需要長時間工作，他只希望可以每天都能應診，幫助病人。因此，我十分欣賞和敬重家父。

家父成為中醫師的過程都讓我有點「吃驚」，他未曾「拜師學藝」或接受正規的中醫訓練，他只不過是自修，努力鑽研中醫藥而已。當年，香港有一間名叫「九龍中醫學院」的機構能提供中醫文憑考試。於是家父便去報考，結果他考獲第二名。

老父性格隨和，不太愛說話，但喜歡思考，閒時會閱讀一些古書，而他唯一的興趣便是寫書法。他曾經參加過全港書法比賽，更獲得長者組別冠軍。

雖然我和家父的年紀差距很大，但是我們總有講不完的話題，不論是中西醫學比較，還是哪一間菜館的東坡肉最好味等等，能夠與家父溝通是一件多麼幸福的事。

我從小就十分頑皮，成績又欠佳，放學後，我必定與鄰近的小孩「通山跑」，到了晚飯時間，我們便自覺地返回各自的店舖。

家父是一位慈祥的父親，我因學業問題，班主任經常見我家父，但事後家父甚少會向我動怒或責罵我，他只會吩咐我再用功讀書。

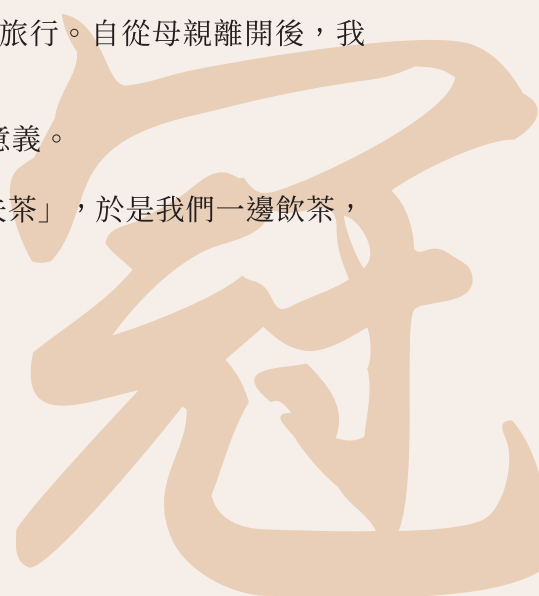
自從母親過身後，我便開始負責家務，當時老父還未退休，似乎老中醫像是沒有退休的一日，而他的病人卻有增無減。

我和姊姊擔心家父的健康，家父經常沒有吃午飯繼續應診，就是為了病人的需要。家父到了退休年齡，我和姊姊經常勸家父退休，好讓我和姊姊照顧他，但是家父堅持繼續工作，原因是醫治病人能帶給他無比的滿足感。

這樣，我和姊姊唯有定時「命令」家父放數天假，可以一家人去旅行。自從母親離開後，我和姐姐都特別珍惜與家父相處的機會。

我一直認為，「孝」是一個動詞，如果只把它作名詞，便失去了意義。

因為家父經常在店舖，所以我有空便找他閒聊，家父喜歡飲「功夫茶」，於是我們一邊飲茶，一邊談天說地，我覺得這樣相處，都是表現孝順的一種形式。



前年，老父不幸患上嚴重肺病，他的肺功能只有一半，必需使用增氧機協助他呼吸，醫生解釋這類病是沒有根治的方法，還有，肺部的退化會慢慢導致其它器官受損，身為子女，我們能做的有限。從此，家父因病情反復而經常進出醫院，每當他需要留院時，我和姊姊會安排時間表，盡量每天都能到醫院探望家父。由於家父不喜歡醫院的膳食，而我們又擔心他會「絕食」，於是我們會預備他喜愛的食物。

一天，我帶了家父喜歡的茶果，突然間，鄰床的伯伯向我揮手示意，原來他都想食茶果，希望我下次幫他買。這些茶果其實很便宜，只是很少地方買得到，於是我答應了伯伯，下次見面時會請他食，伯伯表現得好開心。

我和姊姊探望家父已經個多月，發覺探病的人並不多，目睹不少長者長期臥床，又沒有家人或朋友探望，心感難過。有一句話，「久病無孝子」，我不敢說自己是孝子，也不敢批評別人，因為我深明每一個家庭都有一個「尋找他鄉的故事」。

天氣轉冷，家父不宜每天洗澡，因為會增加他患肺炎的風險，但家父是一位愛整潔的人，他會經常嚷著要洗澡。於是，得到護士的批准後，我使用輪椅把老父推到淋浴間幫他洗澡。家父體力衰退，不能自己洗澡，加上他不可以除掉掛到鼻子的氧氣喉，於是，我用擁抱的方式把他移動在洗澡椅上，然後我便把沖涼液揉搓他背脊，家父閉上眼睛，表現出舒服的樣子，這讓我想起我小時候與家父在公眾廁所洗澡的情境。

當時我還讀小學，學校就在老父的店舖附近，放學後，我便返回藥房逗留，直到藥房關門後，我才跟家父回家去。為了方便，回家前，我們兩父子必到附近公廁洗澡，公廁並沒有洗澡設施，我們只用一個大面盆、毛巾和肥皂。家父會幫我沖涼，原因是我只會玩水，他把肥皂輕輕地擦在我身……今天，終於讓我幫家父沖涼，幫他搽肥皂，那一刻，看著老父的背脊和他滿頭濃密的銀髮，點滴在心頭。

不論是家父或家母，我都喜歡用「身體接觸」來傳遞愛和關懷，我不時會摸他們的面頰和手，當他們患病而需要長期臥床時，我和姊姊都會幫他們按摩四肢和抹身清潔。我和姊姊在小時候，每當患病時，家父家母都十分緊張，幸好家父是醫生，他可立即診斷我們患病的情況。

家父出院後，不久便離世。「父慈」，在我心中，他不只是位慈父，也是我的英雄，「子孝」，雖然我在朋友眼中是一位「算不錯」的兒子，但我覺得做得不夠，至今我仍介懷家父家母離開得早，我和姊姊沒有更多時間去盡孝道。所以，每逢有機會分享家父家母的事時，我都會提醒身邊的朋友，應多主動珍惜與父母相處的機會。

所謂「在家靠父母、出外靠朋友」，父母的愛是無條件的，身為子女，不論我們成功或犯錯，父母總是向我們打開懷抱。





## 公開組 (中文組) 亞軍

姓名：朱周嘉儀

今天是年廿九，我和丈夫及兒子到祠堂拜祭我的父母，只簡簡單單地為他們上了一炷香。香的煙氣冉冉上升，在祠堂的相片上，恍惚看見爸爸媽媽嘴角綻出一絲微笑。媽媽給送醫院那個晚上，唸中二的兒子在日記簿上寫下：「婆婆給響鳴鳴聲的救傷車帶走了。」兒子今年大學畢業了，如果爸爸媽媽仍活着，將會是九十多歲了，而我自己也快步入甲子之年。

十八歲那年，大學二年級時，一位師兄的父親過身了，我向他送上一張慰問咭。他對我說了幾句話：「樹欲靜而風不息，子欲養而親不在。趁父母健在時，當要好好奉養他們。」師兄性格硬朗，這是我第一次見到他表現失落和傷痛。我是個獨生女，對他的說話似懂非懂，那時候我告訴自己，要跟父母親好好過好每一天。

出來社會做事之後，有了經濟能力，除了供養父母，趁着他們身體健康，每年我都帶同他們到外地旅行去，覺得也盡了點孝道。

結婚之後，我和家姑同住。過了幾年，正當我懷孕時，爸爸因病過身了。因為沒有與爸爸同住，他患病時都是靠媽媽照顧他，那時我只感覺十分傷心，但沒有與他一起對抗病魔的經驗。別人安慰我說：「人生老病死，是一件自然的事。」我亦在想我可以做些什麼呢？爸爸死後，媽媽獨個兒居住。我每天都給她打一個電話問候她，雖然閒聊幾句，這卻成了她每天盼望着要做的事情。每逢星期天，我們放假就會接她到家裡小住一天與家姑一起飲茶和逛街。媽媽十分疼錫我的兒子，毫不吝嗇地送上很多大型樂高組合玩具給他。

媽媽年紀漸漸老邁，我替她請了一個菲傭照顧她。過了幾年，媽媽開始經常投訴菲傭偷了她的金錢，有時候又大發脾氣，起初並不知道原因，我只會責罵她。後來經醫生確診是患上了老人癡呆症。我們就包容了她的怪脾氣。其後她更不幸地輕微中風。當時，我曾考慮過送她到護老院居住，但卻擔心瘦弱內向的媽媽，不能適應院舍的群體生活。

我和丈夫商量後，決定接媽媽和菲傭來我

家長住。我的兒子讓出他的房間給婆婆，自己睡在書房裡。我們一家五口，包括媽媽、奶奶、丈夫、兒子加上菲傭就同住在一屋簷下了。

為了防止她的腦袋進一步退化，我請來了外展姑娘幫助她做訓練，也請了物理治療師到家中替她做運動。我每天下班回家，第一件事是跟菲傭合作，替媽媽洗澡，確保她不會跌倒受傷。

媽媽的自顧能力日漸下降，起居飲食和大小二便亦需要別人照顧。星期天菲傭休息，我和兒子就輪流負責照顧媽媽。在這個時候我深深感受到克盡孝道並不單是一種想法，而是要用無比的愛心去付諸行動的。

漸漸媽媽失去大部份認知能力，連說話的能力也喪失了，她雖然不能說話，但我們從她的表情和眼神，知道她的心裡仍然有我們的影子。

最後媽媽因吞嚥問題演變成了肺炎進入醫院，在一個晚霞絢麗的黃昏，在我和丈夫和兒子的陪伴下，告別了我們回天家去了。

中國文化傳統非常重視孝親感恩。我讀大學時，對「孝」的理解只是一個概念，希望做到的是長大有經濟能力的時候，能給爸爸媽媽在物質上過富裕一點的生活。結婚之後，感恩的是我們一家人在客觀條件上一直可以照顧媽媽。我漸步入中年，對孝道有更深入的體會。媽媽患了老人癡呆症而漸漸失去自顧能力時，我更感受到要完全做到孝親，並不是在物質上的外在奉養。孔子回答子夏問孝時指出「色難」二字，教導我們在孝順父母時要做得和顏悅色。照顧患病的媽媽我需要愛心和耐性，內心不斷的去包容和犧牲自己。對下一代最有成效的教育，就是身教。反哺的做法對我的兒子亦起了正面的作用，他的性格比較成熟，明白長者可能隨時會離開我們，懂得珍惜與他們相處。經歷了大半個人生，我深深體會到「孝」是需要學習和身體力行的，希望兒子在人生成長的路上學得到和做得到。現代社會，崇尚物質，人際冷漠，我們更需要將孝道的真諦好好教育下一代，讓這美麗的中國文化，承傳下去。

## 公開組(中文組)季軍

姓名：黃錫蓮

當老父在手術室危在旦夕之際，我並沒有放下手頭工作，繼續在報館埋頭苦幹，並非不孝，而是為了達成爸爸的心願……

小時候覺得爸爸很嘮叨，經常勸我要用心唸書，將來找一份寫字樓工作，不會像從事戶外滅蚊蟲工作的他，日日受風吹雨打。中二時，我在交給老師的日記功課中，道出我認為爸爸的話太多，令我很煩厭，誰知老師在文末寫的一句話，教我很慚愧，頓時淚如雨下，從此懂得珍惜爸爸給我的每一句肺腑之言。記得當年老師用紅筆寫上「樹欲靜而風不息，子欲養而親不在」。

升上預科，眼見爸爸每日唯一的娛樂是閱報，我決定在大學主修新聞，因為我想當記者，讓他每天翻開報章，都能看到我寫的文章。開學第一個月，爸爸給我發零用錢，他的表情相當難堪，原來零用錢只有一百元，我才體會到學費令一家之主的爸爸感到百上加斤。於是我開始做兼職賺取學費和幫補家計。我把所有課餘時間都用在兼職上，披星戴月努力工作和讀書，雖然日子不好過，我每天總是睡眼惺忪的模樣，但總算減輕了爸爸的壓力。

畢業後我實踐了當記者的夢想，猶記得爸爸興奮地拿著我寫的第一篇新聞給鄰居傳閱，還致電親朋戚友呼籲大家買報紙，那種滿足的笑容，是由我懂事以來，從未在他那張滄桑的臉上發現過的。看在眼裡，我知道過往我所付出的都是值得。

一直認為我最不孝的，是沒有聽從爸爸當年的話，在冷氣房工作，相反，我每日都東奔西跑去採訪，和爸爸當年一樣飽受日曬雨淋，生病了更要臥床寫稿甚至發著燒做訪問，直至用僅餘的一口氣傳送稿件回報館，才立即昏倒床上。從沒想過放棄這種非人生活，因為這些年來，我寫的報道刊登後，爸爸總會流露出喜悅之情，推使我咬緊牙關，繼續當一位不孝女。

漸漸地，新聞工作使我著迷，無法自拔，雖然工時很長又奔波勞碌，但我卻樂在其中，忘記了多留時間給爸爸。九年過去，我每天都營營役役地工作，沒有注視到爸爸已經一天天老去，更不幸被癌魔盯上。三年前他確診患上肝癌，採訪前我收到噩訊，在街頭哭得呼天搶地，後悔過往只顧忘我工作，沒有好好陪伴在側。我嗚咽著致電爸爸求原諒，他卻冷靜地說：「我會接受治療，很快就會康復，爸爸知道你很孝順，你繼續做好採訪，爸爸完成手術後，要繼續看你寫的新聞。」

就這樣，我強忍悲痛完成了一個又一個採訪，爸爸被推入手術室前，不忘叮囑我別操心，回報館用心寫稿吧。我緊記他的話，淚眼看著電腦寫出一篇又一篇的報道。慶幸地，爸爸沒有食言，他兌現了承諾，在深切治療部渡過了危險期，康復速度異常迅速，令醫生團隊無不嘖嘖稱奇。在等待出院的日子，他每天都把我寫的新聞和院友分享。在此，感謝上天給我機會達成爸爸的心願，同時懇請爸爸原諒我這個不孝女，沒有絕對服從你的話，可知我對你的不孝也是一種孝，非筆墨可言喻。

後記：

三年後的今天，筆者已經退出了前線新聞工作，不單是因為媒體轉型，工作受到前所未有的衝擊，最主要原因是希望有更多時間陪伴家父，給他一個快樂的晚年。回頭再看，在反叛的青春期，慶幸遇上一位良師，提醒我要趁爸爸有生之年盡孝道，否則後悔莫及。老師未必知道她當年的一句「樹欲靜而風不息，子欲養而親不在」如何扭轉了學生的一生，不但改變了我對爸爸的態度，還影響了我升學擇業的取向，後來更為病榻上的老爸帶來生命曙光，賦予他頑強的求生意志。故此我期盼可以薪火相傳，藉著這篇文章，讓處於反叛期的青少年或與父母聚少離多的成年人，亦會如我般迷途知返，珍惜和父母共聚的每一天，用心聆聽他們的說話，實踐中華民族傳統文化重視的孝道。

孝

## 劬勞猶未報

每年的深秋，我都會向學生講授「論孝」這一課，孔夫子嘗言：「今之孝者，是謂能養，至於犬馬皆能有養。不敬，何以別乎？」誠然，「孝」正是仁德之根本，對待父母，不光是物質的供養，更是時刻心存敬意，惦念生命之本源，養育的恩典。

每授至此，我總不免泛起一陣鼻酸。我幼年失怙，壯年失恃。「父母」這個名詞，於我而言，似遠還近。就在我十歲那年，媽媽因病辭世，靈堂懸著的祭帳，寫上「劬勞未報」，至今歷歷在目。那時我還不知甚麼是「劬勞」，竟誤以為是個「夠」字。那個年代，尚有未淘汰的習俗，就是父母過身，子女要「戴孝」三周，男的胸前掛一塊小黑布，女的頭帶白花，以示悼念。少不更事的我，生怕同窗知道我喪母，於是，回校後便偷偷除下，放學後才重新掛上。詎料，有一天讓父親發現了，我給狠狠的罵了一頓，老父說我是個「忤逆仔」。如今，三十多年如流水般逝去了，這樁小事彷彿變成永恆的歉疚，教我慚愧至今。有時，聽同事聊起假期和媽媽到哪兒逛街哪裏旅行，我倒會靜默起來，腦海泛起母親那張還沒老去的最後臉容。原來，「欲報無從」是無以名狀的。夜深人靜，我有時沉默地屈指一算，1939年出生的媽媽，倘仍然在生，應該是79歲吧！然後想像她蒼老的模樣。孔子說過：「父母之年，不可不知也。一則以喜，一則以憂。」此話教我心領神會。

父親是在我三十多歲時離世的，我依然記得，在他最後的七年，行動不便。於是，我辭掉工作，聘請外傭，盡力看顧他的餘生。日夜輪轉，父親長期臥床，背部長了多顆既深陷又模糊的褥瘡，更曾多次細菌入血。對此，我一度徬徨失措，放聲痛哭，及後，我和外傭分擔了平日清洗傷口的責任。可惜，禍不單行，他的記憶力卻日漸消磨，跟他說話，開始時他聽不準，後來更聽不懂，進而說不出了。在深夜的更深時分，聽見羸弱的父親熟睡時，傳來沉重的鼾息聲。長夜漫漫，使我回想起母親故去後，他如何與我相依為命，父兼母職。後來，

當我呼喚「爸爸」，而他竟然沒法子再回話，仍舊一臉茫然，在交疊零亂的皺紋裏蘊蓄頹然的寂寞。原來，那種失語，無法溝通，甚至失智，比起死亡的訣別，來得更加淒苦。

許多年後，我做了中文教師，當我認識「劬勞未報」中的「劬」字，音「渠」，意即「勞苦」時，媽媽早已離苦西去，那種「欲養親亡」的感嘆，目下青年學生泰半不會明瞭。而今，「爸爸媽媽」這四個字我日常生活話語中，幾近消失。但每次講授〈論孝〉，我鎮是禁不住會把往昔經歷重複又重複，算來是對父母永恆的思念，也渴望把「孝道」的感悟傳揚開去。今之社會，世道乖變，莘莘學子，每有思想偏激反叛者，若能恪守孝道，各司其位，推而廣之，則「老吾老以及人之老，幼吾幼以及人之幼」，社會和諧矣。

「孝」之本義，就是生前尊親事親，死後則慎終追遠。清明重九，我必會到哥連臣角掃墓，幾年前，火葬場築建新路，比前平坦，但仍要繞彎拾級而上。我攜着祭品，行了百多級，竟感到暈眩，訝然驚覺歲月惱人，體力不支了。

今年清明，巧遇一位老伯，頭也光了，他拄杖慢行，五十開外的兒子攙扶在旁，他一邊喘氣，一邊拖着微軀，慢慢地往上走去。伯伯看來已八十多歲了，容顏憔悴多病。兒子多次對他說不要那麼辛苦，不如先歇歇，老伯卻提高聲調道：「都說我還可以！」我想，他幹嗎還要堅持親自上山呢？也許就是一點血脈相連的孝思，一家同根同心，冒著戰火走過幾十年來幾多艱難的日子呢？也許，我們所說的「祭之以禮」，就是為了輕拭父母瓷相上的灰塵，再稟告他們，你們甯擔心，我還活得安好。

兩點紛飛，我也要緩緩下山了。墳場外建有「思親亭」，柱上有對聯云：「思緒猶存悵望雲天懷故舊 親朋何在早登佛地悟真常」。看罷的確勾起一陣捶心的痛，又再想起已逝的父母，人生有涯，當及時行孝，如我者，追悔不已。



## 公開組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：潘敏妮

# 到訪 · 孝

至今我到訪過上海和平飯店三次，它集奢華和傳奇於一身，永遠受人矚目。我的人生恰好相反，總是和名譽地位擦身而過。讀書成績平平，也未能開創一番事業。幸好生於一個香港中產家庭，父母有能力提供足夠的物質生活。一些研究報告指出，只要你每天有清潔的食水飲用，已經是地球人口最幸福的一群。我的平凡人生，沒有可歌可泣的故事，亦不擅長寫大道理。對於「孝」，我純粹從日常生活瑣碎事情領會到它的存在。「孝」這個概念，本來就不用透過膾炙人口的故事表達，就像空氣般自然地為我的人生提供養份。

中學時代，我第一次到訪上海和平飯店。父親和他的公司合夥人到上海洽談生意，適逢我放暑假，便跟隨他們遊上海。當時國內通行外匯券，可在特定地點使用。父親於離開飯店與客戶開會前，叮囑我不要四處亂跑。

「我們晚上便會回來，你只可以在南京東路一直走，天黑前要回飯店，明白嗎？」他於飯店旋轉門前吩咐我之後，便和一起出差的叔叔拿着文件離開。

我點點頭，說聲再見，不久便踏出飯店，獨個兒於南京東路一直向前走，感受新奇的上海。

父母親不會永遠留在自己身邊，而這的確是不必要的。他們努力工作改善家人生活，令子女有受教育的機會，長大後能靠自己走完人生漫長的路，已經盡了責任。做子女的能勇往直前，努力地走過高山低谷，不用父母擔心，亦是「孝」的表現。

和平飯店的裝修很古老，並且傳出很多鬼故事。

父親很怕鬼，早上醒來他問我：「昨晚聽到奇怪的聲音嗎？」

我說：「沒有啊！我肚子餓了，快去吃早餐吧。」

父親笑了一笑。

踏足社會工作數年後，我第二次到訪和平飯店。父親於上海公幹時突然過身，當時我很匆忙，於香港在櫃員機提了幾千塊人民幣，訂

了機票便立即和家人飛往上海。

姑姐曾經問我有沒有再彈鋼琴，因為父親早前向她說，供養了我學琴這麼多年，自從開始工作後，已經沒有聽過我彈琴。奇怪的是，在他去世前半年，我也不明白為何突然在家中練習起莫札特的「土耳其進行曲」來，於是父親便被逼每晚聽着這重複的樂章。

辦妥喪禮後離開上海前，我獨個兒到和平飯店走一趟。父親生前最怕鬼，現在自己也離開了軀殼，去了另外一個世界。我再一次欣賞「老爵士樂團」的表演，說是感受老上海歌舞昇平的日子，不如承認是想著回味小時候和父親在和平飯店的經歷。能和家人在同一個時空裏享受生活，無論是家中的練習或是專業的表演，都是一種美好的緣份。

去年我第三次到訪和平飯店。我和同事一起到上海公幹，參觀公司在上海的業務。為了證明我是走在時代尖端的人，立即安了WeChat Pay。

會議結束後大家都趕着回香港，我決定多留一天，獨個兒到和平飯店走一趟。飯店依然金碧輝煌，大堂置了一個小型展覽，展板羅列於和平飯店取景的電影。我在展板後面的偏廳碰到兩個年輕日本遊客，她們不停用 iPad 拍照。我走到外灘遠眺浦東的東方明珠塔，忽然想起二十多年前的上海，當時浦東只是一片荒蕪之地，有幸能看到自己的國家不斷發展。

公司和國家也是由人組成，若國民和領導者做到在家能孝，對工作和建設國家也一樣凡事盡心力而為，就是把「孝」發揚光大了。

在這個有社會保障的年代，發生不了削肉餵母這些孝感動天的故事。但「孝」真的在我的生命無聲無息地發生了，默默地一代傳一代。

一名可愛的小女孩從外灘的遊人中向我走過來。

我笑了一笑。

## 孝——最後一刻

《孝經》：「夫孝者，天之經也，地之義也，人之本也。」

「校長，我奶奶快不行了，我要趕回去見她最後一面，對不起，我不能夠參加下午的教師會議。」我雙腿彷彿吊在懸崖峭壁，焦急和恐懼的心情蠶食著我，我知道，我不能成為子貢，抱恨一生。

「又去又去！再跳舞我看你跌成怎樣！」奶奶蔑視著我，中氣十足地謾罵，我按不住火氣：「你說古箏像棺材不准我學，我就是跳舞！」奶奶從房間拿出活絡油，抽起了我的小腿，用拳頭背上的關節，鑽著我瘀黑的膝蓋。「鑽！鑽！鑽！以後就鑽死你，風濕死你！」我心想：您管不了我！「親所惡，謹為去」，少年的我，真是太聰明了！

父母離婚的那年，玉就缺了一半，那年我十歲。如果陪伴是最好的禮物的話，那天起我就包起了這份禮物，每逢週末，我才能拆開這份禮物送給您。每次一看見我進門，您就雙手按住桌面從護腰椅上站起來，扶著牆，笑不攏嘴地接著我的手。二十歲前，我覺得東西兩邊跑，很惱人；二十五歲後，我恨不得每天來來回回……洗洗廚房未洗的碗碟、刷刷浴室骯髒的地方、清清房間黃色的尿桶、煎煎您愛吃的紅衫魚、滾滾家鄉白菜魚湯，這都成了我的例行工事，我最喜歡是為您剪腳甲，厚厚的像刀一樣，記錄你踐田割禾、養雞曬魚的日子。您摺著弟弟和爸爸的衣服，疊成一層又一層的年輪，彷彿一本一本厚厚的故事。您常教我：「做人要孝順父母，做事要光明磊落，記住做官也要會耕田。」很久以後，我才知道這些話已不知不覺植根在我生命裡，是教我堅強而堅定的種子。我說：「奶奶，找一天我跟你去喝茶好嗎？」「好，等天氣好。」我一直等著，等著……中秋那天，你說要在家團年、賞月，月亮又大又圓，白如玉盤。您從抽屜裡拿出一條珍珠項鍊，說要送給我。別人送給您的，為什麼給我呢？

您摔了一跤，摔碎了月的圓缺。最後的那個月，您躺在冰冷的鐵架床上，葡萄糖水一滴一滴倒數著生命的流逝。餵飯、擦身、按摩，我握著您瘦骨嶙峋、青筋深刻的手，問：「奶奶，我是誰啊？」精神恍惚的您還認得我：「娟——」帶著潮州的口音，獨一無二的。您的手，冰冰的，皺皺的，我用兩隻手掌包著它，像以前包糰子一樣。我每天都來，問您最簡單

而最重要的問題。「您記得我們以前養了什麼動物嗎？」奶奶虛弱地回答著：「什麼都養……貓啊豬啊牛啊……」我的耳朵貼著您的嘴巴，細細地聽著我們農村的故事。我最喜歡問：「您最愛誰啊？」「你和弟弟，我都……咳……」幾個可愛的問題，不知道能不能為您減少痛楚呢？「快過年咯！」「嗯……」您突然喘著氣說：「娟，好結婚了！」我才二十多啊！我知道，我知道，您的心願……

我的第一份工作——教師，您很滿意；我想過到演藝學院進修舞蹈專業，但我也知道我們綜援家庭出身的，需要一份穩定的收入。我把工資的一部份交給管家的姑姑，好讓她為您處理妥日用開銷。幸好在最後幾年，我們有能力為您請一個傭人，可是，傭人是偷吃的老鼠，我不敢把錢當面交給您，可是我沒有想過，原來我從來沒有把錢給您拿過、摸過，我雖能讀懂您眼底的擔憂，卻沒有膽量跟您明言：「我有錢，我可以養您。」您辛苦了大半輩子，耕田賣菜幾十年，腳底滿是深溝裂縫，卻沒有享過福，到了晚年，還處處擔心生活洗用，連那點點的安全感，我也無力給予您；現在我工作幾年存到錢了，我可以為您買按摩椅、買居屋了，奶奶，您知道嗎？我有多恨自己！我的心被扭成洗衣機裡的衣服，再沒有被燙平的機會……

終於，我趕到醫院，心跳檢測儀的屏幕一閃一閃跳動，「呖」刺耳的聲音一下一下打入我的心臟！生命在殘酷的時間赤裸前行，時光無情，歲月無痕，人往往無力回天。我與您相處的時刻已經夠少了。上天啊！請還我十年光陰！讓一切重來，好嗎？後悔如海浪洶湧而至：我答應過您要帶您喝茶；您說過要參加我婚禮；我還未給您享享清福啊！比起您為我做的，我做的真是太少太少了。求求您，不要走好嗎？您怎麼可以丟下我？下輩子我們可以再見面嗎？我還有沒有機會以綿薄的力量回報你湧泉般的恩情呢？這個天旋地轉的世界，這個默默流逝的世界，我想抓住您，凝固在摺衣服的那天……「呖——」別走，好嗎？

兩年後，我戴著珍珠項鍊，穿上婚紗，向來賓致辭：「『如果我學得了一絲一毫的好脾氣，學會了一點點待人接物的和氣，如果我能學會寬恕人』，那麼這一切都要歸功於我的奶奶。」主家席上的照片，奶奶帶著溫暖的微笑。奶奶，我知道，您知道，「千里共嬋娟」。



## 公開組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：林文淑

# 華大媽

「親生子不如近身錢！養兒防老？現在可沒這支歌唱了！不用你供養補貼算是走運……」華大媽半抱怨半開玩笑地說。

方婉華，一位堅強勤奮，自食其力的年長婦人。她生於貧困家庭，自幼被父母送予他人撫養。八歲那年，養父母不忍她與家人分離，把她送回原生家庭。自此華大媽刻苦工作，幫補家計，可惜，與兄弟姐妹始終因分隔多年而關係疏離。

華大媽一直渴望擁有一個屬於自己的家，可以感受一下家庭溫暖。她跟家人偷渡來港定居後，嫁了一名計程車司機，婚後育有一對子女。好景不常，丈夫因病早逝，子女年幼待哺，她徬徨無助，奔波終日，好不容易才把子女撫養成人。想不到女兒長大後便結婚移居台灣，自此鮮有聯絡。兒子卻像來討債般只懂飯來張口，游手好閒。辛勞大半生的華大媽只好靠拾荒來維持生計。

「唉！人老了，就會像垃圾般被人扔在一旁！」華大媽多年好友兼小學同學萍姨幽幽地附和。「看來我們將來要在老人院再續同學緣了，嘻嘻……」華大媽邊苦笑邊說。

跟萍姨告別後，華大媽便回家為兒子準備晚飯。她腦海中不停閃現自己孤獨老死家中、兒子蓬頭垢面，流連街頭的景象，陣陣苦澀在心中徘徊不去。門鐘響起，華大媽從傷痛中回過神來。她開門迎來誼子梓軒。

「幹麼又買這麼多東西來著？」華大媽皺了皺眉，嘮叨起來。

「衛生紙今天特價，買滿六十元更有九折……」梓軒口沫橫飛地說。

梓軒是華大媽女兒昔日的追求者，最後卻成為華大媽的誼子。這位誼子對華大媽百般照料，每逢周末都會替她添置日用品；不用上班的日子，梓軒總愛帶她上茶樓「嘆」一盅兩件。一次華大媽不小心摔倒，梓軒不但請假陪她覆診，每天下班更為她買餸燒飯。華大媽深受感動，直言這誼子比親兒還要好！

眼見梓軒仔細地把日用品收拾妥當，華大媽忍不住劈頭便問：「我女兒已結婚多年，幹麼你還對我這麼好？」梓軒一臉尷尬地傻笑：「我對亞敏可沒非份之想！……也許是一種補償吧！」

華大媽不解地看著梓軒。

梓軒收起笑臉，正容說：「我在家中排行最小，父母在我唸大學時已年紀老邁。我第一次發薪，便歡天喜地買了母親年輕時最愛吃的芒果回家，希望圓她獨個兒吃下整個芒果的心願。可是，「三高」的她只能淺嚐輒止；有一次我外出公幹，買了父親喜歡吃的杏仁餅，可是，看見他每咬一口，都生怕弄傷僅餘的牙齒的樣子，我便知道我永遠沒法回報他們！」

華大媽點了點頭：「嗯，行孝要及时。」

梓軒擦了擦鼻子繼續說：「那時我明白歲月不饒人，於是拼命賺錢，以為可以讓他們過一個舒適的晚年。我日以繼夜地工作，賺到可觀的收入，卻賠上對父母的照顧。就在我出埠工作時，接獲父親離世的噩耗，我連送他最後一程的機會也沒有……當我驚覺父母要的不是這些時，一切已太遲了！父親離去不到一年，母親也鬱鬱而終。」梓軒鼻子發酸，仰首強忍眼中淚水，嘆了一口氣：「樹欲靜而風不息，子欲養而親不在……真正明白的又有幾人？」

華大媽拍了拍梓軒的肩膀，轉身走進廚房，淚水卻不受控地湧出。她感受到梓軒的無奈悔疚，更明白他父母的心意。她模糊的眼睛，瞥向躲在房間對著電腦的兒子，心中又湧出一陣淒酸……

人人都說華大媽的人生是一場命定的悲劇，苦嚐透了，不知何時會甘來？我卻相信，誰也是命運的編劇，只要你願意，就能改寫人生！

孝，其實很簡單，用心握緊父母雙手便可以了！

「敬養順承，行孝始於真性情；關誠恆耐，盡心自可傳大愛。」

## 公開組 ( 中文組 ) 優異獎

姓名：廖銘輝

# 給兒子的信

哲弘：

感謝你陪伴我渡過了一個異常高溫的清明節。也許我心有感觸，導致我久久不能入眠，因而決定寫下這封信。

每年春祭，你總在埋怨，怨墳地位址太高，或怨路途走得太苦；偏偏今年你沒有發出怨言，只是默默地跟著我，偶爾還替我挽拿拜祭用品。我的心實在高興，我覺得你長大了。

還記得你幼時問我為何要拜山嗎？當時我答你，春秋二祭是中國人的傳統，拜山就是應節。今天，你已是一名中學生，擁有獨立思想，所以我該告知你，這個答案背後的真諦，不僅是秉承傳統那麼簡單，那是切切實實的行孝！

也許你會質疑，行孝不是應該在先人生前時做的嗎？如今在祖輩們仙逝後才做，不是有點惺惺作態嗎？

如果你有此想法，恭喜你，因為你成長了，你所讀的聖賢書並無枉費，因為你把「及時行孝」這個重心說出來了。

我想告知你，孝道不僅要及時適時，更是每個人一生一世的事！

誠然，生前盡孝，肯定比死後供奉來得重要和有意義。然而，我不敢忽視祖輩們死後的拜祭供奉，皆因死亡不會也不能中斷祖輩們與我們的關係。即使你的爺爺已死，但他永遠都是我的父親、你的祖父，永恒不變。我們拜祭他，除了出於一份追憶，更是子孫們對先人身份的尊敬，向先人還愛！

究竟「孝」是什麼？我相信你只要翻翻字典，打打電腦，便能得到成千上萬的詮釋。然而，孩子，此刻我卻想跟你細說一段我和你爺爺的往事，也許你在理解後，會對「孝」有更深層次的理解。

同性相斥，一直存在於我和你爺爺之間，多年不散。

他嗜賭，與你祖母成婚後變本加厲，結果欠下大筆賭債避禍台灣，累得你祖母賣掉房子替他還債，剩下你祖母、我和你姐姐三人相依為命。那些年，每逢同學問及他，我總是隻口不提。「父親」二字早成為我的禁忌。

若干年後，他回港重新生活，想再跟我們一起，卻被你祖母拒絕，理由是分居有利於日後彼此的關係。作為兒子，我心底裡竟全力支持。儘管表面上我對他待之有禮，但內心卻暗懷恨怨。即使後來他被證實患上中期鼻咽癌，要接受治療，我也只是客套問候一下，毫不擔心，更沒關心，疏淡如水。

這份恨怨後來更催使我萌起報復心理。在我籌備婚禮時，喜帖上男方主婚人一欄，我只註明你祖母的尊名，刻意不寫他的名字。在婚宴上，我也刻意編排他坐在次席，主家席上完全沒有預留他的份兒。我由新郎哥自我膨脹成閻羅王，誓要在世人面前論功斷過，賞善罰惡。那一刻，我判了他有罪！

你爺爺知我心存芥蒂，在我婚後也識趣地與我保持距離；然而你的誕生改變了一切。為了見你，他每逢周日都不介意長途跋涉來到我住處附近的酒樓跟我們「茶聚」，風雨不改。現在想來，每周「茶聚」已是我與你爺爺這輩子溝通的唯一時機。他曾跟我說，他希望臨終前能來我家中坐坐，吃吃你媽媽弄的一頓飯便心滿意足。說也奇怪，我對他這個心願極為抗拒，宛如台灣與大陸的關係——溝通交流尚可，合併統一免談。也許，我仍未能放下那份恨怨！

直至那年，他遽然離世，那個深夜，猶如今晚一般，我同是久久未眠。我腦際閃出《愛得太遲》的歌詞：「最可怕的是愛需要及時，只差一秒，心聲都已變歷史……」，頓時泣不成聲。那一刻，我終於知道，同性相斥的恨怨何等多餘？父子何必要有隔夜仇？我只恨自己一直沒勇氣去跨越恩怨和他重修舊好，結果一切都太遲……

兒子，上半生的我，配不上孝子之名；但下半生的我，決意為孝而盡力。我可以告訴你，「孝道」就是一份體會、欣賞和感恩：體會父母祖輩們的苦心，欣賞父母祖輩們的細心，感激父母祖輩們的善心。為人父母者，當然渴望子女成龍成鳳，渴望子女健康快樂，渴望子女衣食無憂，名成利就，但他們並不渴望什麼物質的回報，就只是渴望子女能對他們懷有一絲惦念、一絲欣賞，這也是生前盡孝，死後供奉的意義。我不希望「子欲養而親不在」，因此，我要利用餘生向你祖母盡孝，多陪她吃飯聊天，讓她老懷安慰。

同樣，我期待你日後也能好好孝養你的母親和長輩，畢竟他們都在你的成長路攙扶過你，或跟你同行過，他們心底裡都渴望得到你的惦念和欣賞。

兒子，別愛得太遲，要及時行孝啊！

爸爸  
二零一八年清明

## 珍惜能孝順的福氣

雙親健在，能夠好好侍奉及孝敬他們是一種福氣，然而不是每個人能覺察及懂得珍惜這種福氣。

人生總有不少遺憾，我的遺憾就是自幼失去了非常疼愛我的媽媽。在我腦海中媽媽的容貌永遠停留在她三十多歲的模樣：炯炯有神的眼睛流露着一臉慈祥的母愛，一頭長長的秀髮，鬢着兩條辮子，樣子非常端莊嫺淑，深深的梨渦經常顯現在她的淺笑中……由於當時年紀小，失去了她那種傷痛，感覺不是很劇烈，但對她那思念卻經常縈繞著我，就好像一個永遠不會結焦的傷口，一經觸碰，就會牽動我的神經。

基於無奈的人生際遇，八歲那年我離開了鄉間的媽媽，跟着爸爸在外飄泊。其後媽媽因長期惦念我們，以致鬱結難抒，最終得了絕症。我倆分隔兩地，從她患病直至身故，我也不能與她相聚，連想見她最後一面也無望，甚至不能為她奔喪披麻帶孝，感覺若有所失。年紀尚小，並不知道什麼叫遺憾。及至中學時期讀到《燕詩》及《慈烏夜啼》就感慨非常。「昔有吳起者，母歿喪不臨，嗟哉斯徒輩，其心不如禽……」這幾句深深印在我腦海內，才驚覺到子女不能出席父母的喪禮，是多麼的不孝，更是抱憾一生。及後外婆過身，自己忍不住在外婆的靈堂上哭成淚人。親友也感疑惑，因為我與外婆多年沒見，相處的時間並不多，感情算不上深厚。霎那間，自己將對媽媽多年的思念及未能出席她的喪禮的傷痛，全部投射到外婆的喪禮上，幻想那時自己正為媽媽奔喪，悲從中來，以致泣不成聲。

媽媽辭世至今雖近三十年了，但對她的思念並沒有因歲月而沖淡，每天也祈求及幻想日後自己身故，可以在某個時空與媽媽重聚，她還是三十多歲的容貌，而我就變了老婆婆，媽媽的模樣比我還年輕呢，那情景一定很有趣！我們可以好好的詳談，訴說我對她多年的掛念，細訴沒有媽媽，獨個兒成長的辛酸及人生旅途中遇到的艱苦及起起跌跌……最後我們喜極而泣，緊緊的擁抱，多麼美好的畫面啊！

近年有一件事情令我很感動。我有一位好朋友，自小家貧喪父，母親獨力照顧家中多名

兒女。朋友是家中的幼女，她知道母親身兼父職一邊養家一邊照顧他們，大半生非常勞苦。雖然母親思想傳統，重男輕女，偏心哥哥們，但她沒有半點怨言，長大後非常孝敬母親。母親八十多歲時，患有老人癡呆，於是她將母親接到家中與自己丈夫及孩兒同住。每天都悉心照料，縱然母親因病，經常忘記東西，性情突變暴躁，時常大吵大鬧。好友雖然身心俱疲，但總是不離不棄，沒有半句抱怨。最後病情不斷惡化，不得不入院留醫。她就每天無間前往醫院兩趟，逗留照顧，滌親溺器，無微不至。伯母臨終前一天，我前往醫院探望，看到她不斷噓寒問暖，為母親按摩；又將水果切成小丁，不斷勸她進食。母親發脾氣時，她卻好像在哄兩歲小孩般溫柔。

母親離世後，她一直很傷心，但我安慰她不要太難過。作為子女，她已盡了孝，沒有半點遺憾。這幾年她要照顧母親，又要兼顧自己的家庭，奔波勞累得很，體力透支。但我心底裏暗暗羨慕她，能在母親病榻之時適切關懷及照顧。陪伴母親走完人生最後一段路，報答她似海深恩，以致母親可以善終，一切辛苦都值得，不像我永遠無法彌補那遺憾。

當我照顧兩名年幼的子女，感到身心都極度疲累之時，偶爾也會抱怨：為什麼人與其他動物分別那麼大，其他動物照顧兒女只需要數月或長至兩三年，子女就可以獨立成長，不需依靠父母。然而人類卻要花上差不多二十多年來養育栽培子女成才，日夜守候，為了兒女可以付出所有，甚至犧牲自己。俗語有云「養兒一百歲，長憂九十九」。當中的辛苦，只有為人父母才能體會。其實這都是造物主的精心設計，要我們時常記念父母養育之恩，眠乾睡濕的照顧，所以我們一定要好好孝順父母。最奇妙的是所有動物都有養育後代的天性，卻絕無回報照顧父母的天性，唯獨貴為萬物之靈的人類才有「孝」的觀念。百行以孝為先，人生已有太多遺憾，所以如果父母健在就得好好孝敬他們，多點相伴多點關懷，噓寒問暖。「樹欲靜而風不息，子欲養而親不在」，不要讓自己日後抱憾終生，珍惜能孝順的福氣。



## 春天

為什麼會演變成這樣呢？

這就是大家族的悲哀嗎？

秋，木葉蕭蕭，風吹梧桐，梧桐落葉。

風來了，沒有人知道從哪裡來；但風來的時候又有誰能抵擋？風要走，又有誰能挽留？人也一樣……

梧桐葉落尚可賺得他的一聲嘆息，但人呢？在一嘆息間，不知又有多少生命流走了。所以他回來了，為了家中的老母。

想到宅中的老母，應該早已經入眠了，是吧，誰知道？

巨大的宅院，看來就像枝頭的黃葉，已到了將近枯落的時候，依附著而生的「子女」在夜色看來，就像排排野獸的牙齒，要把大宅吞噬，再消化淨盡。

夜，沒有根的遊子回來了，為了宅中的老母，為了那曾經輝煌過的宅院。

現在大宅已消息沉沉，昔日父親仍在時的花紅柳綠，梅香菊冷已不復再。半夜的春雨，留下了他回來的痕跡。依著梧桐，望著地上昔日他討厭的泥濘如今看起來卻有點點的溫暖。它默默忍受著踐踏，忍受著一切的抱怨及不理解；還是以它的潮濕和柔軟來保護你的「腳」。

世間的父母豈非也正和泥濘一樣？

一直默默的包容孩子的不是、抱怨、放縱，從無怨言，且報以養份，甚至捨棄生命亦在所不惜。可是世間有多少子女能感受到？

他走前，手撫大宅的朱漆大門，門上的朱漆剝落，銅環也已生了絲鏽。宅中的老母亦早已雪滿頭了吧。

唧呀一聲，離家多年的遊子終於推開了大門。

舉目，庭院深深幾許。

遊子雙眼一下子模糊了，後院小樓上似乎有個佝僂的身影日日夜夜等待著，縱使白髮已蒼蒼，但眼睛依然閃著睿智，一下子，使人忘卻了她的年齡。

風淒切，步進大宅，遊子心中踏實了，畢竟，回到家。

多少年了？

有些時候，時間過得很慢，但等他真的過去了，驀然回首，你才會發覺他快得令你吃驚。

趨步上小樓，觸目，室中的一事一物還是老樣子。甚至連擱著的筆，桌上的日曆，牆上

的時鐘亦是停留在他出走的一刻。時光，彷彿在這裡停頓了。

牀上的老人呢？

記得昔日母親珍惜的長髮已剪去，蒼蒼白髮，緊鎖的眉頭，口中喃喃著……也許她真的太累，也許、也許她真的要睡一睡。是什麼纏繞著這位應享兒孫福的老人？

什麼事最煩人？

家事！家族的事。要不然遊子也不會回來了。

遊子坐下，在一張寬大的椅子上。這張椅子只怕比遊子還要老一些。

他記得自己很小的時候和兄弟總是喜歡爬到這張椅子為父親桌上添亂。那時候他們還是兄友弟恭。大家都希望自己能快高長大，先坐到椅子上，可以拿著父親的筆，模仿父親的影子。

那時候，兄弟間都有一種奇妙的想法，總是怕椅子也會和人一樣，會漸漸長高，於是一起想很多法子令椅子長不快。

那時候，大家都不知道，父母會漸漸的佝僂。

終於有一天，兄弟們都能坐到椅子上了，遊子亦知道椅子絕不會長高，而兄弟間卻漸漸開始對椅子虎視眈眈了。

遊子離家的那一天，看著依著椅子的母親，這時他又不禁為這張椅子悲哀，覺得他很可憐，母親很可憐。

他決定不要被椅子桎梏，所以他出走，沒想到老母卻令他放棄一切回來了。

回來了，現在他卻希望親人、至少躺在牀上的母親能和這張椅子一樣永不長大，也永遠沒有悲傷，時間永遠停在那時。

只可惜現在椅子依舊，人都已老了。現在他只希望他的回來能化解母親的眉鎖，能修補兄弟間漸深的嫌隙。

「老了、老了……」

突然一聲輕笑，「誰說你老了？」她人雖未到，笑聲卻已將春天帶了進來。春天，總是充滿生機的，遊子知道連姐姐都回來的話，這個家族的春天，兄弟間的春天，母親的春天亦不遠了。



## 花露水的故事 · 感恩行孝

帶點濕氣的春風吹拂潔白的窗簾，不經意滲進了絲絲溫暖的日光，映入客廳裏，一隅閃閃發亮。原來是那瓶花露水。

我心裏驀地泛起了漣漪。走過去，這瓶花露水，半舊的，包裝簡約，含蓄得來又大方地散發着薰衣草的淡淡芬芳，香氣清雅而不落俗套。我小心翼翼地倒一點在手背上，嗅着，嗅着，那是種熟悉的氣味……

回想起小時候，「疑似」患上活躍症的我最愛到處奔跑，弄得傷痕累累。男孩子總是這樣的吧！她，心疼我，她，知道了花露水具有消炎殺菌的作用，即使平日不捨得使用，也不向我吝嗇。她不是甚麼大戶人家，這瓶花露水是她唯一的嫁妝。她一直珍而重之，不常使用。

也許這瓶花露水正正代表著某種連繫、某些憶記。或許，是否用在我身上就是糟蹋了它、浪費了它？

也許當時天真的小孩只懂玩耍，其他人和事只是裝飾了他的遊樂場。

有一點我卻是清楚的。我知道她著緊我，便故意讓她掛心。不為甚麼，只因我太淘氣。可是，中學二年級的那一次，卻讓她受到傷害……

那年，她特意出席了學校的陸運會，為我打氣，我當然感到很高興、很威風。可是比賽的時候，我不小心跌倒，擦破了皮膚，但我堅持完成賽事。一跑到終點線，還未回過氣來，她便撲出來，然後竟然從手袋裏掏出了一瓶花露水，純熟地扭開設計獨特的瓶蓋，正準備塗在我的傷口上。

不知因由，我臉紅起來，想也不想，使勁推開她。她差點站不穩，我立刻扶她。她本來著急的模樣，呆了呆，變得有點失望落魄，她拭一拭失神的眼睛，微笑著望一望我，似有所悟，然後慢慢地蓋上那瓶花露水，急急地扭緊，又慢慢地放回手袋裏。她陪了我到醫療室包紮，好像甚麼事也沒發生過。

有發生過。

許多老掉了牙但依然窩心的故事中，主角的花露水總是被摔破了，玻璃弄碎了，香氣散

失了，接着又出現了一些奇蹟，即使不能回復到最初，但缺憾美最後還是瑕不掩瑜。美好結局。

我和她的故事，卻並非如此。當天的那瓶花露水，仍然是今天的這瓶花露水。薰衣草的香氣依舊，或許不一樣的，在於歲月的氣味。

她繼續為我無私地付出，我覺得自己很幸福，同時卻很慚愧。

有時夜讀睡意濃，正當我想沖一杯咖啡，她泡了一杯熱茶，捧到我身旁，拍一拍我的膊頭。雖然她沒有留下甚麼加油打氣的說話，那份關懷的暖意足以使我拚勁直線上升。我細看那杯熱茶，一縷縷煙絲煙圈若隱若現，飄送著茶香，以及比茶香更香的薰衣草花露水。

很想說一句謝謝，時常想。

我有時會很懊惱。當下還未畢業，還未投身工作，還未能供養父母。金錢物質生活上，我能做的事不多。情感靈性方面的，我又付出了多少？幫她分擔家務？盡量讓她不用為我操心？給她按摩舒筋？其實我最想她開心快樂……

整間屋每時每刻都洋溢著薰衣草的淡香，我在家裏穿的衣服也沾上了淡香，歷久常清新。偶然，那香氣是特別濃郁的。我會懷疑她是不是被蚊叮被蟲咬，或切菜時弄傷手指，或是被魚刺劃傷。我更會好奇，為甚麼這瓶花露水似是永遠也用不完，抑或是根本這瓶花露水已不是最初的那一瓶……

我弄不清楚。

我卻有一個很明確的心意，就是期待，期待着用畢業後第一份工作第一個月薪金，買一瓶花露水給她。這瓶將是專屬我與她的花露水。想深一層，是不是應該買一瓶氣味相若的香水更貼切呢？是否應該也一併買有「消炎殺菌」作用的藥膏呢？

我又弄不清楚了。

她，是我的母親。我很感恩，我有她當我的母親！

## 我看孝道

這是一個經歷了八十載，橫跨四代人的故事。

母親 8 歲跟外婆逃難到香港，外婆在工地搬運沙泥，小女孩只好到鄰家當幫傭，帶帶襁褓中的小孩。母女倆相依為命，小女孩十七歲，母親卻得了重病，可怎辦？快快找個人付託終身吧。兩個月後，女孩嫁給我爸。我想若不是外婆病重，母親不用這麼早結婚，爸年紀大一點，脾氣犟一點，但很愛家，而這樣就成就了一段五十年的姻緣。我看著母親努力工作，除了養育兒女，其餘的都全給外婆，母親家鄉還有父親、小媽、五個舅舅，全仰仗母親掙錢給他們勉強生活下去。還記得七十年代那段火紅的日子，母親總扛著重重的糧油大米，我們姐弟仨各穿著六件衣服，兩件棉襖，四條棉褲，還有多雙襪子，這樣浩浩蕩蕩扶老携幼，帶著外婆回鄉，為的是給外公一家多一點溫飽。我當時年幼，總不明白為何要這麼苦，過關的擁擠，穿著這麼多衣服的難受，長時間舟車勞頓，我給媽發脾氣，但她仍堅持著每半年都會如臨大敵的回鄉省親。今天，我知道這是「孝」，為了父母，身為子女不應怨苦怨累。

今天，我看見一切似變了樣。「孝」的對象應是對父母，現在卻反過來給「子女」當二十四孝的父母，什麼「成功靠父幹」，每次聽到我也嗤之以鼻，難怪「孝道」在今天日漸式微。我有兩個女兒，她們生於富裕的社會，沒過什麼艱難的日子，小時除有爸媽疼，也有外公、外婆呵護。兩個女兒對祖輩仍很尊重，小時候吃什麼、想買什麼，總撒著嬌向外公、外婆討要。可惜，到了青春期的敬意卻消滅了不少。外公外婆後來移民到美國，兩個孫女只憑每星期一通長途電話共話家常。時間久了，青年人對著電話興味全無。我爸是聰明人，怎不知兩個孫女的小心思？我跟她們說，有祖輩疼愛是幸福的事，我們是中國人，要弘揚中國傳統美德—孝。「孝」除了「孝養」（供養父母，善體親心）、「孝順」（順從父母之志，適時規勸）、「孝承」（繼承家業）還須「孝敬」（發自內心的誠敬）。父親去世，兩個女兒都很傷心，我還記得父親在彌留之際，咽著最後一口氣，兩個女兒在床前跟他說：「外公，不要掛心，我會聽外婆話，我會照看外婆，你安心吧！」女兒當年十五歲，聽到她這樣說，我感受到二人對老人家的愛。

其實「孝」，也是一種愛而已。中國的孝道有時被人詬病為愚孝，我是不敢苟同的。

「孝」講求理性，一切講合情、合理，故要求「父慈」然後「子孝」。我記得女兒曾在作文寫道：「外公因長期吸煙得了肺癌，但我從沒見過外公吸一口煙。」女兒雖小，但也能體會外公對自己的愛護，而女兒也會對等地給父祖輩愛及關懷。而「孝道」，今天有人說可以不必奉行，因老人家也可自力更生，政府也可肩負養老、護老的責任，但君不見道路上有不少拾荒的長者，他們未必一貧如洗，但我深信若子女憐之愛之，應不忍父母白髮蒼蒼仍須「負戴於道路」。故此「孝」在今天還要講，必須講。

今天，除了子女不肯奉養父母，反過來還會覬覦父母辛苦掙一輩子的積蓄。這就是為何今天有些人成為「啃老族」、「吃老族」。女兒十八歲，我以如何照顧父母作身教、言教，我跟她們說你們將來要如何供養爸和我，還說「好女（仔）不論爺田地，自己有本事自己掙錢，父母不會留下太多給你們。」我深信兒孫自有兒孫福，不應過分溺愛子女，讓他們明白自己的責任才最重要。

我深信「孝」是一切道德的本源，個人修身的標準。父母生我、育我、教我，恩重如山，若連對父母也不好，那麼，也遑論對其他人好。我也相信「孝」令民族更團結，使民族生命得以傳承。因人既能敬父母、敬祖輩，也能感恩於整個家族，甚至民族。「血脈相連」、「敬祖合族」就是這個意思。古訓明言：「百行孝為先」，在今天香港，無論怎樣進步、怎樣國際化，也能歷久不衰！

## 孝道

人倫關係中，父母養育子女，是一種必然責任。父母照顧子女稍微失當，在香港這種文明的社會，甚至要負起法律刑責。嬰兒在不能自己照顧自己的時候，父母有天職承擔。反之，對自己有養育之恩的父母需要子女時，為什麼就沒有必然的責任？

孝道脫去虛無的外衣，就是老有所養。如此簡單的需求，試問有多少人能做到？

我不想批評政府的房屋政策，說它拆散了中國式幾代同堂的家庭結構，將孝道問題轉移焦點。因為我相信，兩代人交情如果是有足夠的愛，必然有足夠的孝（包括極大的感恩）。

真正的孝心是拆不散的，就算是死亡，也不能完全將這份感情分離。

曾經看過一個報導：一個老人駕駛了超過1000公里，只為到父親墓前，和他一起聽芝加哥小熊取得世界大賽冠軍的好消息。老人的父親是某球隊球迷，一直期盼球隊能夠奪冠，但直到過世都沒有實現願望。現在他終於夢想成真了。

老人穿著球隊的球衣、隊帽，身上披著球隊的旗幟，坐在父親的墓前，分享勝利的喜悅。

他口中唸唸有詞，因為他心中念念不忘！  
如此深情，雖死猶生。  
這種發乎情的孝，才是最珍貴的愛！

貧窮家庭，總有百般滋味，有太多事與願違，也有太多的心酸不忍言說，但並不代表貧窮的子女，一定比富家子弟缺愛。

懂得孝道的父母，那怕是大部分時間，都為生活基本條件而奔波勞碌，而缺乏陪伴時間。願意付出真愛的人，他們永遠都不會忽略了，在生活中對待親人的愛。工作中再累，他們也要堅持每天都要見一面父母子女。

真正懂得愛的人心裏，父母和子女都是同一個等級的重視，如果勉強要作出比較，他們甚至會選擇父母優先。

相比之下，那些利益觀念太重的家庭教

育，開口說話就是金錢至上的人，這樣的人生哲學，真的好嗎？這些人到底是掌握著龐大的財富，還是被財富主宰著人生？

重情義的人，利益看得淡。  
重利益的人，情義不值錢。

我從來也不認同「久病床前無孝子」這樣的話。記得曾經在報章看到，有一位媽媽租下整塊廣告牌，尋人啓事上所寫的文句：「我一定会找到你，我永遠都不會放棄你。愛你的媽媽」。

愛你的人，怎麼捨得放棄你？

如果說生兒育女是生命中重要任務，父母必需懷著愛去參與子女的成長，甘心為子女付出一切代價，讓孩子有個幸福的童年，寄望為他們創造出一個可以盡展所長的未來；那麼，相對無言，當父母年華老去，也開始需要別人照顧的時候，身為子女的，難道不知道這個也是生命中最重要任務嗎？

老年的父母跟幼年時期的子女一樣，都是需要照顧和關愛，才有美好而完整的人生。

如果只是讓孩子活得好，任由老人家自生自滅？這樣情何以堪？

我覺得上天賜給我子女，就是要讓我們學習照顧別人。在子女成長過程中，就是要磨練我們耐心和包容，學懂感恩，讓我們深刻地體會到父母養育我們時候的愛。

所以，當我們感覺到多麼愛著子女的同時，也應該感恩一下，父母對我們同等的心。

這是倫理，是孝道，也是一種充滿愛共情的文化傳承！

如某禪詩所云：  
有情來下種  
因地果還生  
無情亦無種  
無性亦無生

小學組  
(英文組)

**Primary School  
(English Division)**



## Primary School (English Division) Champion

Name: Cheung Wai Yin Kristie School: St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School Class: 6D

Florence glanced at her watch. Nine o'clock. It was time to go home. Working in McDonald's is tiring, she thought. Soon, I'll have enough savings for my 18th birthday party.

She reached her apartment and rang the bell, not bothering to open the door herself as she was too busy chatting to her friends on Instagram. Her grandmother opened the door and greeted her merrily. "Oh, hi Grandma," she said, her eyes focused on her phone, heading to her room. Her grandmother suddenly let out a barking cough. Florence heard it but continued texting her friends. After the coughing continued for a few minutes, she came to her grandmother's side. "Are you alright?" she asked worriedly.

Her grandmother nodded. Florence looked at her with concern. At that moment, she realized that her grandmother was looking a lot more wrinkled.

Her grandmother picked up a book from the table, squinting at the cover. "Is this Oliver Twist?" she asked.

"It says Great Expectations," Florence replied and wondered why her grandmother couldn't see words that big. It dawned on her that her grandmother's vision was deteriorating.

It suddenly struck her that she was much more self-absorbed than she had thought. She had worked all these months with her birthday party in mind, but she hadn't paid any attention to her grandmother. Every time she came back from work, her eyes were usually glued to her phone. Was she using all her money and time for her own indulgence? Her grandmother had taken care of her since she was born, but now, what was she doing to cherish her?

With that thought in mind, she suggested to her grandmother, "Let me read to you, grandma." Her grandmother's happiness could easily be seen from her wide smile. Florence felt a warm delight that she had never felt before.

Florence started to read the news to her grandmother every morning and spent time reading different novels to her when she came back from work. The grin on the elderly lady's face always gave Florence joy for the day.

Her birthday soon came. The day before it, her friends called her to confirm the plans for the following day.

"Where are we meeting tomorrow?" asked Emily, one of her friends.

"I'm sorry, Emily, but I'm going to spend tomorrow with my grandmother."

"But it's your birthday and you've worked so hard!"

"Yes, I know, but it's definitely time to show some gratitude to my grandmother who raised me. I'm going to write to everybody and let them know that the party is cancelled tomorrow."

"Well... If you change your mind, let me know."

She smiled secretly at her decision.

"Florence, what are you going to do for your birthday tomorrow?" asked her grandmother.

"I'm going to take you shopping, Grandma," she answered.

"No, you don't have to do that. It's your birthday. Aren't you going out with your friends?"

Florence said determinedly, "I would like nothing better than to spend my birthday with you."



## Primary School (English Division) 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up

Name: Annette Che School: Diocesan Girls' Junior School Grade: Primary 3

My name is Annette. I am a fortunate nine-year-old girl. However, I am still young, and I don't really understand what filial piety totally is, but I think "filial piety" is respecting your parents, loving them, listening to them and caring about them under any and all circumstances.

My Mom and Dad love me no matter what. They have enormous open hearts, loving and caring for my sister and me all of the time. For example, my dad took us to the animal hospital in the middle of the night when my bunny was sick even though he was exhausted from his long day of work and he had to make an important speech the next day. Another time, mommy took my sister and I to the Canadian Rockies by herself and we were so naughty. And now we're trying to make it up to her for our past indiscretions.

Parents sacrifice their leisure time to accompany us on lots of interesting outings which make us better and more rounded people. But what do we do in return for them? Nothing. Sometimes we banish them and cause them grief by being naughty. Sometimes we don't care or treasure them in our hearts. Sometimes we hurt them very much by our words and actions.

Some great examples of filial piety includes a recent news of a girl who wanted to give her lung to her mother who suffered for lung malfunction, but found out she was below 18 years old and was rejected by the hospital. I was very touched of the news and I admired the braveness of her daughter because she wanted to express her gratitude to her mother by sacrificing her lung.

I am still very young and I have not begun my career, so I cannot give money to my parents and my parents do not have fatal diseases for me to take care of but there are still so many ways we can practice "filial piety" every day and they can be very simple, such as we can pick up our toys after we play. We can do house chores. We can do what they say when they ask us. When they are sick, we can take care of them by giving them a glass of honey lemon water and feed them congee.

The world has changed and the young generation nowadays does not respect and love their parents as much as our Chinese ancestors who always put "filial piety" in first place. As my parents respect my grandparents a lot and I should follow them and love them as much as I could. When I grow up, I will work hard and give them a better life and spend quality time with them and pay back what they have given us.

Meanwhile, I can behave and show them respect every day by loving my parents and my sister. We need love all around and by practicing "filial piety" that love will stay and continue on for many years to come and most importantly, it will give our parents all the love and respect they deserve.

## Primary School (English Division) 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up

Name: Xie On Tai School: King's College Old Boys' Association Primary School No.2 Class: 5A

# My Three Keys

The words "filial piety" are known as "Xiao" in Mandarin. I personally have three keys to respect my parents even as a little girl.

My first key is "caring talk". Technologies are very advanced nowadays, so there are

many ways of communicating with my parents. No matter how we communicate, like chatting face to face, talking over the phone or texting through mobile devices, I find expressing love to one another very important. One of our everlasting topics is "food of the day", through talking about different meals we eat, cook or want, we show our care by remembering each others' favorite dishes. I would remember their preferences and cook the perfect meal for them later on, which always turns out a loving surprise.

"Quality time" is my second key. I know my parents treasure the time they spend with me, so I accompany them whenever I can. For example, my parents find reading enjoyable, so we go to the library on Saturdays. Talking about the books we read is another favorite topic. Moreover, I think they need to do more exercises to get a good balance between their busy works and a healthy living style, so I suggest our family go hiking or jogging together on holidays. Now, doing exercises has become a close bond among us. I am so glad my parents have developed a habit to exercise. We enjoy every minute of our quality time together. What a lot of good memories we have!

The last key is "responsible service". When I help with house works, no matter what and how I do, my parents are always very pleased, although they may not praise me every single time. Furthermore, I understand the best thing in their mind is to see me make progress on anything, say, studying, hobbies, confidence, serving, etc., regardless of how small the progress is. I still remember, one day last year, I helped my parents water flowers. As I never did that before, I watered them in a blazing afternoon. As a result, some flowers died. I cried with guilt. My parents comforted and encouraged me: "Don't feel guilty. This is just the first time. You can continue to help us water in the mornings!" After that, I kept watering the flowers every morning. The flowers have been very healthy and beautiful until now! Therefore, I realize that I should take my responsibility to do what I can. I believe my services always make my parents proud.

I use these three keys to honor my parents, and they really work! There is a Chinese saying "Xiao is the most important of all virtues", I think they are the keys not only to make my parents happy but also to get along with people around me. I hope I can discover and share more blessing keys in the future!

## Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Hallae Ngui Chuen Sum School: Diocesan Preparatory School Grade: Primary 5

I was so nervous today because I was going to represent my city in a competition. This competition was not an ordinary one, but it was "The Most Filial Son/Daughter Finals in the Country." All of the students here today were elites selected from key schools in various provinces and cities.

To be honest, coming into the competition, I absolutely had no confidence in winning it. The city I lived in, was one of the poorest in the country, and the school I studied in, was nothing but a rural school.

But I was lucky enough to be one of the top two finalists.

"You will now be asked a couple of questions."

"What is filial piety?" The host started, by asking the other contestant first.

"Filial piety is an act advocated by the Confucian tradition. It is also, China's most important virtue that entails strong loyalty and deference to one's parents." She spoke with impassioned energy.

At this point, I felt discouraged, thinking I could never measure up to her response.

"What do you do when your parents get sick and feel sad?"

"My father goes to work, while my mother gets everything done for me every day. I have never seen nor notice them being sick or sad!"

"What would you do if your parents didn't buy you what you wanted?"

"I would win first place in class, so they would definitely buy what I want. I have never disappointed my parents in this regard."

When I was still thinking about how I could answer the same questions the host asked the other finalist more appropriately, the host interrupted my thoughts and started asking the questions.

"Contestant number two, what is filial piety?"

My mind went blank and couldn't think of anything. With no response, I felt hopeless and embarrassed more than ever.

The host then moved onto the next question and asked, "What would you do if your parents were sick or sad?" Answering him with honesty, I said, "I'll do some housework for them or tell them a joke to make them laugh."

"What would you do if your parents didn't buy you what you wanted?"

I started pondering what I wanted to have?

After thinking for a little while, I said, "Actually, what I want most, is a rice cooker for my mother, so she doesn't have to squat on the floor, lighting the fire using wood and dried twigs to cook every day. I know she is suffering from constant pain in her legs, so it is very difficult for her to do simple chores. Seeing what my mother goes through every day and feeling the intolerable pain she's living with, I strive to study hard so that in the future, I can earn enough money to buy a cooker for my mother."

The results were finally in.

The judge cleared his throat and said, "The idea of filial piety is very simple. Confucius, the founder of Confucianism says we must pay attention to the feelings of our parents and be nice to them with reverent

countenance. Contestant number 2 is doing so well in this regard and has proven herself through her humble responses.” I looked blankly in shock at the judge on stage and he looked back, smiling promisingly assuring me that I was the winner of “The Most Filial Son/Daughter Finals in the Country.”

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**Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Helen Li School: Carmel Leung Sing Tak School Class: 6T

*“The ugly sea monster is not as terrible as the ungrateful children.”*

This sentence taught me that we should show filial piety to our parents as ugly sea monsters are terrible things so ungrateful children must be REALLY terrible!

Let me start by asking, do you know what filial piety is? Well, it's ok if not as this essay will tell you all about filial piety. In the “Warring States” period of China's history, there lived a great educator named Confucius. He gave many celebrated lectures to his disciples about filial piety. He said, “All my disciples should have filial piety, and the best disciple is a filial son.” I think we should all learn from him.

In China, there are some stories about filial piety. This is one of them that I think is very profound:

In the old days, there was a son named Tan. His parents were very old and they had eye disease so they needed to drink deer's milk. So, Tan wore a deer skin and went to a mountain and went into a group of deer. When he was milking them, he saw a hunter who wanted to kill a deer. Tan pulled off his deer skin and talked about his parents' eye disease and the reason why he was milking the deer. The hunter admired him because he showed such piety to his elders. Finally, the hunter gave him some deer milk and escorted him out of the mountain.

From this example we know that filial piety is important and we know that in ancient China people paid a lot of attention to being filial.

Now I want to discuss some ways to show filial piety. We all have people who can act as the objects of our piety. For example, parents, teachers and the elderly. We can help them to do housework, we can work hard to get good results at school to make them feel proud. Of course in future, we can try to earn lots of money so that we can give some money to them to pay back their love of us as children. We can meet our relatives when having our holidays, so that we can make them feel they are not alone. Perhaps we can buy some gifts on teacher's day for our teachers to say thank you for their hard work.

So, there are lots of ways to show our filial piety towards others.

Some people may ask, "Why do we need to be filial?"

I think it's because we should be thankful to the people who help us a lot. For example, our parents gave birth to us and this was not easy. Also, they hoped we would be healthy and have a good life so they helped us by buying us food, toys, books and so on. They spent lots of their hard earned money on us but they don't grumble. They have sacrificed a lot. This shows their great love and so we should be grateful and filial to them.

Overall, filial piety should be shown to all the people who have taken care of you, who have helped you a lot and who now need care. They have given you lots of love so we should do everything in our ability to show them lots of love too.

### **Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Yung Lok Ching School: Sharon Lutheran School Class: 6A

We must be very familiar with these words, but there are few people in the world who can do it. I think my dad did it. Five years ago, daddy retired early on the grounds that my grandfather was dead and my grandmother was depressed. He hoped to return home to visit them. For various reasons, he couldn't go to the mainland until three years later, but my grandmother was not deprived of wisdom until that time.

My dad wasn't ashamed of or disgusted by my grandmother. He always went to the hospital to visit her. He held my eighty-five-year-old grandmother and fed her fruits. He also talked with grandmother and took her outside to see the beautiful views. My dad did these things every day.

At that time, a lot of relatives said to my dad, 'If my son is just as filial, I will be so happy.' And some said, 'I will honour my parents like you!' Everyone thought that my dad was a filial man and everyone appreciated him.

My dad accompanied my grandmother for four years. During those four years, my grandmother was very happy because my dad walked with her for the last few years of her life. When my grandmother died, she had a smile on her face, but dad cried sadly.

When I listened to my dad tell his true story, I had an urge to cry. My dad was filial, but how about me? I have nothing to worry about. I always help my dad and mom do things. I care about their feelings. Why do I ever need to think of filial piety?

I learned a lot of things in my dad's story. Honouring parents is not necessarily a matter of money. Sometimes, a phone call, a meeting, or a cup of hot tea can make parents happy. Now, while my parents are still healthy, I want to change myself. I need to care for my parents and honour my parents, so I hope everyone can be filial children.

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### **Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Lau Sin Ka School: Diocesan Girls'Junior School Class: 6B

In Hong Kong, one of the busiest city in the world, the new generation puts less attention on 'Filial Piety'. 'Filial Piety' is a very important quality in all humans. This quality, if spread around, could make a huge difference in the whole human race.

What is 'Filial Piety'? It means to treat your parents with respect. For example, in the Chinese tradition, children pour tea for their parents, and then kneel down and hand it to them. Another example is not to leave home when your parents are there. "Well, I have done some of these things already!" However, have you ever thought of doing more than that while caring about your parents? In my opinion, 'Filial Piety' can be demonstrated in two parts— to respect your parents and to take care of your parents. It is actually hard to perform this quality by yourself, as most people nowadays are very busy. The young children must equip themselves well academically and to promote their personal developments all the time while the young adults must earn their living for their families and keeping their competitiveness in the society. Despite these hardships, I would like to suggest making full use of our leisure time to communicate with our beloved parents. Instead of using mobile devices for entertainment, we may try to spend some time to walk with our parents on the way back home; to talk to our parents during dinner time, to jog with our parents on weekends. From these slight changes of living habits, I am pretty sure that parents can feel your 'Filial Piety' which is your love is around them.

You may wonder how can we promote 'Filial Piety' among people? Reading books about Chinese history is a good way. For example, I believe that we could learn from the old children like Kong Rong giving away bigger pears for the older members in his family which shows respect for the elderly. Also, there is another story of Huang Xiang warming his dad's bed in the winter and cooling it in summer which shows cares for the elderly.



We should learn the moral of these stories.

You might also ask, “Are there some easier ways to achieve ‘Filial Piety?’” My answer is a definite ‘yes’. There are tons and tons of ways to get to the point where you can achieve ‘Filial Piety’. I would like to share one of my personal experiences with you. My granny passed away 8 years before I was born. Though I don’t know her exceptionally well, I keep going to her grave twice a year to give her my blessings.

‘Filial Piety’ is a very important quality in the lives of the human beings. It shows how important your parents and your older relatives are, and you should care and respect them. So, why don’t we try to make our world a better place to live in, with other friends as well!

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### **Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Chow Cheuk Wing School: Chun Tok School Grade: Primary 5

Growing up in a Chinese family, children like me are instilled with an idea called filial piety. This is one of the virtues to be cultivated. It is love and respect, obedience and care for our parents and elderly family members. I have heard a lot of stories about dutiful and devoted sons or daughters. The Thirty-Six Examples of Filial Piety is an important part of Chinese folklore. However, I find it difficult to be as dutiful as those children in the ancient times although their filial affection deserves to be praised.

Cai Shun lived with his mother in poverty. One day, while Cai was out collecting mulberries, he encountered some robbers, who asked him why he separated black and red mulberries and placed them in different baskets. Cai replied that the black ones which tasted sweet were for his mother whereas the red sour ones were for himself. The robbers were impressed and gave him some food that they had. However, in the affluent community like Hong Kong, parents are the ones who give the best to their children. I am too young and too “fortunate” to look for food for my parents. It is only when I grow up, I will definitely repay my parents.

Huang Xiang lived with his father. During summer, Huang fanned his father's pillow to ensure that his father could sleep comfortably at night. In winter, he wrapped himself with his father's blanket to warm it. Nowadays, we have air-conditioners which can replace what Huang Xiang did for his father. My mother cleans my tumbler and prepares my snack box every morning. Even when she is ill, she consistently does the same no matter what happens. As a ten-year-old kid, I cannot do what Huang Xiang did but I am sure I will repay my mother for her unconditional love and care.

Huang Ting-chien of the Sung Dynasty became a member of the Hanlin academy. Even though he was an esteemed person, he served his mother with utmost devotion. Every evening he would personally clean his mother's chamber pot. It seems that only when I am an adult, I can take care of my parents. Recently, my great grandmother has been critically ill in hospital. I noticed how thoughtful and considerate my grandfather has been. He visits his mother every day. He pats her to get rid of her phlegm and cleans her chamber pot consistently every day without grumbling.

As a little kid, I cannot act like Wang Xiang who undressed and laid on the icy surface of a frozen lake to catch fish for his parents. However, I can show my filial piety by fulfilling my duty as a student. I take the initiative to do what I should do in the hope that my parents have no worries. I believe it is love and respect by which I can demonstrate my filial duty and affection in today’s affluent and advanced society.

## Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Ng Wai Kiu Tiffany School: St. Andrew's Catholic Primary School Class: 6B

Nowadays, people don't care much about their parents and elderly relatives. Some people even treat them badly and talk to them rudely. They seem to forget about the importance of the traditional Chinese virtue of "Xiao", filial piety, which means that we should respect and love one's parents, elders and the elderly.

Frequently, I heard news about family disputes and violence. I even came across the incident of a son shouting at his mom. That day, when I was going to school by MTR, I suddenly heard a young man shouting at his mom, "Mom, can you shut up? You are too garrulous. I don't want to hear your advices!"

This prompted me to think that everyone, including myself, may sometimes get impatient with our parents and elders, and talk to them impolitely. But when we are getting impatient with them, do we ever stop to think that we will become an elderly or even parents someday? Do we want people to treat us like this?

When we were kids, our parents and the elderly relatives have been very caring to us and helped us to do many things such as playing with us even though they were very tired after working for a whole day. They would explain patiently and answer our endless questions and queries, and they would take good care of us when we were sick. Also, we often see children crying to beg their parents to buy things for them and parents will try their best to fulfill their needs and demands. So, we should love and take care of them, and treat them with respect in return for what they have done for us.

What can we do for our parents and elderly relatives in return? We should respect them, be nice and polite to them. When our parents are getting old and can't make money themselves, we should support them financially for expenses on medical, food, housing, etc. Among all of the things that we can do, our care and love is the most important. Hence, we can visit the parents or elderly relatives and talk to them. With much caring and love, it promotes harmonious relationship in the family and the society as well.

Filial piety is the Chinese virtue which we should always remember. We should respect and love parents always and forever. Give them care and love. Love will be all around the world!

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## Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Ho Mei Sze School: Lok Sin Tong Lau Tak Primary School Class: 6A

To many Chinese, filial piety is a virtue that a son or a daughter upholds a kind of responsibility to their parents. This responsibility is an attempt to work hard for the good deeds of the parents as well as for the family.

I think the relationship between parents and children will become a bonding, which makes the family members closer. In Chinese, the word 'xiao' has got thousands of meaning. Here I try to cite some examples.

The first one is 'respect'. In a Chinese society, parents have higher positions. As a child, we need to listen to their words. As they have more life experience than us, they can give us advice. Hence, we need to be obedient, kind, polite and honest. We cannot lie to our parents. Otherwise, we can never get trust.

The second thing is 'duty'. Parents work hard to earn money for the family. As a son or a daughter, think how hard our parents work for the family; think how early they get up to serve us breakfast; think how late they sleep to have all the work done before they go to bed. As a son or a daughter, we need to take up some of the housework such as sweeping the floor, washing clothes or cooking dishes. Of course, we need to study hard. It is our basic duty.

The third thing is 'integrity'. All family members need to be cooperative and affectionate to one another. Hence, the family is in a perfect condition. As a child, we follow our parents' suggestion and wishes. We should not argue with parents but listen and make suggestion. We can have our own opinion but should talk with parents sincerely and gently.

To many western families, filial piety may carry a different meaning. Children have more freedom and space on intellectual development. They are creative in all aspects. They open up themselves to make suggestions and voice opinions. They will tell their parents what has happened, how they feel and negotiate on a solution. Children and parents communicate in a silent and peaceful atmosphere. Parents are open-minded. They will not blame their children for their incapability. On the contrary, they will just give their advice and opinion. Children make promises to improve and try their best next time. Children and parents work together for the family. For example, daughters cook with mums while sons make tree houses with dads. It is the most unforgettable and treasurable experience. Children understand the parents' feeling and care. This element is important when children have to pass the good virtue to next generation.

No matter what, I think filial piety is really meaningful. It repays parents for their love and care. Filial piety is a virtue, no matter you are a Chinese or a Westerner. It is a human etiquette and behaviour that works for the well-being of a family, of a society, the nation and even the world.

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### **Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Lee Yiu Tung Michelle School: Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section) Class: 5E

I have a warm family which I can depend.  
We are as close as best friends.  
We support each other  
And we love each other.

Mum takes care of me day and night.  
She teaches me which is wrong and which is right.  
I ask my mum when I can't solve mathematics.  
My mum says just do it step by step and I don't have to panic.  
I ask my mum to read me bedtime stories to get rid of nightmares.  
My mum teaches me how to create our own story with  
'who', 'when', 'where'.

Dad plays and chats with me after work.  
He buys me books which I love to read after doing homework.  
I ask my dad for permission when I want to play computer games.  
My dad tells me to forgive and don't always blame.  
I ask my dad to bring me out on holidays and enjoy outdoor fun also.  
My dad teaches me "work hard and play hard" is always our motto.

When I grow up, I want to live with my parents.  
We will love each other as much as present.  
I will take care of them day and night.  
I will bring them to new restaurants that come to sight.  
They may have difficulties with new technology.  
I will show them step by step patiently.  
They may become forgetful or get sick.  
I will give them the best medication I can make.

Before I grow up, parents take care of me very much.  
When they grow old, I will take care of them as much.  
There are endless examples of love that I've taken from them.  
Some years later, I will give the same unconditional love to them.  
Filial Piety is the virtue that everybody knows.  
The love to parents is what we should always show.

### **Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Kwok Yi Shang Shane School: Sir Ellis Kadoorie (S) Primary School Class: 5A

What is love? Different people have different ways to express their love to their loved ones. Even in our ups and downs, love can rise like a fire and warm the icy part of your heart. To me, parents' love is like a bonfire on the safari: warm, happy and secure, you can feel it even when you are not near it. Even from a distance, you can tell it is there, guiding us from the cold to the warmth.

When I was a younger boy, my dad was away, so I don't have a vivid memory of him. But I have an impression that he is a very kind and playful person. I think he is the reason I am so playful as well.

I love my mum the most because she is the one who raised me and supported me all the time. She is a kind, patient and caring person. Whenever I am sick, she would bring me to see the doctor and use caring words to try ease the pain. If she wasn't there, the pain would always become unbearable. How is my mum so supportive? She always stood by me, making sure that I wouldn't fall. Even when things looked rough, she would just keep trying her best to find a way to overcome it. Whenever I don't understand anything, she would patiently try and help me figure out the problem. And by the end of the day, I would be very familiar with what she taught me. Just like helping me with my Chinese, sometimes she has to be harsh because I was not paying attention but most of the time she is really nice and relaxed if I am attentive.

I love my mum a lot, she is the closest family member I have. She is the only person I can trust with my life. My mum also loves me the most, she thinks that I am the most valuable "treasure" in her life. She even says that I am worth more than gold and riches. My mum loves the movie "Out of Africa", she loves the safari scene. To me I think my mum is a bonfire on the safari.

My mum is just like a flaming bonfire on the safari, setting it so high that it looms over the horizon, making it look like another sun, leading me to a warm and secure spot, a place to rest. Although the bonfire is still going strong, it has a timer. This bonfire will not last forever. I want time to move slower. I hope my mum can stay young, so she would never age or go away. If there was a way, I would do anything to stop time, freeze the picture - A picture with the company of my mum forever.

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### **Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Wong Lok Ching School: S.K.H Ho Chak Wan Primary School Class: 5E

Growing up is a natural phenomenon which we all need to face. As I get older, I gradually realize some important truths about our parents' unconditional love.

When I was young, I always took my parents for granted as they provided everything I ever needed and helped me when I was in need.

Until recently, something tragic incidents happened and it completely changed my attitude towards my parents. My beloved aunt has just passed away and it was astonishing news for our entire family. While I was attending my aunt's funeral, my cousins told me that when my aunt was very sick, they helped her wash her body and even trimmed her toenails. I felt ashamed after hearing it, as I have never taken care of my parents while they were sick.

After the funeral, I told myself that no matter what happens, I must try my best to look after my parents and release their burden. Since then, I helped my parents do the housework and of course studied hard for my exams so that one day I can take care of my parents unconditionally.



**中學組  
(英文組)**

**Secondary School  
(English Division)**

## Secondary School (English Division) Champion

Name: Chung Yiu Nam School: St. Joseph's College Class: 5E

Intangibility has fascinated writers since the inception of language. After all, what's more enticing than describing the indescribable merely by distorting words? It is no wonder that the facades of culture have sparked the imagination of many throughout the annals of history, especially in China, where the great words of Confucius and many other wise men have evoked the imagination of the heir of what we now know as one of the greatest civilizations history has ever witnessed.

Nevertheless, I have always found filial piety a tedious topic to work on. While this traditional family value takes its roots from the authoritarianist social norms of the olden days, and has laid the foundation for basically all traditional family values we Chinese are ever-so familiar with, its depth and complexity are what makes it especially enticing yet daunting to write about.

“Filial piety takes precedence over all good deeds.” This is what Confucius conveyed to his students. While all those of Chinese ethnicity are orientated to follow this tradition, what actually is filial piety?

*Virtuous Aqua  
Nourishing those who breed  
Nurturing those who suckle  
Amid misshapen chaos*

Socialization plays a crucial role in education. Different socializing agents instigate the mind in very distinctive ways, especially when it comes to the Chinese and Western ways of teaching. Although the rather laissez-faire education of the Western world does involve the concept of respect, there seems to be a fundamental business between that and the filial piety that is often reiterated in Chinese families. While both may involve respect and love among a plethora of other values, filial piety encompasses literally everything that governs our attitude and beliefs towards our elders.

In modern society where fairness and equity are of key importance, filial piety is sometimes ridiculed as a ritual of the past. This is unsurprising especially to those who have immersed the traditional readings related to filial piety – The Twenty-Four Stories of Xiao mentioned an anecdote where a teenager lay on an icy lake in a bid to catch some fish for his ill-stricken mother. Another narrative illustrated a man selling his son to make ends meet for his mother.

Prominent Chinese author Lu Xun of the previous century was a prominent condemner of the such practices, saying that it has led to Chinese people resting on their laurels. While it seems incomprehensible to many especially foreigners as to what extents our ancestors did in the name of filial piety, it is not the case when we consider the key spirit of xiao – to repay our parents for their sacrifices in nurturing us. Although this may sound super old-school especially to rebellion-prone teenagers (like me), I have always believed this virtue would dawn upon us one day.

*Penetrating perplexity  
Of well-seeming forms  
Thy beacon absent  
Lost for words*

As much as we endeavoring teenagers hate to admit, we do feel overwhelmed at times. Take sickness as an example. I remember vividly the day when my doctor diagnosed that I had contracted Avian Flu. Literally a shell without poise, I was confined to my bed for most of the week, only for my mother to work for days on end to find a way to alleviate my illness. From conjuring my medically-appointed diet to soothing the sobbing child, I am not sure if I would still be here without all those touches of love and affection. It is such silhouettes that make me remorse and reflect every time I rebel.

Climbing up the learning curve has never been easy. Unlike other animals that have the inborn ability of adapting to their surroundings, we humans are quite the opposite – without parenting we would probably

crouching under a blindfold. It is our parents who play a big part in conjuring the learning ladder that we look back upon on this day. Although it is irrefutable to a certain extent that parents have the obligation to take good care of their offspring, isn't it not the same the other way round? Even the most magnificent of trees stem from their roots. Sometimes, it is the little things in life that make the more significant differences. Yet it is a shame that subtlety seldom arouses sensitivity.

*Shimmers galore  
Sparks glimmer  
Yet what is yearned  
Glow in seclusion*

“There are three degrees of filial piety. The highest is being a credit to our parents, the second is not disgracing them; the lowest is being able simply to support them.” This is what Daoism has dictated for us sons and daughters to follow. Contrary to Western beliefs that providing for parents is already a highly appreciated gesture, filial piety demands much more than that, and it is this virtue that defines the richness of Chinese culture. While we all hope to shower our parents with interminable wealth and riches, is it really what our parents yearn for? A survey conducted in 2015 revealed that the overwhelming majority of mothers wanted not a celebratory dinner, nor a present or money for Mother's Day. It was a simple “I love you” that tingles the hearts of our mothers the most. In the current era where all generations are burdened by the hustles and bustles of life, it is our parents who are often the sacrificial lamb – after all, who is the one most often neglected when the rush of life kicks in? Filial piety does not require us to fork out a lot of time and effort – it is the sincerity and respect that counts the most. A hug or even a simple text message can make all the difference. At the end of the day, it is intangibility that evokes our emotions the most.

We all yearn to savour the tannins of life. They bring vibrancy and meaning to our lives. Although riches and romance, among others, may bring about amazing explosions on our taste buds, sometimes a tinge of filial piety is what makes us reflect upon ourselves, and more importantly, bestow our spirits with wellness.

## Secondary School (English Division) 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up

Name: Agatha Leung Nga Wing School: Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College Class: 3A

# Our Roles

“Tap...tap...tap.”

The old lady clutched clumsily at her walking-stick as she wobbled down the pedestrian walk. Her son and grandson walking next to her, phubbing. Pathetic? Certainly.

Sadly but truly, this scene is not uncommon to see in Hong Kong. To date, we have seen a large number of elderly strolling along the street alone, just because their dear sons have to work hard, having no time to take care of them. Some may even become scavengers because of a lack of financial support. Others may live in solitude or in an elderly home where the staff are too busy to take good care of their occupants. This is certainly heart-wrenching and thought-provoking. They once had a family. They gave birth to their sons or daughters and raised them up. They gave their off-springs their hearts and souls. However, they are abandoned and neglected once they started to age. As cruel as it may seem, this is the same old sob story of many old people in this city. What has become of our society? Do young people pay no respect to the older generation?

As the saying goes, ‘Filial piety is one of the virtues to be held above all else’. Filial piety has long been the core value of Chinese culture, but tragedies and a rising trend of elderly living alone, later-life depression and abuse of the elderly raise concerns about whether filial obligations towards ageing parents are in decline. The impact of intergenerational relationships on the quality of life of older people is undeniable. The emotional connection and dynamics between the two generations in the local context has occasionally been disregarded.

There is de facto something wrong with the attitude of the younger generation. We used to turn a blind eye to the care and love from our parents because of the stress brought by work. In the long run, this would greatly affect the quality of their life. The elderly people who suffer from abuse or negligence exhibit greater instances and higher levels of depression and psychological distress than their non-abused counterpart. It is believed that this is caused by the negligence of their children.

In the past, the Chinese respected and highly promoted the virtue of filial piety. In the Han Dynasty, the nine-year-old boy Huang Xiang was the perfect embodiment of the ancient virtue. While his father read by the light of a candle, Huang, in the sticky heat of the summer's evening, would fan the pillows so that they would be cool when his father went to sleep. In winter, when the freezing wind and snow turned the world to ice, the little boy would first hop into his father's bed to warm up the blankets. Then he would call his father in to come sleep in the cozy nest he had made. This renowned Fan Mattress and Warm Quilt story had been included in modern textbooks, showing and solidifying the importance of filial piety.

Traditionally, it is believed that having an old person in the family is a wise thing, but many old people are now living without the accompaniment of their children or grandchildren. Old people may not bring income to the household. However, they contribute their time and share their experiences. They are our advisors, offering us solutions to problems. In return, what they desire is not monetary or materialistic, but our love and care. As the saying goes, ‘hosting an elder, hoarding a treasure’. It is certainly a sheer bliss to live with our old parents and take care of them.

However, how many of us have mistaken the love and care from our parents as annoyance and an intrusion of privacy? How many a time have we regarded them as a burden? “What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others.” All of us age gradually. The young will become the old one day. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for all of us to show humanity and parental respect if we desire the same thing from the next generation.

As the proverb has it, ‘Blood is always thicker than water’. We are related by blood to the more senior members of the family. Being old, living in solitude and feeling useless are the most terrible situations that a human



being can be put under. Statistically, elderly people have a higher tendency for pessimistic thoughts and greater desire to end their lives because there is not a shelter for them, not even their dearest child's home. Compared to younger people who attempted suicide, they are four times more likely to perform the deed.

As members of the younger generation of society, we should learn to show more respect and tolerance towards the older generation. If words of compliment are bottled up in your throats, a kiss, or a hug, or even mere companionship will do. Sometimes taking your parents or grandparents out for tea, giving them a simple call or paying them a surprise visit can turn the tide. Stop using the excuse of being too busy with life and start showing the older members of family and society some respect and care.

Filial piety is central to Confucian role ethics. We should be the one – and the only one – who spend more time on taking care of our parents so that this virtue can pass on to the many generations to come.

## The Sun in the Dark

“Mother, I’m back...” Falling to my knees, I embraced my mother’s ashes that was placed in a simple and perfectly white urn. Bursting into tears, I murmured repeatedly over how sorry I was. In grief, I wept quietly alone, in the dark little apartment.

I, Sunny Chan, was a tour guide. My mother divorced my dad when I was 6. Her life was not easy and she raised me up with her little income from a cleaning job in shopping malls. She was not well educated, and as she hoped I would be cheerful and positive, she named me Sunny.

My mother was too old to work so I became the breadwinner. Recently, we could only live in a small public rental house. I had been yearning for traveling since I was little. My mother could not afford to take me to a trip, so I had never been away from our district.

Choosing tourism in my university studies, I strived very hard and finally became a tour guide. I dreamed of touring my mother to Santorini where my mother first met my dad. However, reality is never fact but fiction. There was endless work in the travel agency. I worked 24/7 but was paid very little. With our belts tightened, my salary could just cover our daily expenses. I had deposited as much as I could into the bank, hoping to achieve our little dream.

Now that she was gone, the dream will never come true. I picked up a notebook from the table and carefully flipped through the pages. It was my mother’s diary. Reading the stories over and over again, I melted into tears.

11th October, 2017 Rainy

I body check up in hospital. Doctor say I have lung cancer, die soon, 6 months life. He say I go buy medicine for my sick, but I say too expensive, no money. He give me some to make me feel good. I scared, not want Sunny know. She very tired, all money give me, nothing left for her. I find job, cleaner at supermarket. I use my money buy medicine for my sick.

20th November, 2017 Cloudy

I work long long time today, have money. I buy Sunny good chicken, I call Sunny for dinner. She say too busy, not go home. Long long time no dinner with Sunny. I wish her home dinner with me.

9th January, 2018 Sunny

Today Sunny birthday. I buy many good chicken and cake for her. I use all money from job for present. I buy her new luggage case, orange colour. Her luggage bag broken, many holes on it. Hope she like new one. I call her, eat dinner, but she say party with friend, happy. I keep cake in fridge for her. I will give her luggage case later.

18th February, 2018 Windy

Sunny in Rome now, long long trip. Last week my birthday, eat with cleaner job friend. I get some flower today by Sunny, but die. It’s ok, very beautiful. Leave her message, say thank you. I buy medicine for my sick, but doctor say cannot live long. If die, Sunny pay less, more money for her. But love her very much, cannot leave her.

21st February, 2018 Thunderstorm

Me in hospital, tired, very sick. Cannot breathe, miss Sunny. Sunny, cannot stay with you anymore, very very sorry. Take care yourself, eat good dinner. Hope you like orange luggage case. Left you photo, me and your dad. Love you.

Reading the last page of my mother's diary, those words, though in bad grammar and scribbled all over the pages, struck my heart deeply. After she left me, I found out that all I cared about these years was making enough money for our living. I always believed that being filial to my mother was to achieve our little dream. But what I had been entrusting in had been shattered completely. I had never provided my mother with what she really wanted. I had never asked about her health, and I had rarely been home to have dinner with her.

When I opened the orange luggage beside me, there was a photo inside. I looked at it closely. My mother and father, smartly dressed, hugging each other tenderly in front of the little white houses at Santorini. I traced the outline of parents with my fingers slowly, feeling the love they once shared.

Have you ever cared what your parents wanted? People said filial piety is a virtue of respect for one's parents, elders, and ancestors. But I would say it is having dinner with your parents, spending more time with them, going out for a walk in the garden, and many other little things you can do with your parents. Even something that is very common and usual can drive the relationship between you and your parents much closer.

## Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Shum Lap School: Fanling Kau Yan College Class: S5PW

Do you know how you were born into this world? Do you know why you are safe and sound living in this world? The source of all the comfort we enjoy is from our parents. Parents gave us life and saw to our growth. Without parents, we could never have seen the world with our eyes. Their kindness has to be repaid for life.

In the first place, filial piety is the basic moral requirement of being a good person. Our relationship with our parents is inherent. Before we were born, we were connected by an umbilical cord with our mothers. Starting from the very minute we came into this world and saw our parents, our relationship built up slowly. When you see your parents with busy and laborious expression, will you feel sad? Of course! Our love for parents is in our blood. We respect and care about them. If a man loves neither of his dearest parents, who will he love? If a man has no respect for his dearest parents, who will he respect? It is widely believed a person with a successful career, a lot of money or great contributions to the world is respectful. Nevertheless, the greatest attribute of all is to have a loving heart, especially to love our parents.

Apart from the fact that our love for our parents is a human instinct, filial piety is one of the most precious teachings in traditional Chinese culture. As the old Chinese saying goes, filial piety is the most important among all virtues. It has been playing a significant role for several thousand years in the Chinese moral framework. From ancient times to the present, filial piety is highly appreciated, especially in the education aspect. Both Confucius and modern educators agree on the importance of filial piety. In China, "Twenty-Four Stories of Filial Piety" has influenced millions of Chinese, which are legendary stories about 24 filial sons and daughters in the Chinese history. Even in the modern civilized society, more and more people pay attention to the education of filial piety. As a result, most modern people know the importance of filial piety. Nevertheless, do people nowadays really understand the essence of this traditional Confucian value?

The key to filial piety is obedience and deference. Filial piety is not only about satisfying one's parents in terms of their material needs when they get older, but also to treat them with a respectful heart. Nowadays, some people believe that giving their parents money and ensuring their standard of living alone are practices of filial piety. Is that right? As early as a thousand years ago, Confucius gave us the answer. Confucius believed that supporting parents without deference has no different from feeding animals. Moreover, obedience is an important key for us to realise filial piety. I believe that everyone respects their parents, but can they obey their parents? In our daily lives, sometimes we have disagreements and conflicts with our parents. We may say something that hurt our parents when we vent our anger. Parents can be right or wrong, but more importantly is that they have been thinking about their children all the time. If we can put ourselves in our parents' shoes and be more understanding, we will be willing to be more obedient.

In recent years, the issue of spoiled children in society is gaining public concern. These children are criticized as having low self-discipline, low emotional quotient and low resilience. They are overly dependent on their parents' care, just like little princesses or princes. They like to order their parents to do what is meant to be their own work. When they encounter something they are not satisfied with, they will fight against their parents verbally or even physically. Their behavior is a complete violation of the principle of filial piety. What is more frightening is that in some extreme cases the children even killed their parents because of some dissatisfaction. In 2014, a young man surnamed Chou killed his parents for a little profit. The news is shocking and sorrowful, and also aroused the public's attention towards the importance of traditional Chinese virtues. If everyone knew the importance of filial piety, would these tragedies still happen? This is a thought-provoking question that is worth exploring.

In the remote areas of China, there are some elderly who live alone. They are waiting for their children who are making a living in the big cities like Beijing or Shanghai to come back. However, they can only meet once or twice a year, usually during the Chinese New Year. Rural areas are generally poorer than those in the cities. Therefore, these old people have a lower standard of living. Parents are suffering, but can these sons and daughters be called unfilial? If they still respect their parents from the bottom of their hearts, they are not. Sometimes filial piety is not about how much money you offer to your parents, but how much you care about them. We cannot blame those migrant workers of being impious, as they are limited by practical constraints.



Looking at today's Hong Kong, people are not living far away from their parents, but people are busy – too busy to take care of their parents. It is even ridiculously “acceptable” for people to shirk the responsibilities of taking care of their old parents. There is a Chinese old saying, “Parents are gone when the son wants to take care of them”. Our parents will leave us forever one day. Do not regret in later years when you have lost the chance of taking good care of them. We need to treasure every second when we can accompany our parents. Do not just talk the talk but walk the talk.

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**Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Ma Tsz Ying Gianna School: St. Mary's Canossian College Class: 4C

## **In Sickness and in Health**

Filial piety. Two odd, commonly-used words. This vague expression has a colossal meaning that I have learnt to comprehend. However, as a child, I was puzzled.

Although most of my childhood memories are wiped away by Mr. Time, I do distinctly recall the constant fights between my mother and her mother, Popo.

There was a pattern. It would always start with Mother standing by the kitchen counter, preparing a meal while humming to the radio. At a certain point, the phone would ring. She would pick up and sigh knowing it was Popo calling. Things were still pleasant and calm at that point.

After the greetings, Mother and Popo would start asking each other about what they were doing. Then say, fifteen minutes or so into the conversation, they would change the topic to our financial status, expenditures and salaries, which got on Mother's nerves, prompting her to abandon cooking once and for all. In response, she would tell Popo it was none of her business with a higher-pitched voice, followed by the repeated shaking of her head and sighs of devastation.

When the discussion grew into a heated debate, Mother would always pace around the kitchen with eccentric hand gestures, as though Popo could somehow perceive her wrath by doing so.

I recall the air thickening and stifling my petite lungs when Mother and Popo engaged in a virtual fight. Mother would first assert a “Childhood Memory”, commenting on how she was raised the way she was, which evoked Popo's rage, causing her to counter with “Denial”. Mother's fury would intensify, kindling a fire in my imagination, leading to a tensing of the atmosphere. Afterwards, Popo would combat her previous statement and challenge a certain detail, - for example the way she acted, - and accuse Mother of an entrapping attempt. Finally, with a frustrated wowl - “Ugh!” - Mother would submit to Popo's agitating harrying. Victory for Popo!

In face of her dismaying defeat, Mother would hang up with a forceful press of the “End Call” button and let go of the telephone, another hand rubbing on her temples for ease. Somehow this action reminded me of a dragon slayer in the middle of their battle, weary and distressed. I would get this abnormal flutter in my stomach, either because I was famished or concerned, as well as an urge to rush to Mother's side to comfort her. But I never could never quite work my courage up or find the perfect words, hence ending up sitting where I sat, on the edge of my seat with an unrequited compulsion.

Until one afternoon seven years ago. Everything changed.

There wasn't the usual phone call from Popo interrupting Mother's meal making, of which Mother was aware. Her eyebrows knitted closely together, despite telling me not to worry when I inquired about it casually. Eventually, the cooking proceeded with an amiss feeling. Clearly, something was bothering her, and what her mouth said her heart denied.

After Mother finished up her cooking, the long-awaited phone call finally arrived. Relieved, she picked up. What she heard was entirely unanticipated.

Popo was in the hospital.

At the drop of a hat, Mother grabbed her coat and together, we were out the door.

A minute seemed like a lifetime during the ten-minute taxi ride to the hospital. You could only envision the torment Mother was enduring as the dread and anxiety bubbled forth in her blood.

When we finally arrived at the hospital, Mother instantly dashed to Room 607, where Popo was. It was not well-lit, and the anchor grey walls further exemplified its darkness. As I entered the room, I felt the gloominess befall on me, causing me to shiver. Mother was already beside Popo, holding her hand. I noticed an oxygen mask had been placed over Popo's mouth. Her shrivelled, aged, mirthful face appeared more ashen, lifeless, threadbare than usual; her trembling hands were replaced by still, frigid, morbid ones.

Observing her lying motionless in bed, I truly thought Popo was dead.

Conversely, Mother's eyes gleamed ... a green light illuminating Popo and the inky surroundings. Mother was so hopeful that I almost believed by her hope alone Popo would be revived.

Moments later, Mother redirected her gaze from Popo to me, allowing me to glimpse the streaks of tears falling along her chin in the vague lighting. She reassured her bewildered but disconcerted daughter - me - that Popo would be up in no time so I needn't worry.

Father picked me up and drove me back home later on that afternoon. Mother didn't come home until 9:00.

The next morning, Mother was up exceptionally early making the congee I knew and loved - the kind with scallops and lean pork - for Popo. Her facial expression elicited exhaustion from yesterday's visit. Finally, for once, I offered to help, but she declined, insisting that I return to sleep at once.

"Mommy, why are you making congee for Popo when you're so tired?"

"Because she's my mother and I'm her daughter. This is what I should do."

I was perplexed when Mother uttered those words. On any normal day, she would pick a quarrel with Popo over the most trivial matters, as though they loathed each other. So I couldn't comprehend why in the world would she put so much care into making the congee.

"But don't you dislike Popo?"

"Certainly not! Although we always argue, I'll never forget how she raised me to the woman I'm today. So, as one of many acts of filial piety, I'm making her congee first thing this morning."

I was still confused by her words, but witnessing as she was so focused on her task at hand, I knew better than to bother her. When Mother put her mind to a certain thing, no matter how arduous, she would finish it; that's how stubborn the Li women were. At that moment, the solicitous yet determined expression on Mother's face reminded me of Popo.

Like mother, like daughter, I suppose.

## Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Natalie Cheung Tzs Wing School: Renaissance College Class: 8.3

“Xiao” is the most important virtue of the Chinese culture. “Xiao” represents the respect for your elders, including parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and so on. Some understand the statement thoroughly and give it no doubt. Yet to others, this lesson had to be taught, like me.

I was a horrible child. I would ask for things endlessly and expect my parents to fulfill my requests. When things weren't given, I would throw tantrum until they gave me what I wanted. My parents would care for me when I was sick, yet I wouldn't do a thing when my parents got sick. I was a spoilt child.

One day, I got into a fight with my parents. I said mean and horrible things that I regretted afterwards. The fight ended with me running into my room and locking myself in. When I entered my room, I found a letter lying on my desk. It was a white envelope with a few yellow stains on the front, along with my name written in black. The ink looked as if it had faded. It was as though it had sat there for years. Even though I felt crept out, I picked up the envelope and turned it around. Carefully I took out the aged letter that was written. I read the letter with shaking hands, a shiver ran down my spine. This feeling turned from a fright into a heartache of sorrow.

Dear Celine,

13th April, 2004

You are probably the same age as I am when you read this letter. I haven't met you, and I don't think I'll ever have the chance to, but I could feel you right next to me. I could imagine you having long hair, brown eyes just like I do, but I know you will be luckier than I am.

Surrounding me are plain white curtains and plain white walls with no decorations. Tubes are connected to my body, helping me sustain my life, earning me more time on this planet. With every moment, I suffer from pain. The worst of these pains isn't physical, they are the mental scars that I had not enough time to cure.

Being the youngest in the family, I never got much attention, that's what I used to think. I wasn't strong enough to do the housework, nor was I mature like my elder brothers and sisters to make decisions, so I caused trouble to seek attention. My father had to work 18 hours per day in order to earn enough money to raise the family. My mother used to work part time in a Chinese restaurant, but when she was at home, she was always a fierce mom.

One day, I fainted and was admitted to the hospital. I woke up, seeing my dad's tears for the first time. Every day, my family would come visit me to make sure I was doing fine. Yet after the first week, the number of their visits decreased. One day, they stopped coming. I was heartbroken, I felt so unimportant and lost motivation to do anything.

One rainy day, my dad came to visit me, completely soaked from running in the rain. He had gained more white hair and he looked awfully tired. In his hands were my favorite foods. A few thoughts came into my mind. First thing was that he looked as if he's aged for five years during these a few weeks. The second thing was the more important one. I realized that my family did care about me. Father and mother had to work even harder to support my medication.

I always thought that I was neglected, but instead, I was the one who everyone cared about the most. Everyone wanted the best for me, but I never realized that. I feel so horrible that I had found out so late and I regret doing all those things to gain their attention.

Out of pure thankfulness, I started to cry. I couldn't make out if he was surprised or if he's shocked. He gave me the gentlest tap on my head. I wiped my tears and shakily thanked him. Keeping his strict persona, Father told me to stop crying and handed me over my favorite food. I shared some with him, talking about how things have been since I got into the hospital.

Father then looked at me with a serious expression. He told me how my condition was incurable, how I had to stay in the hospital until the disease finally became lethal. Until then, they will have to keep on paying for my hospital bills, despite how poor the family is. They have made the choice to keep me alive for as long as I

could.

I felt conflicted when he told me the news. I was afraid, afraid of the day I die. At the same time, I was grateful that I have such a selfless family and I hated how selfish I had been.

I hope you have learnt something from the tale of my life. Right now, I am sincerely happy that I'm still breathing.

Sincerely,  
Selina, you-

At the end of the letter, a line trailed down the page. She had died before being able to finish the letter completely, someone else had placed it into an envelope and gave it to me.

After reading the letter, I realized how lucky I am. Both to have such great parents and being able to live in such conditions. For the first time, I apologized to my parents and asked them about my aunt who died a year before I was born.

Although I have always known that I was named after my aunt, I was never told of the story behind it. Fate has brought me to finish what my aunt couldn't complete. "Xiao" is an essential virtue that connects and protects the family.

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### Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Arista Lai School: German Swiss International School Grade: 12

# 1919—Allegiance

1919, Baoding, Hebei Province.

A man, almost a corpse, stumbles through the armed gates. Like a stone dropping through still water, the village erupts into anxiety. Shock resounds on each humble passerby's face. Shouts of urgency; gasps of horror; two feet dragging, deadweights, in the dust.

An aging man scarcely hears the pandemonium from his window, but he sees the helpless body—and it wears the faction's uniform. Zhili.

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For months now, the politicians have muttered: guerrillas, guerrilla attacks.

Tensions along the borderlines between the Zhili and the Anhui opportunists take merchants' lives each week. 'Trade should be kept out of war' is what righteous generals believe—yet the Anhui do not follow rules. They are monsters, and Zhili suffers their bestiality.

Sun Chuanfang, aging patriarch of the Sun family, watches the village pensively through a rhomboidal window in his door. As if on command, a man in Zhili uniform bursts into the store, gesturing. Outside, villagers gather to a blood-thrumming drumbeat.

"Zhili! Gather! Warlord Feng has spoken." Uniforms mill around a horse-rider: the lord's aide. He unrolls a scroll: "The Anhui have struck again. This time, at one of our patrols. A direct challenge to our border! Each household shall put forth one man for the Zhili army."

Bowing, Sun closes the door on the commotion. In the house behind the storefront, his family sleeps.



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Sun Xiuming, the youngest, wakes at any sound, and the present drumbeats reverberate through her. Xiuming hates the store. Everything is immaculate, cleaned by them, but still things feel dusty: straw-filled boxes and musty shelves of hand-painted vases.

Her father pads into the living area, spectacles askew, balding head. She thinks he looks apprehensive, knuckles clenching a message that he hides under a mahogany elephant. Xiuming sees that expression more and more often nowadays.

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While her brother Huzhong goes to school, Xiuming learns from village women: sewing, washing, cooking. Arms full with laundry, she nudges the front-door open. Voices waft through, and ever curious, she pauses. “You must go.” Sun’s voice is commanding, leaving no room for argument. Still, he tries to accommodate, “for our leader. For me, your mother, your sister.”

She hears her brother hum in agreement.

“Remember, son. Xiao is the king of virtues.”

Betrayed by the light, Xiuming enters fully. Her brother, eyes still lowered in respect, leaves; they brush shoulders.

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For hours, Huzhong acts strangely. He doesn’t return to school. He loiters around, touching things, rearranging, weaving in circles through the house and back to his room. When he passes the living room, his gaze falls involuntarily on the framed figure of his father in the Zhili army uniform. Brighter, tighter features with purposeful, penetrating eyes. Huzhong cannot shake off the feeling: every step he makes will be wrong, until he steps beyond the door.

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Her hands weave deftly, but her mind floats. She wonders why her brother is packing things, touching, choosing, leaving. This isn’t unusual—she recognises his indecisive patterns from watching him pack the wares; but Xiuming cannot recall Father telling them about new orders.

“I can’t believe it! They can’t do this!” a sharp wail from a village-woman bursts Xiuming’s thoughts. While husbands and sons are at work, they gossip over half-finished baskets.

Another woman sighs in defeat, jabbing the reeds rigidly. “They have our loyalty, they have power.”

“But my husband... I’m pregnant. He can’t leave! What will I do?”

“What you will do,” admonishes her friend, “is keep your voice down. Don’t complain about our responsibilities as Zhili... our men must protect the clan.”

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Xiuming waits in vain through the table-talk of dinnertime.

She ambushes her brother as they clear up: “Why are you leaving us?” Her tone accuses, her glare cuts. Huzhong doesn’t lie. “It wasn’t my choice.” He looks softly at her. “It’s for the good of our family and our people.”

Xiuming shakes her head. “We need you here. Not far away. Not dead.”

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The day after.

Huzhong's presence is being erased. As each job is reallocated, he loses purpose in the Sun family. His only role now is to fight the Anhui.

Sun mentally checks off the necessities for war. He worries over his son's inexperience. 'I had no choice', he tells himself, 'I must be loyal'. This is his duty—Sun had sent merchants over the border despite Anhui threats; the guilty must pay for their folly.

Sun's wife understands, but will never be at peace. Mechanically folding Zhili-crested tunics, the lines on her face read deeply—the natural instinct of a mother constrained by loyalty.

Huzhong finds her curled up with his pillow. He's surprised that Father hasn't reprimanded Xiuming yet; perhaps that alone speaks volumes. The bed sinks underneath him with a melancholy sigh.

"Mingming. I know this is hard for you. But don't blame Father. This is Xiao."

"But it's unfair that they can force you to leave!"

"You need to look wider, sister. It's more; it's our family's collective duty as Zhili. We must respect our community's elders and leaders... for as our mother gave us life, so did our motherland."

Xiuming never saw her brother sit as straight, look as dignified, speak as confidently. Still, she insists, "I know our people need you. But so do I. I need my brother."

Huzhong pats her hand. "We are a clan; the people around us give trust without question. You owe it to them to trust also that I'm not sent away for nothing."

Steadfast like their father, she feels his conviction in their parting embrace.

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She will struggle at first to adapt, to come to terms with her brother's absence. She will refuse to speak to her parents, spending time instead with the village women—at least they empathise with her loss. But she will come to notice how her mother makes Huzhong's bed each morning; how her father placed Huzhong's picture beside his own. And she will finally see that they are all bound by Xiao: by sacrifice, duty, love.

## Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Emma Wong School: Victoria Shanghai Academy Class: Y10 Peace

# Through The Years and Back Again

On January 15, 1990,  
You first open your eyes to the world.  
Your mom and dad look on happily,  
With love for their first baby girl.

One year later and one year old,  
Your first word crosses your lips.  
Your parents wait, and anticipate,  
And “Dada” is what it is.

Months flies by, time whizzes past,  
And all too soon, you’re three.  
Hiding behind your mothers’ skirt  
Becomes your very first memory.

At the age of six, you’re starting school,  
And it’s you wearing the skirt this time.  
You look prepared, all dressed in pink,  
But when your parents leave, you cry.

Seven years old and growing fast,  
You turn to your parents and plead.  
Mommy and Daddy, please, please, please,  
A little sister is just what I need.

At the age of 10, your sister’s forgotten,  
And you’re wearing a smile that gleams.  
“Emma, you’re just like your mom.”  
It’s what everyone thinks, it seems.  
But you couldn’t be happier to hear that phrase,  
And you hope that it is true.  
You want to be like her forever,  
She’s perfectly perfect to you.

Three years later, a change of heart.  
In the hallway under the moonlight.  
And despite the growing hour,  
Alive is a full-fledged fight.  
Your parents stand, side by side,  
Their stance a show of unity.  
But you don’t know that behind their mask,  
They’re scared by what they see.

At the age of fourteen,  
Your home is changed.  
The doors all shut,  
The air feels strange.  
The apartment has a great divide,  
It’s their side and your side.  
The secrets that you keep from them,

Hang like weights in the heavy air.  
But even the cold looks that you give,  
Can’t disguise their love and care.

One year later, the tension builds.  
It’s a full-blown fight again.  
You say you’re going to run away  
They yell and say you can’t.  
You’ve never seen them so unhinged,  
You’ve never seen them so scared.  
But this reaction is what comforts you,  
And reminds you of their care.

The next three years pass similarly,  
They go in the blink of an eye.  
And it’s at the age of eighteen,  
That you’re waving them goodbye  
From the door of your new dorm room,  
You’re feeling new and grown.  
But when you turn around,  
The rooms feel empty and alone.

Your first second of being twenty,  
Champagne is all around.  
Over the cheers and happy laughs,  
Your grandmother muses aloud,  
“Emma, you’re just like your mom.”  
It’s what everyone thinks it seems.  
This time, you roll your eyes instead  
Of flashing that smile that gleams.

“Applause for the class of 2012.”  
Two years later, that’s what we hear.  
Your parents are the proudest of the bunch,  
Holding their breath and waiting near.  
You look to them on your way down the steps,  
Your smile is beaming as you say,  
“Mom and Dad, I’m coming home”,  
And they let you lead the way.  
Through the doors to your childhood home,  
You’re telling yourself that this  
Choice of yours pays your student loans,  
It’s not your parents that you miss.

25 years into your life on Earth,  
The phrase comes back once more,  
This time it’s not family friends or grandma,  
It’s the man you’ve fallen for.

“Emma, you’re just like your mom.”

He says the statement simply,  
He's not sure you'll take it well.  
But you feel as though you're ten again,  
Because the fact makes your heart swell.

Three years from that day,  
You're looking down  
at your very own little girl.  
You and he look on happily,  
As she blinks hello to the world.  
And you don't know it yet,  
But that moment is when,  
The entire cycle begins again.

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**Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize**  
Name: Nicole Wong School: St. Paul's School (Lam Tin) Class: 5D

## Words Left Unspoken

Day1

The horizon was tinged with red and gold, a superb sunset that all photographers fancy. Penetrating the misery in the air of the room, the golden rays planted softly on the girl's face. Agatha laid so effortlessly, her breathing inaudible. The picture could have been perfect if her blonde curls were not tarnished by blood.

Time seemed to have stopped since expiration was declared. Aunt May, Uncle Josh... her body was surrounded by familiar faces. Behind the crowd, there stood a figure witnessing the unpleasant yet peaceful scene.

Her body was translucent and her silhouette shined pearly white. She had no breathe, no heartbeat.

The idea of having only three days left on Earth crossed her mind as she jerked her head and eyed every single face around the sickbed.

What a caricature, she thought, for a mother's absence during her daughter's death. She was overwhelmed with acrimony, but she tried to pretend she didn't care.

With merely 72 hours left on Earth, it surely wasn't wise to waste a single second on her worthless mother. Determined to enjoy the advantages of invisibility, the indulgent girl was about to slide through the walls and roam through the world without boundaries. Just before she left, Agatha caught that her funeral would be held on the following day.

She was surprised that her funeral would be held that soon. Having never attended any funerals, the intrigued girl decided to pay a visit.

The young soul flew through prosperous metropolises, great wide valleys, and lastly settled in the Louvre. As she passed by the beautiful Mona Lisa, Agatha suddenly recalled that Mother had once said her childhood dream was to visit the Louvre. It had been too long ago, long before Dad and Mum's divorce, and when she was less affluent.

Day2

Returning to her hometown, Agatha rushed into the elegantly decorated funeral hall. It wasn't big, for she had few relatives. The walls were dressed with white silk, and a large polished cross was hanged on the wall where the light brown oak coffin was placed before. The rows of benches were only half-filled.



Agatha watched Aunt May slowly went up the podium. Tearful and sullen, she began her reminiscence in a dull tone, her protuberant red eyes stuck on her script. Not paying attention, Agatha was busy searching for her mother among the mournful and dire faces, and finally found her settled in the front.

Long had she not looked at her mother thoroughly. Her black dress was decent. Her makeup was on as usual, but the wrinkles were still visible. Every lady had their hair tied in a bun, yet she let her dark blonde curls down, just as the way Agatha wore them. For the first time, Agatha realised they actually looked alike.

However, that familiar face started getting loathsome. Mother inclined her head at every guest before they left, and generously gave a smile. 'How could she smile unblushingly while everyone's crestfallen? Was she... happy about my death?' Agatha was filled with rage. Her face flushed scarlet, boiling the non-existent tears running down her cheeks. She raised her hand and slapped her mother, but nothing happened.

Everyone left and her mother now stood alone, apparently immersing herself in the glum silence.

'Ling ling...' The reticence was broken. A work call. Mother then set off with a slight bow to the altar.

The ghost was left alone to taste the bitterness.

'I knew it. I always knew that she hates me. She must've thought I was the one who ruined their marriage. After all, it's me who discovered he cheated... No. It's not you it's her. She has drowned herself in court cases and left you all alone. She didn't even endeavor to communicate. Now I'm gone... No wonder why she's pleased...'

Day3

The last day on Earth. Agatha decided to spend it in her bed, the only place that could offer her security. Assuming the house was empty, she was surprised to see the lights were on. That nauseating woman's presence gave Agatha headaches. She slid into her room quickly, yet the panting from mother's room caught her attention.

Curled up in the armchair, Mother's makeup was completely ruined by torrential tears. She was still in that black dress, her hair all messed up. She was holding a photograph tightly with the face of little Agatha printed on it.

'..Aggie ...' Mother muttered. After taking a deep breath, she cleared her throat and turned maniac abruptly. 'I've never thought you'd be gone so soon... I don't deserve to be outlived... perhaps I thought earning more money could compensate an incomplete family... maybe you wanted more space so I never bothered... I just want to be strong for you to rely on... but turns out I'm just... not good enough to be your mother...'

That's too much to process. 'How can I be so ignorant?' Agatha tried to apologize, but words came out without a sound. She glanced around the room, and spotted her favourite teddy bear resting on the shelf which every birthday, a brand new one would be lying on the sofa. Sometimes she wondered why such naïve present was given, but never noticed that's because Mum never knew her penchant since they'd stopped talking.

Realising she'd been self-centred, she'd give anything for a chance to right all the wrongs yet she could merely watch and cry. Through the pouring tears, Agatha spotted a hint of white standing out in the hair of Mum. She stretched her fingers to pick it away, but her hands went right through her mother's curls. Until then, finally had she realized it's already too late to understand and care. Hatred was ever since replaced by regret.

Time was running out. Agatha reached out and cupped her mother's face as she planted a soft kiss on her stained cheeks.

"...you are the best I could wish for... I could've done better..."

An air of emptiness again filled the room.

## Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: So Tsz Kit School: Sha Tin Government Secondary School Class: 5C

For millennia, 'Xiao' has long been an irreplaceable part of Chinese education. We have all been indoctrinated a sense of 'Xiao' since our birth. Yet, most of us do not even understand what exactly it means. 'Xiao', in general, means paying respect to one's parents and elders. Despite sometimes being elaborated to courtesy towards the grey-haired throughout society, it is reckoned that 'Xiao', the esteemed virtue, contributes significantly to our culture.

To the best of my belief, 'Xiao' is the invisible rope that puts a family together, one that prevents it from collapsing. A family is established ensuing the birth of a baby. In it, the baby is safely and securely nurtured and nourished, transforming in the process into a toddler, a child, an adolescent, until eventually into an adult capable of living on his own. From then on, the once havoc-wreaking infant no longer needs the shelter. Instead, he builds one, embarking on his peregrination into the uncharted realm. Howbeit, the bonds amongst the family retain and continue holding it together. The little boy will still periodically return 'home', taking care of his now timeworn parents all due to the very existence of 'Xiao' embedded deeply in the root of our minds. Without it, the family would most likely disintegrate. The little boy might never return, leaving a pair of desolate elders behind in a dilapidated apartment.

With 'Xiao', the family doesn't fall apart. It ramifies into idiosyncratic branches, each with their sui generis features. All branches are connected to the original stem, just like how the little boy constantly returns to his old shelter.

Wait, there is more. Just before you start contemplating the wonderful 'Xiao', why not think about it from another perspective? As a matter of fact, the family we call 'stem' is, indeed, just another branch developed from another stem. Should we follow this trait, all the branches which have existed, exist, or will exist, all ascribe to one point, where our first ancestor began. Suddenly you find yourself being a minuscule and fugacious fragment of a gargantuan and perpetual family system. Staggered, you delve into this unfathomable wormhole, only to excavate even more surprises. Finally, you have a ludicrous albeit veracious thought that your ephemeral life will be recorded in that unfading tree and you think, what about my ancestors, or my offspring? Yes, all of the dribs and drabs of your forebear have been there for a long time, waiting for you to carry on the fabrication of the vicissitudes. You are of utmost and ambiguous insignificance in the system, but you are of culminant and unequivocal importance. You must comply with 'Xiao'. 'Xiao' must be carried forward, or else all of the travail and endeavor done by the ancient will be in vain.

Unfortunately, the unpalatable reality is that the impact of 'Xiao' seems to have been dampened in recent decades. Attrition towards 'Xiao' is prevalent under the invasion of Western culture from countries on the other side of the globe, in which there is no sense of filial piety. With the advent of advanced telecommunication technology, the new generation is now more and more oblivious to 'Xiao' and other conventional virtues. It is unquenchable that should the trend continue to spread like a pandemic disease, the structure upheld for centuries may become more and more vulnerable. It may topple to its demise in a night.

Here we are, in a pressing situation. Our culture is being eroded away and it is your duty to save it from its demise. Recognize your mission and act now!

## Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Martin Alexander Humphrey School: YMCA of Hong Kong Christian College Class: 3H

# The Wise Young Man That Could Not Hear

There once lived a wise young man that could not hear, not of light-hearted suggestions nor the direst of warnings, for he knew that there was not a single soul he could listen to that matched his unparalleled abilities. The young man found that he could not fault. This young man was named Fin.

Fin's name was fitting for the prophecy that awaited him. Fin's mother and father were farmers, simple folks that knew more of the hilly lands than the backs of their hands. Fin's parents loved him unconditionally, letting him go outside on adventures. As Fin would leave the house, his mother would insist from within, "don't go past the heart-shaped tree. But should you do so, remember that those old owls that lay far beyond the grassy hills and meadows of flowers will help you get back home!"

Such warnings would never be heard by Fin as he left, like so many times before, he wandered on a path set over winding hills and cantered past flowered plains on his newest adventure. He was searching for the potent logs that his father always would use to make fires in the hearth.

Fin had arrived at last to the walls of trees that once lingered at the borders of the farmhouse, however before he would continue, he became aware of two young star-crossed lovers, a man and a woman, lost in the colours of each other's eyes. Fin asked intrusively, "Where are the best logs on the land?" "Well," stated the infatuated man, "there's only one tree that can provide the logs you seek, the only Hickory tree beyond the forests ahead."

Fin trudged along, through the rotting rowdy thick of thorns and roots that clung to his feet, wanting to deny him of impending victory rather than leaving him be. The lover's suggestion overwhelmed any other, the desire for success denied him the memory of his mother's wise words.

As the path so faithfully led him, Fin arrived at the steps of a humble abode, with an old concerned looking woman that sat peacefully overlooking a mass of the forest. Fin asked, "Where can I find the best logs in the woods?" "Look around," the old woman proclaimed, "there are countless trees for you to cut, and yet you want the best?" Fin was tired and thirsty after his trekking, his muscles ached and his shirt stuck to him with dried sweat. The wise old woman noticed his sufferings, "I shall give you a great offer, young man - my husband's old axe, but only if you promise to go straight back home." Fin knew that this suggestion was void of excitement and seldom would he accept such direct means for an end. His pride and grandiosity does not permit a simple answer to his task.

A slow descent back onto the path and continuing onward, Fin was imbued a strong inclination to complete his journey, his need for achievement caused by his protest of orthodoxy led him to take a shortcut down a steep trend and into a small clearing in the deep of the forest. There were freshly cut logs, lying around and aroma's of pine and grass encircled Fin. He found himself unable to resist the urge to inspect what seemed like an abandoned sawmill.

The broken mill felt lonesome and aged, with rusted steel tables full of grimy tools and veins of sick green undergrowth seeping up the walls. He sat down and took a break.

He was going to rest his head on some leaves just as a towering shadowy man with three legs stumbled into view. "Hey!" announced the man, "you shouldn't be this deep in the woods alone. Go back home to your parents." The man had long white hair with a beard to match and a cane that supported his bulk. "This is no place for rest," stated the old man in a gruff tone, "why are you here?" "I need to get logs from a Hickory tree to bring home," Fin said in a tiresome manner.

The end of the day was drawing near. A colder harsher wind spat at Fin, and the skies were stained orange.

"You can come into the mill if you want to," the wise old man proposed. "If you would be inclined to ask me for help, I would duly fetch my ladder."

"You're too old and weak to help me," Fin abruptly replied.

"And are you are too young and strong even for my advice?"

The wise old man questioned. Although Fin understood that he needed rest, it seemed like a far cry from asking for help. Fin opted to at least hear out the wise old man's advice.

"There will should life prevail, come a time when you'll be much like me, and your voice of reason should not be as tainted by arrogant indifference much like it is now," the wise old man huffed as Fin got up, away from his company and towards the greenery.

A brief look back at the old run-down sawmill, a quick rebellious sneer in the old man's direction and Fin was back on the last straws of his journey. Fin knew with absolute certainty that the task at hand was nearing completion. His constant numbing and stout boredom could be released. The trees grew fewer in number and smaller in size as Fin drew nearer.

At last, in a clearing, there stood one Hickory tree. Fin was ecstatic, the hairs on his back jumped with joy. But confined in the midst of his sensation, however, hid a revelation. Fin lacked a ladder to scale the tree and no axe to cut its branches.

Fin heard a young voice from behind himself as his hair was greying and legs now struggling to bear weight, "Hey! do you know where the best wheat in the land is, wise old man?"

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### **Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Vania Chow Sung Wing School: Shatin College ESF (Secondary Schools Division) Class: 9X1

Dear Reader,

Please, pardon me. Allow me to be self-centered; allow me to be perhaps... irreverent; allow me to humour you with my self-assured perspicacious thoughts. So, Sir, Madam, Mister, Miss, look out the window, I beg you.

I'll tell you what I see. I see the hustle and bustle of work-goers, rushing hither and thither in their immaculate suits with a perfectly brewed coffee in their hands. I see the hubbub of students, slaving away to their books and their strenuous tests even as they walk, or rather, stumble. And lastly, just barely, hidden in the shadows of the busy young men and women, I see a little old lady. This little, rather decrepit old lady dressed in rags of all colours, was knelt down onto the floor, perhaps searching for some prized possession which had been washed away, wrung from her in this dipping and rising sea of people. I watched her hands search the concrete road blindly, struggling to even reach a meter outwards before they were thrown backwards by the waves of leather shoes. Even from here, I could see the drops, no, the streams of sweat ebbing and flowing down her contorted face of pain onto the sizzling concrete road. Yet no one, not a single office-goer, nor a single student noticed her or her pain- but only, how slow-going she made the traffic on this Monday morning.

Isn't it simply abominable how self-obsessed people are? Were their schedules all so jam-packed that they could not afford to donate a single second to easily have made someone's week? Apparently so. Or perhaps even more sickeningly, these work-goers, these students simply just did not care. After all, these unprepossessing and incapable elderly were only a burden to society and would never be able to return their acts of kindness- or so they believed.

But they are wrong, very very much so. Do you love your life? I'm sure you, alongside those unsympathetic work-goers and students do. Then again, I beg you, I plead you, consider all those things which make your life what it is, consider all the loving people you would not be here without, consider anything and everything which has ever made you smile. These things, these people, this world you live in, did not come together by luck or by chance; they did not come together because of a single genius' works; they came to together because of all of us, because of everyone who has preceded us, everyone, who had ever taken a single step on this Earth.



If your parents did not provide for you, you wouldn't be alive today; if your teachers did not teach you, you wouldn't be reading this letter today; even, if some environmental conservationists did not do their jobs, you wouldn't be breathing this air you breathe today.

You know how the saying goes- we're all born into the world with nothing, and too we will all leave the world with nothing. But no. We are not born with nothing, we are born with the weight of an unpayable debt of moral responsibility on our shoulders; a debt that needs to be paid, or at least, partially paid. And so, what we leave with is completely up to us. Perhaps some may hopefully leave with the lesser of a debt, whilst others' multiplied. So to those students, those work-goers, take a minute out of your time, think, act, aid all those around you who though may not seem affiliated with you in any way, but perhaps, perhaps in another time, in another lifetime has helped you, will help you in ways you cannot imagine.

Fine, you might think now, I'll go visit my parents sometime, or go volunteer at the local community centre. Those actions and deeds, are of course undeniably admirable; but, repaying these debts that you are forever obligated to isn't just a single action. Repaying these debts means commitment, respect, patience, all the virtues of a perfect being. But none of us are perfect, none of us are faultless, but does it mean that we cannot repay our debts? No, certainly not. Repaying these debts are words, actions, thoughts that stem consistently and truly from the bottom of our hearts, it's the effort, the intentions, the love that they broadcast which truly counts.

So listen to me again. Love yourself and your life, for your well-being might just save another man some strife. Love your country, for though it may hold contrary beliefs to your own, but if you are here reading this, it has protected you well. Love the people, for they have provided you guidance and support. And finally, love the world, for it has given you the platform to live this miraculous life. After all, this love is our responsibility, our duty, our obligation.

And as for the little old lady? She was still there, still in the rags she called her shirt and the cracked overused cane she gripped with stone tight perseverance. Was she still on all fours? No, perhaps now you and I would wish she was instead. There she lay, sprawled on the sizzling concrete, her arms wide open spread like a star, as people, people like you and I continued to march over her. Her eyes were still wide open, their fiery pain long gone as she stared up into space, perhaps looking for a saviour, perhaps looking for you.

She is not alone, she is only one amongst millions, neglected, hurt, abused. We may never know of her name or the valiant deeds she's done, but this, this incident, serves as an example of society's neglect. Neglect that must transpire into compassion.

Run, run now, save this little decrepit old lady. For love is always, and will always be something worth fighting for. Go, do not let people downtrodden this star, the star which marks the start of a revolution, the revolution of love.

With love,  
Vania Chow  
15th April 2018

## Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Mercado Hailey Keaira Alcoba School: St. Clare's Girls' School Class: 3T

# Love for All – Filial Piety

'I have never had such a regret in my entire life.'

Did you ever just want to run away from home? To get an apartment of your own just so you could avoid the voice of your parents? I definitely did. But why? Why did I ever want to get rid of the people who believed in me the most?

I was in high school. I was competing for the scholarship for the school of National League of Football. My whole future depended on it. I was never great at academics because I never really worked hard at anything. I'd always fail in class and get detentions for ridiculous reasons I made up. "Oh sorry, my fish ate my homework."

But I was great at football. When I was a little boy, my father always played football with me and watched football games at midnight. He taught me the essentials of the sport along the way.

I was running across the field, holding the "coffee bean" tight against my chest. Running across the field, I heard my mother crying out, "MARK, GET 'EM!!" as she was running across the bleachers following me. I'd think, oh my god...

When I huddled with my team, they asked, "Mark, was that your mother? "

I looked up and said, "No, I have never seen her ever before in my life."

After the game, I slept over at my friend's. I didn't want to see my horrid family because I had lost the game. I hung out with losers who didn't get the dreaded scholarship like me.

I drove back home in a grey run-down van at 2am in the morning with my friends, only to find out that the lights were still on. The window of light shone across the dark cobblestone trail to my crippled old house.

"What?! Are your parents still awake?", my friends asked. I was half-sober with a quarter stick of weed in my hand. They guided me to the door, grasping my forearm or I'd fall down. I turned the knob slowly and took a step into the house which didn't seem familiar anymore. My mother said, "Hi Mark, how've you been? "

"I'm fine, I'm going to bed"

"Mark, I just want to talk you."

"No, I'm tired. I'm going to bed."

"Mark, I haven't seen you all day and night. I just want to talk to you," raising her voice.

"SHUT UP. YOU BOTHER ME." That was my last memory of the house before I left my family.

After 7 months which passed like a bat out of hell, I found myself going on tour, playing championship games whilst rubbing elbows with the finest football players. In one of those nights when I was back at home, I received a call from a recruiter for the football leagues. They really thought I had potential. It was too sudden, who would've expected a guy like me to get a call from the one of the largest sport companies? I didn't tell my parents. I just wanted to leave home, no matter how bad my last impression was.

I was at a hotel in Japan. I was lying on my bed when the phone rang. My mum was dead.

How?! How could this happen? I ran out to the lobby, fell on my knees on the cold hard concrete floor and had my hand up in the air crying out I was so sorry. I found out she was involved in a car crash with an 80-year-old

driver. After I was done with the Asian tour, I flew back to America to look at them for the last time in black boxes.

I was so nervous to see her in the funeral so I stood in the back corner. I kept looking from a distance and kept thinking to myself, "mum, please wake up, please get up." When I finally got the nerve, I walked up to her casket. As I got closer, I realized how beautiful she was. She was wearing a white dress with her hands together on her chest. She looked like an angel.

"Mum, you are my hero, everything I am, everything I hoped to be was because of you. You loved me so much. You gave me a life. You were the only one who truly believed in me."

How did I repay her? By getting drunk and getting high? By getting stupid? By hanging out with losers? And for what? All she ever wanted was to talk to me.

"I wish I could talk to you now, mum," I whispered, "I wish you could see what I'm doing. Why couldn't I have been a better son?"

I regretted everything. People are defined by their choices. But I chose to hang out with losers, to be drunk, to be high, to be bad at school? I've learnt the most important thing in life. Life is precious. When we are lucky enough to have a family, we ought to cherish them, because of how easily they could slip away.

What I learnt is to cherish my family. We need to respect and love our parents. We need to take care of them. Everything we do for them is just to balance the scale, for how many times our parents have been there for us.

Filial Piety is the one thing we could do to repay our debt to our parents.

So give them love.



公開組  
(英文組)

**Open Section  
(English Division)**

## Open Section (English Division) Champion

Name: Dawn Yu Aquino

As a precocious child straddling two cultures in the Philippines, the concept of filial piety took root at a very tender age, planted with care by my Chinese father and Filipina mother, by relatives and well-meaning friends, by media, the school, state, Church and every other person I crossed paths with.

It's a concept and societal norm most Asians grow up and live with, yet some struggle to grasp its significance. Others debate its value and a few disown it altogether. For me, it is like a second skin, as natural as breathing, as important as eating, as essential as drinking.

My earliest memories of filial piety were about food. As a family who loves to cook and eat, mealtimes were (and still are) sacred. My mother would serve all of Papa's favorite dishes, and while they offered us kids the choicest bits, we always declined, offering them back to our parents, who of course also declined, thereby leaving us with that coveted drumstick or mouth-watering piece of beef tendon. Why the merry-go-round when in the end, the kids get to eat the favored parts anyway? To teach us to always offer something -- whether our service, time, or the premium portion -- to our elders. To instill the value of deference, to show that we respect what they like and, as we leave our childhood behind, we watch as the elders graciously learn to accept our offerings. We then play the same merry-go-round with our own children.

The way my Papa treated his mother and his childhood nanny (my Amah and Apo, respectively) were perhaps the greatest examples of filial piety I encountered as a child. His attitude certainly made a deep and lasting impression. He was the fifth among six siblings, one of three boys, and the preferred charge of Apo, who spoiled him and taught my mother all her secret recipes for his childhood favorites. These dishes were prepared with immense natural talent and love by an illiterate person, and the precious recipes have since been passed on to me, painstakingly written down by my mother from observation and memory. Apo joined my Amah's household as a young girl, and typical of the heart-breaking separation stories of that time, she has no recollection whatsoever of her own family, her date of birth or real name, and my Amah's family became her own.

As Amah grew older and more intractable, Papa's patience in dealing with her increased by leaps and bounds. He would go through traffic to pick her and Apo up from the unsavory area around the pier because she preferred to travel by sea. He, along with his siblings, would take her out to eat at least once a week, and listen to her stories while indulging her love of mahjong and smoking. He brought me with him when travelling with her to Hong Kong, because she was stubborn and impatient and would suddenly walk off and veer away from everyone, and he needed someone quick and spry to catch up to her. Eventually I was tasked to be her chaperone, and despite my poor grasp of Hokkien, we managed to enjoy ourselves and I managed to bring her home safe and sound.

Papa took care not only of Amah's needs but Apo's as well, taking her to see the doctor, checking up on her, keeping her company and arranging her funeral when she eventually passed away. Her ashes are in my family's columbarium space, because in that way she will always be remembered, visited and honored, a cherished part of our clan. She never married and treated us all like her own grandchildren.

Today Papa is the ripe old age of 75, strong in bearing but slow in walking, hard of hearing yet still mentally sharp. He pushes his arthritic older brother's heavy wheelchair whenever they eat out at the mall, despite his own decreased pace and energy level.

These everyday examples of deep-seated love and respect for elders is something I witnessed and experienced firsthand, and it is second nature for me to take older people's hands and place them on my temple as a sign of greeting, to acknowledge parents or friends old or new, to offer the best and most comfortable seats to the elderly, whether strangers or not; to help open doors, carry packages, support the wobbly senior crossing the street or getting in and out of a bus.

For my husband and I, supporting and caring for our parents and elderly relatives as they age, whether



physically, financially or emotionally, is a non-negotiable, “no arguments please” fact of life. We will do it gladly, openly and generously, as they have done for their family members before them.

My kids, however, are growing up in twenty-first century Hong Kong, a bustling, pressure-cooker metropolis, which, like most cities in this day and age, is beset with modern-day ills. Without their grandparents or elderly relatives constantly surrounding them, I know as parents we have to double up our efforts and impress in them how crucial this virtue is, as a way of maintaining harmony and balance in society, as the transformative power that smoothens out the rough edges of family life, and to complete the circle of give and take. I strongly believe that an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration prevents many a family's contentious debates.

When my modern-day kids do simple things such as follow their grandparents around to make sure they don't lose their balance and fall, hold their arms as they cross the street or climb the stairs, offer them something to drink, get their meals at a buffet line, give them priority seating, listen to their stories, no matter how boring or bizarre; when they show respect for elderly strangers, or tell us how they will care for us when they reach adulthood, I know we have taught them well. When my young son carefully and lovingly placed a basket of flowers at the gravesite of my Amah, someone he never met, and deferentially bowed his head, sitting patiently under the scorching sun while the adults said their prayers, I know there is hope yet. Hope that filial piety, this bedrock of society, this seemingly alien concept for a lot of youngsters nowadays, will eventually become second skin—as natural as breathing, as important as eating, as essential as drinking.

## Open Section (English Division) 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up

Name: Liam Beale

# Children of Cities

You've heard of the Coriolis effect; how the direction water that flows in is different in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. I experienced something far more interesting when taking my first wayward steps from West to East.

When I left England in 2008 I was parting from my parents physically (leaving my mother sobbing at the terminal gate of Heathrow) but remained dependant on them financially. The new friends I would start to make in Hong Kong, on the other hand, seemed to be getting a raw deal; They were expected to knuckle-down in office jobs and give money to their parents.

Support, it seemed to me, was flowing backwards.

This would have been something I put to the back of my mind, but it began taking up a bigger and bigger part of my life when I fell in love with a Chinese girl. When the time came and we decided to marry I found that I was expected to ask for her parents' permission, rather than just informing them as we had done with my own parents. Then, shortly after the wedding, it dawned on me that my commitments to her had also extended to her family - as if I had read them vows, and given them rings.

One resulting obligation came as quite a nasty surprise. On one occasion my mother back in England felt it right to send me some money - whilst my wife felt it right to give her mother some money. This meant, in effect, my mother's money was going to my mother in law!

This kind of lopsidedness surely causes conflict in many bicultural families. I was lucky to have caught on early, but all the same, my parents demanded an explanation.

I had to articulate to them that this was all part of what people were calling Haau Sun (孝順), a set of expectations as to how one treats one's parents. It is commonly translated into the rather stuffy filial piety, which fails to express that Haau Sun is commonly used as a verb. It is something actionable. You do it: You show gratitude and loyalty to your parents throughout your adult life to acknowledge the efforts they put into raising you.

It is all too easy for those of a Western mindset to be left scratching our heads or rolling our eyes when hearing of the term. It all sounds a bit too authoritarian; typical of our stereotypes of Chinese parents as being stringent and pushy to their children.

But Haau Sun is much more than the propaganda of tiger mums: it is deeply embedded in Chinese culture. Confucius, the primordial thinker of Chinese civilization had called it the most important of all virtues, stating that empires would stand or fall based on whether its principles were upheld. Chinese folklore is full of tales extolling its importance, but to Western ears, these tales often sound alien and unethical. Most prominent among these being the tale of the Taoist protection deity Nezha (哪吒), who is known as practically the patron saint of Haau Sun because in his tale he repays his 'debt' to his mother and father by tearing apart his flesh and bones and feeding his parents the meat of his own body!

Or, let's take another story - Ragged Boy Obedient To Mother - and break it into its essential beats:

1. A boy's natural mother dies. In time the father decides to remarry.
2. This new stepmother turns out to be abusive in a number of ways, giving preferential treatment to her own two boys.

Now, perhaps you have already noted the tropes of a good fairy tale and feel that you know the resolution we're steering towards.

Let's see :

3. The good little boy falls to his knees and begs his father to forgive the stepmother.

If you're like me this feels like the wrong ending - But why? What's missing?

The temptation would be to say that justice is missing, and this is to an extent true - Traditionally, duty to one's parents came before fairness. But the classical Western folktales did not really hand out justice either. They revelled in comeuppance. Our own Brothers Grimm would have had the abusive stepmother danced to death in burning metal shoes whilst doves pecked out her children's eyes!

And here, in holding Western culture up to the standards of Haau Sun, do we realise that the Chinese and Western views have fundamentally different starting points. Where Confucius idolized parenthood, our own intellectual forefather, Socrates was wondering aloud whether we should abolish parenthood entirely, and instead teach individuals that they were born from the city itself. Where the stories of the East taught family unity, The Parable of The Prodigal Son instead shows us how a good parent allows their child independence, whilst also providing them dependability. Overwhelmingly our fairy tales (Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella, Snow White...) focus on liberation from the family, - into the woods, into adventure and the company of strangers.

These stories contributed to a mindset that seemed, to me, to be the natural way of things - until one day my wife said :

'The Chinese view might sound strange, but the Western view of parenting is quite sad really. It's like that spider that gets eaten by her own babies.'

This is worth remembering: Where we may feel that a virtue like Haau Sun is strange, to people from other cultures our own status quo can appear selfish, callous and harmful.

Consider, for example, what some in England are calling The Silent Epidemic - Whereupon millions of ageing people, with their mobility increasingly limited, suffer tremendous social isolation as a result of their families moving away from their immediate area. Often with just a television for company, many English seniors suffer from depression and anxiety. This has a measurable impact on their wellbeing, and although certain charities aim to offer social support, these are the exceptions that prove the rule.

Somewhat ironically, Western individualism might not be the best thing for us as individuals either. The blogger Tim Urban calculated that by the time an individual in America leaves high school they have already spent 93% of the time they will ever spend with their parents . Yes, this lifestyle has granted us freedom - but often the true cost of this freedom is only made apparent to us when we are hit by hardship and tragedy.

A friend of mine, another proud migrant, was unable to fly back to England when his mother fell ill. Instead, his family brought a computer into her hospital ward and my friend watched his mother's final moments over a faulty Skype call.

The heartbreaking poignancy of this image seems to me the perfect crystallization of our conflicted mindset: A simultaneous, impossible urge for both independence and dependence; Part of us saying - 'I have to leave you, but please stay with me.'

In keeping families close filial piety neatly remedies these blind spots. It's also worth remembering that in the entire planet, Hong Kong is the territory with the highest life expectancy and it would be glib to ignore the role Haau Sun and family unity play in this.

But it would also be dauntlessly naive to assume that Hong Kong's traditional values are not threatened by a new set of priorities. In fact, the change is already underway. It might be no exaggeration to say that the gap between this generation and the last demonstrates the greatest shift in attitude Hong Kong has ever seen: To

my parent-in-law's generation, it was practically unthinkable to live away from your elders, practically sinful to disobey them. But increasingly the youth of Hong Kong are choosing personal liberty over familial duty.

Today Hong Kong's iconic skyline, its streets, and sprawling shopping centres wear no hint of classical Chinese values. Instead they proudly broadcast the ideals of The City - Corporatism, Consumerism, and Individualism - Beneath these giants inconvenient ideas like 'duty' become unfashionable and are squeezed into the margins; Haau Sun, once the root of all virtue ', has been reduced to token gestures - taking parents out for meals on weekends - Sacrificing no more than a little money and a timeslot on an otherwise busy schedule.

Even my own parents have come to see the sadness in this. It required a reversal of thought on their part, but they ultimately came to empathise with the Chinese view, and as a family, we have taken away lessons from it: We no longer shy from the grim reality that our time together is limited - Instead we accept the fact and plan accordingly. Our connection is perhaps stronger than ever.

And now I have sons of my own I will tell them that they are not rootless, and that it's in their own best interest to treat their foundations with care because these foundations are an integral part of them as individuals.

Not because of lofty concepts like 'duty', or 'obligation'.

But because it offers us all a happier way of living.

## Open Section (English Division) 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up

Name: Ho Wai Kwan Celia

# Grave Sweeping Day

On our way back to Jakarta, we have stopped at a shabby hawker centre to wait out the daily tropical thunderstorm.

My cousins from Jakarta are busy helping themselves to a bowl of rujak fruit salad. Mum and her younger brother are chatting animatedly in Bahasa Indonesia, an alien tongue to me. It has been a long day in every sense of the word. I am beginning to feel a nagging pain in my head, which makes me wonder why I have initiated coming here to sweep Grandpa's grave.

I have met Grandpa only once, in Hong Kong. To my scrawny little self, he was a towering figure. He spoke in Hokkien and Mandarin, so back then we could not really talk. The only other thing I can remember from his visit is that he patted my head approvingly after I had bought him a KCRC train ticket from a machine.

Mum used to visit Grandpa in Jakarta every year. I was never allowed to accompany her, out of health and safety concerns. The city has always had a special place in her heart. Hardly a week would go by without her sharing with me a fond anecdote or two.

Grandpa had followed the footsteps of his peers to Southeast Asia in search of better fortunes. Mum and Uncle grew up in Jakarta during its heyday. Grandma had passed away when they were small, and Grandpa occupied himself with his budding business. He was not a doting father, as he had flatly refused Mum's plea for ballet lessons and pets in spite of the minimal costs. It did not take long for the siblings to become more fluent in Bahasa than in their native Hokkien, and acquire from their housemaids a taste for spicy local food and Bollywood movies.

In the wake of Indonesia's political turmoil and xenophobic movement, Grandpa sent Mum, then a teenage girl, to their relatives in Fujian province, but kept Uncle with him. That decision sealed the family's fate of separation, but never severed their bonds.

Fast-forward to 1998. In the midst of the worst unrest in Indonesia in decades, Grandpa was taken critically ill with cancer. Mum adamantly flew there. I was too young to worry much. Later, she recounted how the capital's international airport seemed abandoned. Somehow she managed to get a taxi. The ethnic Indonesian driver took her to the hospital through deserted streets, but she felt an unspeakable sense of peace, as if Grandpa was there protecting her. She came home to Hong Kong safely, but this time, there was none of the usual satay, kueh sweets or locally-harvested swallow's nest that Grandpa used to source for us. That was the last time she saw Grandpa.

A few years after I had graduated from university, my nurtured curiosity about the country materialized into a plan to visit Bali, Borobudur and Jakarta, where it all began. As the trip was to take place in spring, I casually suggested to Mum that we take a detour to Grandpa's grave in Bogor. I had not the faintest idea what prompted me to say that. Needless to say, the offer was more than readily accepted. Mum had that in her mind all the time, but the problem was, neither she nor Uncle knew the exact location of the grave.

Numerous phone calls to distant relatives had paid off and we tagged along their grave sweeping outing. It was a two-hour drive from the capital. Urban bustle gradually gave way to sun-blessed vegetation and lush paddy fields. To the eye of the city dweller, these are all novelties beyond words.

The cemetery on the hills was mainly for the Chinese. Our cars meandered upwards until there was no road ahead. We then trudged on with our offerings in the sweltering heat. Banana trees were here and there, but they were no shelter against the merciless sun. It had felt like a hike on a midsummer's day, until our relatives pointed Grandpa's grey stone grave to us. His name was engraved in Chinese on the headstone.



'I've come to see you, Pa,' wailed Mum in Hokkien.

Before I knew it, she was down on her knees. Tears came rolling down her cheeks. She beat her chest a few times at the height of her sorrows. I did not see this coming at all. From the others' faces, I knew that they were completely taken aback as well. We all froze and were not sure what to do.

'I'm so sorry that I didn't take care of you. I wasn't there by your side when you left us,' continued Mum. She said other things in Hokkien which I did not understand.

'Your granddaughter has come to see you too.' Mum beckoned and I knelt down next to her.

'I've come to see you, Grandpa.' I was at a loss for the right thing to say, so I echoed Mum's words.

It was a good five or ten minutes before Mum finally calmed down. Still sobbing and blowing her nose, she cleared away the branches and leaves that were on Grandpa's grave. Following her orders, we laid out the offerings ranging from fruits, meat, sweets, to of course, faux money and paper-made servants. We lighted joss sticks and properly paid our respects. It was then our turn to eat. In the shock of the moment, I had forgotten how famished I was.

If not for what had happened, it would have resembled a family picnic. While we tucked into the chicken, Uncle teased Mum for being melodramatic. Cousin said that she was touched, besides shocked, to witness Mum's outburst, but I suspect her surprise much outweighed other sentiments.

Before leaving, we were introduced to the cemetery keepers. Mum gave them money and earnestly asked them to take good care of Grandpa's grave. Not knowing when she would get to visit again, that was the best she could do.

Now as I sit in a corner of the hawker centre and listen to the subsiding rain, all of a sudden I can see with clarity Mum's regrets which will be for the rest of her life. It hurts to know that however much she misses Grandpa, he is no longer around.

And it dawns on me why I have come here. Life has come full circle in its miraculous way. It is meant to be.

## Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Janice Getzlaf

# Trust

I have found my dad in a box.

There he lays, with a serenity that I have never imagined in my years pondering this elusive figure, this shrouded enigma ...

My dad.

Now, as I peer down at my father's face, I am afforded some minutes to wander the imaginary path to my own childhood, marked by a striking absence of children's fuzzy, squishy toys, or the typical bounteous feasts on display during festivals. My dad lived with us, but this arrangement had its drawbacks: With each other, my parents were bitter, brash and accusatory. But then it happened. One day – I believe I had just started kindergarten – our flat became mercifully quiet, but father's absence was loud and clear. He was gone.

From that time onwards, it was my mother who filled the hours with her secure presence, while my father only popped in unannounced. His visits – and I now believe were solely to see me - were brief. My world became my mother, someone who could unleash an almighty fury that rendered me powerless. Still, I was able to bask in her unconditional, rational sensibilities. And I had a roof over me, allowing me the most pleasant sleeps, and dream worlds where I, an intrepid prince, overpowered predatory ogres with a solicitous slice of my gleaming sword.

I examine my elderly father's weatherworn wrinkly features, and I allow myself to look back on the happier, tender times with my father, but they are scant – a grand total of three. As the first of these notable vignettes eases its way into my mind, I embrace it.

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It was a Sunday in our single-roomed government flat stuffed floor to ceiling with mold-laden footwear, caved-in containers, and mounds of pre-laundered clothes located on shelves along the dingy, dove-emblazoned, papered walls. Light was flickering dimly, making a clearer, more perceptible view of the clutter impossible, which proved to be a blessing in disguise.

It was my fifth birthday and my father had showed up. He sat on the kitchen chair, leaning towards me, a small figure dutifully propped on the bed, awaiting the undeniable pleasures brought about by the contents of a can of sardines – the variety smothered in oil and rich tomato sauce. I waited as my father tugged on the tab – 'THWUCK' – and then, with the precision of an accomplished watch-maker, scooped out a generous teaspoonful of sardines, set it on a piece of crusty bread, and placed it in my eager hand.

'For you. Be careful! This one's got chili,' he whispered at a level to ensure the chosen words would not wriggle their way into my mother's ears.

I hesitated. 'Chili?'

'Yes, chili. It's hot, but it's the best. Trust me.' With these words he chuckled gently, like an elf sharing a silly secret with his best friend.

The morsel of bread and heap of spicy fish now sat in my mouth, with taste buds poised to accept or reject the introduction. Suddenly, a fiery burning sensation burst forward, causing my breath to cut off. With tears streaming down both cheeks, and in an attempt at self-preservation, I swallowed it all in one giant gulp.

Dad's eyes twinkled, 'Nice?'

'Yes.' I muttered.

'Want some more?'

'Yes.' I whispered, wiping away the tears. Something in my sparse answer sent my father into howls of laughter.

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Shuffling footsteps behind me. A nondescript apparition scuttles away into the remote shadows. I steal glances at the mildewed concrete walls and observe a rusty liquid oozing out of cracks – an image that shares a remarkable likeness to that of an injured soldier's leg with its gashes and gaping punctures. Here in this underpass linking the Grand Valley Racecourse with Lau Yin Street, peculiarly, my father seems at peace in his cardboard box.

As I wait, the memory of another of my father's visits makes a subtle entrance.

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I, then six, was sitting at the table in my home, poring over one of the three comic books which had been given to me by the neighbor's son, Bryan, who had long ago outgrown them, and determined early on that they weren't worth collecting. The pages were flimsy and fragile, and delicacy was required in their handling.

My father, I remember, was standing in front of me, listening attentively as I read aloud the words on the faded pages: 'We'll now answer the thousands of requests about what Gok-Jai's rings can really do. First, this is the Sun Scintillator, and this, the Duplicate Disintegrator. Here is the Eco-Blast Equalizer, and here ...'

Suddenly, the book was yanked unceremoniously from my hands. My mother stood defiantly, taking on the intimidating shape of our monolithic 'Tower of the Emperor' – that single Banyan tree I and other urchins often clambered upon in the estate playground at the base of our building.

'Stop this nonsense!' Her harsh tone made me wince. 'It's dinner time now, and the boy has to eat.' She did, however, display her characteristic decency and tucked the book carefully next to the pillow on my bed.

My father, seemingly deflated, peered hard into my eyes, for the message was not lost on him: His visit had come to an end. He put his face close to mine, saying, 'You've got a powerful voice. One day, you'll speak and others will listen. Trust me.'

I looked at him, and then over at the comic book settled neatly on my bed, and nodded in dutiful agreement.

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I appreciate this cardboard box, a barrier from the biting elements of an unseasonably cold spring. No cost. No mortgage. No taxes. On one side, it boldly declares 'THIS SIDE UP: PERISHABLE PRODUCTS' I wonder what goods have so generously given up their coveted position inside, unwittingly providing a welcomed respite for my father in this draughty thoroughfare.

I remember a summer when hot-air system had engulfed the city in a blanket of sweltering heat. My father was with me once again in a memory about ice ...

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My dad and I, a gangly eight-year-old, had just been to the park. We were pulling open the cracked, yellowed, glass door of the Chick Chick Café. Inside, I begged for a cola and that was what I got. "For you ..." my dad said, handing me the coldest paper cup I had ever held in my life thus far. Peering under the plastic lid, I was fascinated.

"Dad," I began, as we strolled along the heat-soaked pavement.

"Yes."

"Why are these called ice cubes? I mean, they're not cubes at all. Look! Cubes contain six equal squares. These sides aren't equal. The edges are actually rounded and uneven ...," my voice trailed off as I ingested this peculiarity.

"You're right, son." In his utterance, I could hear my father's pride. "When I was a boy, my father taught me that reflecting on whatever's around you was the noblest method of learning wisdom. The art of observing and then reflecting will take you far in life. Trust me."

Such profound words sounded quite right. I nodded but was more intent on slurping up the splendid goodness of cola.

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Then my dad simply disappeared from my life. At the time, it seemed inconsequential. After all, I had rarely seen him, and secondly, I was striving conscientiously for excellence in my academic pursuits. Through scholarships, bursaries and perseverance, I managed to gain my PhD, developing a keen interest in the field of computational linguistics.

Despite my notable prowess in academia, I realized that whatever understanding I had of my father was achingly limited, narrow and restricted. It became a ravenous, wormlike obsession that niggled incessantly into my comfort-blanketed world.

As I squat down on the barren concrete next to this box, I can't believe that, after appealing to social services, sifting through government data on missing persons, and scouring streets in unsavoury neighbourhoods, I have found him. Just two days ago, my initial euphoria morphed into bewilderment when I uncovered the truth: my father was an indigent who existed on the periphery of a society that didn't seem to care anymore. His address was Permanent Skid Row. His title? A Homeless Man.

Suddenly, Dad's eyes spring open, and we spend a few seconds searching - with uncertainty - into the weary windows of each other's soul.

Time has nowhere to go.

Finally, right there, the decrepitness of a tired, sagging cardboard box peels away, my childhood vestiges flutter off to some disused wayside, and each hour of searching, delving, and querying makes its own hasty retreat into the sunless, moonless recesses of the underpass walls.

'Dad, it's me.' I'm barely audible.

'Hi son. So nice to see you.' His brown eyes well with tears, and he blinks in a successful attempt to remove them.

"I'm here for you now, Dad." And then, I take ownership of the two words that I heard on three indelible occasions while in the company of my loving father: "Trust me."

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## Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Mrigank Ballabn Singh

One can judge the cultural maturity of the society by the way it treats its elders. Just reminisce your school days as a toddler and you can still hear the echo of your favourite teacher saying, "Respect your parents, teachers and elders" ever and anon. Every culture is rife with parables organically capturing how the virtue of filial respect is so significant for every generation and how profoundly it establishes affectionate bonds between different generations. The Chinese stories of "The Twenty Four filial exemplars" are extremely influential in imparting moral values expected of an ideal offspring or a student. One of my favourite stories comes from Indian Mythology. Karthikeya challenged his brother Ganesha to a race around the world. While Karthikeya zapped on his mount Peacock, Ganesha simply encircled his Parents and won the race. When Karthikeya objected, Ganesha calmly explained, "Brother while you were going around 'The World', I was going around 'My World'."

Every righteous person tacitly acknowledges the contributions of their elders. Even while the world deified Sir Isaac Newton for his remarkable achievements, Sir Isaac Newton himself was more humble in acknowledging his predecessors when he commented, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."

Yet a quick show of hands survey on "How we treat our elders" will immediately make it evident that how critical we are of world today corroborating specious belief that the current generation has lost respect for its elders. However I'm convinced that this is simply cynicism regarding today's world. We only have to look in the eyes of our own children and grandchildren to see that how much they love us. I am not denying the existence of ungrateful selfish persons, but they are rather exceptions and sometimes victims of their own circumstances. Even two thousand years ago, Plato chided the insolent kids in the following quote:

"The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers."

The legitimacy of this quote may be debatable however I am assertive that, since ancient time, cynicism in society has been just as prevalent in this world as has been love. I have mostly met people who love and respect their elders. One of the most lucid evidence of this respect is found in most unexpected way. When people want to be offensive they hurl profanities at their rival's ancestors knowing fully well that it will hurt them emotionally. Therefore while I do religiously believe in the virtue of respecting elders and I will accentuate on its significance, I will do it without knocking the youth off their perch.

Providing reasons for why we should love and respect our elders are just as banal as providing reasons for why we should eat. When we are born we are only able to breath like any other animal. However parents with affection and patience teach us how to eat, talk, walk, dress, and even to express our own inner feelings. Later this ability to feel is what we stakes claim to as our individuality. Our elders and teachers endow us various skills that are not only essential for us to survive but also enable us to grasp the world in its full spectrum. We understand the cultural, political, economic, scientific, and technological aspects of this world only under their aegis. Obviously sometimes our elders are stern with us and punish us if we veer away from the right path, but even then their love for us is guiding their actions. We must always remember the proverb from the bible, - Let the righteous smite me in kindness; it shall be excellent oil for my head".

Our social order is more than a random process. It encapsulates millions of years of evolutionary imprint of what we are. The reason we have evolved into a sentient and sapient species is that we have been living in the social units of families and communities. Our current knowledge has culverted through the channels of each generation. We learn from their experiences, theirs successes and failures, and even from abstract beliefs they hold like religion. The wisdom and teaching traditions honed by ancestors cannot be marginalized. Their wisdom provides the bedrock on which we build for our own future generations. The implicit statute of filial respect is what has cemented this unabridged chain of life skills.

Our generation is also just one link in that incessant chain. When we show respect to our elders and teachers, this probity is transferred to our next generation. We will be rewarded with respect from our young for the respect we show to our elders. Still let me not turn love into barter for love. There are more beatifying aspects



of loving your parents. Think of all the times you were down and you sought comfort in your mother's lap, of all the times when your dad was your hero, and your grandparents were story jukeboxes. These blissful moments embellish our life with meaning, which is otherwise just a breathing and eating automaton. Our elders love and support keeps us sanguine.

We cannot express gratitude for the love, support and learning we have received from our elders with even expressively bardic poem. Therefore reciprocating their love, obeying them, listening to them, and caring for them are the only ways to acknowledge their sacrifices. When we care for them in their old age we are actually thanking them for their blessings that enabled us carry forward their legacy. Our parents, elders, and teachers are extension of our own personalities encapsulated into different bodies. They share our joys and griefs. To not respect them is to disrespect ourselves. Our elders are like upstream river, which continuously enrich us with fresh water, lest we become stale. We are simply middle course of the river, which will pass on all the learnings and morality that we receive from our elders to our downstream younger generation. It is therefore our obligation to love and respect our elders, so that this sacrosanct virtue also percolates down to our children. To love your ancestors is natural human character. A parents' unconditional love towards their children is natural because of biological evolution. The offsprings serve as a genetic conduit ensuring the continuity of species along with its collective consciousness throughout the epoch. Conversely, several evolutionary psychologists argue that children love for their parents is also innate through natural selection. Psychologists argue that children, who love and take care of their parents, are expected to do better than the children who do not. The virtue of love and care for their parents is transferred to their children, thereby building an affectionate family support system providing them with greater resources. Hence continued tendency of children to love their parents, generation after generation will be selected and spread throughout the population.

I may be accused of committing a scientific harakiri on an emotion as beautiful as love. I am only trying to bring home that love and obedience for parents is just as natural for human species as it is natural for elephants to follow the Matriarch through their own evolution. Human beings' ability to live in families, communities, and nations is not imposed on them by some foreign agent but has come through thousands of years of evolution and survival technique. It is therefore important that we do not shake the pillars of traditions and accepted behaviour as these are foundations over which our civilization and culture has been built. Thus to disrespect your elders is inhuman.

Family is the closest social order that any person associates with, as well as his first bastion of support. Life is ephemeral and one day we would be pining for the departed souls of our elders. Notwithstanding our myriad beliefs on afterlife, we can patently make our lives better by creating euphoric memories of our elders. The most obvious path to that is by loving, respecting and caring for them.

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**Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Lisa Baczkowski

## **A Question of Piety**

"Mom, it seems you've got it all figured out with having seven children. Once everyone starts working, we would each give you money, then you and Dad don't need to work and you can retire comfortably."

I remember once saying this, ten odd years ago; the year before I got married. When I mentioned this incident to my husband a few years later, his response came as a shock to me: "You give your parents money??? Why would you DO that? Did they ask for it? Do they need it? What's it for? And you give them money EVERY month?"

I felt confused. Why do I have to defend my actions? Isn't giving money to one's parents something one does by default? Situations like this emphasized how the Chinese culture and values are probably more ingrained in me than I imagined.

This is significant because my parents' union was, to some extent, due to their own rebellion against the customs and traditions of their Chinese heritage and upbringing. The roles they were expected to fill had left them feeling dissatisfied and empty. There had to be more to life than simply being a dutiful son or daughter,

marrying the "right" person so that you will bring honour to your family, and working at a respectable job so that you could provide for your family and instil the same values into your own children, thus ensuring that they would continue the cycle.

In their search of a more meaningful life, my parents had found a new religion. The religion of the gweilos. Christianity. And living the way the Early Christians did in the New Testament's Book of Acts. Thus, my parents broke away from the traditional norms and, with like-minded friends, tried out a more bohemian lifestyle.

My grandparents were shocked. Especially when they learned that I was on the way. My mother was only 19. My paternal grandparents made an effort to reach out and "fix" this error. My maternal grandparents demanded a proper banquet and sponsorship of a specified number of tables – something that my paternal grandparents could not afford. Mom didn't care; she wouldn't have any of it. She didn't want a traditional Chinese wedding. She wanted to live her life the way she wanted, finding spiritual fulfilment in learning about a loving God who did not expect her to be bound by traditions.

Thus I was born out of wedlock. As was my sister after me. My grandparents on both sides were horrified. When my mother reached the legal age to be married without parental consent, she and my father obtained a marriage certificate, much to their families' relief. A few years later, we moved out of Hong Kong and lived in various countries around Asia.

It was a life of adventure, unbounded by the traditions that once held my parents down. They were free to live and raise their children the way they wanted. My sisters and I were brought up in the Christian faith, ignorant of the customary Chinese religions of Taoism and Buddhism, and blissfully unaware of the Asian mentality behind certain practices of "respect".

To many locals in Hong Kong, Christianity is a "western" religion which challenges "Chinese" practices of filial piety. It is a frequent cause of conflict between Chinese Christians and their Taoist/Buddhist-practicing relatives, resulting in the more traditional family members resenting Christian notions as a threat to the foundations of Chinese culture and therefore not compatible with Chinese values.

When my maternal grandfather (外公) passed away, a proper Chinese funeral was prepared, with the burning of incense and Hell money; chanting by priests and professional mourners; brass instruments clanging; kow-towing and a cremation. Returning to Hong Kong for the ceremony, my parents initially objected to participating in what they considered "heathen practices", claiming that it went against their Christian beliefs. Nevertheless, to avoid strife, they conceded to partaking in some, though not all, of the rituals.

By then, my mother's siblings already regarded her as the "least traditional" of them and were used to her apparent lack of social awareness or observance of Chinese norms which spilled onto us, her children. This suddenly became an issue for my mother. To compensate for our apparent "ignorance" of all things Chinese, including the language and its customs, we returned to Hong Kong and were enrolled in local, Chinese-speaking schools. It was our biggest challenge yet. We not only had to learn a new language, but also a new way of behaviour and thinking. Somehow, though, we adapted. We quickly grasped the ideologies of Chinese values and understood the importance of honouring one's family.

As my understanding of the significance of reverencing or showing respect to one's ancestors and departed loved ones grew, so did my confusion as to why it is often shunned by many Christians as "idol or ancestor worship". This question was further accentuated following marriage to my very traditional Catholic Polish husband. I discovered that filial piety is not something exclusive to Asians; and Christian practices and beliefs do not necessarily clash with Chinese values. Indeed, our cross-cultural, interracial union only emphasized how similar Polish and Chinese customs were.

For example, it is customary for Poles, when visiting the family cemetery, to light special candle lanterns, add fresh flowers and say prayers and respectful words at the tombstones of the dearly departed. Was this not similar to the Chinese custom of grave-sweeping? And how is it that Westerners are often dismissed as not knowing the meaning of filial piety, when this Christian culture practiced such similar ways of venerating the dead?

Of course, the practices and concepts of family respect cannot simply be generalised to venerating one's ancestors. Indeed, there will always be examples of filial piety from both sides that I have yet to understand. For example, my parents-in-law expect my husband to call or email them with a daily report on his life, regardless of the mundanity of that day. I realised this was a Polish thing when I met other Asian women who had Polish husbands and we expressed bafflement that a grown man had to call his mother regularly and talk for more than half an hour – or two hours, if the day deviated from the usual schedule – about the events of the day.

In pre-Skype times, when international calling cards were costly, calls were reserved for weekends, and daily emails were expected. My husband considered it his filial duty to make these daily communications. He didn't always enjoy them. Once, around mid-afternoon, he received an email from his mother, demanding to know whether he was so ill that he could not send even a short line to confirm his existence. The whole business was a far cry from my parents' expectations.

The first time I travelled independently, my parents needed exactly two calls from me. One to tell them that I had arrived safely at my destination; and one to tell them that I was returning to Hong Kong. I was eighteen at the time.

My husband, nearly 40, is still expected to call his parents every single day. The first time I visited my parents-in-law in Poland, they suggested I call my parents about my safe arrival. I meekly obliged.

"Hi, Mom," I greeted.

"Is something wrong?" Mom asked.

"Um, no. Just calling to say I'm in Poland."

"Oh, okay..."

I could imagine Mom wondering why I would be calling to tell her something that she already knew. And whether there was some sort of emergency.

"So, I guess I'll see you when I get back." I said.

"Oh, okay. Um, have fun," said Mom, ending the call.

"That's it?" my in-laws demanded.

"Yeah," I shrugged. I felt duty-bound to explain that even though we don't talk for hours on the phone, we still loved each other very much and that not calling my parents every day did not mean that I was a bad daughter.

The more I engage in discussions of filial piety with people from different walks of life, the more I have come to realise that, while it is considered a very "Chinese" thing, it is nevertheless prevalent through all cultures – some more so than others. And while Asians may have a prescribed code of conduct and behaviour in expressing one's loyalty to family, it does not mean that Westerners, in their various expressions of affection, do not also encompass this trait.

Recently, I discussed the concept of filial piety with my multi-national students. When I mentioned the concept of giving money to one's parents, the more Western students had a reaction very similar to that of my husband's. This sparked a heated debate, as students with Asian backgrounds (including Filipinos and Indians) advocated showing one's gratitude through financial means, regardless of whether one's family needed or asked for monetary support or not. "It's just something you do!" one girl insisted. "Our parents poured all their energies and money into raising us. Of course we should give back to them!"

"We didn't ask to be born!" retorted one Israeli student. "They're supposed to raise and provide for us!"

Further uproar in response to this statement ensued. Observing how passionately these young people involved themselves in this topic, I recalled a Bible verse my sisters and I had been taught when we were young:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3.

To me, this Christian teaching is what embodies the spirit of filial piety. It is the bridge that harmonizes the varying interpretations of this virtue from the East to the West.

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### **Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Pun Yuk Ying

Filial piety, originated from Confucian philosophy, has been a virtue of utmost importance in Chinese culture and a core value underpinning the Chinese community for thousands of years. It is a virtuous disposition of treating parents with affection and respect; revering them and providing support materially to their daily life, taking good care of them, and grieving with great sadness over their death. Filial piety extends beyond conduct, calling for the genuine desire to be pious which is generally manifested as obedience. To conform with this deeply rooted value, people have been instilled with the obligation to be respectful and deferential to parents/seniors and to value peaceful interpersonal relationships over difference in opinions. These amicable attitudes form the backbones of families. As the family unit is the cornerstone of society, it comes as no surprise that the principal of filial piety has been a pillar of the Chinese society, and the traditional mindset of the public is to strive to maintain harmony both in the family and the community as a whole.

Nonetheless, today the society and families suffer in the wake of people's deteriorating faith in filial piety, leading to contemptuous and unruly manners spreading like an epidemic everywhere. It is not just the elderly in families being treated with such bad attitudes, but so is anyone in the society, including those in authority. It is commonplace for politicians or members of the public to shamelessly hurl insults at government officials/opponents whenever social/political or controversial issues are discussed, leaving no room for respectful and rational discussions. The community is highly polarised and filled with hostility. Social harmony is no longer the norm but has sadly evolved into a far-fetched fancy. In families, parents do not necessarily receive due regard of their children. Rather, stories about abuse or abandonment of aged parents hit the headlines from time to time.

To restore the amiable relationships of our families and society that we have taken pride in for thousands of years, it is of profound significance to rebuild the virtue of filial piety. In this connection, we should understand why the social stance has changed over the years, the constraints people face in fulfilling the filial duty and what can be done to revive the faith and facilitate grown children to shoulder the duty.

Against the backdrop of the British colonial rule, Hong Kong, a predominantly Chinese community was where east met west for circa 150 years, with her people exposed to and assimilated into western culture and values. In particular, the lure of individualism which advocates a free, autonomous and independent self, and that interests of an individual should take precedence over all others overpowers the rest of the many western ideologies. The "self-seeking" proposition of individualism is of such mass appeal that it garners mass support and keeps gaining momentum in Hong Kong.

On the other hand, the eastern virtue of filial piety is losing lustre as the fast-changing society has marginalized many of the traditional values. Reviving any of these principals is seen as something of the old school. Filial reverence is no exception and has lost ground to the luring ideology of individualism. The inherent familial obligations run counter to the western myth of a totally care-free, independent self who cares for nobody. Individualism leads people to disregard interpersonal relationship, which is the very element in dire need nowadays by every family and the society. Its absence explains why a cohesive, harmonious union no longer exists.

Whilst the community does acknowledge and give applause to many different types of virtues or qualities, filial piety seems to be forever overlooked. Stories of self-made men, like how Mr. Li Ka Shing worked his way up to be a tycoon, are often widely publicised. So are those who brave major adversities in life or

illnesses; overcome physical constraints to achieve their goals; dare to pursue their dreams at all costs; show generosity to the needy; and contribute selflessly for others' good, etc. The list can go on and on, yet a filial son or daughter is always bound to be an unsung hero, rarely raising any eyebrows in the public sight. We should never underestimate the powerful role of the media in shaping the social outlook, values and culture. Whilst filial piety completely lacks spotlight in the media, there is no surprise why the younger generation could hardly identify with the principle, let alone aspire to conducting themselves in respectful and obedient manner.

Adding fuel to the fire are the many tremendous practical constraints that tie down a child from supporting his/her parents even he/she has all the genuine desire. Long working hours, high costs of living and housing problems are well-known issues of Hong Kong. Not only does each issue adversely impact people's well-being, it also knocks on their ability to take care of their parents. Few adults can afford a flat spacious enough to live with their parents. Nuclear families have become such a norm that the number of elderly parents living on their own keeps increasing. Being physically apart would render it even more difficult for the children to take care of seniors' daily needs. While Hong Kong is blessed with very low unemployment rates, sons/daughters very likely have to work and would not be able to personally attend to their parents. Furthermore, due to the notoriously long working hours, they either cannot spare time after work with the elderly, or are too exhausted and stressed out to show affection and respect to them. Spending enough and/quality time with parents almost becomes mission impossible for a filial son/daughter – the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. A miserable depiction of how practicality issues can paralyse acts of filial piety!

Even more frustrating is when parents are too frail or have lost self-care ability due to old age/illness/physical disabilities, children are often left with no choice but to entrust them to elderly homes which is a taboo in the Chinese community. Notwithstanding that the act is out of all the good intent for seniors' benefit, it is often wrongly perceived by the receiving end as being belittled or even abandoned. Perception aside, there are reasons for seniors to worry about life in elderly homes as some serious abuse happened in the past to the tenants. Well-run elderly homes are not only hard to come by but also priced beyond the reach of most people.

Parents and children seem to be stuck in a helpless position, yet we should take heart from the fact that things start stacking up on different fronts to restore the virtue of filial piety and/lower some of the practical barriers mentioned above. In terms of the Government policy, taxpayers who support their parents will soon be granted an increase in tax allowance which at least is a good gesture to reward the unsung heroes who shoulder their filial duty. Other measures like the new Higher Old Age Allowances also indirectly help to alleviate financial burden of the children in providing for their parents. In order that seniors with need of long-term care can stay home for as long as circumstances allow, i.e. saving elderly homes as a last resort, the Government is pumping in additional resources to enhance community and home care services. At the same time, the "Home for the Elderly" housing project was introduced years ago to provide life-time rental units for the middle-aged elders whilst the units are spacious enough for children to live in. The Government is also taking steps to scrutinise and subsidize elderly homes to ensure that they maintain a reasonable standard of service.

Apart from the various measures, of equal importance is to revitalize the time-tested virtue of filial piety among the general public. To this end, civil education and support from the media would have a role to play to engage people from all walks of life and of all ages to once again appreciate the beauty and importance of filial reverence as the pillar of both a peaceful family and community. Though possibly a long shot, it is worthy of concerted efforts by the Government and every one of us to do so for the benefit of individuals, families and the society as a whole, for reclaiming our much treasured social harmony, and preserving and handing down the virtue to future generations.



## Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Bergas Janica Therese Villagracia

There are things that we do, words that we say, and events that must take place without us really knowing why. The love that an individual has for another is an abstract concept that is as complex as the universe itself, if not more so. When we love, we do things and we say words impulsively, motivated to do so because of this feeling that is love.

We love because it is right, and we love because we were taught to do so. Our parents impart onto us many gifts – treasures – wrapped in lessons and teachings. Of all these gifts, the most important one of all is the gift of love.

When we came into this world and opened our eyes, the first rays of light that we welcomed into our lives were those shone upon us by the loving faces of our parents. How extraordinary it is for a human being to wholeheartedly love, to give themselves fully to someone because of the bond of blood: the bond of a family. We can never truly understand how it is to love until we discover the profound love that our parents have showered us with at birth – the sacrifices they have made, the tears they have shed, and the smiles that have spread across their face, happy to love and be loved.

Throughout my life, I have been questioning as to what “love” truly is. And perhaps the simplest of all answers was in front of my eyes all along; found within the endeavours and sacrifices my father chose to make for his family.

“Above all, they are my family,” my father would say. Through tired eyes and a weary gaze, “they are my family.” Through hardships and sacrifices, they are my family. Through tears, anger, and pain, they are still my family. How much must one go through in order for them to distance themselves from those they call their family? Are there no limitations to the sacrifices we must make? They are our family, yes, but what about ourselves? What about our own wellbeing?

To be able to fully give, no matter what harm or negativity may come upon, must truly be a selfless kind of love. Perhaps to love is to give wholeheartedly? Perhaps to love is to choose the path where your loved one would be given the upper hand, despite the choice pushing you towards an opposite path? Is loving, then, working late hours at night and coming back in the early hours of dawn? Is the definition of it working on days where one should not even be working just to make ends meet? Is it missing your daughter’s birthdays?

My grandparents were part of my father’s life right from the beginning; they were never separated. When my father got married and had a family of his own, he welcomed them into his own home in order to appease their financial situation; they would not have to spend another dime in their lives so long as my father lived. In the beginning, it seemed best, but he did not know the long-term toll it would take on him: we could not afford all the costs. Having three kids, alongside his parents, wife, and helper living underneath his roof, he had to work multiple jobs at one point. Working from noon to dusk, then dusk until dawn, we would rarely see him until the weekend. And, despite being physically present on the days that he was home, he was never really there mentally. It was hard to see him this way – a man torn and almost defeated by the physical limitations of a human being. He wanted to provide for both his own family and his parents, but it was taking a terrible toll on him.

Is this, then, what love is? Putting your family above your own health? I never understood this notion of his. I would ask him if it was worth it, if there was another way – a way in which someone else would take care of his parents instead. To this he would reply, “above all, they are my family.”

Perhaps, then, to love is to give to those who have given to you. Perhaps this feeling is synonymous to a word in which its definition means to pay your dues – dues being the sacrifices made by those who came before us. For if we do so, we then feel gratitude and satisfaction, knowing that those on the receiving end of our sacrifices would feel “love”. Is this then what love is? Is it the feeling you unknowingly feel when you selflessly give someone all that you have, and they are left grateful and satisfied? Are there, however, no limitations to this? How far must one go in giving in order to satisfy the requirements of love? How much must one give?

I am reminded of this significant memory of mine. Late at night when everyone was in bed, I heard my parents speaking to each other in hushed tense tones behind the locked door of their bedroom. As the walls between our rooms were thin, I could hear mere glimpses of their conversation.

“We can’t afford it.”

“I know... but, she’s my mother. What can we do?”

“I don’t know... but we just can’t afford it.”

“No, we can. We just have to find another way to do so.”

“Like what? Where will we get the money from?”

There was a slight pause after this question. Afterwards, my father took a deep breath and said, “ we will liquidate our life insurance.”

To me, at that moment, there was nothing more troubling and concerning than my own parents willing to put the safety net of their own lives on the line in order to send some money to my grandmother for her daily essentials. My parents could no longer afford the expenses they had that they had to find other means of finance and liquidate their own life insurance – something they have invested in and worked hard for. How much does one have to give in order to fulfil their, as my father puts it, “rightful duties” as a son? One may argue that it is proper to repay those who have taken care of you and seen to your growth, but what if the sacrifices made are more than needed? What if I told you that my grandmother did not essentially need the money? Would it still be proper for my father to perform this sacrifice to see to his mother’s appease? Is this, then, what love is?

Love is a strange feeling. It makes us do things that we would not think of doing without any motivation to do so or perhaps if it was never taught nor shown to us.

After all of my father’s hardships, after his endeavours have ended, I believe I found the meaning of love. When my grandmother breathed her last breathe, I saw my father cry for the first time. It was at this moment that I knew what love was. Love was not simply about giving or paying your dues. It was not simply performing the traditional expectations within a family. It was so much more.

Love was knowing that you have the ability to provide and keep safe those who did the same for you. It is knowing that those whom you care for can rely on you for anything. Love is going to bed at night knowing that you have done all you can to provide happiness for those you provided happiness for you. It is showing your appreciation and sharing your blessings – for if it had not been for those who shared with you their blessings initially, you would not have been able to receive all you had at present.

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**Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Leung Fung Sze

# The Power of Filial Piety

Human beings, it is always said, are born for love. And filial piety is an important Chinese value that sustains the power of love. In this essay, we will explore how filial piety holds up a strong bond in the family, and how it helps to develop peace and harmony in society. Practising this virtue is the first step towards love and harmony in the family and society.

Filial piety, without a doubt, is our traditional Chinese value that we, as human beings, should always cherish and embrace. Unfortunately, while we are living in a time of stability and prosperity, people seem to lose sight of what is important in life, as seen from the fact that there are a number of family conflicts in the news every day. Some cases are concerned with parents being intimidated by their children who are in desperate need of money. Even worse, some family tragedies are concerned with elderly people being physically abused by their

own family members who regard them nothing more than financial burdens. These elderly people, in order to save face for themselves, have to swallow all pain in silence with no intention to let others know what they suffer. This is sad and heartbreaking. And this makes me ponder on what is the meaning of our existence, the meaning of our life.

First, we need to look back and give some thought to our roots. We were born into the world with parental love and care. We learned to take the first step and say the first word under the caring wings of our parents. They devoted their whole heart to nurturing us and tried their hardest to provide everything we needed. They created a protective shelter where we felt love and warm. When we were kids, nothing seemed to possibly worry us. The family bond was strong and we all stucked closely together. However, when we are getting older, some of us seem to become self-centered and forget all the sacrifice our parents have made for us. We spend most of time and effort in pursuit of individual benefits. Some people focus entirely on their personal success and little priority is given to their aging parents. Even worse, some children distance themselves from their parents, or even refuse to see them, to avoid the responsibility of taking care of them. These children, apparently, lose all sense of consciousness as they forget their roots, where they come from and who they are. They try to deny the fact that they are nothing without their roots and parents. However, one day, they will suffer from deep pain and agony when their conscience is tested to the fullest. The pain of repentance stems from their shame in having mistreated their parents when they were alive. They come to realize that personal success or wealth is only as important as they let it be. It could not bring them long-term happiness, but only lead to a suppressing of their spiritual self. It has to be remembered that family should be the focus of our life. Therefore, it is important for us, as human beings, to cherish and embrace filial piety which has its power to build up a family with love and care.

We should never underestimate the power of filial piety. We need to stand firmly upon the rules of filial piety. For example, we should always love and respect our parents and senior family members. We should always take good care of them and pay attention to their needs no matter what situation we are in. We need to constantly look back on our past and appreciate what they have done for us. When we were kids, our parents created a safe atmosphere where we felt love and warm. And now, it is time for us to do the same and provide a loving shelter where our fragile parents feel safe and secure. Here, it is important to note that our children will learn from our positive behavior and do the same when we are old. Filial piety builds through health and sickness, good times and bad times. This traditional Chinese virtue always exists even during times of trouble and crisis. Bad times, therefore, do not destroy relationships, but only make us strong. Filial piety, as we can see, plays an important role in bringing all family members together. Practising filial piety is the beginning of a beautiful chain reaction which touches the life of everyone around us.

Filial piety is an integral part of Chinese values. It has a significant impact on the family and society. Performing filial piety, to a large extent, helps to develop peace and harmony in our society. In Hong Kong, we often see some senior citizens walking aimlessly from one place to another with no hope in life. And it is also not hard to see some elderly people who still need to toil all day to fend for themselves despite the fact that they have families. Even though we are living in a time of stability and prosperity, some elderly people are abandoned by their own families and become homeless. These poor elderly people are deprived of love and care that they deserve. This is sad and pathetic. This reveals that a lack of filial piety leads to a series of social problems that we should not neglect or ignore.

In order to achieve social harmony and make sure that every senior citizen is well taken care of, we need to cling with tenacity to the practice of filial piety. We need to always look back on our past and show gratitude to our parents for all the sacrifice they made for us. Their love, care and kindness can, and will never be compensated. And therefore it is important for us, as children, to take good care of our parents and senior relatives with deepest appreciation. Their life should be lived with love and respect, not pain and despair. We should always hold onto the practice of filial piety through good times and bad times. If everyone in society performs this Chinese virtue, there will surely be fewer family conflicts and social problems. And this clearly illustrates the constructive power of filial piety. Practising this Chinese virtue is the first step towards harmony in society. Here, as we can see, filial piety has its positive impact on society.

Thus, with a close examination of filial piety, it is clear that this Chinese virtue is an integral and important part of Chinese values. It holds up a strong family bond which keeps every family member together. This, in turns, helps to develop peace and harmony in society. We therefore have to make a great step forward on the path of filial piety and believe that our family and society will be changed for the better.

## Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Yung Janet Pui Qun

# An Open Letter To My Mother On Filial Piety

Mom, what exactly is filial piety?

I know it must mean something to you, because of the way your nose scrunches up when you talk about a friend's daughter who doesn't pay her a monthly stipend at all. Or when your eyes light up after describing our cousin, who happens to give over quite a lot of her monthly income to my aunt.

Yet, you never ask me for a cent. In all these years since I've graduated, I have never, ever, heard you request anything financial from me. Could that be because you simply don't need it? Or want it? After all, you do earn a lot more than I do. Anything I can give is probably small change to you.

Because your facial expressions are sometimes difficult to understand, I think I'll turn to something more comprehensive. Such as the Internet, one of the millennial's preferred tools of knowledge. After all, if millions of internet strangers claim the same thing, it must be true.

I go on to Google and type "what is filial piety", in both English and Chinese. I am not that foolish to rely on an internationalised version of what is so clearly a Chinese tradition. Yet having grown up in an international setting, I have to include the English version as my crutch.

The standard Wikipedia definition tells me that filial piety involves being good to and respecting one's parents. Such as, to care for them throughout their lifetime out of obedience, reverence, and love.

Our family is Chinese, so I have heard this many times before. Over dinner gatherings, at least one well-meaning relative would remind me to "be pious towards your parents", as if it were something easily forgotten. My "yes, auntie" was automatic, because what else can you really say. I took that to mean getting good grades so that you could be proud of me, Mom. Or saying "I love you" often, because I really do.

But what does my promise mean to you now?

Maybe a more precise source will shed some light. Opening the "Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety", it is a classic collection of stories on specific acts of filial piety written over several hundreds of years ago. There is the boy who slept without clothes to allow mosquitos to bite him instead of his parents, or the son who was travelling in the mountains, only to return home to check on his mother, because he felt a pang in his heart when she bit her finger some miles away.

Their devotion to parents is evident, and sacrifice clear. But how much can be replicated today, as I can simply buy some mosquito repellent for you, or even a phone in case of emergencies? This act won't even come close to the intense itchiness of the boy who would've been painfully bitten. Perhaps I need to scratch a little deeper.

How much then, is too much or too little? I look towards the forest of online opinions. For all its commonplace existence in Chinese society, exact guidelines on giving are nowhere to be found. On the more extreme side are writers positing that parents who are anything but loving do not deserve filial piety from the children they mistreat. That being blindly obedient to abusive parents is actually against the very spirit of filial piety.

So, filial piety is reciprocal. By this logic, how much a child should give back depends on how much their parents had given them whilst growing up. Maybe this is the reason for Article 49 of the Chinese constitution, which states a duty of parents to rear and educate their children whilst receiving provisions from the child once they come of age.

By this measure, I can't even begin to count what you've provided for me over the years Mom. From my education to living and food costs, it is a lot. And what about my future children? It will be like paying back both my own education and theirs at the same time.

Now I'm beginning to see why you work so hard, Mom. Even as my parent, you're also a child to my grandparents. I guess I'll have to become a parent myself to fully understand what filial piety is. Or keep scrolling through these articles online for now.

Hold on. Filial piety doesn't appear to stop with just the parent-child relationship. One article tells of the collective action taken through a countywide filial piety fund, which was set up earlier this year in order to cater to the elderly population in several hundred villages in China. Children of elderly parents are encouraged to donate, and with top-ups from private donors and the state.

From my relationship to yours, it is comforting to know that even strangers can donate to help support some of the elderly in need, even those who do not have children. Filial piety is not just about us then. And now that tax season is just around the corner, who can forget how our government supports filial piety through income tax-breaks too.

For all its individual acts of sacrifice, devotion, money and kindness, filial piety also reaches far across society through means of governance, welfare, and of course the well-meaning relatives who remind children to be pious.

Still, all these opinions, definitions, and tales do not tell me exactly what is filial piety to you, Mom.

But I understand now, that anyone anywhere can write their own "paragon" of filial piety as long as they are a child, parent, or both. Even if you don't really need the money, Mom, I choose to start my paragon this way.

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**Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize**

Name: Kenneth Wong

**FILIAL PIETY – PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

As son

I was born into a very humble family. Dad was a tailor who worked hard to make ends meet. Mum was a happy-go-lucky housewife. She enjoyed eating, playing mahjong, watching movies and left all the household chores to my grandmother. Dad was quiet, stern and rarely showed his love to anyone but I knew deep down he cared a lot about our family and about my studies. He asked mum to take me to an evening tutorial school to improve my English. Mum took advantage of this opportunity to rush me to a theatre nearby immediately after my evening class, and paid something like 30 cents to go in and listen to the theme song towards the end of the opera!

There was a sort of hidden and subdued family love among the three of us. My Dad died of liver cancer when I was studying Form 2. He drank and smoked too much. We rarely talked to each other except during supper. I was too young to do anything to help him. There was a physical as well as spiritual gap between us. My Mum died of multiple complications from diabetes about two years after my marriage. On reflections, I could have done more like seeing her more than once a month, giving her a bit more money on top of a monthly sum, and helping her to eat a healthier diet.

As son-in-law

My mother-in-law was a bit like my father – stern, stubborn and authoritarian. She rarely expressed her emotions. Our relationship was good in the early days. She loved playing mahjong and I 'demonstrated' my filial piety serving as one of the 'legs' – before and after I became her son-in-law! As she was getting older, our relationship was getting worse. We had arguments and even quarrels, sometimes over issues such as the way she handled my daughter (ie her grandchild). To make matters worse, she gradually got dementia. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and eventually she did not speak at all and could not even recognise us, and had to be spoon-fed. Finally, we sent her to an Old People's Home in Yuen Long because it was not safe to leave her alone at home. I used to drive on weekends to visit her. She died some years later.



### As community volunteer

One of my regrets in life is I could have done more to take care of my mum and my mother-in-law, particularly in the last phase of their lives. I was not doing too badly but definitely far from adequate. One main reason I joined AVS (Agency For Volunteer Service) after my retirement is to help the elderly. I have taken part in activities like visiting the oldies, giving out presents like food and fruit. We volunteers sometimes do half-hourly home visits, chat with them, complete a questionnaire and jot down any points which require follow-ups. For me, it is a sort of compensatory measure to psychologically reduce my emotional baggage for my mum and my mother-in-law!

### As father

The whole family (me, wife, daughter and son) migrated to New Zealand in 1994. After a couple of years, I returned to Hong Kong to work. My daughter went to US to complete tertiary education while my wife and my son continued to live in NZ. At one stage, our story was a tale of three cities – Auckland, Wisconsin and Hong Kong! Another regret in my life is the long period of separation from my family. I was away from my wife, AND from two children during their adolescent and early adult stages. Fortunately, all of us are now in Hong Kong, and the extended Wong family now includes a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law and a granddaughter. We usually meet once a week for lunch or dinner, sharing all sorts of things, chatting about serious as well as trivial matters. Our granddaughter adds fun and laughter, and plays a significant role in further strengthening the family bond!

### Filial piety in the 21st Century

Gone were the days when parents used to have close connections even after their adult children were married. The aging population in HK (and China), which keeps expanding, also means there are more and more old people who live on their own and need special care – physically, mentally and emotionally. A further complication is that most married people nowadays prefer to have either no children or just one child. All of these changes make it very difficult for people to maintain and strengthen family relationships. Below are some suggestions on how we can reconceptualise and revive filial piety in the 21st Century.

#### Treating children on an equal footing

Parents should not assume they are the figure of authority and their children are obliged to follow their advice and suggestions. Their past experiences may be useful but may also become outdated or irrelevant. They need to treat their children as friends, as equals and offer advice and suggestions but not instructions! They have to look at things from their children's point of view and should never assume they are always in a position to give sound advice or correct judgment. Only understanding and sympathetic parents can earn respect and love from their children. In other words, filial piety is to be developed and should never be taken for granted.

#### Bridging the generation gap

A major source of conflict among parents and children is most people make judgment from their own point of view. If parents can look at a situation from the perspective of their children and their children do likewise, there will be less conflict and more harmony. Parents should remember once they were young. Children should also realise they will get old too. Family relationships become more harmonious if the generation gap can be bridged. Everyone should be more objective, takes a step back and looks at a situation from multiple angles. This is an effective way to minimise conflicts and negative feelings.

#### Using the electronic media as a servant, not a master

Breakthroughs in communication technology have brought about huge benefits – commercially, educationally and socially. However, most things in life are double-edged! When parents and their adult children have yumcha on weekends, it is increasingly common to see each person being glued to their mobile and there are very few chats and verbal exchanges throughout! It is a classic example of misusing the mobile. Instead, we can exploit the mobile and its functions as topics for conversation such as distinguishing between online facts and fiction, such as fun and games, such as sons and daughters teaching parents how to use a new app! Face-to-face communication can never be replaced by electronic gadgets. No emoticons are as meaningful as facial

expressions and other forms of body language! At the same time, the Hong Kong Government can exploit the electronic media to promote family ties, eg: making videos of real and touching family stories as well as short and snappy scenes to promote filial piety.

#### Regularising family occasions

Family time should be quality time. If parents and children work out schedules for family days, they will see each other regularly, not just on special occasions like festivals or birthdays. This is important to maintain the family togetherness. As parents get older, they will have to deal with more and more health-related problems. It is therefore vital for children to see them as often as possible, observe their physical and emotional well-being and provide help if needed. Seeing each other once in a blue moon is totally inadequate in maintaining and enhancing family ties!

#### Conclusion

It is very sad to learn about, through the press or TV, feuds and legal battles between parents and children, or among children themselves, over huge sums of inheritance, which happen from time to time in Hong Kong and elsewhere. On the other hand, there are successful people who donate part of their fortune to help the elderly and the needed. If we define filial piety in a broad sense and put it into practice, the world would be a more harmonious and peaceful place to live in. Indeed, filial piety is fundamental in bringing about a better society, a better country, and a better world. When people love and care about their parents, they will do the same to other people, even complete strangers. There will be less conflict and more harmony – at home, in society and even among nations. Indeed, it is a priority virtue among all the Confucian virtues.

Filial Piety First! Filial Piety First! God bless Hong Kong, China, and other parts of the world!

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### Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Ha Pik Ki Peggy

# To Be Confiscated By 'The Nation'

‘Madam, your savings transaction has been done.’ The bank teller grins.

‘Thank you!’ I replied, holding a paleo-passbook tightly.

‘Madam, transactions can be done via online banking services conveniently. It is efficient and saves your time for queuing and paying extra costs for the transaction fee.’ The young teller, a Miss Lee as shown on her name tag, had been trying her very best so as to convince me to take her advice solicitously. ‘Well, I am a big fan of Bruno Mars.’ In one second, standing in front of the window, I whispered, ‘Just the way you are!’

The young teller was taken back. ‘Please accept my apology. I was joking. But, I prefer keeping this account in its original style as there’s something behind the scene and that’s irreplaceable.’ I explained to Miss Lee and left the counter in a stride.

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Love from parents is a one-way investment that does not require a return. Holding high hopes for children, parents never intend to seek materialistic returns or show pride. Instead, they wish to grant their beloved ones a bright future, a worry-free life and a permanent fortune. I recall a time, a friend of mine, who idolized Gordan Ramsey, groaned about not receiving support from his mother for his dream to be a chef. It was understood that the conflict upset him, but what was important to keep in mind was that, the lack of support came from ultimate love and care. We are mature enough to realize that, parental love is in various forms, devotion in different forms and the sacrifices made may not even be noticeable. Parents may not be around all the time, but they are always on call. They may not be able to overcome an obstacle we encounter, but they are the biggest cheerleaders who have always have our backs. They may not appreciate our passion and dreams, but soon they

are willing to adapt and respect. Parents express their love in different intangible ways, yet, they all mean the same and allow us to know – ‘you mean the entire world to me’.

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Twenty years ago, my mother brought me to this bank a week before my wedding.

“Miss, can you please take out all the deposits from this account?” My mom requested.

“Why, mom?” I was confused.

“You have been asking about your lucky money since you were young, haven’t you? Now, I am going to return it to you. Though this money can’t give you to a prosperous life, I still hope that you can make good use of the money, especially for your family, my little girl. ”

I was moved to tears. Being so thankful, I decided to pass down the family tradition by opening another account. I told myself, I would keep this account. The charm of this account has nothing to do with numbers.

It is a place where love, blessings and care that have been deposited from generation to generation.

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Filial piety is about having a grateful heart to appreciate everything our parents have done for us. Appreciation is not measured in terms of money; filial piety cannot be requested. There is no code to define filial piety, the only rule is that – we should be truehearted. A Thai Beauty Queen, Mint, hit the headlines in 2015. Instead of reporting her victory, the news was about her giving thanks to her mother in the most modest way. Wearing the glittering crown, Mint knelt before her ‘garbage collector’ mother, dedicating the win to the one who raised her. Telling the world proudly that rubbish-collecting was an honest profession, Mint was always proud of her. Some say that filial duty is equivalent to paying parents every month, yet, it is not totally true. The essence is to share what we have with the ones who have been adoring us unconditionally, but not to fulfill an obligation superficially. I recall the time, at the age of 4, I always asked my father to play with me, after he returned home from work. Despite being exhausted, he still ran to hold me in his arms and press a kiss on my cheek. Genuinely, all parents want from us is exactly what we wanted from them when we were babies. Familial love is meant to be sincere and pure.

Is filial piety a repayment? No, it is not, since we can never do enough to compensate our parents for their commitment of offering unfailing care and eternal love. Is filial piety a ritual? No, it is not, calling it a ritual is at odds with the principle of virtue. What we owe to our parents is nothing more than a deep debt of gratitude, for their dedication is selflessly phenomenal. It is time to express our heartfelt thanks to our parents for taking care of us through the nights when we were sick back in the days when we were babies and having forgiven us when we broke their hearts.

‘Honour thy father and thy mother.’ Filial piety, is actually a lecture of a life time. In times, the one who truly understands the true meaning behind the scene, will appreciate and show gratitude to their beloved ones.

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“Kung Hei Fat Choi!” Now, it is my son’s turn to receive red packets. Without a second thought, that chubby cute little boy ran to me and handed me with the red envelopes that he had just received. My friend, whom I have known since I was six, scenting the approach of a jest and said, ‘Oops! All his Lai See are going to be confiscated by the nation!’

In lieu of explaining all the rationales behind, I just smiled radiantly and soliloquized, ‘The Nation, is indeed, loving her kids affectionately and more importantly, that love is definitely INEXPLICABLE!’

## Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Yeung Wing Yee Cecilla

O Filial Piety! O Filial Piety!  
Where have you gone  
for your footprints I could trace in the Chinese history?  
You were the friend of ancient kings and legends  
that goodness was well paved above your modesty.

O Filial Piety! O Filial Piety!  
Where have you gone  
for your steps are fading in this modern society?  
You are the root of all virtues  
that my mother has taught me since I was of purity.

O Filial Piety! O Filial Piety!  
Where have you gone  
for your echoes I long to hear in this youth party?  
You are the spirit of all conducts  
that I have seen offspring acting against morality.

O Filial Piety! O Filial Piety!  
Where have you gone  
for your light is dimming in the sky-almighty?  
You are the value of all relationships  
that generation of respect shall travel through eternity.

Filial Piety! Shine in your majesty!  
Shed the beings from shame and guilt,  
speak to them that, "Of all virtues, filial piety is the first!".  
O shower your seeds, for they shall grow into prosperity.

Filial Piety! Return to your community!  
Redeem the hearts from broken families,  
regardless of all the stories of chaos.  
O replant your stems, for they shall bring unity.

Filial Piety! Walk with your enemy!  
Whisper the tales from old battles,  
whether you had won or lost.  
O water your sequoias, for they shall ease anxiety.

Filial Piety! Penetrate into your humanity!  
Paint the lives with obedience,  
pour in the basic truth of love and patience!  
O preserve your souls, for they shall be refined in the cycle of amnesty.

O Filial Piety!

(在不影響原作內容的前提下，以上所有文章已進行校對及修正。)

(All entries have been proofread and edited without alterations to the author's original meanings.)





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