

## WFWP USA: My Beautiful Time with My Parents

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Chinese People's Federation for World Peace 4th Filial Piety Artwork Contest Awards



Good morning and good afternoon,

Greetings of love to all!

On behalf of the Women's' Federation for World Peace USA I would like to express our most heartfelt CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of this wonderful AWARD CEREMONY of the 4th Filial Piety Artwork Contest!!

I would also like to commend and thank the CHINESE PEOPLE'S FEDERATION FOR WORLD PEACE for choosing this beautiful, meaningful, and very much needed topic on the "Filial Heart" for this art contest.

And thank you so very much, to the chairwoman, Mrs. Amy Young, for inviting me to share this greeting and also some thoughts on the topic of "My Beautiful Time with My Parents".

I truly love this subject for several reasons:

One, it is because I personally have had a very good relationship with my parents, although they divorced later on, when I was a young adult. Having been raised in the Catholic tradition, I was taught from early childhood on, to obey the parents, respect elders, observe etiquette, exhibit kindness when in the store, and how to behave in public and at home. And although it was not always easy to obey when my mother asked me to do something like the dishes, every time, when I was able to overcome my dislike and complaint, and I did the dishes, I felt a sense of joy and I felt good about myself. Sooner or later I discovered that whenever I would serve and obey my parents, there was harmony and love between us.

The most memorable and beautiful moments for me were when I asked my parents about their childhood,

(my mother is from Austria/Bohemia and my father is from Germany) their time in school, what their daily life was like, what they liked to eat, their chores, friends, and also their challenges as they grew up during war time, etc. Oftentimes their stories moved me to tears.

I was also always curious about the childhood of my grandparents, and asked them many questions about their lives, as well as about their parents and ancestors. I learned deep faith in God from my mother's side, and love for people, all cultures, languages and open mindedness from my father.

I am forever grateful for these stories filled with wisdom and guidance which helped me throughout my life. So I naturally felt moved to take care of my parents in their old age, visiting them often until they passed.

This is to confirm that a filial heart can bring happiness, a feeling of belonging, connectedness and deep love.

The second reason I feel this topic is so important:

Looking at today's society, especially here in the United States, we don't see much filial piety or respect for parents, elders, or even teachers and superiors in the last 50-60 years. Some children call their parents by their first name and treat them as equals, disrespect them and put them down, even kill them. This is very sad. Being surrounded by this very toxic culture of putting self above others, individualism, and self-indulgence, we miss a supportive environment for such values in our communities in which our children grow up.

As a result, family bonds and family culture is weakening all across the nation, and our next generation feels a sense of inner emptiness, insecurity, loneliness and despair. Yet I do like to also mention on the other hand, when parents don't truly invest and sacrifice for their children, it is harder for the child to respond with a filial heart.

So how can we begin to revive Filial Piety in America?

I believe with all my heart that it is through our many wonderful ethnic communities here in the United States, who preserved their deeply spiritual roots, family traditions and beautiful heritage, especially from Asia, where filial piety is one of the great family values. And Chinese ancient culture certainly is one of the oldest cultures in the world, with much depth and wisdom hidden in the Chinese written characters.

In conclusion, I feel that this kind of Filial Piety Festival and art contest, is like a breath of fresh air for us here in America, as it evokes the natural God-given filial heart in those who participate, and creates and awakens consciousness of these values we all long for.

I would like to end with a word from Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the Founder of WFWP and also the CPFWP. She says in her Memoir "The Mother of Peace":

"Children of true filial piety are those who sacrifice for their parents just as their parents have sacrificed for them."

Once again, Congratulations!

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Note: One of the core tenants of WFWP is to build a strong family culture. Filial Piety is the virtue of respect for one's parents. Angelika shares her heart about her parents in her congratulatory remarks at the Chinese People's Federation for World Peace on Sept 3, 2002.