父亲没讲完的故事

My Father's Unfinished Stories

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在我的印象中，父亲一直是个地地道道的“老黄牛”。家里的重活、农活，几乎都由他承担。他话不多，总是埋头做事，任劳任怨，从不计较辛苦。

如果用今天的话来说，母亲是家里的规划者，父亲则是坚定的执行者。家中的大事小事，多半由母亲拿主意；而无论母亲作出什么决定，父亲总是默默支持，尽心尽力去完成。

正是这样的默契与分担，让他们在那个物资匮乏的年代，靠着勤劳的双手和坚韧的意志，将七个子女一个个抚养成人。如今回想起来，这绝非易事。可在我的记忆里，他们似乎从未抱怨过生活的艰难，只是一天天劳作，一年年坚持，把全部心血都倾注在这个家里。

父亲偶尔会给我们讲一些年轻时的经历。

他出生于 1928 年，小时候在乡间私塾读过几年书。旧时私塾以诵读蒙学典籍为主，《三字经》《增广贤文》等都是必读课本，先生一边教识字，一边讲做人的道理。虽然读书时间不长，却影响了他的一生。

八岁那年，正值战乱年代，他被国民党部队带走。由于年纪太小，无法上前线作战，便留在营中看管军用物资和做些后勤杂务。从此跟随部队辗转各地，经历了抗日战争，也目睹了国共内战。

父亲喜欢喝酒。后来听他说起，喝酒的习惯也是那段岁月养成的。内战后期，部队退守上海，他被安排独守一处营地看管物资。那时战局已

定，人心惶惶，营中管理松散。他整天无事可做，偶尔会用一些富余物资换取零用钱，买酒喝，到戏院看戏打发时间。

1949 年，国民党军准备撤往台湾。他不愿远渡重洋，于是选择回到故乡，做一名农民。

在许多人的印象中，农民往往与贫穷、愚笨，落后联系在一起。可在我的记忆里，父亲不仅勤劳能干，更是一个热爱生活、充满智慧的人。

农闲的时候，他从不会让自己闲着，总能给自己找些事情做。他会将晒干稻草编成草鞋。那些草鞋结实耐穿，透气舒服，是当年农民夏天常穿的鞋子。如今回想起来，那样的手艺几乎已经消失了。

他还会用竹子编织各种箩筐、簸箕和篮子。我常常喜欢坐在院坝里，看他将一根根竹篾握在手中，灵活地穿梭编织，一两天工夫，一个结实耐用的箩筐便完成了。

家里的许多家具也是父亲亲手制作的。椅子、板凳、木架，虽然样式简单，却十分牢固耐用。

后来我开始学习绘画，需要画框。父亲看了看尺寸，找来几块木板，没过多久便做好了几个画框。在我的眼里，好像没有什么事情能够难倒他。那时候，家里许多用具都是父亲亲手制作的。

父亲也是个很会过日子的人。那个年代，农村要挣到一分钱都不容易。除了种地，他还养猪养牛。每当牲口长大一些，他便牵到集市上卖掉，再买回小猪、小牛继续饲养。靠着这样一点一滴地积累，补贴家里的开支。

七个孩子生活在一个农村家庭里，日子自然谈不上富裕。可无论生活多么艰难，我们总有衣穿、有饭吃，也都有机会读书识字。

如今回想起来，能够把七个子女抚养成人，还让他们一个个走出大山，的确不是一件容易的事。而父亲和母亲，正是在无数个平凡而辛劳的日子里，用自己的双手撑起了整个家。

父亲把最美好的少年和青年时光留在了战乱岁月里。那些漂泊与动荡的经历中，想必有许多不寻常的故事。只可惜，平日里的他沉默寡言，很少主动谈及过去。只有喝了酒，才会打开话匣子，讲起自己的人生经历。可每当这时，母亲总会生气地打断他，说他又在借酒“摆龙门阵”。久而久之，那些往事便散落在酒后的只言片语中，再也没有机会完整地讲出来。

父亲虽然没有受过多少正规教育，但早年的私塾启蒙却深深影响了他。小时候教育我们时，他常常引用一些古话，好像“将心比心”、“钱财如粪土，仁义值千金”、“善有善报，恶有恶报”、“相识满天下，知心能几人”等等。母亲也常笑他，总爱把这些老话挂在嘴边。

那时我年纪尚小，对这些话并不理解，只觉得父亲总爱反复念叨。母亲也常笑他，说他一天到晚把这些老话挂在嘴边。

从未读过《增广贤文》的我，后来偶然翻开这本书时，竟有一种似曾相识的感觉。书中的许多句子，我早已耳熟能详。细细想来，才明白那些道理早已随着父亲日复一日的教导，悄悄融入了我的生活，在不知不觉中扎下了根。

直到年过半百，经历了人生的起伏与世态炎凉，我才渐渐读懂父亲的话。那些看似普通的句子，并非书本上的大道理，而是一个经历过战争、漂泊与磨难的人，用大半生沉淀出来的人生智慧，也是他留给子女最珍贵的财富。

母亲去世后，父亲独自生活了整整十年。

而那十年，恰恰也是我人生最艰难的一段时光。为了生计，为了事业，也或许是在为自己寻找借口，很少回家看望他，只是偶尔打个电话问候。那时长途电话费很贵，每次通话都很短。听到电话那头的父亲还能清楚说话，知道身体无恙，便匆匆挂断了电话，继续奔波于自己的生活。

那十年或许是父亲一生中最平静自在的时光。子女已经长大成人，他不再为一家人的温饱操心，也不再为生活四处奔波。每天自己生火做饭，炒上一道小菜，喝上一杯酒，到田间地头走走，或坐在院坝里乘凉，看太阳升起又落下。经历了一生风雨后，他终于拥有了一段属于自己的宁静岁月。

更让人感到不可思议的是，那些年里，几乎从未听说他有什么严重病痛。直到离世的那一天，他突然执意要见大姐，坚持让二哥把大姐接回来。

大姐赶到后，父亲与她说了许多平日从未提及的话。他交代了自己的存款情况，也谈到了对子女们的牵挂和安排，甚至提及兄弟姐妹之间应如何相互照应。大姐听着这些话，心里隐隐觉得有些异样，却又说不出缘由，只觉得这些交代未免有些沉重和不吉利。

那天晚上，吃过晚饭后，大姐到大哥家串门聊天。过了一会儿，她回到父亲房间时，却发现父亲已经无法说话了。

父亲就这样离开了我们。

他的离去十分突然，没有长期卧病在床，没有经历太多痛苦，甚至在最后时刻，还能清醒地与家人交代后事。后来每每想起，总觉得那一天

仿佛是他早已知道自己的归期，提前把该说的话都说完了，然后平静地走完人生最后一程。

直到今天，父亲的离去对我而言仍像一个未解的谜。有些往事，我们来不及询问；有些经历，他也来不及讲完。那些被岁月尘封的故事，终究随着他的离开，一同消失在时间深处，只留下后人无尽的追忆与感慨。

父亲的一生，应该有许多精彩而曲折的故事。遗憾的是，年轻时的我总觉得他的经历离自己太远，从未认真坐下来听他讲述过去。等到后来想听的时候，他却已经永远离开了。

如今每当想起父亲，我都会想，那些没有讲完的故事，那些被岁月掩埋的往事，也许早已随着他的离去消散在时光深处。但他留给我的勤劳、坚韧、仁义和宽厚，却早已融入我的生命，成为伴随我一生的精神底色。

My Father

In my memory, my father was the very image of a hardworking farmer. Almost all the heavy work, both at home and in the fields, fell on his shoulders. He was a man of few words who simply got on with the job, never complaining and never counting the cost of his efforts.

If I were to describe my parents today, I would say that my mother was the planner of the family, while my father was the one who quietly carried out those plans. Most family decisions were made by my mother, and whatever she decided, my father would support wholeheartedly and see through to the end.

It was this partnership that enabled them to raise seven children during a time of material scarcity. Looking back, it was no small achievement. Yet I never remember either of them complaining about life's hardships. They simply worked day after day, year after year, pouring all their energy into the family.

Occasionally, my father would tell us stories from his youth.

Born in 1928, he spent a few years studying in a traditional village school. The curriculum focused on classic texts such as *The Three Character Classic* and *Expanded Worthies*. Students learned not only to read and write but also the principles of how to conduct themselves in life. Though his formal education was brief, its influence stayed with him forever.

When he was eight years old, China was already at war. He was taken away by the Nationalist Army. Too young to fight, he was assigned to guard military supplies and perform camp duties. In the years that followed, he traveled from place to place with the army, living through the War of Resistance against Japan and later witnessing the Chinese Civil War.

My father enjoyed drinking, a habit he said began during those turbulent years.

Toward the end of the Civil War, his unit retreated to Shanghai. He was left alone to guard a supply depot. By then, the outcome of the war was becoming clear, and military discipline had largely broken down. With little to do, he occasionally exchanged surplus supplies for a bit of spending money. He would buy some wine and spend time at the local opera house.

In 1949, when the Nationalist Army prepared to withdraw to Taiwan, my father chose not to follow. Instead, he returned to his hometown and resumed the life of a farmer.

Many people associate farmers with poverty and hardship. Yet in my memory, my father was far more than a hardworking man. He was practical, resourceful, and deeply connected to life.

During the farming off-season, he never sat idle. He would weave dried rice straw into sandals. Strong, breathable, and comfortable, they were the summer footwear of choice for many farmers. Today, such craftsmanship has almost disappeared.

He was equally skilled at weaving bamboo baskets, trays, and containers. I often sat in the courtyard watching him work. Thin strips of bamboo seemed to come alive in his hands. Within a day or two, a sturdy basket would take shape.

Many of the household items we used were made by him. Chairs, stools, shelves, and wooden racks were all crafted with his own hands. They were simple but remarkably durable.

When I began learning to paint, I needed picture frames for my artwork. My father measured the sizes, found a few wooden boards, and soon made several frames for me. In my eyes, there was nothing he could not do.

He also knew how to make the most of what little a rural family had. In those days, earning money in the countryside was difficult. Besides farming, he raised pigs and cattle. Once they had grown, he sold them at the market and bought younger animals to raise again. Little by little, he supplemented the family's income.

We were seven children growing up in a rural household. Life was far from comfortable, yet we always had food on the table, clothes to wear, and the opportunity to attend school.

Looking back, raising seven children and helping each of them leave the mountains to build a better future was no easy task. My parents achieved it through countless ordinary days of hard work and persistence.

My father spent the best years of his youth in wartime. He must have carried many extraordinary stories from those years of upheaval and wandering. Yet he rarely spoke about the past. Only after a few drinks would he begin sharing his experiences.

Whenever he did, my mother would interrupt him, teasing that he was spinning tales again. As a result, many of his stories survived only in scattered fragments and were never fully told.

Although my father received little formal education, the lessons from his early schooling stayed with him throughout his life.

When we were growing up, he often quoted old sayings:

"Treat others as you would like to be treated."

"Wealth is like dirt; righteousness is worth more than gold."

"Good is rewarded with good, and evil with evil."

"You may know many people, but true friends are few."

As children, we paid little attention. My mother often laughed at him for repeating the same old sayings over and over.

Years later, I happened to read *Expanded Worthies* for the first time. To my surprise, many of its sayings felt strangely familiar. I realized that my father had already planted those lessons in our hearts long before we encountered them in books. Through years of gentle repetition, they had quietly taken root in our lives.

Only after I reached my fifties and experienced life's ups and downs did I truly begin to understand his words.

They were not abstract lessons from textbooks. They were the wisdom of a man who had survived war, displacement, hardship, and change. They were also the most valuable inheritance he left to his children.

After my mother passed away, my father lived alone for ten years.

Those ten years happened to be the most difficult period of my own life. Struggling to make a living and build a career, and perhaps finding excuses for myself, I rarely went home to visit him. Instead, I only called from time to time. Long-distance calls were expensive then, so our conversations were always brief. Once I heard that he could still speak clearly and was in good health, I would quickly hang up and return to the demands of my own life.

Looking back, those years may have been the most peaceful and contented time of my father's life. His children were grown, and he no longer had to worry about feeding the family or making ends meet. He cooked simple meals for himself, enjoyed a glass of wine, walked through the fields, or sat in the courtyard watching the sun rise and set. After a lifetime of hardship and uncertainty, he finally had a period of quiet that belonged entirely to him.

What seems remarkable is that during those years, he never appeared to suffer from any serious illness. Then, on the very day he passed away, he suddenly insisted on seeing my eldest sister and asked my second brother to bring her home.

When she arrived, he told her many things he had never spoken of before. He explained his savings, shared his concerns and wishes for his children, and spoke about how the brothers and sisters should look after one another. As she listened, my sister felt a vague sense that something was unusual, though she could not explain why. His words sounded more final than ordinary conversation.

That evening, after dinner, my sister went to visit my eldest brother's family. A short while later, when she returned to my father's room, she found that he could no longer speak.

That was how he left us.

His passing was sudden. He had not spent years confined to a sickbed, nor had he endured prolonged suffering. Even in his final hours, he remained clear-minded enough to settle his affairs and speak with his family. Looking back now, it often feels as if he somehow knew his time had come. He said everything he needed to say, then quietly completed the last journey of his life.

To this day, my father's death remains a mystery to me. There were questions we never had the chance to ask, and stories he never had the chance to finish telling. Those memories and experiences, buried by time, disappeared with him into the past, leaving only reflection, longing, and a deep sense of loss for those who remained.

My father's life must have contained many remarkable stories.

Sadly, when we were young, we felt those stories belonged to a distant world and never took the time to listen carefully. By the time we wanted to hear them, he was already gone.

Today, whenever I think of my father, I wonder about the stories left untold and the memories buried by time. Perhaps they disappeared with him.

Yet the values he passed on, diligence, resilience, kindness, and integrity, remain woven into my life. They have become part of who I am and will stay with me for the rest of my journey.