

This Presentation
is dedicated to
our Dad
our Grandfather
our Teacher
and our Friend

One day when he was young...



His simple pleasures...

Travel



Pet



Reading



Photography



Walking



His first love...

**The Mystery of the
“Red Hair Language”**

图 解

man | was | drunk

The

driving

lorry

the

This | is | letter

a

written

in

German

This | is | question

a

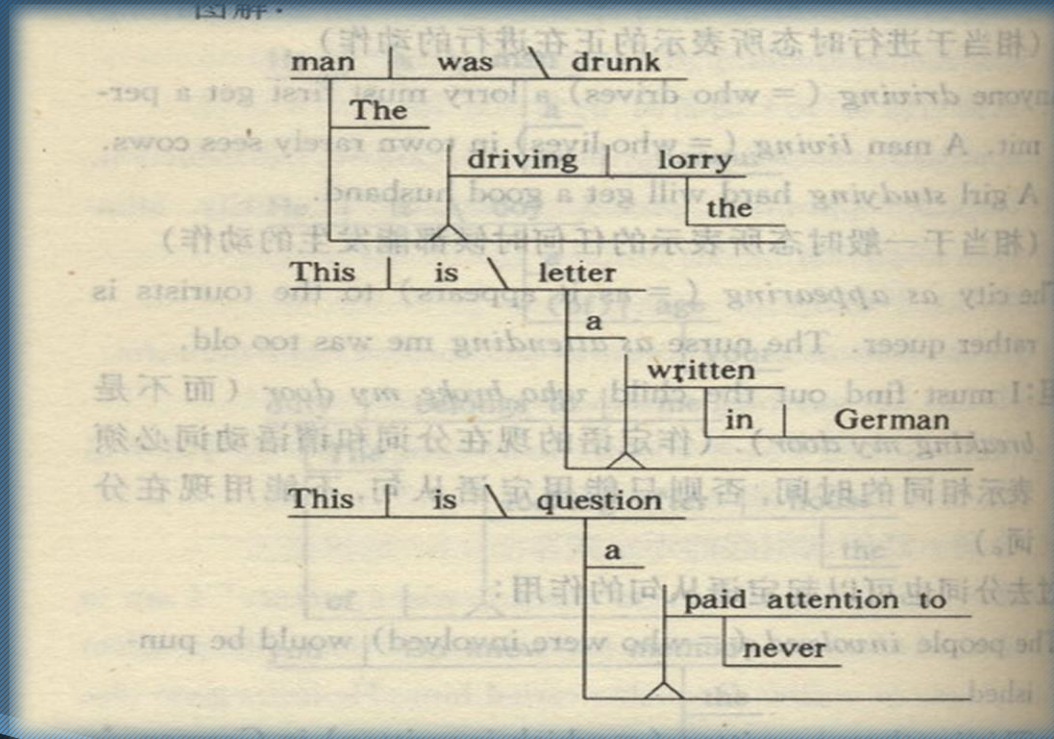
paid attention to

never

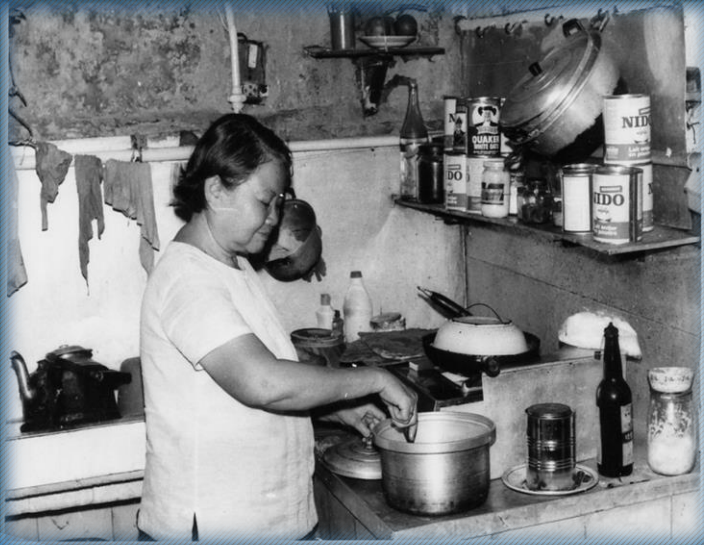
Excuse me...

What was that?

Diagram of Sentence Structure in the English language



His second love...



Life with his wife



...with his "weather elements"

Wind



Cloud



Ice



Rain

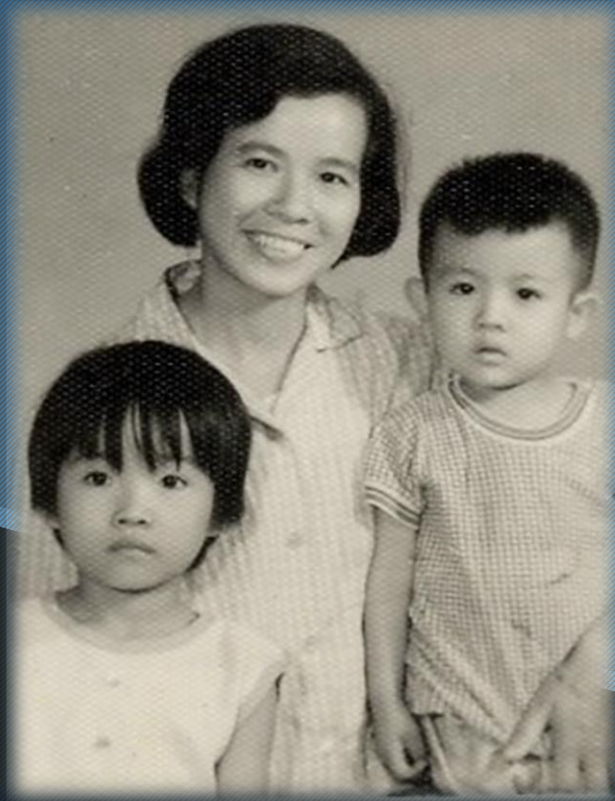


Light



Results from the "weather"

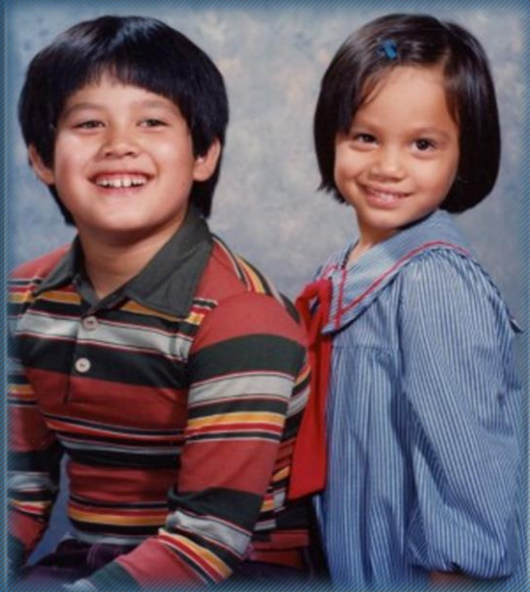
From "Wind", came ...



Wendy

Kit and Ming

From “Ice”, came...



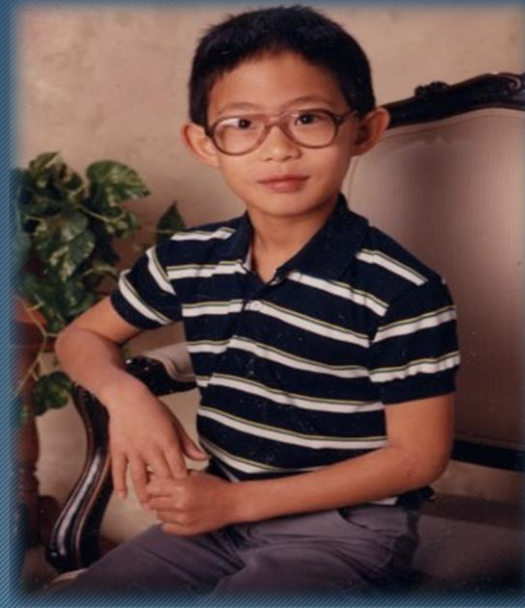
Jaysen



Aimee

From “Rain”, came...

Greg and Kevin



Kevin



From “Light”, came ...

Harvey and
Grandma



Meiling



Harvey

Harvey
and Kevin

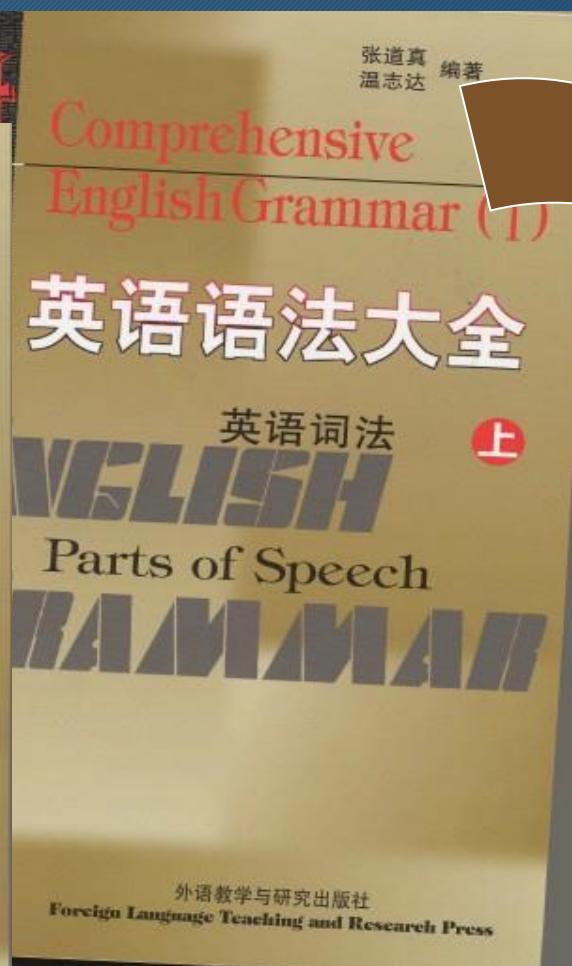


**Besides taming
the "weathers", he has tamed
the most difficult
"element" in the
English language...
"Grammar"**

His Pride and Joy

In 2001

Published
in China



50,000 copies



Second Book Was
published in
December 2002.

Reprint expected to be
made in December 2004.

Today, as we gather here
to witness his reunion with his wife,
we want to take a moment to
Remember ...

Our Mom, Grandmother, Friend and Healer



November 3, 1997

Good-bye, my love...



Circle of Life



Please tell Mom we love her and miss her...

Different ages, different places



Different faces, different places

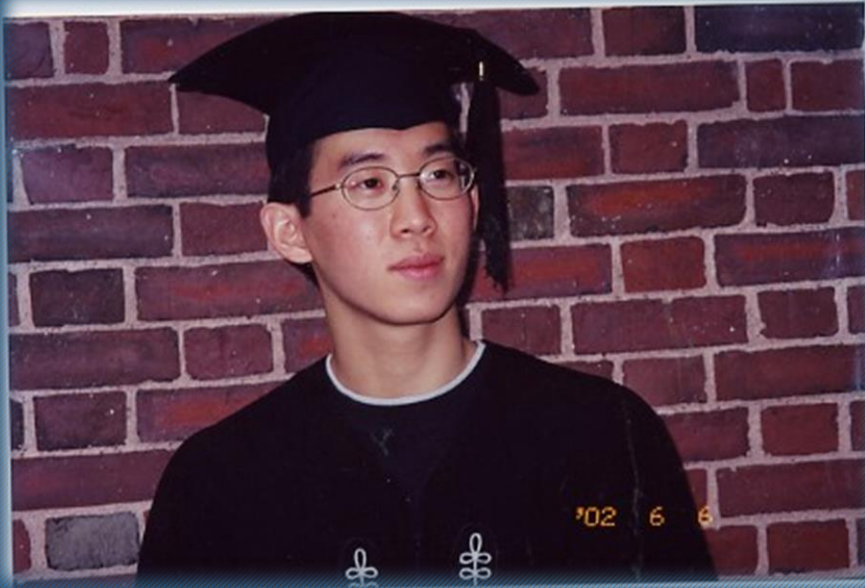


Life in USA



93rd birthday
Best Panda Restaurant
San Francisco





**Harvey's graduation from
Harvard University - 2002**

A happy Father

And a proud Grandfather





**Vincent and
Mei-Ling's
Visit – July 2002**



Thanksgiving 2002 at Kevin's House in Berkeley



Christmas - 2002

At Jan's House in San Jose







Make a wish and blow out the candles.



Celebrated with his
favorite people.



2003

**A quiet
Thanksgiving
spent at Greg's
house in Mountain
View.**



December 15, 2003

Dad fell while washing his face. He was laid up in bed for two days, and was taken to the San Francisco General Hospital. Although the MRI did not reveal it, the doctors suspected that dad had a minor stroke because he displayed a slight slur in his speech. Dad stayed in the hospital for a week and was discharged. We were warned by the doctor that dad probably would not make it for much longer and he recommended us to contact the Hospice.

We tried to encourage dad to exercise. The only way to get him to do it, was to do it with him. 1, 2, 3, 4...



Our dad is #1...



Jan brought dad some flowers, and he liked having them around the house. It became a ritual for Jan to bring him flowers when she visited him. He did not want the housekeepers to throw them away, even if they faded. He said he loved the person who brought them very much.



Christmas – 2003

We brought Christmas to dad's home.



Our usual Christmas picture with dad.



Jan logged on many miles going up this “Taylor” street to see Dad. It’s hilly and scenic. Alcatraz can be seen in full view.



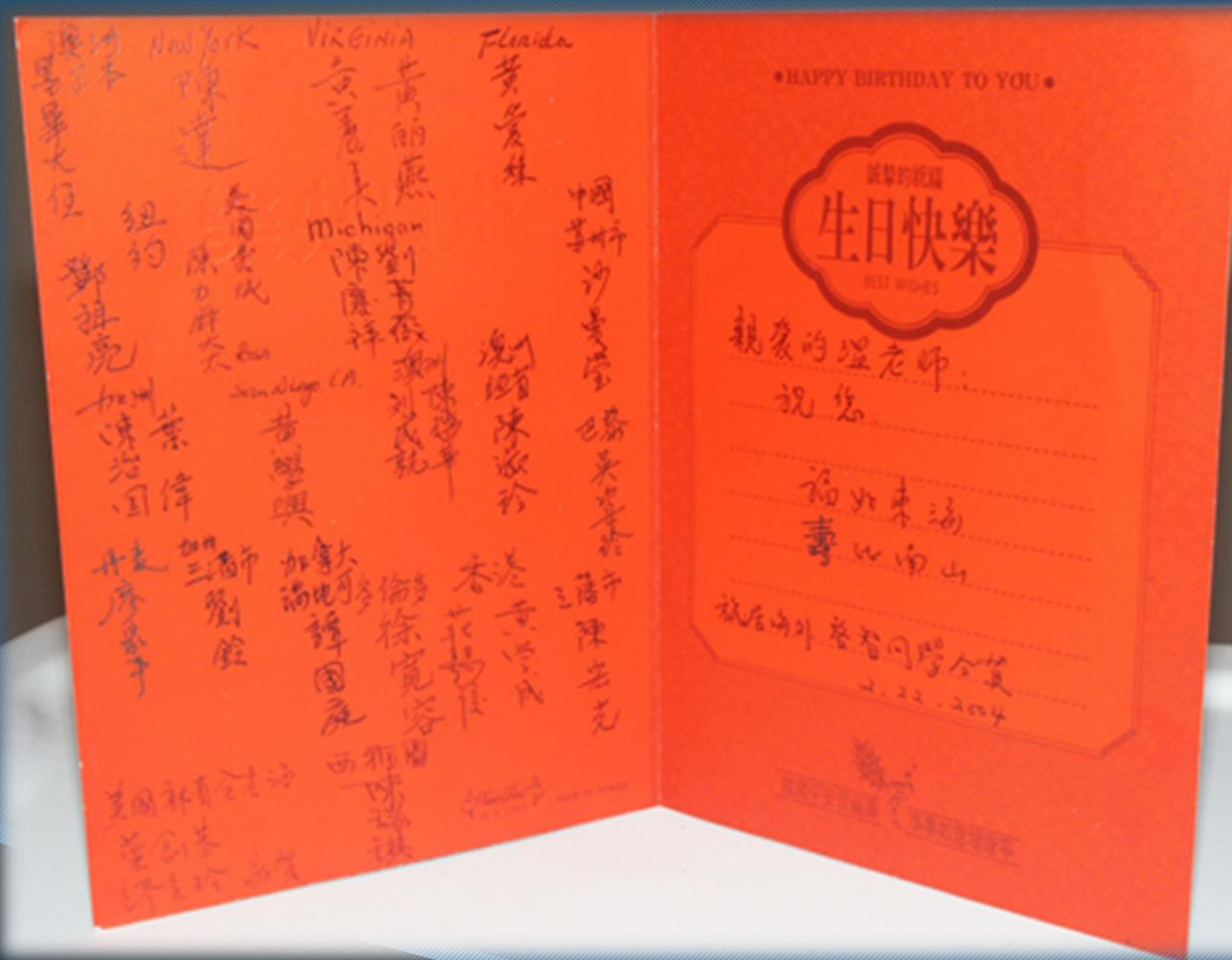
February 9, 2004. As dad was recovering, Jan requested a wheel chair from the Hospice, so she could take Dad out for a walk. Dad complained that she walked too fast because he needed time to look at the scenery from both sides of the streets.



They went around the Washington Square and then to a coffee shop, chatted for more than an hour. Jan told dad that we were planning a birthday party for him. Did he want to have it at home or in a restaurant? He preferred to be in a restaurant. On the way home that day, Jan decided to invite all dad's friends and students and to make this the largest celebration he ever had.

Reservation at R&G Lounge in San Francisco was made. A list of names was collected from dad's address book. Invitations were designed and printed and ready for mailing. A letter was written updating dad's health's condition. All these were done in one evening.

Meanwhile, somewhere in this world, another project was being undertaken. A birthday card initiated by Derek Tran (one of dad's Khai Tri School students), at Mission Viejo, was en route collecting signatures and greetings from dad's other former students. This birthday card started its journey on September 15, 2003, completing its mission on February 8, 2004.



A well-traveled card



These are the students who made a difference in dad's life.



February 22, 2004

97th birthday.

R&G Lounge San Francisco



Dad enjoyed a smooch from a grand niece.



Hugs, hugs, hugs...





**Nieces and nephews, and
their children.**

**Dad's long-time friends
(more than 60 years),
came from Canada.**

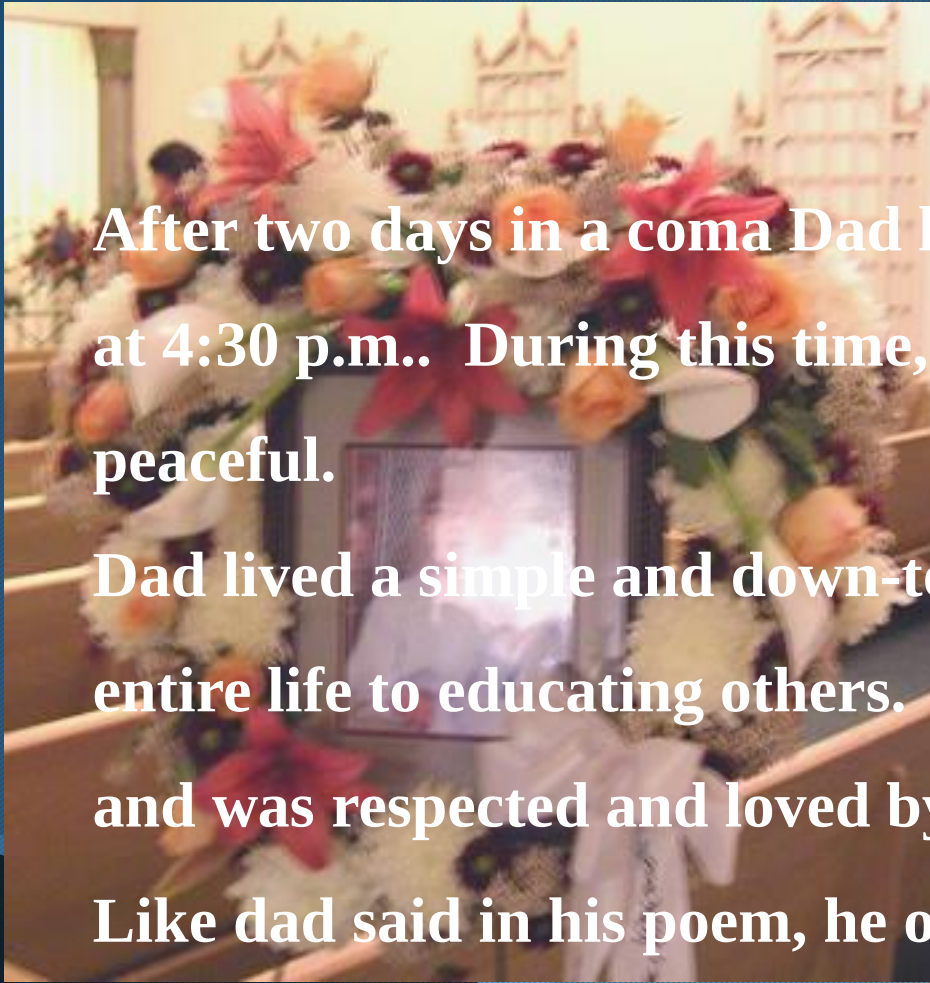




Cheers!!!



Our beloved dad at 97 years old.



After two days in a coma Dad left us on April 16, 2004 at 4:30 p.m.. During this time, dad looked comfortable and peaceful.

Dad lived a simple and down-to-earth life, dedicating his entire life to educating others. He was loving, compassionate and was respected and loved by many who knew him.

Like dad said in his poem, he only went to sleep for a while, and we will meet our dad again someday.

Sleep well, dad , we love you.

訃告

先嚴溫公諱志達，原籍廣東省梅縣，痛於二〇〇四年四月十六日下午，壽終正寢，溯生於一九〇七年二月二十二日，享壽積閱一百有餘。不孝等隨侍在側，親視含殮，遵禮成服，謹涓於二〇〇四年四月廿四日（星期六）下午二時，在三藩市華埠麗安殯儀館 649 Green Ave. 舉行家奠公祭，五月二日（星期日）下午二時，安葬於金山陵園，叨在宗親戚友世鄉誼哀此訃

孤哀子

溫風

孤哀女

溫光

溫雲 率眷全泣啓

溫冰

溫霖

聞

敬悼

越南知用、啓智等高級中學資深英文導師
北京英文文法大全著作人

溫志達老師逝世

哲人

其萎

符曼蘋

符志俊

符志鴻

符志錦

符曼莉

符麟書夫婦
符麟林夫婦

仝敬輓

悼念

尊敬的溫志達老師

筆耕平生抒志越東寮
著譯等身譽達中台美

美國越南知用中學校友會 拜輓

敬悼

越南知用、啓智等高級中學資深英文導師
北京英文文法大全著作人

溫志達老師逝世

春風化雨數十載
桃李滿園萬千朵

陳偉初 林漢 周昌義
陳爾謙 黃乃芹 陳大哲
張敬耀 李天啓 陳夢萱
彭耀庭 呂少芳 謝國華
袁福

仝拜輓

Fill not your hearts with pain and
sorrow.
But remember me in every tomorrow.
Remember the joy, the laughter, the
smiles.
I've only gone to rest a little while.
Although my leaving causes pain and
grief,
My going has eased my hurt and given
me relief.
So dry your eyes and remember me.
Not as I am now, but as I used to be.
Because I will remember you all and
look on with a smile.
Understand, in your hearts, I've gone
to rest a little while.
As long as I have the love of each of
you,
I can live my life in the hearts of all of
you.

不要讓您的內心充滿痛苦和悲傷，
總要每個明日懷念我，
懷念我們的歡樂、歡笑和微笑。
我的離去只是小享安息，
雖然我的離去會帶來痛苦和憂傷，
卻能撫平我的傷痕和給我舒暢。
故此懷念我便該擦乾您的眼淚，
好像我以往和您們在一起，
因為我會帶著微笑的懷念您們每一
個，
希望您們能由衷的明白，
我的離去只是小享安息。
由於我已得著您們每一個人的愛，
深信我能活在您們各人的心中！

Dear friends, I believe that everyone of us is so touched after having read Teacher On's poem. For those who cannot attend the memorial service, let's hold a minute of silence at 2:00 pm April 24, 2004 to celebrate the life of our respectful Teacher. It will be 5 pm same day in East Coast and Canada. 11 pm same day in Europe. 5 am Sunday in Hk and China. And 7 am Sunday in Australia. Derek



Sleep well, our beloved dad. We will always remember you.



Dear dad, you came to this world with these missions: to raise your children to be responsible individuals, to pass on your values and beliefs to them, and to educate others with what you learned. Your missions have been completed and you are free to return to where you came from.



Looking at you, dad, as you are sleeping so peacefully, I have nothing but fond memories of you... I remember you and mom, Kevin, Greg and I traveled to all different places. You and Greg were so busy taking pictures. I wish I learned something about photography from you then.

I remember your voice, so calm and soothing. I remember your smiles just days before you left. Your cute smirk when you told me you liked Bush, our president. I was so pleased with your humor when you teased me about my Chinese writing. I remember the walks we had around the park, the mocha we had in the coffee shop, the chats we had there. I also remember the painful squeeze you gave me as you slipped away forever, from my hand hold.

From going through your desk, I found the letters you have kept for so many years. These letters were from your children, your grandchildren, your students and friends. This reminded me of the kindness you had displayed to all alike.

Good bye, dad. Take care of Mom when you see her. Keep her company. She needs you to let her know you love her. She was a good mother to us and a wonderful wife to you, even though she did not know how to show it sometimes. You are in my heart always. Lam





Dad was cremated and was buried in Golden Hills Cemetery in Colma, California, together with his wife, our mom, on May 2nd.



Mom bought this property a few years before she passed away. It is a clean and quiet place.



We sent dad away with his normal attire (hat, glasses watch and camera) together with a blanket to keep him warm. He is going to be with his wife forever from now on.



Let's pray for our dad...



Lucille bade farewell to dad.



We sang “Amazing Grace” and “One Day When We Were Young” for dad.



Jan is heart-broken. She misses dad.



Greg paid his
last respect.











Rest in peace, dad. You'll always be in our hearts. Please remember us. Farewell. We love you, dad.

Thank you



Thank you

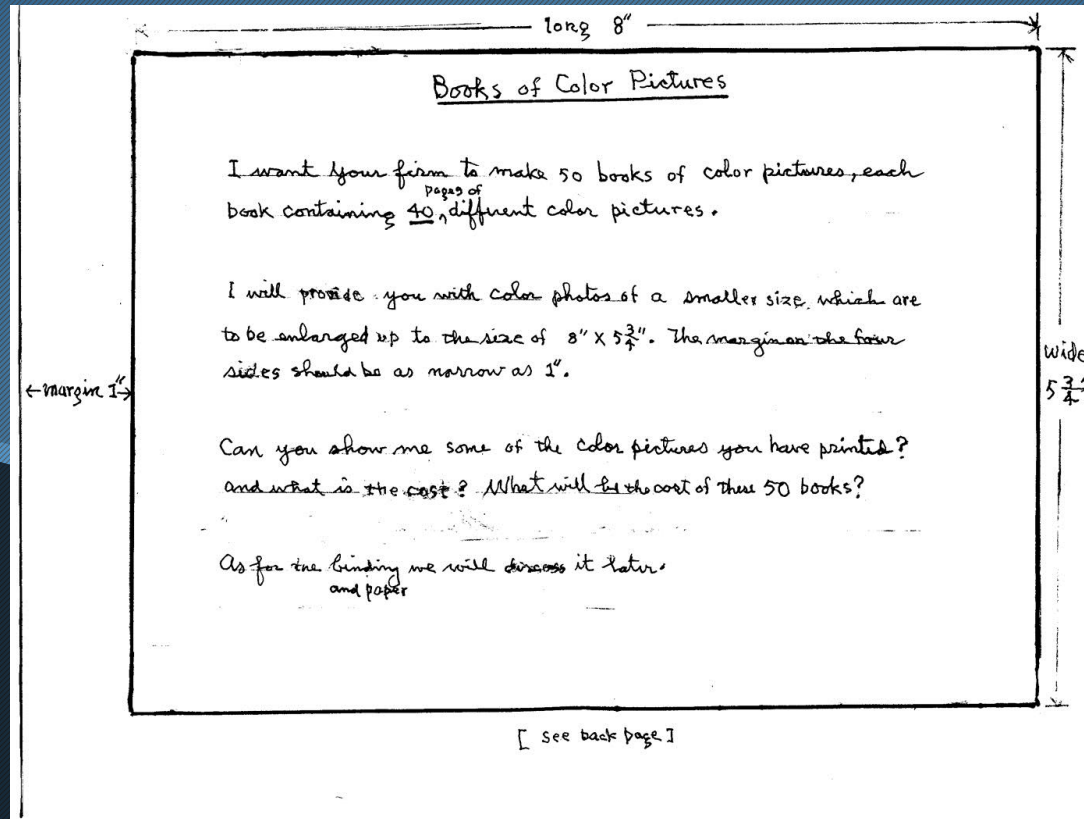
Dear friends and relatives,

Thank you for being with us on our beloved dad's memorial service. Your presence was appreciated by our dad and all of us, his children.

We also want to extend our special thanks to those who contributed to our dad's Memorial Education Fund. Your generosity will be appreciated by us and by those who will benefit from it. .

Fung, Lucille, Anne, Jan and Vincent

The following are some pictures found in dad's desk. Dad mentioned to Jan when he was in the hospital that he had some pictures he wanted to print out for friends and relatives. When I asked him again about this, he seemed to have forgotten what he had told me. Here are some of them. I couldn't find 40 pictures like he mentioned in his letter to a photo studio.



Chi-Dat On's Photo Gallery

Chi-Dat On's Photo Gallery







Death Valley



China









Palace of Fine Arts





Yosemite



Kevin





Little cowboy









Kids, birds and shadows



Yosemite



**Life's biggest pleasure –
holding one's grandchild**



Refugees



Little Loafer

“Hope”









One mind of a crowd of thousands









Portsmouth Square San Francisco



Kung Fu Master



Kung Fu Master

昙花



当暮色苍茫，你便展扇翅膀；
人南入睡，蜂蝶深藏时候，
你更百媚千娇，使满屋弥漫天香，
但曙光一现，你却头垂气衰，
香也消散，色也衰枯，
荣华不到一晚，就告死亡。





董事長杯專題比賽

組色彩

金牌獎

溫志達

董事長黃道華贈

1980

寂寞的長征

由學 ABC 到發表《英語語法大全》

溫志達

(編按)溫志達先生係越華資深知名英譯學者，當年曾在中山、知用等高中任教，移民美國后以逾九秩高齡筆耕不輟，寫成《英語語法大全》專著，並由北京出版社出版。

說到英語，我要把時間推回七十五年，回到我的生地荷屬爪哇（今稱印尼）。我常聽人說，能讀“紅毛書”，是了不起的，又聽說我一位老師是教紅毛書，但我看他的書並不紅，也沒毛，使我不解。（昔日華僑稱英國人爲“紅毛”）。但我還是喜歡它，第一天上課，是學 ABC，讓我非常興奮，以后每日踢完足球，打完彈子，放完風箏，定要把習題查一查，改一改，要記得每句頭一字必需大寫，句末必須加一點，若爲問句，就要加一耳朵（？）……

有一天我正呆坐教室中時，英文教師大聲叫我的名，使我嚇了一跳。但他溫和地對我說：“你的英文很有進步。”。這一句（沒有第二句）的讚揚，令我對英文原本的熱誠更加熾熱。

十三歲我跟父母回祖國，定居廣東梅縣一個鄉村，我進了一間“張氏小學”英文教師點了名后，先叫學生們念一遍，最后叫我的名：“你來，大聲一點，大家聽著。”。我立起身，平時非常吵鬧的教室，忽然肅靜，蒼蠅飛過之聲都可聽見，令我腳軟心寒，但我還是提起精神，用馬來音調大聲念出來，把 The boys and the girls are looking at the books 中的 b 念成 p，把 g 讀成 k，尤其把 are 和 girls 的 r 用顫舌音念出來，立即震動八方，連平時不露笑容的老師也合口而笑，

于是對全班學生說：“你們都聽見了吧，這是很標準的英語讀音。”。接下來是老師念一句，學生也跟著念一句。老師念：“The boys and the girls are looking at the books”。打波以時恩打基啊魯時啊祿慶壓打不克時學生跟著念：打波以時恩打基啊魯時……我聽得頭昏腦脹，似覺他們講客家話。

幾年之后，我因口中忽然見血，以為肺癆（當時肺癆是青年們極“時髦”的病），在鄉下“養病”幾年，未能到縣城入中學，但對英語念念不忘。新年贏得很多錢，如何用它是一大煩惱。忽然心血來潮：買一本英漢字典不是等于買一位無所不知而且有問必答的英語老師嗎？于是我與一同族玩伴天一亮就出發，越山涉水，步行五小時，終于到達縣城，在一間書店，買了一本約四百頁的字典，再買少少點心，立即啓程回家，途中口渴，便在涼亭中買仙草止渴，手中帶著寶貝字典，雖然再走五小時山路，仍覺得身輕是快。

回到家時，遠近同族，都來看我的字典。一看見，男的叫一聲“啊喲”，女的叫一聲“媽啊”，有的說：“好大的番書。”有的說：“讀十年也怕讀不完。”，以為它是與三幾十頁教科書同類的東西。有的要把它摩一摩，有的要托一托，“好重！好重！”。第二天，我把地板打掃干淨，以免

蒼蠅飛來打擾，于是坐在地上，欣賞字典內容。一同族兄弟指一圖畫問是什麼？我說那是猩猩，又問英語怎麼說，我把 orangutan 讀出來，此時母親在旁，就責備我：“自己還沒有讀，就讓別人先讀。”。

幾年後，我進中山大學附中，讀高中二時，覺得聽課學不到什麼，不如自修更明白，更快速，更自由。因此時時缺課，跑到圖書館讀書。我喜歡文學，在一年內，對讀了約三十部有漢譯本的世界名作，如法國的 Les Misérables 《悲慘世界》，英國的 David Copperfield 《塊肉餘生》，德國的 Faust 《浮士德》，波蘭的 Quo Vadis 《你往何處去》，意大利的 Decameron 《十日談》，美國的 Jungle 《屠場》，俄國的 Crime and Punishment 《罪與罰》，每部都是四百多頁，我細心研究各家譯法，希望一生作一個翻譯家，尤其是翻譯世界文學。

學期末，英籍女教師查我的成績，大為驚訝，她說我的成績高過同班幾倍，我應讀大學。這是什麼緣故？我說 I don't know why. 其實這成績是我不上她的課偷來的。

我讀高中三時，初試啼聲，翻譯西班牙代表作，Cervantes Don Quixote 西萬提斯的《唐吉訶德》，執筆寫第一句時，心驚膽戰，如臨大敵，似覺一生成敗，完全在此一筆。

最幸運的是廣州的一間大報，接納我的文稿，願意逐日刊登，結果一年登完全書。

升大學時，我譯希臘盲目詩人 Homer 荷馬的史詩 Iliad 《伊利亞特》。每早我必第一個溜入圖書館，午飯時我必最后入飯堂，我譯的史詩就這樣每天在報上出現。

我父親回國后三兩年內，算是鄉中三富豪之一，但以后由于過路的軍閥部隊，連年不斷逼抽軍餉，遂致陷入貧窮，而致精神分裂，而致去世。我的廣州的財源，就快斷絕時，好在每月約三十元稿費，令我能夠維持生活與求學，直到大學畢業為止。

畢業時，系主任在介紹工作信中說我“堅苦卓絕”，這四個字令我覺得捱了四年終于得到這面金牌。

畢業后，我在防城中學教英文，此時日軍圖佔華南。我領帶學生深入“十萬大山”賊區宣傳抗日，編戲劇和“導演”，我在山腳與深坑而乘車掣失靈的自行車跌落在石路上，折斷兩粒門牙，而且因勞苦過度，腦力衰竭，算數只能算到三，說到英文，離開我三千里了。不久我與妻出國到法屬南越永

隆鄉村，在岳父果園中養病，每日吃生果與漿船，度過三年，這是我一生之一大真空。

腦病初癒，我就想“重操舊業”。最先，我假扮教師，叫我妻弟假扮學生，坐在凳上，聽我講授英語。試驗兩月，我乃放膽向堤岸中山中學求職，于是在此教英語。

以后幾年，日軍來，日軍去，法軍去，美軍來。五十萬美軍湧入南越時期，英語大行其道。我收了很多學生，得到“教王”綽號。教十多年后，我就開始認真考慮：教一年，充其量只能教一百學生，得益學生並不多，但是我如果寫書，只要寫得不錯，拿到十億人口的祖國出版，得益者總可能在一萬以上，而且教書是受地點與時間限制，而著作則不受地點（例如樹蔭之下，小溪之旁）和時間（例如半夜，暴風雨時）的限制，只要學生有興趣，就可立即上課，而且有問必答，答必詳明。最妙的是著作者縱經離世，仍能向學生講授，如同生時。我這樣想了又想，就決定從事著作，放下粉筆，拾起筆桿。

我決定寫語法，且要有新意，資料來源，除文法書外，我搜集了報刊、小說、情書、

佈告，甚至街上拾起的傳單，我認為其中必多珍品，為一般文法書所少見者。英語句子，千變萬化，我想找出能囊括天下任何句子的少數句型，我花了五年，找出四十七種句型，並找出決定每一句型的几乎所有動詞。時態之外，還有動相（aspect），亦須重視，心理形容詞，須有主動與被動之分，副詞有五個位置，當如何決定？……我研究這些英語規則，花了十三年，把結果寫成一千七百頁的書，名曰《英語語法大全》，在北京出版。寫這部書時，我幸得國內傑出英語專家張導真教授，花多年時間，檢討全書，使它更為完美。

由學習 ABC 到寫成《英語語法大全》，是一段非常寂寞的長征。一開始陷入迷霧，接著望洋興嘆，有時闖入桃花源，有時誤入窮巷，但結果總算到達終站。

一九九九年九月九日

THE TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK MY LIFE

By: Zhi-Da Wen

Half year before the fall of Saigon, I had somehow smelt the odor, because the Paris Peace Accord had been only a pretense, used to enable the US to leave Vietnam without losing face and to give the VC more time for another attack. Now, while the VC were trying to strengthen themselves, the Saigon government was trying to degrade itself, wallowing in extravagance, favoritism, exorbitant taxation, inflation, arbitrary law, especially official corruption (to be exact, official robbery), just like what had happened in China on the eve of the fall of the Nationalist government.

Communism, I think, is not bad for a man born and brought up in it. Even barbarism is good for a man born and brought up in barbarism. But, even though he had an untainted past, it would be unbearable for an adult used to freedom, to be suddenly thrown into the rigor of communism; to have to learn all over again how to dress and eat, how to talk and think, and how to brainwash oneself and others. Being too old to learn, I decided to leave Saigon before the VC came. This decision was made in October 1974.

The first thing I did was to apply to the US for a relative immigrant visa. The second, was to dispose of all the furniture. The third, was to give all the thousand books to a library. These books, having been collected for thirty years, had a place not only in my shelves, but deep in my heart. Every book deprived of me meant a pang. For they had been reference books for 'The Writer's Cyclopedia', which I had written for 22 years. But I was glad that I had just finished it and sent it to the US.

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The fourth, was to return the house to the owner, and got back the “tea money”. Actually I received only half of the current price. Friends said I had been foolish enough to accept it. I said I might get a zero if I delayed. It was in February 1975, before Chinese New Year’s Day, that I and my wife left the house we had lived in for more than twenty years. So I and my wife became “homeless”. My wife stayed at a relative’s house, and I at my friend Fu’s, a mile away from her. We agreed to meet at eight every morning in the garden of a great hospital, where I relaxed several times a day in the past 4 years.

Four months had passed since I applied. I was worried that the VC might arrive before my visa petition was approved. Now the communist troops began surrounding Saigon and the circle became tighter and tighter every day, just like a large snake coils around a chicken. I was anxious, like an ant in a frying pan. I even thought of buying poison to finish myself in case I could not get out. I knew I could not get along with them.

In these days, however, most Saigonese seemed unaware of what was going on. Pedestrians were walking leisurely. Cinemas were full. Food stalls were as boisterous and merry as usual. Gold store owners were selling gold for pile after pile of money, with the happiest of faces. “Saigon will live at least until the end of 1975”, they said.

To my greatest joy, my visa petition was approved on April 18. Then I asked about the “market price” of a passport. A man inside the government said it would cost five million piasters (1000 piasters = 1 US\$) and be delivered in two months. But could Saigon last so long? Then I asked, “how about in a week”? Immediately he replied, “ten million”. I was speechless, and at a loss whether to laugh or to cry. Now the legal channel had been blockaded, what else could I do?”

About this time, Fu told me there was a merchant ship waiting on the high seas, that a Vietnamese gunboat or helicopter would take us from a secret place, to the ship, which would sail for Hongkong, that each passenger (there were sixty) was to pay twelve liangs of gold (1 liang= 1.2 oz.), and that all his family would take this ship. How about me? As this seemed to be the only exit I had, I said, “I will join you.”

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I told my wife about it. She was greatly shocked. “No! No! How dangerous to travel that way! To be thrown down by a helicopter to a ship!”

“I think it is safe.”

“I will stay here. You go.”

“I go alone? What would our children say?”

“you go with your friend. They are rich people. We cannot afford to pay twenty-four liangs of gold. Even if we could, we would be poor in Hongkong in all our lives.”

“This is no time to worry about how much to pay. So long as we are safe...”

“Everyone says there will be no trouble in Saigon. Why should you make such a fuss? I am already over sixty. What could communists do with me?” (As if they would pity her just because she was old.)

“Do you remember what our son told us in his letter, ‘You are standing upon the top of a volcano.’? A single rocket will be enough to throw all Saigon, about two million people, into a great panic. Could a nervous woman like you stand the shock?”

Then our old auntie suggested consulting the oracle of the Goddess Matsu at the famous A Bo Temple. I had never believed such a thing, but through the Goddess’s influence I hoped I could persuade my wife. To my greatest joy and amazement she did agree. She asked whether I would go, too. “Certainly,” I said. Immediately we set out for the temple. When I thought of this strangest mission, my sorrowful heart could not but smile. The temple was almost empty. First of all she bought a bundle of incense sticks and then burned them on the altar. Then she knelt down before the Goddess, muttered her question, shook and shook a long bamboo vessel containing about a hundred numbered sticks. After a few shakings, a stick of a certain number fell out to the floor. Then a clerk in charge handed her a yellow paper strip of that number, on which was written a poem, the answer of the Goddess. With the greatest excitement, because this poem meant our destiny, we read it shoulder to shoulder, but to my disappointment we found no instructions whatsoever. To leave or not to leave was still a question.

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Then she suggested I should consult the oracle myself. This was just what I longed to say, thinking that my hands might be luckier. But at the outset, my knees resisted being bent. I tried hard and managed to kneel down. In this unaccustomed posture I unconsciously looked up at the face of the Goddess and met with her benevolent eyes. I shook the vessel with confidence. After a few shakings, several sticks suddenly jumped out together. After this failure I became very timid. I shook and shook and shook, but no sticks came out. My wife then knelt down by me, helped me shake it with a proper force. Then a stick leaped out. The oracle, again, never told us whether to stay or not to stay. On our way home, I kept silent, nor did she say anything.

The departure of the ship was postponed and postponed again, because of the helicopter was busy fighting, or because the communist suddenly asked three liangs of opium for each passenger, instead of two for his own share. So we began to suspect the ship was unsafe. Every morning, my wife and I met in the hospital garden with sad faces, and with sad faces we separated.

So far I had no confidence in the evacuation program started by the American government. Because thousands of refugees, possibly with guns or grenades, might suddenly crowd into American ships or helicopters, and kill or wound the old, the weak and the young, as the tragedies in Danang had clearly shown. But as there was no other way out, I, with two of my friends, went to an American in charge of the evacuation program. I showed him the notice of approval of my immigrant visa petition, asking what was the use of this paper if the Vietnamese government refused to give me a passport? He said, "It is a good paper. You can go to the Consulate." I said, "But must I get a passport?" He evaded my question, but gave me a significant smile, saying "It's already enough for you." I quite understood what he meant. I seemed to see a ray of light in the darkest night.

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The next morning in the garden I told my wife we could leave without the passport; that she should get up at 5 a.m. and stand in line before the American Consulate, with the greatest patience, in spite of the large crowd of people, the scorching sun and her sickly knees, that this was the only way open to us. While she was waiting for processing, I would go about the city doing something important. She gladly accepted my proposal. The first day she waited all morning but could not enter the gate. The second day at 10 a.m., I went to the Consulate, saw only a sea of faces and umbrellas, but not her. “Perhaps she gets sick?” Then I looked through the iron bars into the courtyard of the Consulate, where the luckiest few were seated. Then my short-sighted eyes seems to see a short old woman standing up and going to a policeman to say something. Who should it be but my wife! She had entered the gate. But I could not greet her, nor did she see me.

Her turn would come in two hours. I went home. I was too excited to have any appetite for lunch. As soon as the clock struck twelve, I went to her relative’s house. As soon as I got down from the motor tricycle, I saw in the dark house her smiling face. Before I spoke, she told me the Consulate officer said our papers were “very good”, and that we could go to the airport any time. This was really a voice from Heaven. A thousand questions suddenly dissolved into a zero. Then we discussed whether to set out in two or three days so that everything was ready?: or the next day after a good sleep? Or this evening after lunch? “No, no,” I said, “We must start RIGHT NOW. Things are changing rapidly. Pack as few things as possible and call a taxi.”

In half an hour, we were in front of the airport. I, with a small travelling bag, she with a small basket. The clothes we wore were all the clothes we brought with us. After all, here were all our belongings after forty years of hard work.

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We waited some hours. Then we got on an American military bus. As soon as I trod on the bus steps, I suddenly had a weird feeling that I was crossing from one world to another, from the known to the unknown, and that once I crossed, I was never to return. When I was in my seat, I wish I could wave to the dozens of dear friends, students and relatives I suddenly left behind, but, instead, I could see only strange faces around me. This day was April 23, 1975.

The bus drove into the American air base and stopped near a big building, where we passed the first peaceful night after months of worry. My wife and I lay on the lawn under a tree, where we could breathe fresh air. The moon was over our heads, it set me thinking about the vivid past and the vague future.

The following morning at six, we got on an American military plane. About four hundred people were seated on the floor, with their legs bent against one another's back, or stretching toward one another's nose. But the beauty of it was nobody complained or apologized. So long as they could get out of Vietnam, few of them cared to know where they were going, and would not seem to mind if they were flown to a jungle in Africa.

We flew to the Philippines, then to Guam, then to Pendleton. We were met by old friends, and stayed at their home in San Diego. Then we flew to San Francisco, but we got lost in the maze of the airport. When we were looking sadly around to find a way out, there suddenly appeared in the door, I had not yet noticed, the smiling faces of our two daughters, son-in-law, and grandson. This was a reunion after many years of separation.

Above is an account of the ten days (April 18 – April 28 1975.) (Vietnam fell on April 30, 1975) that shook my peaceful life. From now on, the past, however vivid and near it may be, will become vaguer and vaguer, farther and farther; and the future, however vague and strange it may be, will become livelier and livelier, dearer and dearer.

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This is our dad
Through the eyes of the
4th daughter.

Jan/Lam