

Damn

Samson Gong

For as long as I can remember, my grandmother was smiling, carrying me and my twin brother around her little shop in Chinatown. She was always showing off her two grandsons. I can't remember my first word, but I do remember reading a whole sentence in Chinese. My brother and I sat at a little table with books in front of us, my grandmother holding a stick in her hand.

She was strong, loving and caring, but always strict about education. My parents worked more than twelve hours a day, so we spent most of our time with my grandmother. My grandmother worked twice a week even though she owned her own medicine shop, but she needed to take care of us. She was my hero.

From first to sixth grade, my math skills were always above average, but my English always needed improvement. This was because my grandmother could only teach us math and Chinese. She always wanted her grandchildren to have a career that would support ourselves and our family. Even though she was strict, she wanted us to be not only successful, but happy.

I loved ice cream. When I heard the jingle of the ice cream truck, I ran up the stairs to my grandparents and asked for money to buy ice cream cones. I remember staying outside eating our cones and I never recall our grandparents saying no to the ice cream.

I am known as an American Born Chinese (ABC) born in 1990 in New York City, and in all the sad experiences of my life the one with the most impact was when I was in sixth grade.

It had been my best year at school. I had good friends and the teacher was nice. But there was one morning that year I will not forget. My mom called my brother and me to go to the second floor to see my grandmother. That day her skin turned a bright yellow, but otherwise she looked normal. I only saw her for a minute before I had to go to school.

When we returned from school, my grandmother was in the hospital. I didn't care much, I thought she would come home soon. As days passed, her condition worsened. My uncle, who is a doctor, said my grandmother wouldn't make it. I believed him. We visited her, and she looked tired. I made her a Get Well Soon card for each visit. My aunt stuck them on the wall by her bed for her to see.

One afternoon I took the citywide test in school and had done really well. I wanted to tell her the great news. I was so happy. When we arrived, I tried to tell her what happened, but she couldn't hear me. I couldn't help but cry. She was in much pain and couldn't open her eyes to look at us. I guess I always thought she

would beat this because a patient next to her also had liver failure, and he was okay and went back home. So I thought she would be all right too.

But my hope disappeared. My mom asked my aunt to take us to her house for a sleepover. My cousin and I walked together, and I talked about how I thought my grandmother would be okay. But the next morning my cousin told us that my grandmother passed away.

Recently, my brother told me my grandmother could have lived if she accepted the liver transplant. But she rejected the offer because someone else younger than her needed the transplant also. My grandmother gained the respect of many people through acts like this. She was a hero not only to me, but to others too. She helped many people as a Chinese doctor and would never reject someone even if they didn't have money to pay. This is the way she lived and who she was.

Even now, years later, I wonder how life would be if my grandmother were still alive. Damn.

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